

Second Sunday after Epiphany

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 49:1-7

The Servant of the LORD

Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. 2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. 3 And he said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” 4 But I said, “I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God.” 5 And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him—for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength—6 he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” 7 Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

With vivid accuracy Isaiah 41-48 foretells the end of captivity in Babylon and Cyrus’ redemption of Israel. Now, beginning with chapter 49, Isaiah’s prophecies become more concerned with Israel’s spiritual captivity to sin the solution through Yahweh’s Suffering Servant. (CC)

The Second Servant Song in 49:1-6 shares the following characteristics with other texts. First, the Servant’s address to the coastlands and distant peoples in 49:1a-b suggests a court speech, much like 41:1; 48:14. Second, much like Jeremiah (1:5), the Servant is called while still in his mother’s womb. Third, Is.49:3 appears to be much like Ps. 2:7-9 and therefore suggests something like the Servant’s commission. And fourth, in 49:4-6, the Servant recalls an earlier peril followed by Yahweh’s salvation, much like Psalms 37; 116; and 118. Following this Second Servant Song is an epilogue (Is. 49:7-13). In like manner, the other three Servant Songs have postscripts: 42:1-4 (42:5-9; 50:4-9 (50:10-11); 52:13-53:12 (chapter 54). (CC)

49:1–6† (or 1–7 or 1–13) The second of the four servant songs. The speaker in vv. 1–6 is the servant of the Lord, the Messiah. (CSB)

49:1 *listen to me* – Jesus is saying “listen to me” have something important to say. Reminds one of Transfiguration where the Father says “listen to him.”

The Speaker, unnamed as in 48:16, is the Servant (vv 3, 5–6), who now explains why “the Lord GOD has sent” Him. (TLSB)

Much has happened since the First Servant Song (42:1-4). Cyrus was introduced (44:28, 45:1), Babylon is envisioned as already fallen (chapter 46-47), but Israel remained deaf and blind through it all (42:19). The people still embraced their plaint that Yahweh did not see and therefore disregarded their cause (40:27). Therefore, in chapter 48, Israel is admonished to leave its headstrong way and depart from Babylon (48:20, with the threat that those who remain will have no peace (48:22). Israel according to the flesh has been a rebel from conception (48:8). (CC)

The big issues of the history of mankind are to be weighed. What men should become aware of first is that the unique person who is under consideration has been destined by the Lord Himself, even before birth, to a task of incomparable magnitude and importance. God's plans are not improvised as He goes along. They are distinctively made long in advance. (Leupold)

We too are commanded to listen. The words are God's, and they reveal the great truths of His love for all the world. (PBC)

Shama – to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience, etc.; cause to tell. (Strongs)

YOU have heard that the prophet Isaiah and all other prophets deal with two things: First, they teach, terrify, console, and instruct their people and correct the rebels, and for that reason it was necessary to inculcate the issues of faith and good works. The second part was to give them direction concerning the coming Christ. Having completed the first part, the prophet proceeds to the second. (Luther)

From this chapter to the end there is nothing but Christ, and although the prophet at the same time occasionally corrects and rebukes, the scope of this treatise has to do with Christ, with the calling of the Gentiles, and with the rejection of the Jews. For Christians the following will be easy to understand; at all events, let us receive it with a burning spirit! In the eyes of the world the Word of Christ is always foolishness, as we experience today and as the Jews experienced with their magnificent promises. Beyond these they cannot comprehend the Gospel and are soon offended by the lowliness of the Word, since they are accustomed to the priceless pearls of their own promises. Hence these words do not refer to a physical kingdom. We must open our heart and receive the promises through the Word and faith alone. In the eyes of the world these words cannot be convincing, because their meaning becomes clear only by faith. You will hear great promises. (Luther)

coastlands. In 42:4 the islands “put their hope” in the servant's law. (CSB)

Distant lands to the west, the farthest extent of the known world. (TLSB)

While the Lord chose a specific nation through whom He would send “His Servant,” He made it crystal clear in His call to Abraham that His concern was for the entire world. Listen to Paul in Gal. 3:8 “The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the Gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’” (LL)

If by now the Spirit has removed some of the scales off of our eyes, we will begin to see the correlation between world events and the spread of the Christian church. A classic example is World War II. No single event did more to bring the Gospel to the “islands” and “distant lands” than this war, especially to the islands of the Pacific. For example the planting of the Christian church in the highlands of New Guinea is a direct result of the witness of Christian men and women in the Armed Forces of the USA who were stationed there. (LL)

One more example from recent history. Why is it that throughout all of Asia with one exception the Christian church numbers less than two percent of the population? And that exception? South Korea, where the Christian church claims almost 20 percent of the South Korean population. There can be no question as to the real reason why US troops were so heavily involved in the Korean War and why US troops have been stationed there ever since. (Largest Christian church in the world is in Seoul.) (LL)

The islands and distant nations represent the farthest corners of the earth. (PBC)

Galatians 3:8 “The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”

We live in the time of the greatest immigration surge in the history of our country. For every white English speaking person who dies, 1 is born or immigrates here. For every African American who dies, 3 are born. For every Hispanic who dies, 12 are born. For every Asian who dies, more than 20 are born. (Bob Scudieri – “The Mission Field Called North America”)

called me from the womb. † Cf. v. 5. The language is similar to that of the call of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 1:5) and of the apostle Paul (Gal 1:15). – Before Jesus’ human birth. It was also a plan from eternity. (CSB)

Chosen or appointed. *from the womb.* As God’s spokesmen (such as Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and Paul) were chosen for their task before they were born (Lk 1:15; Gal 1:15), so the Servant was called and equipped to bring His message of salvation to a worldwide audience before He became incarnate in a virgin’s womb. (TLSB)

A new Servant cryptically speaks in 48:16d. This new Israel, also called from the womb (49:1), will be everything the first Israel was not – for us and for our salvation! The Servant is preeminent among servants who were set apart for God’s purposes even before birth (e.g., Jer. 1:4-5; Lk. 1:13-17; Gal. 1:15). The expression “from the womb” (49:1) links the Servant with Yahweh’s choice of the nation (e.g., 43:1; 44:1), as well as with Isaiah’s prophecy of Immanuel (born of a virgin [7:14] and other texts that reference the Messiah’s birth (Gen. 3:15; Is. 9:6; Micah 5:3; Ps. 22:9). These are fulfilled in the Gospels (Mt. 1:18; Lk. 1:26-38; 2:1-7) when Jesus “was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man” (Nicene Creed). The eternal Son of God assumed a fully human (but without sin) at the moment of his conception (Athanasian Creed, verses 27-35). Because the preexistent Servant was set apart to be our Savior, we have likewise been elected before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless (Eph. 1:4-5). (CC)

What has this to say to us Gentiles? This great promise is empty, so to say. The prophet makes it, however, for the purpose of boasting, driven by necessity, because Christ and His Word was folly and scandal to the Jews and Gentiles and is nothing to all of them. So also today in the whole world we are like dregs and poison; we are devil-possessed. So foolish, and even pernicious and demonic, are the things we say. This is the constant experience of the godly, and this was Christ’s experience when He began to govern by the Word. Because of this extreme and most stubborn scandal of the whole world He boasts here that He did not come of Himself but was sent and called by God and by divine determination. “He did not call Me on the basis of any preceding merits nor when I was 30 years old, no, when I was in My mother’s womb, He designated Me a Preacher.” Thus the boasting of the godly is necessary, not for their own sake but for the sake of others, to prepare them and make them attentive listeners and to prevent the offense of the Gospel, which is totally overwhelmed by scandals. (Luther)

my name – He is thinking not only of Jesus Christ, but of Savior, Redeemer, King, Priest, etc. All of them are comprehended in “My name.” (Luther)

Several OT passages speak about the mother or the birth of the Messiah (cf Gn 3:15; Ps 22:10; Is 7:14; Mi 5:2). Jesus was named while still in His mother’s womb (Mt 1:21–23). (TLSB)

But not only was this person divinely appointed before His birth to perform an unusually high task, He was also equipped with the requisite gifts to achieve His divine purpose. (Leupold)

49:2 What they hear has the cutting edge of a sharp sword and hits its mark with the penetrating force of “a polished arrow” (cf Jer 1:10; 23:29). Nothing can blunt these words, for God’s hand hides them in His scabbard and quiver. This Servant’s weapons come from His mouth, i.e., His words (cf Eph 6:17; Rv 2:12, 16; 19:15). (TLSB)

my mouth like a sharp sword. See Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12; Rev 1:16; 2:12, 16. In 11:4 a powerful rod comes from the mouth of the Messiah. (CSB)

Unlike Cyrus, who waged war with his military forces (e.g., Is. 41:25); 45:1-3; cf. 2 Cor. 10:3), Yahweh will conquer the world and free it from its captivity to sin by means of his lowly Servant, whose chief weapon is his mouth, that is, his preached Word. His mouth is “a sharpened sword,” which is also how the apostle John sees it in Rev. 1:16; 2:12; 19:15 (cf. Heb. 4:12). His Word is efficacious and accomplishes Yahweh’s purpose (cf. 55:10-11). “In a world in which the rise and fall of nations appears to be determined not by prophetic pronouncements but by imperial armies, this may seem like a feeble piece of equipment.” For those who preach the Gospel, however, “the weapons of our warfare are not freshly, but are empowered by God for the destruction of strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4). (CC)

“My kingdom consists of the Word. He gave Me a mouth, not a sword. But He gave Me a mouth to take the place of a sword.” The sword denotes power in its comprehensive sense, the civil government. Here, however, He says, “For Me government is not a matter of external arms.” There is the distinction between kingdom and kingdom. The reign of Christ consists in and is exercised by mouth and word. The laws of the jurists also have a mouth, but they are linked with the sword so that the criminals might be held in check. However, this mouth and word is beyond every sword, teaching as it does the forgiveness of sins gratis. (Luther)

His mouth is His Word, His Gospel, sharply spoken to the unrepentant and gently spoken to those in distress. (LL)

The instrument with which He works is the Word, spoken by His mouth which spoke words that were to be startlingly effective (sword), which is kept in such a way that its sharp edge will not be blunted, but be ready for effective use. (Leupold)

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that “the Word of God” generally “is sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even dividing asunder of soul and spirit: (Heb 4:12). Christian experience testifies that this keen, searching, cutting power attaches in an especial way to the sayings of Jesus, which pierce the heart as no other words can do, and rankle in the soul, which is quite unable to forget them. The imagery recurs in Revelation (1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21). (PC)

Rhema – God’s utterance as an utterance going forth out of God’s mouth (Matthew 4:4). When we use it in our battle we are to use it only as God uttered it. We must also use it unaltered, just as God uttered it. Any alteration takes the power and edge off of this sword.

The Word is such that it is not preached in vain. It is not empty like a human law, which brings nothing perfect. Rather, it is a sharp sword. The Gospel penetrates and has power. Consider how powerful it has been today against the papacy and how it continues to strike through. It cuts off righteousness, holinesses, and religions. “He will convince the world of sin” (John 16:8), of the sin of unbelief, of the idea of holiness, destroying all high places and fortifications of human knowledge against God. This is the sword of the Spirit which not only drives out gross sins, as the law of Moses does, but it is double-edged and effective against human thoughts. (Luther)

In 11:4 the Word is like a rod coming out of His mouth to judge and destroy the wicked. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 1)

Ephesians 6:17 “Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

shadow of his hand. Descriptive of protection (see 30:2–3; 51:16). – The Lord hid His Servant’s divine glory and power in the form of the Son of Man, a Servant. (CSB)

Yahweh hides his Servant in his hand. This is a safe place to be, for no one can snatch from Yahweh’s hand (Deut. 32:39; Jn. 10:28-29). Secure in this hand, the Suffering Servant is “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24; cf. 2 Cor. 5:16). A seemingly insignificant itinerant Preacher accomplishes the most significant event in human history; the salvation of sinners through his death and resurrection (Is. 53:8-12). (CC)

Here He acknowledges protection, from which it follows that He was greatly troubled. For it is impossible: The whole world lies in ambush for one who has fought against Satan with this sword; it taunts you and consigns you to death. The word of the Gospel is the cause of strife because the factious will fight against it. Therefore He says here that His service will not only be effective but steady and lasting and abiding to eternity, because it is under the shadow of His hand. Consider well this passage about the fortune of the Word. Although according to the flesh it would seem to have been blotted out by the tyrants, it nevertheless endures under the shadow of God’s hand. Consider how it has endured in this decade against every tyranny and cares nothing about the persecution and counsels of princes. It converts monks and nuns, because it is a sharp sword, that is, it is efficacious and safe under the shadow of His hand. It will endure forever. This is so because it sets souls and consciences free from force and from Satan. It possesses a power which wisdom itself does not possess. (Luther)

polished arrow. Arrows are used of God’s judgment in Dt 32:23, 42, of the deadly words of the wicked in Ps 64:3–4 and of Satan’s schemes and temptations in Eph 6:11, 16. (CSB)

The ministry of the man in question apparently is calculated to wound men for their own good. His ministry to men may involve pain and suffering on their part; it will have deep-going effects. (Leupold)

