

1 Clement

For help with 1 Clement, see Lightfoot's classic 5-vol. set on the Apostolic Fathers.

This anonymous letter (traditionally ascribed to “Clement,” the exact identity of whom is unknown, but probably a pastor in Rome) was written at about the same time as John’s Revelation (i.e., mid-90s). Some in the early church initially thought that it was part of the New Testament. It is formally a letter from the church in Rome to the church in Corinth (see the text below) attempting to mediate an internal dispute, apparently between younger and older leadership in the Corinthian church (3.3; 44.6; 47.6–7, see text below). The letter begins with a highly commendatory description of the Corinthians’ reputation (1–2; very unlike Paul’s description! So perhaps they had responded well to the apostolic admonitions), but then tells us that this has changed due to jealousy (3). The next paragraph, immediately preceding the reading selection which begins with 5.1., recounts the fruit of jealousy from many OT examples, including Cain, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and David.

The first few paragraphs given below are intended to provide a setting for the reading selection. Translations are those of Holmes.

Ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ παροικοῦσα Ῥώμην τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ παροικούσῃ Κόρινθον, κλητοῖς ἡγιασμένοις ἐν θελήματι θεοῦ διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ παντοκράτορος θεοῦ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πληθυνθείη.

The church of God which sojourns in Rome to the church of God which sojourns in Corinth, to those who are called and sanctified by the will of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. May grace and peace from almighty God through our Lord Jesus Christ be yours in abundance.

1.1. Διὰ τὰς αἰφνιδίους καὶ ἐπαλλήλους γενομένας ἡμῖν συμφορὰς καὶ περιπτώσεις, βράδιον νομίζομεν ἐπιστροφὴν πεποιῆσθαι περὶ τῶν ἐπιζητουμένων παρ’ ὑμῖν πραγμάτων, ἀγαπητοί, τῆς τε ἀλλοτρίας καὶ ξένης τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς τοῦ θεοῦ, μιᾶς καὶ ἀνοσίου στάσεως ἣν ὀλίγα πρόσωπα προπετῆ καὶ αὐθάδη ὑπάρχοντα εἰς τοσοῦτον ἀπονοίας ἐξέκαυσαν, ὥστε τὸ σεμνὸν καὶ περιβόητον καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἀξιαγάπητον ὄνομα ὑμῶν μεγάλως βλασφημηθῆναι.

Because of the sudden and repeated misfortunes and reverses which have happened to us, brothers, we acknowledge that we have been somewhat slow in giving attention to the matters in dispute among you, dear friends, especially the detestable and unholy schism, so alien and strange to those chosen by God, which a few reckless and arrogant persons have kindled to such a pitch of insanity that your good name, once so renowned and loved by all, has been greatly reviled.

3.3. οὕτως ἐπηγέρθησαν οἱ ἄτιμοι ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐντίμους, οἱ ἄδοξοι ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐνδόξους, οἱ ἄφρονες ἐπὶ τοὺς φρονίμους, οἱ νέοι ἐπὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους.

So men were stirred up: “Those without honor against the honored,” those of no repute against the highly reputed, the foolish against the wise, “the young against the elders.”

44.3b. –τούτους οὐ δικαίως νομίζομεν ἀποβάλλεσθαι τῆς λειτουργίας. 4. ἀμαρτία γὰρ οὐ μικρὰ ἡμῖν ἔσται, ἐὰν τοὺς ἀμέμτως καὶ ὁσίως προσενεγκόντας τὰ δῶρα τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ἀποβάλωμεν. 5. μακάριοι οἱ προσδοιπορήσαντες πρεσβύτεροι, οἵτινες ἔγκαρπον καὶ τελείαν ἔσχον τὴν ἀνάλυσιν· οὐ γὰρ εὐλαβοῦνται μὴ τις αὐτοὺς μεταστήσῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδρυμένου αὐτοῖς τόπου. 6. ὀρῶμεν γὰρ, ὅτι ἐνίους ὑμεῖς μετηγάγετε καλῶς πολιτευομένους ἐκ τῆς ἀμέμπτως αὐτοῖς τετειμημένης λειτουργίας.

