

# Clemens Romanus

by John Gill

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*John Gill's sermon on Clemens Romanus explores the early Christian writer's teachings on election, God's sovereignty, and the importance of unity and love within the church.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:3

**Topics:** "Predestination", "Election of God"

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## Description

John Gill discusses the teachings of Clement of Rome, emphasizing the doctrine of predestination and the elect of God. He highlights Clement's affirmation that God's will is sovereign and immutable, asserting that all things are accomplished according to His purpose. Gill notes that Clement identifies a specific number of the elect and emphasizes the importance of love and unity among them. He also points out that spiritual blessings, including repentance, are reserved for the elect, and that God's election is through Jesus Christ. This sermon underscores the foundational Christian belief in God's sovereign choice and the assurance it brings to believers.

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## Transcript

The

CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH.

Part 4

Chapter 1--Of Predestination

Section 1--Clemens Romanus. A.D. 69.

Clement of Rome, lived in the times of the apostles, and is, by Clement of Alexandria,[1] called an apostle. He is thought by some[2] to be the same Clement the apostle Paul speaks of, in Philippians 4:3, as one of his fellow-laborers. He wrote an epistle in the name of the church at Rome to the church at Corinth, about[3] the year 69, which is the earliest piece of antiquity next to the writings of the apostles extant, being written when some of them were living, even before the apostle John wrote his Epistles, and the book of the Revelation, and while the temple at Jerusalem was yet standing.

In this epistle are several things relating to the doctrine of election, and which greatly serve to confirm it. For, 1. Agreeable to the apostolic doctrine, that God worketh all things after the council of his own will

(Eph. 1:11), that his purposes shall stand, and that whatsoever he has determined shall come to pass, Clement affirms, that[4] "when he wills, and as he wills, he does all things;" kai ouden mh tarelqh twn dedogmatwmenwn up autou, and that "none of those things which are decreed by him, shall pass away," or be unaccomplished: which shows his sense of the dependency of all things upon the will of God, and of the immutability of his decrees in general. 2.

He not only frequently makes mention of persons under the character of the elect of God, but also intimates, that there is a certain, special, and peculiar number of them fixed by him. Speaking of the schism and sedition in the church at Corinth, he represents it[5] as what was "very unbecoming, and should be far from toiv eklektoiv tou Qeou, the elect of God." And elsewhere[6] having cited Psalm 18:26, he says, "Let us therefore join ourselves to the innocent and righteous, for eisin outoi eklektoi tou Qeou, they are the elect of God;" that is, they appear to be so, these are characters descriptive of them.

And in another place,[7] enlarging in commendation of the grace of love, he says, "Love knows no schism, is not seditious; love does all things in harmony; pantev oi eklektoi tou Qeou, all the elect of God are made perfect in love:" which agrees with what the apostle says of them, that they are chosen to be holy and without blame before him in love (Eph. 1:4). Moreover, Clement observes,[8] to the praise of the members of the church of Corinth, to whom he writes, that formerly their "contention was night and day for the whole brotherhood, that ton ariqmon twn eklektnw autou, the number of his elect might be saved, with mercy and a good conscience."

And elsewhere[9] he says, that "God chose the Lord Jesus Christ, and us by him, eiv laon periousion, for a peculiar people." 3. Whereas the apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says; Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation oaf the world ( Eph. 1:3, 4), we conclude from hence, that from all eternity there was a preparation of spiritual blessings made; and agreeably, Clement, our apostolical writer, has these words; "Let us therefore consider,[10] brethren, out of what matter we are made; who and what we were when we came into the world, as out of the grave and darkness itself; who, having made and formed us, brought us into his world proetoimasav tav euergesiav autou prin hmav gennhqhnai, having first prepared his good things for us, before we were born." 4.

This very ancient writer plainly intimates, that the special and spiritual blessings of grace are peculiar to the elect of God; and that it is the stable and unalterable will of God, that his chosen ones should partake of them: particularly repentance, and remission of sins: for having mentioned those words in Psalm 32:1, 2, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile; he observes,[11] that this blessedness comes upon, or belongs unto, touv eklelegmenouv upo tou Qeou, those that are chosen of God by Jesus Christ our Lord."

And in another place,[12] having taken notice of some general instances, declarations, and exhortations, encouraging men to repentance, suggests, that God's design herein, was to bring to repentance such as were interested in his love; his words are these; "Therefore He (that is, God), being desirous that pantav touv agaphtav, all his beloved ones should partake of repentance, confirmed it by his almighty will." That is, God, not willing, as the apostle Peter says, that any of his beloved ones should perish, but that all of them should come to repentance (2 Peter 3. 9), fixed it by an unchangeable decree, that they should come to repentance; and therefore makes use of the above declarations and exhortations as means to bring them to it. 5.

As the Scriptures always ascribe the act of election to God, and not men, and represent it as made in Christ, and by or through Him (Eph.1:4, 5); that he was first chosen as a head, and the elect as members in him; so Clement speaks[13] of God as he oeklexamenov ton Kurion lesoun Criston kai hmav di auton, who hath chosen the Lord Jesus Christ, and us by him;" and of the elect as chosen upw tou Qeou dia lesou Cristou tou Kuriou hmwn, of God through Jesus Christ our Lord; and exhorts men[14] to come to God in holiness of soul, lifting up pure and undefiled hands unto him, loving our mild and merciful Father, ov hmav ekloghv merov epoihsen eautw, "who hath made us a part of the election for himself."  
ENDNOTES:

[1] Stromat. 50:4, p. 516.

[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 50:3, c. 15; Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccl. s. 25.

[3] Fabricii Bibl. Graec. 50:4, c. 5, p. 175.

[4] Epist. ad Corinth. 1:p. 64.

[5] Epist. ad Corinth.i. p. 2.

[6] Ibid. p. 104.

[7] Epist. ad Corinth. 1:p. 64.

[8] Ibid. p. 6.

[9] Ibid. p. 130.

[10] Epist. ad Corinth. 1:p. 88.

[11] Ibid. p. 114.

[12] Ibid. p. 20.

[13] Episi. ad Corinth. p. 130, 114.

[14] Ibid. p. 66.

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