This is a selected arrow, without any fault, that accomplishes its purpose. This is nothing but a boasting about the ministry of the Word. It is a Hebraism. The sons of Ephraim were made into a deceitful bow (cf. Ps. 78:57). The kingdom of Ephraim was supposed to be God’s bow, that is, His kingdom. Even so we can say that the princes and magistrates are the bows and arrows of God, as the psalm says (Ps. 127:4), “Like arrows in the hand of a warrior.” So He says here, “I am not a useless and deceitful arrow but an effective one. (Luther)

quiver – This says the same as the above, “in the shadow of His hand He hid Me.” Here in two comparisons you have the Word of God, efficacious and safe. So the church is powerful and safe. In the eyes of the world, however, the opposite seems to be the case. The Word and the church seem to be extremely weak and then also turbulent. (Luther)

49:3 *my servant, Israel.* “Servant” here cannot mean literally national Israel, since in v. 5 this servant has a mission to Israel. Rather, the Messianic servant is the ideal Israel through whom the Lord will be glorified. He will succeed where national Israel failed. (CSB)

God redeemed Israel, His disobedient servant, from the Babylonian exile in order to be glorified (60:21; 61:3). Yet if God was to be glorified, He needed a sinless Israelite, a Servant who “according to the flesh” was of the race of Israel (Rm 9:5), yet “separated from sinners” (Heb 7:26). Nothing but the perfect service and obedience God demanded would rescue a world of sinners, including Israel. To the Servant capable of this deliverance, God said: “You are My Son” (Ps 2:7). (TLSB)

The Servant is called Israel, and through him Yahweh will manifest his beauty and glory. The same promise with the same verb appears also in 44:23, but to the nation of Israel. He [the Suffering Servant] will be for Israel, and the world, what Israel could not be. (CC)

I will be glorified. Through the redemption he will accomplish. (CSB)

Faced with Israel’s failure, God does not wipe out the nation. Instead, the Second Servant is “a light for revelation to the Gentile and the glory of your people Israel” (Lk. 2:32). In a supreme paradox, the Servant’s greatest beauty is displayed when “his appearance was disfigured beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of ordinary men” (Is. 52:14). Now we, who are ugly from sin (e.g., Is. 1:18; 64:6), become most beautiful in Christ (e.g., Is 62:3; Eph. 5:26-27). The hymn rightly acclaim him our “Beautiful Savior.” (CC)

This is reminder of the Transfiguration. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume, Part 1)

Here you have what the ministry of the Word should preach. It is the antithesis of all false preachers, as they are described in Galatians (Gal. 6:13): “They desire to have you circumcised that they may glow in your flesh.” So all false teachers seek their own glory, although they give lip service to the glow of God. Therefore, you preachers, know that you are not free from the monster of glow. We will not be rid of it as long as there is a drop of blood in us. Life is soon over, because they quickly fade away, since they do not honor God as God (Rom. 1:21). Yet the Gospel proclaims the glory of God alone. “The heavens are telling the glow of God” (Ps. 19:1), not their own glory. The glow of God is that God alone is wise, righteous, and the Redeemer. It follows that we are foolish and lost sinners, because the glow of God is not set forth unless we ourselves are confounded. The papists do not want this confounding, yea, they ascribe a part of righteousness to their own glory, and therefore it cannot bear the Gospel. The Holy Spirit convicts the whole world of sin (John 16:8) and proclaims the righteous Christ and His glow alone. It is the office of an evangelical preacher to proclaim the glory of God alone. Away with the papists and Anabaptists, who boast of their own glory! In their word, evangelists teach nothing but grace. Therefore it follows that there is nothing but confusion and sin in us. (Luther)

49:4 *but I said* – the Messiah speaking here in His role of true human being, in the weakness which beset Him in Gethsemane. (Kretzmann)

labored in vain.† Christ would encounter strong opposition during his ministry and would temporarily suffer apparent failure. The “suffering servant” theme is developed in the third and fourth of the four servant songs (50:4–9 or 50:4–11; 52:13–53:12). (CSB)

Redemption came by way of suffering and agony so intense that the Servant “in the days of His flesh ... offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears” (Heb 5:7). Cf Mt 26:39; 27:46. (TLSB)

The Servant speaks of the seeming ineffectiveness of His work, but nevertheless relies on the Lord for His strength. (TLSB)

Because here the Servant has already expended his strength, this may be a lament toward the end of his ministry that, from a human perspective, his mission appeared to have been unsuccessful. In light of Yahweh's scathing rebuke of the exiles in chapter 48, the Servant's frustration is understandable. Look at what he has to work with! The people do not know and have not heard (40:21-28), believe that Yahweh has ignored their cry for justice (40:27), and are admonished (43:22-24); 45:9-13; 48:18-19), in large part, because of their Idolatry (44:9-20). The exiles are deaf and blind (42:18-20), stubborn (46:12; 48:4), insincere (48:1), and outright rebels (46:8). The Suffering Servant stands in a long line of ministers who lament that they have been called to a task too great for their abilities (e.g., Ex. 4:1; 1 Kings 19:9-10). (CC)

The Suffering Servant of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 seemed like a failure. But he was vindicated and rewarded through his resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume, Part 1)

This is the lament of every preacher, that even though the Word is sure, he has so few disciples. "I preach, but there seems to be no fruit. Here Christ in His own person complains about the small number of disciples. So we, too, experienced that we lost many. David had this offense in mind in Ps. 88:1: "O Lord, my God, I call for help." Jeremiah, too, had this offense in mind (Lam. 2:20): "Should priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?" "I am the only one left." So Paul says after his labor in Asia that "all who are in Asia turned away from me" (2 Tim. 1:15). This is a fine pleasure! Therefore you must not give up if for your labor you get the reward of ingratitude. We must not lose hope, as though the Word were about to be destroyed. Let fall what may, let come what will. Jeremiah has his 7,000, Paul has his Corinthians, Ephesians, and Timothy. So the seed falls on the rock, on the road, among the thorns, and yet some also falls on good soil. This is the consolation for all preachers so that they do not lose hope, though the traitor Judas should come among the Twelve. (Luther)

The accomplishment of the Father's mission would not be easy. In true humility and in His true humanity Christ describes His discouragements and loneliness as one by one His followers leave Him. We remember His sadness as he asks His disciples if they will also leave Him. We are reminded of the hour of intense and lonely suffering and agony in Gethsemane where "His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44). As He faces the horror of the cross and all He would suffer there, we hear His agonized cry: "My father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me" (Matthew 26:39). (LL)

The disappointing aspect of Christ's earthly ministry is here indicated at least for His three years ministry on earth. The fruits of this ministry were startlingly meager. The Servant would put His best effort into His labor, toiling and spending His strength. Visible results will not be in evidence. (Leupold)

Philippians 2:5-11 ⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature ^b of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

my right. Perhaps referring to the spiritual offspring of the servant (see 53:10)—Jews and Gentiles alike who believe in him (vv. 5–6); see 40:10 and note. In any case, he will be vindicated and rewarded (50:8; 53:10–12; 1Ti 3:16). (CSB)

An angel appeared to assure Him of the justice of His cause and the certainty of recompense. (TLSB)

The expression “my justice, cause” first appears when Israel voices the complaint that “my justice passes by my God” (40:27). While Israel wallows in self-pity, the Servant in his lament turns in hopeful confidence to Yahweh, who announces, “my justice as a light to the peoples I will establish” (51:4). This happens through the Suffering Servant, who is violently taken away without due justice (53:8). But paradoxically, Israel is vindicated through this human perversion of justice (53:11; 54:17). (CC)

Jesus experienced the corruption of justice in his trials (e.g., Mt. 27:24) and was forsaken by his Father (e.g., Mt. 27:46). “in the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered” (Heb. 5:7-8 ESV) Jesus is true God, and as true man, he fraught with frailty and weakness, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). He finished the Father’s course (Jn. 19:30), and his completed mission brings salvation for all by grace and through faith alone. (CC)

Although it seems empty and vain, it is nevertheless God’s work, even though I am deserted by brethren and attacked by tyrants. Yet this consolation and the witness of our conscience heartens us, as Paul says (2 Cor. 1:12). (Luther)

Thank God that agonized cry was followed by the difference between life and death with words for you and me and an entire human race: “Yet not as I will, but as You will...” (LL)

A few hours after Jesus’ “Why have You forsaken Me” cry by committing Himself into the hands of the Lord: “Father into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). And He was not disappointed. (PBC)

49:5 *formed me in the womb*. “My office is from God. My word is the Word of truth. If they refuse to believe, let the Gentiles believe. The unbelief of the Jews does not nullify the truth of God.” So the apostles speak (Acts 13:46): “It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you ... behold, we turn to the Gentiles.” When some despise the wedding, others are invited from the lanes and highways. (Luther)

bring Jacob back. A prophecy of release from captivity in Babylon (see vv. 9–12, 22; 41:2 and note) and from the greater captivity of sin. (CSB)

The One called Israel in v 3 is to bring Israel back to the Lord; this means the Servant is not the nation of Israel, but One representing the nation for its restoration. Similarly, Adam, though one man, is representative of all humanity (cf Rm 5:12; 1Co 15:45). This same “one for all” idea characterizes Jesus. His death, burial, and resurrection are given to the baptized (cf Rm 6:1–10). (TLSB)

The one called Israel (49:3) is to restore Israel. How can this happen? The Servant is called to embody the people’s calling...Yahweh is still concerned to bring them back, so that they can take up their calling. The Servant is an individual, not the nation of Israel, but he represents the nation for its restoration. He will be for Israel what Israel could not be in itself. Jesus is not only the Second Adam (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:45), but he is also the Second Servant. (CC)

my strength. This may well have to do with the restoration of Judah 70 years of captivity in Babylon, but especially alludes to the greater deliverance from the captivity of sin, as the angel said to Joseph in Matthew 1:21. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume, Part 1)

49:6 Together with Gen. 12:1–3; Ex 19:5–6, this verse is sometimes called the “great commission of the OT” and is quoted in part by Paul and Barnabas in Ac 13:47. (CSB)

too light a thing – The Servant is to affect a salvation benefiting not only the “preserved of Israel” but extending “to the end of the earth.” (TLSB)

preserved of Israel – נֶחֱמָה means something unguarded, something abandoned. He wants to describe Israel as scattered, unprotected, without protector and shepherd. Where the Word is not in use, there must be endless sects. And these in turn convert those who were scattered. (Luther)

We note two reasons. First, the Servant came to restore the tribes of Jacob. His work would focus on the ancient people God had chosen. Jesus was born in Bethlehem to “save His people from their sins,” as the angel proclaimed to Joseph (Matthew 1:21). But we also note God’s second reason for sending the Servant. God implied the reason in the first verse when He commanded the distant nations to listen. (PBC)

The Servant’s ministry is to resurrect Israel and bring people home, a theme announced in 40:1-11. Through his victory over Babylon, Cyrus will permit the Judean exiles to return to the land (44:28; 45:1). The Servant, however, is the one who regulates all the scatter people and bring them back to God (cf. James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1). (CC)

light for the nations. Christ is the light of the world (Lk 2:30–32; Jn 8:12; 9:5), and Christians reflect his light (Mt 5:14). (CSB)

This Servant is to be a light for the nations (Lk 2:30–32; Jn 8:12; 9:5). The nations have a prominent role throughout Is (cf 2:1–5; 11:10; 25:6–9; 40:5; 66:23). (TLSB)

The Suffering Servant will accomplish individually what Israel was unable to do corporately. He brings salvation not only to the children of Abraham (cf. Mt. 1:1-17), but to all the other children of Adam and Eve as well (cf. Lk. 3:23-38). The movement from Israel’s restoration to the restoration of the nations describes Christ’s ministry in Matthew. He sends out the Twelve to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt. 10:5-7; cf. Mt. 15:24). After his resurrection, he issues the charge to make disciples of all nations through baptizing and teaching (Mt. 28:19-20). (CC)

This is covenant language which goes back to the covenant between God and Abraham. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume, Part 1)

end of the earth. The only salvation through Christ must be brought about in all the ends of the earth. “Salvation of God” is a Hebraism. It is not that by which one is saved but that by which He saves us. Thus the righteousness of God is that by which He makes us righteous. Here you see it: He depicts one Head for both Jews and Gentiles. (Luther)

Hbr *yeshu‘ah*, the basis for the name “Jesus” (Mt 1:21). (TLSB)

49:7 Redeemer and his Holy One. Stresses the Lord’s role as the One who rescues (cf 41:14). (TLSB)

Focuses on the Lord’s judgment. (TLSB)

This name recalls the laws of redemption in Leviticus. If a man was forced to sell himself as a servant or sell his property to another, he could later buy back whatever had been sold. If he could not, a relative – a kinsman-redeemer – then could buy back whatever had been sold. The Lord would offer the payment; the Servant of the Lord would suffer and die to buy back those held captive by sin and death. (PBC)

“I therefore now establish one Man out of two, having set up one Christ as Prince, so that the faith and religion of one people be under one Head.” Now He describes the cross which follows in the church. Because Satan cannot bear this true worship, David says (Ps. 116:10): “I kept my faith, even when I said, ‘I am greatly afflicted.’ ” The cross soon follows. I, however, was humiliated on the way. (Luther)