–these men [i.e., the former bishops] we consider to be unjustly removed from their ministry. 4. For it will be no small sin for us, if we depose from the bishop’s office those who have offered the gifts blamelessly and in holiness. 5. Blessed are those presbyters who have gone on ahead, who took their departure at a mature and fruitful age, for they need no longer fear that someone might remove them from their established place. 6. For we see that you have removed certain people, their good conduct notwithstanding, from the ministry which had been held in honor by them blamelessly.

47.6. αἰσψρά, ἀγαπητοί, καὶ λίαν αἰσψρά, καὶ ἀνάξια τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἀγωγῆς ἀκούεσθαι, τὴν βεβαιοτάτην καὶ ἀρχαίαν Κορινθίων ἐκκλησίαν δι’ ἐν ἣ δύο πρόσωπα στασιάζειν πρὸς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους· 7. καὶ αὕτη ἡ ἀκοή οὐ μόνον εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐχώρησεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἑτεροκλινεῖς ὑπάρχοντας ἀφ’ ἡμῶν, ὥστε καὶ βλασφημίας ἐπιφέρεσθαι τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου διὰ τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀφροσύνην, ἑαυτοῖς δὲ κίνδυνον ἐπεξεργάζεσθαι. 48.1. Ἐξάρωμεν οὖν ἐν τάχει καὶ προσπέσωμεν τῷ δεσπότη καὶ κλαύσωμεν ἰκετευοντες αὐτόν, ὅπως ἴλεως γενόμενος ἐπικαταλλαγῇ ἡμῖν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν σεμνὴν τῆς φιλαδελφίας ἡμῶν ἀγνὴν ἀγωγὴν ἀποκαταστήσῃ ἡμᾶς.

47.6. It is disgraceful, dear friends, yes, utterly disgraceful and unworthy of your conduct in Christ, that it should be reported that the well-established and ancient church of the Corinthians, because of one or two persons, is rebelling against its presbyters. 7. And this report has reached not only us, but also those who differ from us, with the result that you heap blasphemies upon the name of the Lord because of your stupidity, and create danger for yourselves as well. 48.1. Let us therefore root this out quickly, and let us fall down before the Master and pray to him with tears, that he may be merciful and be reconciled to us, and restore us to the honorable and pure conduct which characterizes our love for the brotherhood.

5.1.¹⁰⁹ Ἄλλ’ ἵνα τῶν ἀρχαίων ὑποδειγμάτων παυσώμεθα, ἔθωμεν

ἐπὶ τοὺς ἔγγιστα γενομένους ἀθλητάς· λάβωμεν τῆς γενεᾶς ἡμῶν

τὰ γενναῖα ὑποδείγματα. 2.¹¹⁰ διὰ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον οἱ μέγιστοι

¹⁰⁹ 5.1. γενναῖος, α, ον, *noble, illustrious* (B 193); τὰ γενναῖα ὑποδείγματα = “noble examples” (ibid.).

¹¹⁰ 5.2. ἐδιώχθησαν, 3ΡΑΡΙ > διώκω; ἤθλησαν, 3ΡΑΑΙ > ἀθλέω, *to compete* (in a contest). μέγιστοι, MPN of the superlative form μέγιστος (B 624 col. 2, s.v. μέγας 4.b. near the end), occurs only once in NT, 2 Pt 1:4. Since Mounce’s textbook (which most of you had for first year Greek) doesn’t include any information on comparative forms of the adjective (adverbs are similar), here’s an overview. The degrees of comparison possible are: positive (*big*), comparative (*bigger*), superlative (*biggest*), and elative (*very big*). Greek has both regular and irregular formations of the adjective. The

καὶ δικαιοτάτοι στύλοι ἐδιώχθησαν καὶ ἕως θανάτου ἤθλησαν.

3. λάβωμεν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἡμῶν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἀποστόλους·

4.¹¹¹ Πέτρον, ὃς διὰ ζῆλον ἄδικον οὐχ ἓνα οὐδὲ δύο, ἀλλὰ

πλείονας ὑπήνεγκεν πόνους καὶ οὕτω μαρτυρήσας ἐπορεύθη εἰς

τὸν ὀφειλόμενον τόπον τῆς δόξης, 5.¹¹² διὰ ζῆλον καὶ ἔριν Παῦλος

ὑπομονῆς βραβεῖον ὑπέδειξεν, 6.¹¹³ ἐπτάκις δεσμὰ φορέσας,

φυγαδευθεὶς, λιθασθεὶς, κήρυξ γενόμενος ἔν τε τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἐν

τῇ δύσει, τὸ γενναῖον τῆς πίτεως αὐτοῦ κλέος ἔλαβεν.

