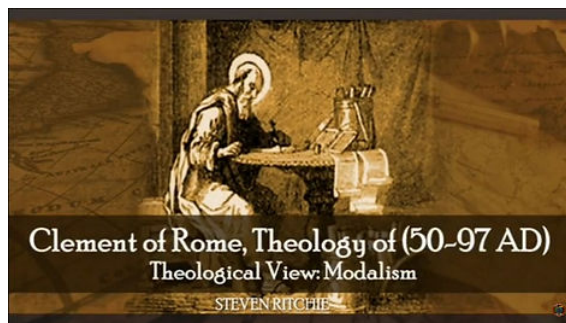




GLOBAL IMPACT MINISTRIES

A Defense of the Apostolic
Christian Faith

Clement of Rome, Theology of (50-97 AD)



Theological View: Modalism

The historical evidence proves that Clement of Rome was a leading Elder in the first century church in Rome long before he became the senior bishop of the city. The word “bishop” simply means “overseer.” Extant early Christian literature says that Clement personally knew both Peter and Paul before becoming a bishop of the city of Rome. In fact, the earliest Christian literature unanimously acknowledged that Clement was the reputed author of both 1 and 2 Clement within the first century.

WHEN EXACTLY WAS 1 CLEMENT WRITTEN?

1 Clement chapter 41: 1-3 proves that Clements First Epistle was written before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.

“Not in every place, my brethren **are the daily sacrifices offered** or the free-will offerings, or the sin-offerings and trespass-offerings, but only in Jerusalem; and there also the offering is not made in every place, but before the shrine, at the altar, and **the offering is first inspected by the High Priest** and the ministers already mentioned. Those therefore who do contrary to that which is agreeable to his will suffer the penalty of death’ (1 Clement 41:1-3).”

Why would Clement write, “Not in every place ... **are the daily sacrifices offered**” and that **“the offering is first inspected by the High Priest”** if the temple in Jerusalem was already destroyed? For if the temple in Jerusalem was already destroyed when Clement wrote his epistle, then he should have written that the daily sacrifices “were” offered and that those offerings “were” first inspected by the High Priest rather than stating that those sacrifices and offerings “are” currently being offered in the present tense. This is a strong argument in favour of 1 Clement being written sometime before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.

Historians and scholars who hold that 1 Clement was written before 70 A.D. cite Clements’ quotes from the Gospel of Matthew as proof for a pre-70 A.D. composition of the gospel according to Matthew (According to E. Massaux, *Clement of Rome in this epistle frequently quotes from Matthew (EM 35)*). So if we accept that it was written pre-70, it would again confirm the early composition of the Gospel of Matthew.

Jacob J. Prahlow (PhD) wrote that Clement and other early Christian writers often cited scriptures from memory with some “rhetorical modification” rather than always citing each scripture with a scroll in hand.

“For Clement, specific citation information (addresses, authors, speakers) did not matter nearly as much as if those speaking were inspired by the Spirit of God to utter the truth. Even then, the contents of what was spoken were not beyond stylistic and rhetorical modification or quotation from memory. As noted earlier, these practices place Clement very much in line with other writers of this period ... Clement’s practice of composite citation sheds light on post-Apostolic conceptions of scripture by showing one method of literary citation and pointing toward what really mattered for Christians during this period. The practice of composite citation—by no means limited to Clement, but certainly most evident in his letter—indicates that *meaning* rather than *form* was the primary impetus for citing sources during this period. Our standards of copyright and attribution simply did not exist in the ancient world and the practice of composite citation is one consequence of that fact. Additionally, we must recognize how motivations impacted approaches to scripture. Clement was primarily interested in resolving a schism in the Corinthian church by appealing to the authority of Christ, not trying to create the New Testament canon. While his use of scripture can provide evidence for his wider theology of scripture, these concerns must always be considered in light of the practical theological matters being addressed in early Christian writings.” (Jacob J. Prahlow, PhD) (<https://pursuingveritas.com/2016/10/03/scripture-in-1-clement-compositeimplications/#more-2997>)

1 Clement 23 further cites the Gospel to the Egyptians which would prove that this lost gospel was also written before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. Since Clement frequently cited New Testament Scripture (Clement cited the Egyptian Gospel as “that scripture”), we have first century evidence confirming that the gospel of Matthew and the gospel to the Egyptians were written before 70 A.D. Therefore we can see how important it is to study the earliest Christian literature.