The name Redeemer recalls the laws of redemption in Leviticus. If a man was forced to sell himself as a servant or sell his property to another, he could later buy back whatever had been sold. If he could not, a relative – a kinsman-redeemer – then could buy back whatever had been sold. The Lord is the Redeemer. His people had sold themselves to the servitude of sin and could not escape. Because they had nothing to offer as adequate payment, they could not redeem themselves. The Lord would offer the payment; the Servant of the Lord would suffer and die to buy back those held captive by sin and death. In addition, the Lord would redeem His people from the captivity of Babylon. Cyrus would release them from that bondage, but it would only be a preliminary event to a much greater deliverance through the Servant of the Lord. (PBC)

despised. Applied twice to the suffering servant in 53:3. In 60:14 Zion is despised by her enemies. (CSB)

He who was to be “a light for the nations” was “abhorred by the nation[s].” But “the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn 1:5; cf 1Jn 5:4). Cf 1Tm 6:15; Is 52:15. (TLSB)

Yahweh’s ways are so strange! His tactic is not to overcome the world’s arrogance with more arrogance, like every terrestrial conqueror, but to triumph in grace by allowing his Servant to be despised and rejected (cf. Is. 53:3; Mt. 26:67-68). Christ “emptied himself” (Phil. 2:7) and was obedient even to death on a cross (Phil. 2:8). (CC)

This is the appearance of God’s people, despised, abhorred, and a people of servants. This agrees well with the promises that they are a people saved and redeemed. You see today that there is nothing more contemptible and despised than this Word... Then it is an abomination, as Paul says (1 Cor. 4:13): “We have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the off scouring of all things.” In the eyes of the world the greatest insult is to call a person a Christian. (Luther)

His own countrymen screamed, “Crucify Him.” When Pilate asked what he should do with their king, the crowd answered, “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15). (PBC)

nation. Refers to either Israel (1:4) or Gentiles. (CSB)

Kings shall see. See v. 23. This reaction to the servant is similar to that of 52:15. (CSB)

Even kings and princes will be found among His subjects, humbly falling down before the King of kings and Lord of lords. (TLSB)

In spite of the way the world and its rulers will treat the Servant (50:6; 53:3), they will eventually kneel before him (49:7; 52:15; cf. 45:23). Psalm 2 likewise exhorts those who conspire against the Messiah (Ps. 2:1-3) to “kiss the Son” in humble adoration (Ps. 2:12) lest his wrath flare against them. (CC)

You are oppressed by them and by the kings, and yet you shall be exalted so that the kings must arise in your presence and do homage to you.” So the princes shall fall prostrate and do homage to the church after tyranny. This is the consolation: “Do not lose hope because of the contempt. Your Word must stand in such a way that even the persecuting tyrants will long for it and revere it.” This is beginning already

and is bound to get still better, since the very princes and persecutors must kiss the Gospel. These words were not spoken for the sake of the princes but for the purpose of consoling the godly. (Luther)

They will bow down because of the redemption He will bring to the world. The kings of the earth bow because of the unsurpassed blessing of the redemption God has provided for their people and for all the people of the earth. Note again that kings and princes outside the people of Israel – Gentiles – accord the honor to this Servant. Redemption is for all humanity. (PBC)

faithful – Despite the way the world and its rulers have treated the Servant, they will still kneel before Him (52:15; 60:14). (TLSB)

chosen you. He Himself will strengthen your faith and make you sure, so that you may believe Him to be true. This seems to the world contrary to reason, because God seems to be lying, forsaking us, not choosing us but rejecting us. To the godly man, however, it is believable. (Luther)

49:1–7 Further description of the Servant-Savior is provided by the Lord. The Servant will administer not only the “sword” of God’s Law but also the salvation delivered for you through the Gospel. • Shine upon us, O Light for the nations, and extend to all people the promise of salvation. Amen. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Greeting

1 Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, 2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Kretzmann has a nice summary of the situation at Corinth... (Buls)

Paul had come to this city on his second missionary journey, Acts 18:1, about 50 or 51 A.D. The Lord, through the work of Paul's preaching, had established a Christian congregation in this city, Acts 18:7-11. His converts were mainly Gentiles. The members of the Corinthian congregation were somewhat subject to arrogance and self-conceit, 1:17; 8:1, and had not yet fully thrown off the dominance of sins of sex, 5:1-11; 6:15-18; 11:21. Factions were formed in the congregation which tended to disrupt the entire work of Paul, 1 Corinthians 1:10-12; 3:3.4.21.22; 4:1-5; 11:18. As a result, various evils appeared, such as laxity in church discipline, 5:1-5; a growing indifference with regard to the sins of sex, 6:9.13-19; members of the congregation brought suits in the civil courts against one another, 6:1. Christian liberty was abused by participation in feast of idolatry, 8:10.14-33; the celebration of the Communion was desecrated through abuses and uncharitable behavior, 11:17-22; the wonderful gifts of grace were not always used for the edification of the congregation, chapter 12 and 14; some even denied the resurrection of the dead, 15:12. (Buls)

1:1-2 κλητὸς ἀπόστολος ... κλητοῖς ἁγίοις—Derived from the verb καλέω (“to call”), the adjective κλητός (“called”) points to God’s inexpressible grace in calling into his kingdom and service those who are totally unworthy of that call. That is reflected in 15:9–10: “For I am the least of the apostles, one who is unworthy to be called [καλέω] an apostle because I persecuted

the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am.” The same balance and parallelism between “called apostle” and “called saints” appears in Rom 1:1, 7. Both the apostle and his hearers owe everything they are and have to God’s call. (CC p.25)

1:1 Paul. † The Greek custom was to begin a letter with the writer’s name (see note on Ro 1:1). For more information on Paul see notes on Ac 9:1; Php 3:4–14. (CSB)

called – Note "called" a passive verbal adjective, is used of Paul, verse 1, and of the Corinthians, verse 2. His conversion and status as an Apostle were only through God's call. Their conversion was only through God's call. (Buls)

With great care Paul has designed every detail of his introduction (1 Cor 1:1–9) to combat the rising factionalism and to restore the Corinthians again to the one fellowship of Jesus Christ. To this end he begins by asserting his authority as Jesus’ designated envoy, who in carrying out his commission had become the spiritual father of every Christian in Corinth (4:15). Thus no one could rightly claim, “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas” (1:12), if this meant he would have nothing to do with Paul. For although Paul saw himself as the least of the apostles (15:8–9), his apostleship was nevertheless beyond dispute. He had seen the risen Lord (9:1)! This Lord had called him as his chosen vessel to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Rom 11:13), including those in the largely Gentile city of Corinth. (CC p. 27)

But Paul knew that he was nothing in himself (2 Cor 12:11). He had no intention of building a personal following and deplored the formation of a “Paul” faction as much as he deplored any other faction (1 Cor 1:12). He saw himself simply as servant and witness of the crucified and risen Lord, Christ Jesus, Israel’s promised Messiah and the Savior of the world (Mt 1:21; Jn 4:42). Now the former persecutor of the church (1 Cor 15:9) had found his great vocation in betrothing others to Christ (2 Cor 11:2); his most important labor was in ensuring that Christ was formed in others (Gal 4:19). His concern to advance the name and cause of Christ emerges clearly in the opening verses of this epistle, where “Christ” occurs ten times in the first ten verses. As he wrote to the Philippians, “For me to live is Christ” (Phil 1:21). (CC p. 27)

It was “not from men nor through a man” that Paul had been commissioned to serve Christ (Gal 1:1), but “through the will of God” (2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; cf. 1 Tim 1:1). Unlike the false apostles who commended themselves and sought to impose their own will on the church (2 Cor 10:18; 11:13), Paul’s ministry bore the divine stamp of approval. (CC p. 27)

apostle of Christ Jesus. Paul uses this title in all his letters (except Philippians, 1,2 Thessalonians and Philemon) to establish his authority as Christ’s messenger—an authority that had been challenged (see ch. 9; 2Co 11). He reinforces his authority by adding “by the will of God,” i.e., by divine initiative. – Paul was not using this to brag. He had some important and sometimes negative things to say and so the establishment of his authority was important. He also was often under attack of “Judizers” who maligned him and his office and thereby advancing their ideas verses the gospel he had preached. By using this phrase he was telling the people that he had not been sent by human individuals or groups but that his authority and message directly from Jesus himself. (CSB)

ἀπόστολος—Rengstorf finds a close parallel to the NT apostleship in the Jewish social institution of the *shaliach* (שליח). The *shaliach* was the personal representative of another, commissioned with a task which could take him to distant places. According to the rabbis, “the one sent by a man is as the man himself.” Even though the historical link between this Jewish institution and the apostolate may be open to question, the conceptual analogy is illuminating. Jesus assured his apostles, “he who hears you, hears me” (Lk 10:16). Thus an apostle’s role in representing the one who sends him is similar to that of the modern ambassador or envoy (cf. 2 Cor 5:20). (CC p. 25)

Paul has some weighty problems to deal with in this Epistle. It is necessary for him, therefore, to state that he is an apostle, a called apostle, and that this is thoroughly in keeping with the will of God and of Christ. But there is more. He is joined by Sosthenes, the brother. There has been much discussion as to who this man was. (Buls)

will of God – "Christ Jesus" is subjective genitive. Christ made him an apostle. "Will of God" here is God's gracious will. (Buls)

Bengel: Look at 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; and 2 Timothy 1:1. This 'by the will of God' is the ground of his authority toward the churches and of a lowly and zealous disposition in Paul himself. (Buls)

Lenski: What turned him about and changed his entire character and life was God's will. The volition of God through which he became an apostle emanated from the good and gracious will of God.(Buls)

Kretzmann: The call of Christ and the will of God have worked together in conferring upon him this distinction of being an apostle. (Buls)

By grace, God calls all Christian. Similarly, God chose and appointed Paul to be an apostle. (TLSB)

brother – ἀδελφός—An ἀδελφός is a fellow Christian, a “brother” who addresses God as “Abba,” “Father” (Lk 11:2; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). (CC p. 25)

Sosthenes. Perhaps the synagogue ruler at Corinth who was assaulted by the Greeks (Ac 18:17). If so, he obviously became a Christian—possibly while Paul was preaching at Corinth (Ac 18:18) or during Apollos’s ministry there (Ac 19:1). – He may have served as secretary and wrote down what Paul dictated. Paul then signed the letter (16:21) (CSB)

A Corinthian synagogue ruler (Ac 18:17) beaten by the frustrated crowd at Paul’s trial. (TLSB)

Despite his standing as a divinely called apostle, Paul never operated as a “one-man band.” His ministry was always a team effort, whether he was associated with Barnabas, with Silas and Timothy (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1), with various “brothers” (Gal 1:2), or, as here, with Sosthenes. This is probably the same Sosthenes who had been serving as synagogue ruler during Paul’s first visit to Corinth (Acts 18:17). Like another synagogue ruler before him (Crispus, Acts 18:8), Sosthenes found Paul’s preaching compelling. But his Christian leanings incurred the

hostility of his fellow Jews, who inflicted a beating on him before the proconsul Gallio's tribunal (Acts 18:17). Thereupon Sosthenes seems to have left the city, making his home in Ephesus. As a former synagogue official, and moreover one who had been beaten for the sake of Christ, Sosthenes would have been honored by the Corinthian church. (CC pp. 27-28)

Sosthenes probably wrote down most of the letter (i.e., through 1 Cor 16:20) at Paul's direction. But this may have involved more than accepting mechanical dictation. The two men probably talked over the letter's contents and came to a consensus on what should be transmitted. Nevertheless, it is clear that Paul is the primary human author. The ultimate author is God, whose Spirit inspired the writing of the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21), and so Paul's canonical writings are part of the sacred Scriptures (2 Pet 3:16). The exact method and circumstances of the human authors in no way compromises the divine authorship of the Scriptures. (CC p. 28)

1:2 church of God. Used only by Paul and only in Ac 20:28, here and 2Co 1:1. Its OT counterpart is the expression "assembly (or community) of the LORD" (see Dt 23:1; see also Nu 16:3; 20:4; 1Ch 28:8). (CSB)

God's people in Christ, especially as they congregate in His name. (TLSB)

ἐκκλησία—In secular Greek ἐκκλησία denoted a popular assembly, like the ἐκκλησία in the theater of Ephesus described in Acts 19:32, 39–40. Normally, however, the NT uses the expression for the "church" of God gathered in the name of Christ Jesus. This NT usage is controlled by the use of ἐκκλησία in the LXX (as a translation of עֲדָתָא) for the gathered people of God (e.g., Deut 9:10). (CC p. 25)

Paul and Sosthenes address "the church of God that is in Corinth" (1:2). The church does not belong to Paul or Apollos or anyone else; it is God's. Paul, Apollos, Sosthenes, and the other church workers all belong to God. They are "God's coworkers," and the Corinthian saints are "God's field, God's building" (3:9; cf. 3:22–23). Thus Paul tries to lift the Corinthians' sights above any limited conceptions of the church as a merely human institution, or an arena for human power plays, to a proper understanding of its character as a divine institution. The apostle of Christ Jesus, called by the will of God, is writing to the church of God, consisting of saints who are also called by God. This is the great vision of the church Paul wants the Corinthians to catch, the vision of God's "one holy catholic and apostolic church" (Nicene Creed), of which the church in Corinth is a manifestation. (CC p. 28)

"Church" is a collective noun, denoting a local congregation. It is modified by "of God." (Buls)

Rienecker: The genitive is possessive and is at once a protest against party spirit, the church is of God, not of any one individual.(Buls)

Lenski: It is best to take the genitive in the broadest sense, since God is the originator, lord, living power, protector, comforter, and ruler of the church. (Buls)

Kretzmann: In addressing the Corinthians, Paul charitably assumes that they are all members of the true congregation of the Lord, of the communion of saints. This is shown by the explanation: to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, to the chosen saints. (Buls)

in Corinth – The address sounds so pious that one would never have guessed Corinth was a hotbed of impurity. It was city that put out the red carpet for people looking for overindulgence of every sort. So vile and so corrupt was the lifestyle of Corinth that the Greek world used the name of this city as a slang term for corruption. It would have seemed like the last place on earth that God would have a church. Called to be holy, God’s people are called to be holy in unholy places. (Where in the World is God?)