7.¹¹⁴ δικαιοσύνην διδάξας ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς

δυσεως ἐλθὼν καὶ μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, οὕτως

“regular” variety are formed by adding the following suffixes to the stem of the (positive) adjective: -τερος (comparative) and -τατος (superlative). Thus: μικρος, *small* > μικρότερος, *smaller* > μικρότατος, *smallest*. The “irregular” variety use the suffixes -(ι)ων and -ιστος. Thus μέγας, *great* > μείζων, *greater* > μέγιστος, *greatest*. The degrees of comparison are not very rigid in koine; superlative forms are often only relative in meaning, and comparative forms often have a superlative or relative sense. For a good discussion of these forms, see Goetchius, *The Language of the NT*, 210–13; also pay close attention to the entries in BDAG which will usually point out the variations that are present in a given adjective.

¹¹¹ 5.4. ὑπήνεγκεν, 3SAAI > ὑποφέρω; μαρτυρήσας, AAPMSN > μαρυρέω; ἐπορεύθη, 3SAPI > πορεύομαι; ὀφειλόμενον, PPPMSA > ὀφείλω.

¹¹² 5.5. βραβεῖον, ου, τό, *prize, reward* (“ἄθλον and νικητήριον are more common in Gk. lit.,” B 183); ὑπέδειξεν, 3SAAI > ὑποδείκνυμι/-ύω, *to show* (B 1037).

¹¹³ 5.6. ἐπτάκις, *seven times* (ἐπτὰ = *seven*); δεσμός, ου, ὁ, *bond, chain*; φορέσας, AAPMSN > φορέω, *to wear*; δεσμὰ φορέσας = δεσμοφορέω = “to be in bonds, to be imprisoned”; φυγαδευθεὶς, APPMSN > φυγαδεύω, *to be an exile*; λιθασθεὶς, APPMSN > λιθάζω, *to stone*; ἀνατολή, ἥς, ἡ, *rising, east*; δύσις, εως, ἡ, *west*; τὸ γενναῖον ... κλέος = “glorious renown” (B 193), or perhaps better, “genuine fame.”

¹¹⁴ 5.7. ἀπηλλάγη, 3S²API > ἀπαλλάσσω, *to leave, depart* (B 96); ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ κοσμου = euphemism, “to die”; ἀνελήμφθη, 3SAPI > πορεύομαι; the phrase καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δυσεως ἐλθὼν = “and having gone to the boundaries of the west”: a key (& disputed) reference to the travels of Paul. The “boundaries of the west” are typically identified as the area around the Straits of Gibraltar (more specifically the city of Gades, in southern Spain west of Gibraltar)—which would correspond with Paul’s desires to travel to Spain (Rom. 15:23–29). If so, this is our only historical confirmation that he did indeed make it as far as Spain on his missionary travels. On this see not only the bibliography in BDAG (s.v., τέρμα and Σπανία), but esp. E. Earle Ellis, “The End of the Earth’ (Acts 1:8),” *BBR* 1 (1991): 123–32. The alternative position is that “boundaries of the west” refers to Rome. What one decides on this issue will also determine how one translates ἐλθὼν/ἔρχομαι here (esp. since Clement is writing *from Rome*: is Paul ‘coming’ to the west (i.e., to Rome), or is he ‘going’ to the west (i.e., past Rome to Spain)?

ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ κοσμοῦ καὶ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ἀνελήμφθη,
 ὑπομονῆς γενόμενος μέγιστος ὑπογραμμός.

5.1. But in order that we should leave the old examples, let us come to those who are nearest—champions, taking from our generation the genuine examples. 2. Because of zeal and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars were persecuted and fought unto death. 3. Let us receive before our eyes the good apostles. 4. Peter, who because of unrighteous zeal endured, not one nor two, but many afflictions, and having testified in this way, he went to his deserved place of glory. 5. Because of zeal and strife, Paul showed the way to the reward for endurance, 6. seven time wearing bonds, being an exile, being stoned, being a preacher in both the east and in the west, he received the genuine fame for his faith, 7. having taught the whole world righteousness and having gone to the boundaries of the west; and having testified to the rulers, thus he departed from the world and passed into the holy place, having become an outstanding example of endurance.