Did Clement Write as the Universal Bishop over all Churches?

The Epistle of 1 Clement to the Corinthians does not give us a reason to believe that a single Roman bishop ruled over God’s universal Church as the Roman Catholic Church now proclaims. Clement was a first century leader in the Church of Rome long before he was appointed its senior bishop. Eusebius recorded that “Clement of Rome wrote in the name of the church of the Romans (EH 3: 38, 1).” Eusebius never stated that Clement wrote as the head bishop of Rome. The historical data informs us that the apostle Peter had ordained Linus, Cletus, and Clement as overseers of the Church of God at Rome. Linus succeeded Peter in 67 AD, so Clement would have been acting as an assistant bishop long before he became the leading bishop of the city of Rome in the later portion of the first century.

The opening words of Clement's first Epistle to the Corinthians say nothing about Clement being a head bishop of the Roman Church. Clement opened his Epistle to the Corinthians by saying, "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. Grace and peace from God Almighty be multiplied to you through Jesus Christ. Owing to the sudden and repeated misfortunes and calamities which have befallen us, **we consider that our attention** has been somewhat delayed in turning to the questions disputed among you, (the Corinthians) ..."

Notice that Clement did not write his epistle as the senior bishop of Rome, but as a representative of the Roman church by saying, "we consider," and "our attention." Since Peter had ordained Linus as the senior bishop and Cletus and Clement as assisting Elders, it makes sense to believe that Clement wrote his epistle to the Corinthians as one of the Elders of the church of God at Rome rather than its head bishop. Therefore it is highly unlikely that Clement wrote his first epistle as the senior bishop of Rome.

Dennis Barton wrote, "Clement does not claim to be writing as the bishop of Rome, but on behalf of the Roman Community. Eusebius recorded that 'Clement of Rome wrote in the name of the church of the Romans' (EH 3: 38, 1). He did not say that Clement wrote as the singular bishop of Rome. Peter had ordained Linus, Cletus and Clement as bishops. Linus succeeded Peter in 67 AD so Clement would have been acting as an assistant bishop for at least three years prior to the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. He would therefore write in the present tense regarding Jerusalem during this period." (*The Clementine Gospel Tradition (The Authors of the Gospels)* By Dennis Barton - www.churchinhistory.org)

The Shepherd of Hermas says that "Clement" served as one of the prominent leaders in the vast Roman Church as a contemporary of Hermas.

"Thou shalt therefore write two little books, and shall send one to Clement, and one to Grapte. So Clement shall send to the foreign cities, for this is his duty; while Grapte shall instruct the widows and the orphans. But thou shalt read [the book] to this city along with the elders that preside over the Church." (*Shepherd of Hermas II, 19 and JATR 320*).

Dennis Barton wrote, "So we learn it was the duty of a person named Clement to correspond with foreign cities. Lightfoot called him: 'the foreign secretary of the Roman church' (JATR 321), and Robinson described him as: 'the correspondent of external relations of the Roman Church.' Edmundson, in his 1913 prestigious Bampton Lecture, pointed out that Clement was: 'only the servant, not the head of the Church acting on his own initiative'." (JATR 333). (*Dennis Barton, "The Clementine Gospel Tradition" (The Authors of the Gospels)* www.churchinhistory.org)

It was not until 88-97 A.D. that Clement served as the senior bishop of Rome in apostolic succession from Peter. Clement is listed in Philippians as a fellow labourer in ministry with the apostle Paul. Therefore it is highly unlikely that Clement's theology would have been different from the first century apostles.

The Theology of Clement in 1 Clement

The first century Roman bishop wrote in 1 Clement, chapter two, "Content with the provisions which God had made for you, and carefully attending to HIS WORDS, you were inwardly filled with the doctrine, and HIS SUFFERINGS were before your eyes (1 Clement 2)." Around 200 A.D., Tertullian had denounced the idea that God could suffer in his polemic Against Praxeus. Yet Clement, who was familiar with the first century teachings of the apostles, taught that GOD SUFFERED as Jesus Christ (as a man in the flesh) just one hundred years before the time of Praxeus and Tertullian. Thus, we can clearly see that Clement taught that God (the only true God the Father - John 17:3) suffered as the man Christ Jesus just like Praxeus and the Modalists had taught a century later.