On the one hand, the church in Corinth is fully church, with no gifts or graces missing. On the other hand, it is only one manifestation of God’s church among many others, one outcropping, the one that happens to be in Corinth. So the Corinthians should not see themselves as superior to other Christians because of their intellectual attainments or spiritual gifts or unique cultural situation. They are to obey the same apostolic Word that sustains all the churches (cf. 4:17; 7:17; 10:32; 11:16; 14:33). Thus Paul constantly reminds the Corinthians of their place in the larger Christian family (cf. 16:19). After all, the Word of God did not originate with them! (CC pp. 28-29)

Cf. R. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 17:

Paul chides the Corinthian Christians for their prideful presumption that their spiritual freedom liberates them from accountability to others: “[D]id the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?” (14:36). The answer is, of course, that the word of God has reached many and that the Corinthians must see themselves as part of a much larger movement, subject to the same Lord whose authority governs the church as a whole. They are not spiritual free agents. The church of God that is in Corinth is just one branch of a larger operation. (CC p. 29)

Undoubtedly Paul would also chide those modern churches that operate as if they were completely independent from the rest of the church. The worship life and practice of a congregation should reflect its interdependence and unity with congregations in other places and throughout history. (CC p. 29)

sanctified. † Meaning “made holy,” which is done by (1) being declared holy through faith in Christ’s atoning death on the cross, and (2) being made holy by the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. In spite of the fact that Paul found much in the Corinthian Christians to criticize, he still called them “sanctified”—not because of their conduct, but because of their relationship to Christ. (CSB)

Made holy, specifically in Baptism (6:11). This is God’s work in the life of a sinner, through Christ, not the holiness of the person’s conduct. (TLSB)

ἡγιασμένοις—The literal translation “having been sanctified” reflects the perfect tense, which points to “a present state resulting from a past action.” The passive voice shows that the Corinthians’ sanctification was the work of God. (CC p. 26)

In the LXX, the verb ἁγιάζω is “the usual rendering of the root שׁוּׁר.” The Piel and Hiphil forms of the verb mean “to consecrate,” “to hallow,” “to sanctify” and are especially frequent in Exodus, Leviticus, and Isaiah. Often the word pertains to the prescribed sacrifices, the tabernacle or temple, and liturgical worship. According to the NT, the Christian has been sanctified, made holy, and dedicated to God by Christ’s atoning sacrifice (Heb 2:11; 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12). (CC p. 26)

How paradoxical that the one church of God was present in corrupt Corinth! Paul now elaborates on the church’s nature: it consists of those in a state of “having been sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1:2). The sanctification of God’s people does not result from their efforts at self-improvement, their moral accomplishments; it is God’s gift in Christ. As one commentator observes: “Holiness is received, not achieved.” The church received her holiness in Baptism: “But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (6:11; see also 12:13). On the basis, then, of the sanctification conferred on the church, Paul constantly appeals to the Corinthians: “Become what you are! Live like saints! Flee fornication! Pursue love!” (CC p. 29)

Another epithet follows, “called saints” (1:2), which balances “a called apostle” in 1:1. God’s people in Corinth had become saints, “a holy nation,” by virtue of the divine summons “out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9; cf. Ex 19:5–6). (CC p. 29)

In Paul’s letters the word “saints” always embraces all believers. (CC p. 29)

Cf. Luther’s comments on the phrase “the communion of saints” in his explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed in the Large Catechism: “Recht deutsch zu reden sollt’ es heißen ‘ein Gemeine der Heiligen’, das ist, eine Gemeine, darin eitel Heiligen sind, oder noch klärlicher ‘ein heilige Gemeine’ ” (*Bekennnisschriften*, 657.49 [LC II 49]). “Speaking in proper German, it should be called ‘a communion of saints,’ that is, a communion in which there are only saints, or even more clearly, ‘a holy communion’ ” (author’s translation). (CC p. 29)

In conversion, for Jesus' sake, God sets the Christian aside for Himself and His service. "In Christ," an adverbial prepositional phrase denoting cause. Only because of what Christ did for them are they sanctified. Note that "holy," a common term in the New Testament for Christians, emphasizes the idea of called and sanctified, they have become such only through the call of the Spirit in the means of grace. (Buls)

Rienecker: 'Called to be holy,' the perfect emphasizes the state or condition resulting from a previous action. (Buls)

Bengel: Those who have been claimed for God. Making a prelude already to the discussion, Paul reminds the Corinthians of their own dignity, lest they enslave themselves to men. (Buls)

Lenski: The idea expressed in 'holy' is separation from everything profane and worldly and devotion to God in Christ Jesus. Paul calls the Corinthians 'they that are sanctified' in spite of the fact that he has much fault to find with them. (Buls)

The remainder of the sentence is in apposition to the words "called to be saints." Paul is not addressing Christians throughout the world at this moment, but is rather stressing the fact that they are in fellowship with all Christians throughout the world. (Buls)

He begins by saying in effect, "You people really have a lot going for you. Christ Jesus has forgiven all your sins, and He is going to help you to do better. This is what it means to be sanctified. This is a marvelous, undeserved gift of God to all Christians, made possible by the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. We are not dogged by our past sins; they are pardoned! We are not helpless in the face of future temptations; we are empowered to resist them and to live more fully according to God's will!" (LL)

John 17:17-19 ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified."

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 ²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it."

call upon the name - "Call on the name" reminds one of Acts 2:21; 7:59; 9:14.21; 15:17; 22:16; Romans 10:12.13.14 and 2 Timothy 2:22. We quote just one of these which is a quotation of Joel 3:5: "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" Romans 10:13. In other words "call on the name" is a synonym for "Christian" but reminds us that their faith is active in praying and confessing the name of Jesus. (Buls)

Rienecker: The present tense emphasizes the habitual act which characterizes their life. (Buls)

Bengel: The consideration of the Church universal frees the mind from party bias, and sways it to obedience. It is therefore at one suggested to the Corinthians. (Buls)

"The name of our Lord, Jesus Christ" denotes everything that Jesus Christ is and was and did for us, including His revelation of Himself to us. Note both the divinity and humanity of Jesus in the term "our Lord, Jesus Christ." The prepositional phrase "of all" denotes the universality of the Christian Church. All over the world, night and day, Christians in many lands and of many cultures are calling on the Lord Jesus Christ who revealed Himself to us through the Gospel. (Buls)

The final three words in verse 2 are elliptical for "both their Lord and ours" RSV. JB has an interesting translation "for he is their Lord no less than ours." (Buls)

An expression common in the OT (Ps. 116:13, 17), indicating the response of one called by the Gospel (Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13). (TLSB)

σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα—Using the middle voice of the verb, ἐπικαλέομαι τινά means "to appeal to someone." Paul appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11). In the LXX the verb is

used of the believer's calling upon the Lord in prayer, praise, and confession. (Ps 98:6 (ET 99:6); Is 43:7; Joel 3:5 (ET 2:32); Zech 13:9) "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe" (Prov 18:10). The NT applies ἐπικαλέομαι to believers who, prompted by their hearing the Gospel in faith (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, Gal 3:2, 5; cf. Rom 10:17; Heb 4:2), call on the name of Jesus Christ and thus receive his rich mercy and salvation. Compare Rom 10:12–13 and Luther's explanation of the Second Commandment: "call upon it [God's name] in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks." (CC p.26)

The Corinthians are saints "together with all who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place" (1 Cor 1:2). Again Paul is reminding the Corinthians: "You are not your own. You belong to a great spiritual fellowship of Christians throughout the world." To "call on the name of the Lord" (1:2) means to believe in Jesus as Lord, appeal to him in prayer, and praise him in worship (Cf. Ps 99:6; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; 9:14, 21; 22:16; Rom 10:12–13). The attentive listener in Corinth would have been able to complete the text Paul is citing from Joel 3:5: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." In no other name was salvation to be found (Acts 4:12; cf. Acts 3:16). No doubt the text had become more precious to Paul since his Baptism, when Ananias admonished him, "Rise, be baptized, and wash away your sins, *calling on his name*" (Acts 22:16). Thus the expression designates a Christian, who calls on the name of Jesus in faith. The Roman statesman Pliny the Younger testified that Christians were characterized by the practice of singing hymns to Christ "as to God." (CC pp. 29-30)

together with all – σὺν πᾶσιν—It seems more satisfactory to link the phrase "together with" to the immediately preceding word "saints" than to see the letter as addressed both to those in Corinth and to all Christians in every place. 1 Corinthians is not a general epistle; it specifically addresses the Corinthian situation. The Corinthian saints share the calling of "saints" with all other Christians in every place and time. (CC p. 26)

in every place – The phrase "in every place" (1 Cor 1:2) evokes the grandeur of the universal church and its mission in echoes of Malachi: "'From the rising of the sun even to its setting, my name shall be great among the nations; and in every place [LXX: ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ] incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering, for my name shall be great among the nations,' says the Lord of hosts" (Mal 1:11). (CC p. 30)

OF US – The final phrase in 1 Cor 1:2, "both their [Lord] and ours," reminds the Corinthians again of what they have in common with fellow Christians everywhere. They are not unique; they share the same Lord Jesus Christ as do their brothers and sisters around the world. "The same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing riches on all who call upon him" (Rom 10:12). Thus they have communion with one another, not only by virtue of having the same Lord as their Master, but also in having him as their Savior. (CC p. 30)

1:3 *Grace...peace.* Paul now confers his apostolic blessing of "grace" and "peace" (1 Cor 1:3). These scriptural blessings are not merely wishes. They convey what the words say. The first blessing, "grace," is the highest gift of God, his free favor and forgiveness to undeserving people. Grace, then, is the source of peace, the state of being reconciled to God (Rom 5:1–11). Since the death of God's Son brought us forgiveness and reconciliation to God (Rom 5:10), Christians are inspired to live in a forgiving and peaceful manner with one another and, so far as

it lies with them (Rom 12:18), with all people. How sorely the strife-torn Corinthian congregation needed this blessing of peace and the conciliatory spirit that flowed from it! Often God's peace also bears fruit in a sense of inner peace, though this "feeling" is not essential. The objective condition of a peaceful relationship with God through Jesus Christ is paramount in Paul's concept of "peace" (Rom 5:1–2; Eph 2:14–18). (CC pp. 29-30)

The gifts of grace and peace are conferred both by "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:3). "The Lord Jesus Christ" is accorded equal status with the Father as the bestower of divine gifts. When he is called "Lord," he is given an ascription belonging to God. (CC p. 31)

This was a common greeting then and is often used from the pulpit. There is nothing common about it meaning. Grace is the source of salvation. That in turn is the only way to achieve true peace. So the order is important and there is a very powerful message expressed.

We become so accustomed to this verse that it loses its force for us. "Grace" is the unmerited kindness of God which caused Him to redeem us through Christ. "Peace" is the objective peace of God which we have because Christ redeemed us. It is ours whether we feel it or not. God is our Father and Jesus Christ is our Lord. The second "and" plainly shows the divinity of Jesus.