6.1. Τούτοις τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ὁσίως πολιτευσαμένοις συνηθοῖσθη
 πολὺ πλῆθος ἐκλεκτῶν, οἵτινες πολλαῖς αἰκίαις καὶ βασάνοις διὰ
 ζῆλος παθόντες, ὑπόδειγμα κάλλιστον ἐγένοντο ἐν ἡμῖν. 2. διὰ
 ζῆλος διωχθεῖσαι γυναῖκες, Δαναΐδες καὶ Δίρκαι, αἰκίσματα δεινὰ
 καὶ ἀνόσια παθοῦσαι ἐπὶ τὸν τῆς πίστεως βέβαιον δρόμον
 κατήντησαν καὶ ἔλαβον γέρας γενναῖον αἰ ἀσθενεῖς τῷ σώματι.
 3. ζῆλος ἀπηλλοτρίωσεν γαμετὰς ἀνδρῶν καὶ ἠλλοίωσεν τὸ ῥηθὲν
 ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀδάμ· Τοῦτο νῦν ὁστοῦν ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων
 μου καὶ σὰρξ ἐκ τῆς σαρκός μου. 4. ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις πόλεις μεγάλας
 κατέστρεψεν καὶ ἔθνη μέγала ἐξερίζωσεν.

6.1. To these men who lived holy lives there was joined a vast
 multitude of the elect who, having suffered many torments and
 tortures because of jealousy, set an illustrious example among us.
 Because of jealousy women were persecuted as Danaids and
 Dircae, suffering in this way terrible and unholy tortures, but

they safely reached the goal in the race of faith, and received a noble reward, their physical weaknesses notwithstanding. 3.

Jealousy has estranged wives from their husbands and annulled the saying of our father Adam, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” 4. Jealousy and strife have overthrown great cities and uprooted great nations.

7.1. Ταῦτα, ἀγαπητοί, οὐ μόνον ὑμᾶς νουθετοῦντες ἐπιστέλλομεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑαυτοὺς ὑπομιμνήσκοντες· ἐν γὰρ τῷ αὐτῷ ἔσμην σκάμματι, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ἡμῖν ἀγὼν ἐπίκειται. 2. διὸ ἀπολίπωμεν τὰς κενὰς καὶ ματαίας φροντίδας, καὶ ἔλθωμεν ἐπὶ τὸν εὐκλεῆ καὶ σεμνὸν τῆς παραδόσεως ἡμῶν κανόνα, 3. καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ποιήσαντος ἡμᾶς. 4. ἀτενίσωμεν εἰς τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ γινώμεν, ὡς ἔστιν τίμιον τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκχυθὲν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ μετανοίας χάριν ὑήνεγκεν. 5. διέλθωμεν εἰς τὰς γενεὰς πάσας, καὶ καταμάθωμεν ὅτι ἐν γενεᾷ καὶ γενεᾷ μετανοίας τόπον ἔδωκεν ὁ δεσπότης τοῖς βουλομένοις ἐπιστραφεῖναι ἐπ’ αὐτόν. 6. Νῶε ἐκήρυξεν μετάνοιαν, καὶ οἱ ὑπακούσαντες ἐσώθησαν. 7. Ἰωνᾶς Νινευίταις καταστροφὴν ἐκήρυξεν· οἱ δὲ μετανοήσαντες ἐπὶ τοῖς ἁμαρτήμασιν αὐτῶν ἐξιλάσαντο τὸν θεὸν ἱκετεύσαντες καὶ ἔλαβον σωτηρίαν, καιπερ ἀλλότριον τοῦ θεοῦ ὄντες.

7.1. We write these things, dear friends, not only to admonish you, but also to remind ourselves. For we are in the same arena, and the same contest awaits us. 2. Therefore let us abandon empty and futile thoughts, and let us conform to the glorious and holy rule of our tradition; 3. indeed, let us note what is good and what is pleasing and what is

acceptable in the sight of him who made us. 4. Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ and understand how precious it is to his Father, because, being poured out for our salvation, it won for the whole world the grace of repentance. 5. Let us review all the generations in turn, and learn that from generation to generation the Master has given an opportunity for repentance to those who desire to turn to him. 6. Noah preached repentance, and those who obeyed were saved. 7. Jonah preached destruction to the people of Nineveh; but they, repenting of their sins, made atonement to God by their prayers and received salvation, even though they were alienated from God.