Clement of Rome cited the same particular passage from the lost Gospel to the Egyptians in both 1 Clement 23 and in 2 Clement 11. Since Clement regularly cited the Gospel to the Egyptians as "the prophetic word" throughout 2 Clement, we can see that Clement cited the same quote from The Gospel to the Egyptians in both 1 and 2 Clement as "scripture." How could Clement have cited the same scripture from the Gospel to the Egyptians in both 1 and 2 Clement if Clement of Rome was not the same author?

Furthermore, how could the Gospel to the Egyptians have been a second century document when Clement cited it in the first century within his first epistle? Since the Gospel to the Egyptians is the only lost book of the Bible known to have been cited in 2 Clement, the mysterious scriptural quote that appears in both 1 and 2 Clement must have originated from the lost Gospel to the Egyptians. This would mean that the Gospel to the Egyptians was written before 70 A.D. while the original apostles were still alive. The Gospel to the Egyptians plainly stated that Jesus is the same Divine Person as the Holy Spirit of the Father.

Epiphanius (340-403) wrote in Panarion 62 that the Gospel of the Egyptians states that Jesus "makes clear to the disciples that he himself is the Father, that he himself is the Son, and that he himself is the Holy Spirit."

If the first century Roman bishop was a Trinitarian then why would he cite the graphically modalistic Gospel to the Egyptians as inspired scripture? The Egyptian Gospel clearly stated that Jesus "makes clear to the disciples that he himself is the Father, that he himself is the Son, and that he himself is the Holy Spirit (Epiphanius, Panarion 62)?" Hence, we have clear historical evidence to prove that Clement of Rome was a Oneness Modalistic Monarchian Roman bishop within the first century.

Scholars Roberts and Donaldson did not include the later interpolated passage in Leo's 1056 version of 1 Clement, chapter 58 because the passage is not found in the earliest extant manuscript from which the later copies appear to have been made. J. B. Lightfoot had translated the Codex H manuscript written by Leo in 1056 which contains an apparent interpolated addition to 1 Clement that does not appear in the earlier fifth century Codex Alexandrinus. Hence, 1 Clement 58 is likely a later interpolated addition.

The eleventh century addition to 1 Clement (chapter 58) says, "For as God lives, and as the Lord Jesus Christ and as the Holy Spirit live ..." Trinitarians often cite this later passage from Leo's eleventh century manuscript which does not appear in the more trustworthy fifth century manuscript that was found attached to the New Testament Scriptures in the Codex Alexandrinus. Since scholars believe that Leo's eleventh century manuscript was composed from the fifth century Alexandrian manuscript as its source, it is likely that Leo interpolated the passage in 1 Clement 58 because it does not appear in the earlier fifth century manuscript of 1 Clement.

The Second Epistle of Clement also happens to appear with 1 Clement in the Codex Alexandrinus with the words, "The Second Epistle of Clement" appearing on the manuscript. Every single manuscript of 1 Clement was always found with 2 Clement attached to it with the words, "The Second Epistle of Clement" written on the manuscript. From the earliest days of Christian history, Clement was always known as the original author of both one and two Clement. Therefore it is nonsensical to deny the Clementine authorship of both manuscripts and that the same author consistently held the same theology in both epistles.

The first century Roman bishop never wrote anything about an alleged pre-incarnate God the Son distinct from God the Father. Even Trinitarian historians have noted that it was Origen who first taught the idea of a timeless eternal Son in the early third century and that the opponents of the Modalists such as Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Origen were "Semi-Arian" in their theology (*Johannes Quasten Patrology, vol. II: Pg. 326-327 / Patrology Vol. 2, Page 78 / Patrology Vol. 2, Page 200*) - *Jaroslav Pelikan, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, Vol. 1, Pg. 191* - *Jaroslav Pelikan / Principis 4 4:1*) before the Trinity doctrine fully developed. Therefore the Oneness Modalists were the only early Christians who believed in the full deity of Christ before the Trinitarian doctrine was later developed.

The Theology of Clement in Second Clement

The Codex Alexandrinus is a fifth century codex bound book of the entire New Testament Scripture with the two Epistles of Clement attached. Wikipedia says that the Codex Alexandrinus, "... contains all of the books of the New Testament (although the pages that contained Matthew 1:1-25:5 are not extant). In addition, the codex contains 1 Clement (lacking 57:7-63) and the homily known as 2 Clement (up to 12:5a)."