By the way, note well the expression "Christ Jesus" or "Jesus Christ" in every verse of our text, with the exception of verse 6 where it is only "Christ." Let's look at every case: in verse 1 Christ called Paul as Apostle; in verse 2 we have been set aside only because of Christ Jesus and He is mentioned again at the end of the verse; in verse 3 the two nouns which summarize Christianity have their origin in Christ; in verse 4 grace is ours only as a gift in Christ; in verse 5 He is referred to by the pronoun, the source of our wealth; in verse 6 His testimony has confirmed us; in verse 7 we are assured that He will come again; verse 8 of our Lord on the last day; and, verse 9 speaks of our fellowship with Jesus Christ. A remarkable repetition throughout our text. (Buls)

Lenski: The order of these two, grace and peace, remains constant, grace always first, peace always second.(Buls)

Kretzmann: The grace and mercy of God in Christ is the greatest gift of the believers; they are assured of the favor of God through the redemption of Jesus. (Buls)

The source of our salvation is always and only in the grace of God in Christ. The result of our salvation is always the peace of God in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 1)

Thanksgiving

4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— 6 even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1:4-6 The three aorist passives are wonderful descriptions of the monergistic salvation story: *tēi dotheisēi* (“that was given,” v 4), *eploutisthēte* (“you were enriched,” v (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

1:4 *thanks*. See Ro 1:8. In spite of the conditions which Paul knew to be existing in Corinth, he breaks forth in a hymn of thankfulness because they were believers, they had received grace from God. (CSB)

Faced by the host of problems in the Corinthian congregation, Paul might naturally be expected to begin on a note of complaint. But he takes care not to let the abundant aberrations loom so large in his mind that they sour his relationship with the church and make him lose sight of the far more abundant grace of God (cf. Rom 5:20). As their faithful apostle, pastor, and intercessor, he first assures the Corinthians that he always thanks God for them. (CC p. 34)

Cf. M. Franzmann, *Romans*, 29: “Thanksgiving is always first; thanksgiving, Luther says, is the fire in the censer that makes the incense of our petitions rise with a fine and joyous buoyancy to the throne of God.” Cf. R. C. H. Lenski, *St. Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 30: “This thankfulness on Paul’s part is an example for us all. God loves to add new blessings when past blessings are received and cherished with true gratitude.” Cf. also D. Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 19: “If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed ... then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ. ... A pastor should not complain about his congregation.” (CC p. 34)

Despite everything, they remain his constant “boast” (2 Cor 1:14; cf. Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19–20). (CC p. 34)

While it was standard practice in ancient letters and speeches to begin by expressing one’s gratitude to the audience, a practice which could degenerate to hollow flattery (cf. Acts 24:1–3), there is nothing hollow about Paul’s words of thanksgiving to God for the grace he has poured out on the Corinthians. From the fullness of the unspeakable gift of Christ himself (2 Cor 9:15), the congregation had received “grace upon grace” (Jn 1:16). Ever since their Baptism (1 Cor 6:11; 12:13), they had enjoyed a rich and full spiritual life. (CC p. 34)

grace...given – In Romans 1:8 Paul thanks God because their faith is known in all the world. In Philippians 1:3 he thanks God for their fellowship in the Gospel. In 1 Thessalonians 1:3 he thanks God because of their labor of faith, toil of love, and endurance of hope. In 2 Thessalonians 1:3 he thanks God because their faith and love are increasing. In Philemon he thanks God because Paul had heard of their faith and love. Only here, in the introduction of 1 Corinthians, does Paul thank God because of the saving grace which God gave them in Christ. That is truly remarkable, because of all of Paul’s congregations, so far as we know, the Corinthians gave him the hardest time. The point we are making is that the Apostle really practiced 1 Corinthians 13, the great chapter on love. The more wayward the hearers, the more grateful the preacher because of God’s grace. (Buls)

Lenski: The passives show that this is praise for what God has wrought, not for anything the Corinthians have done. This fact is quite significant for an understanding of the body of the letter, which has much to criticize in regard to the Corinthians. Yet Paul is not writing in an ironical manner (hypocritical) when he uses these passive verbs. A little personal touch is added by inserting 'my' before 'God.' Paul always remembers with a grateful heart the many gifts God has already granted to his people. 'Grace' is itself the highest and most comprehensive of God’s undeserved gifts and here embraces all that God has so freely bestowed on the Corinthians.(Buls)

Kretzmann: The injury of the ungrateful Corinthians was great, but their ingratitude did not consume Paul's gratitude. Paul's manner of dealing in this instance is, incidentally, a fine example of love's believing in all things; for he was sure that the abuses that were found in the Corinthian congregation did not represent their real spiritual selves, and that his admonition would readily be heeded. In spite of their many weaknesses, they were yet believers. (Buls)

1:5 *in every way* – ἐν αὐτῷ—KJV and NKJV translate “by him.” However, “in him” is to be preferred because the phrase is in apposition to “in Christ Jesus” in the previous verse. (CC p. 32)

have been enriched – This is in the passive and therefore says that it is not something that came from them. They are enriched in a spiritual way in that they have been well taught in the Word and received the right understanding. Moreover, their Christian knowledge has already borne good fruits. (Stoekhardt)

Their rich endowment in “speech” included the gift of tongues and its interpretation, prophecy and the weighing of prophecy, teaching, and the composing of hymns (12:10, 28–30; 14:26). Following the pattern of their teacher, Apollos, an “eloquent” man (ἀνὴρ λόγιος, Acts 18:24), the Corinthians had been enriched in all “eloquence, speech” (λόγῳ, 1 Cor 1:5). (CC pp. 34-35)

This gift of speech flowed from the “knowledge” that was in their hearts. Like “speech,” “knowledge” is a comprehensive word. It includes the Corinthians’ Spirit-given understanding of the wisdom of the cross, their appreciation of all God’s gifts, their ability to exercise spiritual judgment, and the specific gift of prophetic knowledge (2:6–16; 13:2; 14:6). These two gifts—the utterance of the mouth and the knowledge of the heart—find an echo in the two parts of Rom 10:9: “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised him for the dead, you will be saved.” (CC p. 35)

For the congregation’s outstanding endowment with these gifts Paul thanks God. Some commentators have detected a trace of irony in his thanksgiving, for it was precisely these gifts of speech (especially the gift of tongues) and of knowledge which had led many Corinthians to become puffed up. But there can be little doubt that Paul’s thanksgiving is thoroughly genuine. The gifts (χαρίσματα, 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31) in themselves were signs of God’s rich gift of grace (χάρισμα, 1:7). The problems had arisen because some were letting their gifts “go to their heads,” as though they had acquired them through their own efforts or brilliance. Later Paul would remind them, “What do you have that you have not received?” (4:7). (CC p. 35)

Thus in praising God for the Corinthians’ giftedness “in all speech and all knowledge” (1:5), Paul is not only giving God his due but also signaling to the Corinthians that it is to these two gifts that he will be paying most attention. *Throughout the epistle everything he says will be aimed at correcting distortions and developing the right understanding of Christian speech and knowledge.* (CC p. 35)

Usually Paul speaks of God’s riches (cf Phil. 4:19), but here God causes His people to share in His wealth of “all speech and all knowledge.” (TLSB)

ebebaiōthē (“was confirmed,” v 6). This is “the grace (*charis*) of God” (vv 3–4), God acting in his unprompted goodness for his people. God causes and bestows this spiritual blessing. This is why the apostle can say to the Corinthians, “In every way you were enriched” in Christ (v 5b), for “you are not lacking in any spiritual gift” (v 7a; see below). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

"In every way" means "in every respect" and should not be watered down. "You have been enriched" implies that they were poor beggars, spiritually, before they came to faith in Christ. "In Him" refers to Christ and denotes the meritorious cause. This phrase reminds us of the Christmas verse which says: "We are rich for He was poor etc." Note that this verse contains three "in" phrases, all

adverbial. The first is locative and denotes the circumstances of their lives. The second is adverbial causal and the third is locative, denoting their inward and outward state and actions. (Buls)

Rienecker: Speech, utterance, and knowledge. The first is the outward expression and the second the inward conviction. (Buls)

Bengel: Utterance follows knowledge, and the latter is known by the former. The Corinthians admired spiritual gifts; therefore, by mentioning their gifts, he conciliates them, and prepares a way for reproof. (Buls)

Lenski: 'Utterance' must refer to any and every form of expressing the saving truth of Christ, namely the practical and theoretical, devotional and apologetic, pastoral instruction and admonition, and public preaching and teaching. This, of course, includes also the knowledge necessary for such utterance whenever teaching is engaged. The 'knowledge' here added to 'utterance' is the result of the latter. (Buls)

Luther: That is what St Paul calls 'being rich' first 'in all doctrine or wisdom' which is the high spiritual understanding of the word which concerns eternal life, that is, the comfort of faith in Christ; also of calling upon Him and praying. And 'in all understanding' that is, correct knowledge and distinction of the entire external physical life and being on earth. (Buls)

speech and all knowledge. Gifts of the Spirit (see 12:8; also 2Co 8:7). (CSB)

This is not restricted to some specific type of speaking as “in tongues.” This refers to every form of expressing the saving truth of Christ. Where all forms of teaching and admonition manifest themselves, there the natural result will be that all forms of knowledge will spread in the congregation and thus likewise abound. (Lenski)

The Corinthians appeared to value eloquence and wisdom above anything else. Many of them paid good money to traveling teachers who trained them to become eloquent and persuasive speakers. (PBC)

Because the Gospel is proclaimed among them, they have everything they need to continue strong in their faith and to keep improving in their Christian life. (LL)

Jeremiah 9:24 “but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the LORD.”

1:6 *even* – καθώς—BAGD, s.v. καθώς, 3, understands this conjunction in a causal sense. Cf. NIV: “because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you” (cf. NEB). But more likely the term should be taken in its normal sense “just as,” “inasmuch as.” The gifts of speech and knowledge are evidence that “the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you.” (CC p. 32)

testimony about Christ was confirmed among you – Their knowledge has shown itself in the free and effective witness for Christ. Their congregation is a demonstration of the Gospel’s power. (Stoekhardt)

Preaching gives witness to Christ, and the Corinthians’ faithful receiving of it demonstrates the Spirit’s confirmation of the message. (TLSB)

Their rich spiritual gifts served as evidence that the apostolic testimony to Christ had created Christian faith in the hearers. Through the Holy Spirit’s testimony it had been brought home to their deepest convictions that the Gospel message was true, leading to these rich results. (CC p. 35)

Rienecker: 'Just as, inasmuch as, because.' Produces not mere parallel but rather an explanation of what precedes. (Buls)

Bengel: Christ is not only the object but also the author of this testimony. By Himself confirmed and by the accompanying gifts and miracles, 12:3; 2 Corinthians 1:21.22; Galatians 3:2.5; Ephesians 4:7.8; Hebrews 2:4. That the Corinthians needed nothing is proved by the fact that the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them. (Buls)

That is a very important remark. The charismatics claim that true Christians need more than faith in the Gospel. That is simply anti-Scriptural. (Buls)

Lenski: 'In you' means: in your hearts by an increase of faith. Instead of writing 'the Gospel' Paul says: 'the testimony of Christ' was confirmed in you. The testimony which Christ himself made while here on earth, subjective genitive. The verb is again passive, pointing to God as the agent. 'Giving' is the broadest of the three verbs, verse 4; 'making rich' in verse 5 is more specific; 'confirming' in verse 6 narrows the idea down still more and refers it to the very hearts of the Corinthians. (Buls)

to marturion tou Christou, "the testimony about Christ." How should the genitive be translated? Some, such as the ESV, render it "about"; others suggest "of" or "to." Gregory Lockwood puts it this way: "The apostolic testimony to Christ has created Christian faith in the hearers" (*1 Corinthians*, Concordia Commentary [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000], 35). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

A Christian has a certainty that no unbeliever can ever know. This certainty affects all he knows and everything he says. (PBC)

confirmed. Paul's preaching about Christ had been accepted by the Corinthians, and they had proved it to be true. (CSB)

1:7 *not lacking* – μή ὑστερεῖσθαι—Cf. BAGD, s.v. ὑστερέω, 2: "pass[ive] *lack, be lacking, go without, come short of*." (Cf. Rom 3:23; 1 Cor 8:8; 12:24; 2 Cor 11:9; Phil 4:12; Heb 11:37) (CC p. 32)

1 Cor 1:7 is a result clause, balancing the positive statement of 1:5 ("in everything you were enriched in him") with its double-negative corollary ("thus you are not lacking in any gift of grace"). Paul is probably not comparing the Corinthians with other Christians ("you are not lacking in comparison with others"), but simply saying they are not at all deficient. They should not let anyone make them feel inadequate because of their lack of a rhetorical education; the *χαρίσματα* they had received were sufficient. (CC pp. 35-36)

any spiritual gift. Probably refers to the spiritual gifts of chs. 12–14. According to those chapters, a spiritual gift is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit enabling one to minister to the needs of Christ's body, the church (see 12:7–11; 14:3, 12, 17). The Greek word used here stresses that it is a gift of grace. (CSB)

These blessings originate in the Spirit of God. Our redemption is the chief gift (Rom. 5:15) and consequently the means God has given to equip His Church to minister to one another with that gift. (TLSB)

χαρίσματι—RSV, NRSV, and NIV translate *χαρίσμα* as "spiritual gift," KJV and NKJV simply as "gift." A cognate of *χάρις* ("grace"), the word means "gift of grace" or "gracious gift." Paul uses it (1) of the whole gift of salvation (Rom 5:15; 6:23) and (2) of specific gifts and mercies given to Christian people.

Those specific gifts could be of a miraculous nature like prophecy, tongues, or healing (1 Corinthians 12–14), or less spectacular gifts like an encouraging message (Rom 1:11), a special blessing or favor (2 Cor 1:11), the gift necessary for the work of the pastoral ministry (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6), or even the grace to live as a celibate or as a married person (1 Cor 7:7). (CC pp. 32-33)

This is the first time Paul has used the word χάρισμα (“gracious gift, gift of grace,” 1:7). While the Corinthians themselves seem to have preferred the word πνευματικά (“spiritual gifts,” 12:1), Paul prefers χάρισμα as a reminder that all they have is by grace. (CC p. 36)

"Therefore" with the infinitive can denote either contemplated, anticipated, result or actual result. The difference must be determined contextually. Here it most definitely denotes actual result. TEV is good: "The message about Christ has become so firmly fixed in you, that you have not failed to receive a single blessing." And JB: "The witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit." RSV, NIV, NEB, AAT, NKJV all agree in this. NEB reads: "There is indeed no single gift you lack." That is SO important to note when dealing with the charismatics. Furthermore, note the double negative which makes the negative more emphatic. (Buls)

Rienecker: 'Spiritual gifts' that which was given out of grace, empowerments given to the church from God or from the risen Lord. (Buls)

Lenski: Since Paul is here speaking in general terms, 'no gift' cannot refer to the special charismatic gifts of the early church, chapters 12 and 14, but must point to the general gracious gifts of God with which true believers are always duly endowed, the spiritual blessings of Christianity in general. A congregation does not come behind or fall short when it is waiting for the Lord's revelation. Whoever is equipped to look forward aright to that glorious revelation does not 'come behind in any gracious gift.' (Buls)

This is well said. Charismatic gifts never cause a person to look forward to the last day. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The Christians of Corinth did not lack, did not fall behind in, any gift of grace which was needed for edification, by which they were qualified to labor for the Lord by instruction, by exhortation, by rule, by service. No congregation of the early days exceeded that of Corinth in the variety of its endowments and the satisfaction felt in them, 12:7-11. The believers in that heathen city were in possession of such rich endowments while they eagerly awaited the coming, the final revelation, of the Lord Jesus Christ. They received the rich endowment of the gifts of grace and used them for the benefit of the work for Christ, but at the same time their hearts were turned in eager anticipation to their final redemption, Philippians 3:20; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 3:12. (Buls)

Charismati, “spiritual gift[s].” This is a key word in this letter—although Paul uses *pneumatika* in 12:1, perhaps reflecting that the Corinthians themselves preferred this term. It means “gift of grace”—but is often (incorrectly in this writer’s opinion) translated “spiritual gift”—and is used to express gifts of a miraculous nature or those which are less spectacular (1 Cor 12–14), or “a special blessing or favor (2 Cor 1:11), [or] gift necessary for the work of the pastoral ministry (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6), or even the grace to live as a celibate or as a married person (1 Cor 7:7)” (Lockwood, 32–33). All speech (*en panti logōi*) that flows from all knowledge (*pasēi gnōsei*) are the particular gifts the Corinthians have received (v 5). Unfortunately, these very gifts led many of this congregation to be puffed up (1 Cor 8:1). The apostle will address them at length later in his letter. Lockwood notes: The Corinthians have fallen “into a self-centered intoxication” with their spiritual gifts rather than appreciating that these gifts are “to serve a church which is still on the way.” Their failing has impacted their eager anticipation of Christ’s final coming (36). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

The Corinthians are not lacking any spiritual gift. The double negative (*mē . . . mēdeni charismati*) asserts that they have all the Holy Spirit intended for them. Note also the simple but profound comment in *The Lutheran Study Bible* on this verse: “Our redemption is the chief [spiritual] gift” (1947). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

as you wait - apekdechomenou, “eager longing,” specifically for *tēn apokalupsin*, “the revealing.” “The verb describes the eager longing of the creation and Christians for Christ’s return (see also Rom 8:19, 23, 25; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:20)” (Lockwood, 33). Fritz Rienecker adds concerning this present middle participle: “The double preposition in compound implies a degree of earnestness and intensity of expectation. . . . The present tense emphasizes the continuous action” (Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, vol 2 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981], 40). A possible translation is “as you keep on expectantly waiting.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

ὁμᾶς . . . ἀπεκδεχομένων—The verb ἀπεκδέχομαι describes the eager longing of the creation and Christians for Christ’s return (see also Rom 8:19, 23, 25; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:20). (CC p. 33)

At the same time, Paul gently reminds them not to let their giftedness lull them into complacency. They must not become so focused on present blessings that they lose sight of their Christian hope. After all, their gifts are gifts of grace to weak, struggling sinners, who still live under the cross and await the final glory. They should still be filled with longing for “the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:7). Their gifts are to serve a church which is still on the way. But the Corinthians are in danger of falling into a self-centered intoxication with their gifts, so that later Paul must reproach them: “Already you are satiated! Already you have begun to be rich! Without us you have begun your reign!” (4:8). As a result, not only are they no longer eagerly anticipating the Lord’s final coming (Cf. Lk 17:30; 2 Thess 1:7; 1 Pet 1:7,13; 4:13), but their hope for the final resurrection of their bodies has also faded (1 Corinthians 15). They need a reminder that the Spirit and all his gifts are God’s down payment, his guarantee of a much greater inheritance (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14). (CC p. 36)

They need to join Paul in praying the prayer with which he closes the epistle, μαράνα θά (“Our Lord, come!” 1 Cor 16:22). (CC p. 36)

Rienecker: 'To wait eagerly but patiently for something.' The double preposition in compound implies a degree of earnestness and intensity of expectation. The present tense emphasizes the continuous action and the participle expresses an attendance circumstance. (Buls)

Look at its uses at Romans 8:19,23,25; Galatians 5:5; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 3:20. Except for the last reference it always denotes the earnest longing of the Christian for everlasting life, the appearance of Jesus. (Buls)

Bengel: The test of the true or false Christian is his waiting for, or dreading, the revelation of Christ. (Buls)

revealing - tēn apokalupsin, “the revealing.” Not the “appearing” (*parousia*), but the unveiling of Christ visibly. See also 2 Pet 3 (Epistle for Advent 2, Series B) including the language of the Day of the Lord bringing “exposure” (v 10), not just of the reigning Christ, but of the falsity of fallen creation by the re-creation of new heavens and the new earth. Three terms give emphasis to this focus: *apokalupsin* is followed by *eōs telous* (“to the end”) in v 8a and by *tēi hēmerai tou kuriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou* (“the day of our Lord Jesus Christ”) in v 8b. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

1:8 *who*. God the Father. (CSB)

sustain you – The Lord will preserve them (and us) in the faith. They need not be distressed, thinking of their own weakness, but rather should look to the Lord. (Stoeckhardt)

The gift of Christ’s holiness made the saints holy; therefore, they will be kept “guiltless” in His innocence until His return. (TLSB)

Thus on the day when all must appear before Christ’s judgment seat (2 Cor 5:10), the Corinthians could be assured that they would be “holy, pure, and blameless” before him (Col 1:22). That day and the assessment of his life which would take place on that day were for Paul far weightier matters than any assessment of his ministry by a “human day” (1 Cor 4:3). For the Corinthians also, preoccupied as they were with the present age and its gifts, it was essential to keep the Last Day continually before their eyes. Our death may transpire before Jesus’ final coming, but the resurrection of the body and eternal life in the new creation will commence only then, at his return. We need a proper “apocalyptic” perspective—a sense that our brief lives are always lived in the shadow of eternity. Then we will not become too myopically engrossed in the joys, gifts, and cares of this world. “For,” as Paul reminds us in 7:29–31, “the form of this world is passing away.” So we live here as resident aliens, longing for our true home in heaven, “from which we await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:20). (CC pp. 36-37)

When Paul says that God will keep them “blameless” (1 Cor 1:8), he does not mean, of course, that the last advent will find them morally perfect. His assurance is that no one will be able to bring a charge against them (Rom 8:33), for Christ Jesus has become their righteousness (1 Cor 1:30). (CC p. 37)

Moreover, Paul is confident that God will keep them from falling in times of temptation (10:13; 2 Cor 1:10). (CC p. 37)

Cf. FC SD XI 32: “Holy Scripture also assures us that God who has called us will be so faithful that after ‘he has begun the good work in us’ he will also continue it to the end and complete it, if we ourselves do not turn away from him but ‘hold fast until the end the substance which has been begun’ in us. For such constancy he has promised his grace (I Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6ff.; II Pet. 3:9; Heb. 3:14).” (CC p. 37)

the end. Of the age, when Christ comes again. (CSB)

guiltless – The blamelessness of Christian does not consist in any merits on their part, but in the fact that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them by faith. (Kretzmann)

ἀνεγκλήτους—ἀνέγκλητος in the NT bears two meanings: (1) In a civil sense: “blameless” “(in the sense of civil ethics),” that is, having the reputation of a good citizen (1 Tim 3:10; Titus 1:6–7). (2) In a religious sense:

On the basis of the justification effected by the death and resurrection of Christ, Christians are spotless and irreproachable before God. No accusation can be brought against them. This will be disclosed at the last judgment. In this declaration we have a clear expression of the power of grace creating a wholly new situation. How the ἀνέγκλητος is to be understood is made perfectly plain by the question of R[om]. 8:33f.: τίς ἐγκαλέσει κατὰ ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ. ... The presupposition according to 1 C[or]. 1:8 is the help of God. (CC p. 33)

Note that the previous verse ends with a semi-colon which virtually makes verse 8 an independent clause. Now Christ Himself is the subject and the verb is in the future, telling us that He will establish the hearers. On the adjective "blameless" look at Colossians 1:22; 1 Timothy 3:10; Titus 1:6.7. It never

means "sinless." It means that no one can condemn the individual of whom it is said. The blood of Jesus Christ makes us blameless. "The day" for the individual means either at the time of death or on the last day, which every comes first. But the temporal phrase beginning with "in" makes it abundantly clear that on the last day the Lord Jesus will declare the individual believer blameless. Look at Romans 8:1. (Buls)

Bengel: 'In the day' construed with 'blameless,' 1 Thessalonians 5:23. After that day there is no danger, Ephesians 4:30; Philippians 1:6. Now there are our own days, in which we work, days of enemies, by whom we are tried; then shall be the day of Christ and his glory in the saints. (Buls)

Lenski: The future tense 'shall confirm you' has the force of divine promise. The verb 'blameless' is forensic. (Buls)

Correct. We are justified, forgiven, reconciled to God, made blameless forensically because of the blood of Jesus Christ. (Buls)

Kretzmann: This blamelessness consists in the fact that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them by faith, Philippians 3:9. (Buls)

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Art. XI, Election, Tappert 621,32: In the same vein Holy Scripture also assures us that God who has called us will be so faithful that after 'he has begun the good work in us' he will also continue it to the end and complete it, if we ourselves do not turn away from him but 'hold fast until the end of the substance which has been begun' in us. for such constancy he has promised his grace, 1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6ff; 2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 3:14. (Buls)

anengklētous, "guiltless." The adjective can be used in the civil sense (in civil ethics) or in a spiritual/religious sense. "On the basis of the justification effected by the death and resurrection of Christ, Christians are spotless and irreproachable before God. No accusation can be brought against them (see Rom 8:33). . . . In this declaration we have a clear expression of the power of grace creating a wholly new situation" (Walter Grundmann, *TDNT*, 1:357). Other judicial renderings of *anengklētous* might be "not subject to accusation" or "not able to be indicted." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

We are not guiltless/blameless so that we are ready for "the Day." We are ready for (we are "sustained" to) the end, the Day, the revealing, because we are guiltless in Christ. And it should also be noted—and declared—that after the Day, there is no danger to those redeemed and rescued by Jesus Christ. (See also 2 Pet 3:14b, the final verse in next Sunday's Epistle.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he returns (v. 7; Php 1:6). (CSB)

ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν—The OT expression יְהוָה יוֹם, "the day of the Lord" (e.g., Joel 1:15; 2:1–2; Amos 5:18–20), lies in the background. (CC p. 33)

Telous, "end," and *tēi hēmerai tou kuriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou*, "day of the our Lord Jesus Christ." The apocalypse of Christ (v 7a) is the end; it is the Day of the Lord. These expressions—written with Hebraic parallelism—are filled with Advent implications. Paul will write later in this letter: "The present form of this world is passing away" (7:31b). It will pass away because of God's action. (See the notes on 2 Pet 3:8–14 prepared for the Second Sunday in Advent's proclamation.) The Confessions include 1 Cor 1:8 (and 2 Pet 3:9 for Advent 2) as references. See Robert Kolb, Timothy Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 646:32. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

1:9 fellowship – εἰς κοινωνίαν—The word κοινωνία (“communion”) has a broad semantic range, including “a society, a fellowship, an association, the right of participation,” “generosity, fellow-feeling, altruism” (BAGD, s.v. κοινωνία, 2), “sign of fellowship, proof of brotherly unity,” even “gift, contribution” (BAGD, s.v. κοινωνία, 3). Basically the words in the κοινόν group signify “to share with someone in something.” In 1 Corinthians Paul uses the κοινόν words for the participation of the believer in Christ (1:9), in the blessings of the Gospel of Christ (9:23), and in the body and blood of Christ (10:16). The term is packed with theological significance in a context where the congregation was threatening to fly apart, forgetting the precious κοινωνία in Christ on which it had been constituted. (CC pp. 33-34)

English versions commonly translate κοινωνία as “fellowship” (RSV, NRSV, KJV, NKJV, NIV, GNB). The rendering “communion” may be freer of secular associations, and it better preserves the link with the Holy Communion text in 10:16. (CC p.34)

As a sign that the one who had called them would see his good work through to the end (cf. Phil 1:6), Paul points to the blessed fellowship the Corinthians already enjoyed in Christ. This fellowship (κοινωνία, “communion”) involved far more than some kind of vague relationship with Christ. It meant, rather, an actual participation in him, a union with him through faith and Baptism into his body, so that their bodies were now in a mysterious way members of his body (6:15; 12:13). This deep communion was constantly nourished by the Gospel and Christ’s true body and blood in the Sacrament of Holy Communion (9:23; 10:16). (CC p. 37)

G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 45, and H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 29, n. 47, doubt that Paul is alluding to the Lord’s Supper here in 1:9, but they advance no solid reasons for eliminating this aspect from the picture. As the only other occurrence of κοινωνία in the letter is in 10:16, where it clearly refers to communion in Holy Communion, it seems likely Paul also has this aspect in mind in 1:9. Cf. R. C. H. Lenski, *St. Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 35: “In this life our communion with Christ is mediated ... by Word and sacrament, ... by which he makes his abode with us and dwells in us. There is no fellowship of Christ with us apart from his Word and sacrament.” (CC pp. 37-38)