Since both 1 and 2 Clement were found affixed to the Codex Alexandrinus which contains all of the books of the New Testament, it is hard to imagine that the early Christians did not believe that the first century Roman bishop was the author of both documents. For why else would both 1 and 2 Clement have been attached to the end of the New Testament if the early Christians had not believed that both 1 and 2 Clement were written within the first century? Therefore, 2 Clement must have also been written in the first century by the same Roman bishop, namely Clement.

Bishop Clement wrote in 2 Clement, chapter 1:

"BRETHREN, it is fitting that **you should think of Jesus Christ as of God,--as the Judge of the living and the dead.** And it does not become us to think lightly of our salvation; for if we think little of Him, we shall also hope but to obtain little [from Him]. And those of us who hear carelessly of these things, as if they were of small importance, commit sin, not knowing whence we have been called, and by whom, and to what place, and how much **JESUS CHRIST submitted to suffer for our sakes.** What return, then, shall we make to Him, or what fruit that shall be worthy of that which He has given to us? For, indeed, how great are the benefits which we owe to Him! **He has graciously given us light; as a FATHER,** He has called us sons; He has saved us when we were ready to perish [Notice that there is nothing within the text to indicate that the subject has changed from Jesus Christ to God the Father so Clement of Rome identified Jesus Christ as the "Father"]. What praise, then, shall we give to Him, or what return shall we make for the things which we have received?"

Notice that Clement identifies Jesus Christ as "God, as the Judge of the living and the dead." Then Clement goes on to identify Jesus Christ as the one who has "graciously given us light; as a FATHER" who "has called us sons." If Clement's theology had been Trinitarian, then he would not have called Jesus Christ a "Father" who calls us his sons. According to later Trinitarian theology, Clement should have called Jesus Christ "God the Son" rather than identifying him as the Father of God's people who "has called us sons."

2 Clement 9:5-6, "If Christ the Lord who saved us was Spirit at first but became flesh and so called us, so shall we receive the reward in the flesh."

Notice that Clement never spoke of "Christ the Lord" as God the Son who "became flesh." According to Clement, "Christ the Lord who saved us was Spirit at first." Clement appears to say that Christ was first the Spirit as "the Holy Spirit" in chapter eight, but Clement left no room to doubt that he was addressing Christ as the Holy Spirit in chapter 14:3-4.

"... **the Holy Spirit** ... guard the flesh that you may partake of the (Holy) Spirit. Now if we say that the flesh is the Church as **the Spirit is Christ,** then verily he who has dishonoured the flesh has dishonoured the Church. Such a one, therefore, shall not partake of **the Spirit which is Christ.**"

2 Clement clearly states that the "Holy Spirit" is "the Spirit which is Christ."

Trinitarians are supposed to believe that "the Son is not the Holy Spirit" and that "the Holy Spirit is not the Son." Yet Clement wrote that "the Holy Spirit ... is Christ."

Moreover, Clement frequently cited the now non extant Gospel to the Egyptians which contains graphic Modalistic Monarchian content. 2 Clement repeatedly quotes texts from the Gospel to the Egyptians, which he regarded as scripture. This presents a problem for Trinitarian scholars because the historical data proves that "The Gospel to the Egyptians" was highly regarded as sacred scripture by the early Modalistic Monarchians. Ephiphanius (340-403) wrote that The Gospel to the Egyptians states that Jesus "makes clear to the disciples that he himself is the Father, that he himself is the Son, and that he himself is the Holy Spirit (*Panarion* 62)."

If Clement did not believe that Jesus is the Father and the Holy Spirit, then why would he repeatedly cite the Gospel to the Egyptians as authoritative inspired scripture? It is apparent that Clement's Modalistic teaching of Jesus being called the "Father" and the Holy Spirit being called "Christ" is the real reason why most Trinitarian scholars refuse to accept 2 Clement as a document written by the first century Roman bishop. For Trinitarian theology is supposed to believe that the Father and the Holy Spirit is not the Son. Wherefore, Trinitarians cannot claim "apostolic succession" through the Roman bishops because the earliest first century Roman bishops were Modalists!

For More ARTICLES

For Free BOOKS

For Video Teachings, subscribe to our YOUTUBE CHANNEL

CONTACT



Share



Name *	Message
Email *	
Subject	

Send

© 2016 | GLOBAL IMPACT MINISTRIES