Communion with Christ is in turn the basis for communion among Christians (Acts 2:42; 1 Jn 1:3). In drawing people into communion with his Son as members of his body, God draws them into a close and deep relationship with one another. From the outset Paul is reminding the Corinthians that their “communion” (κοινωνία, 1 Cor 1:9) in Christ rules out all factionalism and individualism (1:10–11). Paul would have no time for the modern attitude that “my Christianity is something between me and my God.” (CC p. 38)

Note both natures of Christ in the words “of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.” There is no stronger human bond than that which exists between the God-man, Jesus Christ, and the believer. It is from eternity, brought to pass in time, and will last forever. Nothing can compare with it among mere men. (Buls)

Eis koinōnian, “into fellowship.” This is more than a vague relationship with Jesus. (Witness the fuzzy spiritual language in many parts of modern Christendom.) This fellowship is grounded in the waters of Baptism, by which an isolated individual becomes part of the Body (1 Cor 6:15; 12:13). This union, this communion, this participation with Christ—and with other believers!—is nourished in the Gospel of Christ’s body and blood in his Supper (9:23; 10:16). The First Letter to the Corinthians deals with many distortions, implications, and applications of this divine gift. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Vv 3–9: Finally, we note the repetition of “Jesus Christ” throughout the appointed Epistle. Our Lord’s name occurs six times in these seven verses, each with different words preceding it. In light of the naming of the Messiah in prophetic Word and in the Gospel accounts (Mt 1; Lk 1–2), careful attention could (should!) be given to each phrase. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

God ... is faithful. He may be trusted to do what he has promised (1Th 5:24), namely, to keep believers “strong to the end” (v. 8). (CSB)

πιστὸς ὁ θεός—Paul places the adjective πιστός (“faithful”) first for emphasis (“faithful is God”), as he does in 1 Cor 10:13. God’s faithfulness in keeping his promises is assumed throughout the Scriptures. (CC p. 33)

He can assure them that God will sustain them to the end because he knows “God is faithful” (1 Cor 1:9). God’s faithfulness is one of his outstanding attributes, according to the Scriptures. Whereas every human being has an innate tendency toward lying and deception (Rom 3:4; cf. Ps 116:11), God “never lies” (Titus 1:2). He is “the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love” (Deut 7:9) and can be counted on to say “yes” and “amen” to all his promises (2 Cor 1:18–20). (Cf. 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3) Thus he is worthy of the Christian’s total confidence. (CC p. 37)

Even when we are faithless (2 Tim. 2:13), God will sustain those who are “called.” (TLSB)

In Greek "faithful" is a predicate adjective placed forward for the sake of emphasis. Look at 2 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; Hebrews 10:23; 11:11; 1 John 1:9, where you have the same phenomenon. In addition to these references see 2 Timothy 2:13; Revelation 1:5; and Deuteronomy 7:9. When "faith" is applied to God it means He keeps His promises. (Buls)

Bengel: He performs what He has promised. (Buls)

Lenski: The passive verb itself contains the idea that God is the agent. His faithfulness reaches back to the very first moment of our saving contact with him. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The final, the deepest ground of Paul's hope for the salvation of the Corinthian Christians is the fidelity of God: Faithful is God, through whom you are chosen to the fellowship of His son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Our election to the fellowship of His son, Jesus Christ, the fact that we have been brought to faith by Him and have thus been united with Him in that wonderful spiritual union of members in His body, is His earnest-money to us that our salvation is secure in His hands. (Buls)

Luther: What Christ has begun in you, and what He has already given you, in that He will surely keep you to the end and into eternity, if only you do not willfully fall from it and cast it from you. For His Word and promise, given you, and His work, which he performs in you, is not changeable like men's word and work, but sure, certain, and divinely immovable truth. Since, then, you have such a divine call, take comfort in it and rely upon it firmly. (Buls)

pistos ho theos, “faithful is God.” Note the significant word order. “Faithful” is given pride of place. All contemporary English translations reverse the words: “God is faithful.” (And some are quite weak, e.g. “God faithfully keeps his promises” [God’s Word to the Nations] and “God can be trusted” [Contemporary English Version], even though these are true statements of God’s character.) No popular translation puts “faithful” first in this verse. *Pistos* is also an expressive bookend to the *charis*, which is the initial word of the text (v 3a). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Beck says, “You can depend on God, who called you.” The Good News says, “God is to be trusted.” The adjective “pistos” is placed emphatically forward and means trustworthy, reliable. If we were left to depend on ourselves we should surely be lost, but we can trust God completely. (Lenski)

2 Timothy 2:13 “if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”

Hebrews 11:11 “By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he^a considered him faithful who had made the promise..”

called – Kretzmann sees election in this verse. That is reminiscent of the Predestinarian Controversy between the Ohio and Missouri Synods one hundred (sic) years ago. On the word "called" look at Romans 8:30. Kretzmann is surely right. We end with a well-known quote from Luther's Large Catechism, the Creed, Tappert 417, 51-53. (Buls)

This is the sum and substance of this phrase (communion of saints): I believe that there is on earth a little holy flock or community of pure saints under one head, Christ. It is called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, mind, and understanding. It possesses a variety of gifts, yet is united in love without sect or schism. Of this community I also am a part and member, a participant and co-partner, 1 Corinthians 1:9, in all the blessings it possesses. I was brought to it by the Holy Spirit and incorporated into it through the fact that I have heard and still hear God's Word, which is the first step in entering it. Before we had advanced this far, we were entirely of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ. Until the last day the Holy Spirit remains with the holy community of Christian people. Through it he gathers us, using it to teach and preach the Word. By it he creates and increases sanctification, causing it daily to grow and become strong in the faith and in the fruits of the Spirit. (Buls)

1:4–9 Paul highlights the strengths of the congregation, strengths God extends to all believers by His grace. We rejoice in our relationship to God: He has called us and sanctified us, and He will sustain us. • We hear Your call, heavenly Father, in the Gospel of Your Son. Keep us to the end. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – John 1:29-42a

Behold the Lamb of God

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! **30** This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ **31** I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” **32** And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. **33** I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ **34** And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

1:29-41 An epiphany—a manifestation of the divine or a sudden perception of a thing’s essential meaning or nature—calls for response, reaction. When the Magi learned of the newborn King, they sought and worshiped him. So do we. At his Baptism, Jesus was declared the Son of God and empowered by the Spirit for ministry. In our Baptism, we were made children of God and filled with the Spirit for our role in the church. The proclamation of Jesus as Son of God and the world’s Savior moved those who heard to share the good news. God intends us to do the same so that Epiphany may be a constantly occurring event. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 1)

Last week, in the baptism of our Lord, we encountered the very first words Jesus speaks in Matthew's Gospel. In this week's text, we have the first words Jesus speaks in John's Gospel. Consider the import of these words, which the Holy Spirit led these writers to use as the first words of Christ in their Gospel accounts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 1)

In connection with John referring to Jesus as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world," many commentaries will direct you to Passover imagery. I prefer the imagery of the Day of Atonement. In Leviticus 16 we learn that the high priest casts lots for the two goats used on the day, "one lot for the Lord, the other for the scapegoat" (Lev 16:8). The goat whose lot fell for the Lord was sacrificed as a sin offering. Over time this goat became known as "the Lamb of God." This imagery is a significant background to John's use of the term "Lamb of God" with respect to Jesus, especially with the specific addition "who takes away the sin of the world." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 1)

An understanding of what John made Jesus out to be, "the Lamb of God," would come from a familiarity with the Seder meal narrative (Haggadah) for Passover. For the Passover festival, God commanded Israel to retell his rescue of them (Ex 13:8) every year. The retelling would serve as a constant reminder of his grace and mercy and also as a prophetic preparation for the Messiah to come for complete and final rescue. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

Jesus is this final Paschal Lamb whose blood we need placed on (that is, in) our bodies so that death will pass over us. And we do eat and drink this greater paschal meal in the Lord's Supper, the New Testament Seder: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

1:29-31 John the Baptist's purpose (like John the evangelist's) was to bear witness to who the Messiah would be and then to point him out. This he did in word but, interestingly, through the waters of Baptism as well (v 31). His Baptism was one of repentance, making ready for the Gospel and Spirit that came in Jesus. That is, his Baptism was to lead everyone to the Christ as Savior. Now having the Word himself in the water, John saw Jesus revealed as the Savior, by the Spirit in visible form. Jesus reveals himself to us through Word and water by the same Spirit today. This should not be surprising, as Luke points out in the Emmaus story that those two disciples only recognized Jesus at the breaking of the bread (Lk 24:13-32). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

1:29 *next day* – This is the day following events/day of vv. 19-28. John may not be using precise reckoning of time but may be creating a comparison with the six-day creation. He began his account with creation themes from Genesis, including reference to "light" (which forms days vv. 1-4) and water (an important element of creation; vv. 26-34). Vv. 19-51 suggest a passages of four days (day 1, vv. 19-28; day 2, vv. 29-34; day 3, vv. 35-42; day vv. 43-51). At 2:1 John begins to count again, starting on day 4. So "on the third day" (2:1) would make a total of six days – a week that ends with yet another Genesis theme: the blessing of marriage (cf. Gn. 1:28; 2:18-25). On expressions for time and reckoning, see p. 1567. John ends his account with another six-day period: Holy Week (12:1). (TLSB)

look – "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (v 29) is the first and most complete one. This proclaims law and gospel as succinctly as it can be stated. John the Baptist wants Jesus and his identity to grab and hold the attention of his hearers. There is a sense of excitement in John's imperative "Look!" excitement generated by the identity of the One approaching, "the Lamb of God." The expression "Lamb of God" has a rich Old Testament background that would have been more familiar to the original hearers. There was the Passover lamb, whose shed blood averted the destroyer of the firstborn, and who was eaten in an annual sacred meal commemorating God's deliverance (Ex 12:11-13; see Paul's application of it to Christ in 1 Cor 5:7). There also was the lamb of daily sacrifice (Ex

29:38–42), and the lamb led to slaughter in Isaiah 53:7—Yahweh’s Suffering Servant. All these sacrificial lambs foreshadowed this Lamb of sacrifice “who takes away the sin of the world.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 1)

Lamb of God.† An expression found in the Bible only here and in v. 36. Many suggestions have been made as to its precise meaning (e.g., the lamb offered at Passover, or the lamb of Isa 53:7, of Jer 11:19 or of Ge 22:8). But the expression seems to be a general reference to sacrifice, not the name for a particular offering. John was saying that Jesus would be the sacrifice that would atone for the sin of the world. In Jn 1:29, 36 the Greek is *amnos* for Lamb. In only one other book in the NT is Jesus called Lamb—about 30 occurrences in Revelation, also written by John. There in each case the Greek is *arnion*. (CSB)

This has rich OT background and would have been familiar to the original hearers. There was the Passover lamb, whose blood averted the destroyer of the firstborn and who was eaten in an annual sacred meal commemorating God’ deliverance (Ex 12:11-13). There also was the lamb of daily sacrifice (Ex 29:38-42), and the lamb led to the slaughter in Isaiah 53:7 – The Suffering Servant. All these sacrificial lambs foreshadowed this Lamb of sacrifice who would take away the sin of the world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 1)

“The Lamb of God” (*ho amnos tou theou*) is a title for Jesus. From the Baptizer’s statement the Church receives the Agnus Dei canticle, sung during the Divine Service. The same title will be given to Jesus in Revelation, especially in the words of another Divine Service canticle, Dignus est Agnus (“Worthy Is the Lamb”). From the earliest times in the Old Testament economy, *lamb* specifically referred to sacrifice (Gen 4:4; 22:7; Ex 29:38–42), so this symbolism would have been unmistakable to John’s hearers. “Who takes away the sin of the world” indicates that Christ’s mission will be for more than the descendants of Israel. It will be for all nations. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 1)

Lamb of God. amnos tou theou is used to refer to a lamb that was sacrificed in the Old Testament. The Septuagint uses *amnos* when it refers to the Paschal Lamb. In light of the Psalm for this Sunday, we should consider that ram caught in the bushes after God stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac (Gen 22:8, 13). God must provide, since our offerings, no matter the cost, remain inadequate. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

Exodus 29:38-42, ³⁸ “This is what you are to offer on the altar regularly each day: two lambs a year old. ³⁹ Offer one in the morning and the other at twilight. ⁴⁰ With the first lamb offer a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil from pressed olives, and a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering. ⁴¹ Sacrifice the other lamb at twilight with the same grain offering and its drink offering as in the morning—a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire. ⁴² “For the generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before the LORD. There I will meet you and speak to you.

John the Baptist is a beautiful example of how all of us can and should introduce others to Jesus. By what we say and do we want to call the attention of others to this great messenger of God. We want them to realize who He is, and what He has done, and then accept Him by faith. Sometimes witnesses attract so much attention to themselves that others never notice Jesus. The faithful witness will say as John did, “I’ am not the one you need. Jesus is. Follow Him.” (LL)

This lamb was provided by God and sent out by God. The Lamb of God first took the load of sin off the world onto Himself, then rolled it off from Himself. Luther says, “It is extremely important that we know where our sins have been disposed of. The Law deposits them on our conscience and shoves them into our bosom. But God takes them from us and places them on the shoulders of the Lamb. If sin rested on

me and on the world, we would be lost; for it is too strong and burdensome. God says: “I know that your sin is unbearable for you; therefore behold, I will lay it upon My Lamb and relieve you of it. Believe this! If you do, you are delivered of sin.” There are only two abodes for sin: it either resides with you, weighing you down; or it lies on Christ, the Lamb of God. If it is loaded on your back, you are lost; but if it rests on Christ, you are free and saved.” (LW Vol. 22 – pp 169-170)

takes away – The Greek *airo* is “bearing off,” “getting rid of,” or “carrying away.” John the Baptist alluded to the scapegoat carrying the people’s sins away (Lv. 16:21-22). Luther: “(The Son of God) says to me: ‘You are no longer a sinner, but I am. I am your substitute... All your sins are to rest on Me and not on you’” (AE 22:167). (TLSB)

Takes away. The meaning of *airō* is “to take up” and “carry.” Jesus uses it to call to us: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and *take up* his cross” (Mt 16:24). It can also refer to that which we take “*along for the journey*” (William Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature: A Translation and Adaption of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer’s Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der Übrigen Urchristlichen Literatur* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979], 24). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

sin of the world – The singular “sin” shows the abominable condition of the entire race in its state of rebellion, separation from God and spiritual death. – The use of the word *kosmos*, “world” may be John’s way of emphasizing the cosmic significance of Christ’s atoning work. All of sin, its guilt and shame, as well as its rippling results in throwing the whole created order out of right relationship with God, is removed in Christ Jesus. Not just the sin of humankind, but that sin’s effect in the world is the target of Christ’s atoning work. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 1)

The singular “sin” raises attention above individual sins (which people attempt to play down and excuse) to the abominable condition of the entire human race in its state of rebellion, separation from God, and spiritual death. It is this whole deadly mess which the Lamb of God removes, lifting it off us by his sacrifice (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Jn 1:7). John is very deliberate in identifying Jesus as the one greater than he, the Messiah for whom Israel was waiting (vv 30–31; note the interplay of the carefully chosen Greek prepositions: “after me . . . surpassed me . . . before me”). When Jesus was baptized, John recognized him as the very Son of God (vv 32–34), and he testified to that effect; the revelation led to action. Seeing the Spirit “remain” on Christ is significant in that it marks Jesus as the one to whom “God gives the Spirit without limit” (Jn 3:34), unlike many of the leaders in the Old Testament, such as Samson, upon whom the Spirit would rush only at certain times (Judg 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14; 16:17). It also marks Christ as the co-sender of the Spirit (Jn 16:1–16; cf. the *Filioque* in the Nicene Creed). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 1)

World, kosmou, has for its first meaning in most lexicons the entire universe. Anyone would be hard-pressed to limit this scope to only a few, or only those whom Christ intended to save, that is, the elect. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

1:30 *a man* – *avar* – A true man. But He was before John because He is the eternal God. John knew Jesus was the God-man.

“A man who ranks before me” (*anēr hos emprosthen mou gegonen*, literally “a man who has become before me”). The Baptizer’s words are his recognition of his place relative to Jesus: Jesus is greater than he. As he testifies to the Pharisees earlier in the chapter, John knows that he is not the Christ, but simply

his forerunner (Jn 1:23), and that he is of lesser rank (Jn 1:27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 1)

1:31 *I ... did not know him.* John the Baptist, who “lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel” (Lk 1:80), may not have known Jesus at all. But the words probably mean only that he did not know that Jesus was the Messiah until he saw the sign mentioned in vv. 32–33. (CSB)

John knew Jesus (they were cousins; cf. Luke 1:36), but until Jesus was baptized, John did not know that He was the Messiah (cf. V. 33). (TLSB)

I came baptizing – “For this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed [*phanerōthēi*] to Israel.” John speaks of his purpose—to reveal the Christ to Israel. This is the theme of the Epiphany season, the manifestation or revelation of the Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 1)

revealed to Israel – As the forerunner of Christ, John’s mission was to make Jesus manifest as Messiah to His own nation. (TLSB)

So that he might be revealed, phanerōthēi, “intentional” subjunctive passive. It was John’s job to baptize and proclaim (“for this purpose I came,” Jn 1:31), and through this Word and water was the Messiah to be revealed. It was no mere wish, but God’s intended outcome. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

1:32-34 Here John describes Jesus’ Baptism. “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (v 33). John indicates that he did not know that Jesus was the Christ until seeing the Holy Spirit’s descent upon him. This shows the importance of Jesus’ Baptism for knowing that he is the Christ. Having seen it, John bears witness about the divine identity of Jesus, only known by the Father’s revelation to him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 1)

1:32 This is testimony of what happened at the Baptism of Jesus. (CSB)

John saw the Spirit remain on Christ (v 33), thus anointing Him as the Messiah. (TLSB)

dove. Cf Gn 8:8–12. An animal associated with the services of the temple. Cf Lv 1:14; Lk 2:24. (TLSB)

We are reminded here of how the Spirit hovered over the depths at creation, together with the Word. Just as in the beginning, the Father spoke, and that which was not was. Here we have the new creation taking place, again through the Word sent by the Father, together with the Holy Spirit and water. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

It was significant that the Spirit remained on Jesus because God the Father had told John to watch for this sign to identify Him. (PBC)

1:33 John the Baptist, like the OT prophets, received direct revelation from God. (TLSB)

he ... will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John baptized with water, but Jesus would baptize with the Spirit. If a specific event is intended by these words, the fulfillment was the sending of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2). – John’s baptism was Christian. It differed from that of Mt. 28:19 in only two respects: a) It was for Israel only; b) It was under the Old Covenant whereas that of Mt. 28:19 took place

after all had been fulfilled. Some commentators call it “preparatory” but that does not mean that it was not a true means of grace. John does not say that there are two baptisms or that his baptism is inferior. He is stressing the fact that he is not Christ, but is His forerunner. Since Pentecost, all who receive Christian baptism receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit. (CSB)

The One upon whom the Spirit came at His Baptism now gives the Spirit through Holy Baptism (Ti 3:5). Luther: “Thus our Baptism in Christ, in which He gives us remission of sin, baptizing us with the Holy Spirit and with forgiveness, remains and continues to be effective” (AE 22:179). (TLSB)

In v 33, the NIV translates, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who *will* baptize with the Holy Spirit” (emphasis added). Though translated as future, the tense is actually present. Hence, “is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” This present tense helps to dispel any attempt to construe that Christ was without the Holy Spirit prior to its descent upon him at his baptism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 1)

Some may make too large a distinction between John’s Baptism and future Baptisms after Pentecost. It is not that John’s work was devoid of the Holy Spirit, but rather it was not all that this gift was to be—not until after everything was complete and fulfilled. The full gift had not yet been sent. The Spirit did not remain on anyone else but Jesus until after he had been sent to all, on the Day of Pentecost. Now he remains on all who are baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:38–39; Rom 6:3–10). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

1:34–39 Here is where we see John “decreasing” as Jesus must “increase.” That was why John was sent—to bear witness and send people on the “straightened path” to their Savior. John was the best man, leading the Bride to the Bridegroom. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

1:34 *I have born witness* – God Himself gave the Baptist the unmistakable proof which led to the unshakable testimony that Jesus is, in very truth, the eternal Son of God. John’s testimony lives to this day.

The apostle John does not record the baptism of Jesus in his Gospel. Instead, he has John the Baptizer relate parts of what took place in connection with Christ’s baptism, as John now points his disciples to following Jesus. John is lesser; Jesus is greater. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 1)

Son of God. See vv. 14, 18; 3:16; 20:31. (CSB)

This title bears witness to God the Father’s words from heaven (Mt. 3:17; Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:22) declaring Christ’s unique relationship to His Father (cf. Ps 2). Jesus is “very God of very God, begotten not made” (Nicene Creed). (TLSB)

1:29–34 John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world—the very Son of God, on whom the Holy Spirit rested at His Baptism. Today, the Lord gives His Spirit in Holy Baptism. To regard Christian Baptism as a symbolic act is to despise a precious treasure. In Baptism, Jesus Christ has taken away our sin, and the Spirit daily assures us of His merciful goodness toward us. • O Lamb of God, send Your Spirit with Your gracious pardon, and silence my accusing conscience. Amen. (TLSB)

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, **“What are you seeking?”** And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” 39 He said to them, **“Come and you will see.”** So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, **“We have found the Messiah”** (which means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, **“You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas”** (which means Peter).

1:35-37 “The next day” shows us the consecutive nature of events. “With two of his disciples.” John had his own followers who believed his prophecy. Now two of them believe John’s testimony about Jesus, “and they followed Jesus.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 1)

1:35 *two*. One was Andrew (v. 40). The other is not named, but from early times it has been thought that he was the author of this Gospel. (CSB)

Andrew was one (V. 40). Commentators agree that the other must have been John, the Evangelist.

his disciples. In the sense that they had been baptized by John and looked to him as their religious teacher. (CSB)

1:36 *Lamb of God*. It was if he had said, “Look, there is the man you need to follow.

There is the long-awaited Savior. Why are you standing here with me? Go to Him – now!” (PBC)

1:37 *they followed Jesus* – God worked through Word of the Baptist to cause his own disciples to follow Jesus. God still uses His Word to make disciples. (TLSB)

1:38 *Rabbi* – This literally means “my great one” and which John translates as “teacher” for his gentile readers. (PBC)

“Rabbi.” The Hebrew title used by John’s disciples shows their recognition of Jesus as one to follow. They place themselves underneath Jesus as students, just as John placed himself underneath Jesus as the one who ranked before him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 1)

saw them following – *theasamenos* – This root from which the word “theater” is derived, denotes more than mere seeing or looking. He was interested in them.

What are you seeking – Jesus question implies that they want to see Him. – It was a penetrating question, meant to get those who follow Jesus to think about what they expect to get from Him. We will learn soon enough about some who were wanting things from Jesus that He didn’t come to give, such as earthly prosperity, political power, and deliverance from the Roman oppressors. (PBC)

where are you staying – Their answer turned the focus properly back on Jesus. They wanted to stay with Jesus, learn from Him and get from Him what He had to offer them. Should any disciple want anything more? (PBC)

Not an unreasonable question; they want to find out where to receive this new rabbi’s teaching. (TLSB)

Remain. menō means “to stay, dwell, or abide.” This is third person singular, but its subject is the “dove,” which is masculine. The ESV has “it remained” (v 32), but we could as easily say “he remained,” as God is always “he” and the Spirit is never feminine. In v 33, this verb is present active, so can we conclude that John still sees the Spirit remaining on Jesus, approximately forty days later? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

1:39 *come* – He opens the door to them that very instant as if He had been expecting them. Nothing is easier than to get an audience with Jesus.

The respectful title “Rabbi” indicates that like Nicodemus, who used the same title later (Jn 3:2), the men were sincerely expecting to learn truths of God from Jesus. When Jesus invited them to his home, he surely had much more in mind for the two seekers than a social visit. As he did so often in the years following, he taught them about himself and the coming of the kingdom of heaven. It was the beginning of their experience of living with the Word made flesh (see Lenski on Jn 14:8). What a blessed time as they “spent that day with him”! (The tenth hour after sunrise would be about 4 p.m.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 1)

they stayed the day with him – “And they stayed with him that day.” John’s two disciples are now Christ’s disciples. They stay with Jesus and begin learning from him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 1)

tenth hour. 4:00 P.M. JEWISH TIME. IF JOHN WERE USING ROMAN TIME, 10:00 A.M. (CSB)

10 a.m. according to Roman time, which John seems to use. He reckons time differently from the other Gospels. (TLSB)

The exact time here may be less important than John’s mention of the time. This detail suggests that he was there, that he was one of the two disciples. The idea is strengthened when, in turn, he names only one of the two, a strange decision unless he was merely consistent in not naming himself in his Gospel. (PBC)

1:40-41 Hearing John’s testimony, the very words of God, caused Andrew to believe that Jesus was the one for whom Israel was waiting: “We have found the Messiah.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

1:40 *Andrew* – Assumes readers’ knowledge of previous Gospels or Christian teaching as Peter is not previously introduced in John. Andrew came to Christ first and led his well-known brother to the Lord. (TLSB)

“One of the two . . . was Andrew.” The evangelist gives us the identity of one of John’s disciples. Though not a member of the innermost circle of Peter, James, and John, Andrew can claim the status of the first of the Twelve to follow Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 1)

1:41 *find his brother* - While there are textual variants, the reading *prōton* is best understood as an adverb. The following morning, “the first thing” Andrew did was locate his brother, indicating both his eagerness to share his amazing discovery and his love for his relative. How very simply the great ministry of the apostle Peter was launched! “Found the Messiah” may say what Andrew thought had happened, but who found whom? Nevertheless, there is a bold, though embryonic, confession of Jesus as the long-awaited Christ. “In Jewish lips ‘We have found the Messiah’ was the most comprehensive of all Eureka’s”

(Dods, quoted in Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971] p. 159 note 93). This technical term, “Messiah,” occurs only here and in 4:25 in the New Testament, though “Christ” is of course the Greek equivalent. Many hearts longed for the promised One to come. The full significance of “Messiah” and terms like “Light of the world,” “Word made flesh,” and “Son of God” would come much later. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 1)

the Messiah – Out of the OT he gathers the truth that if Jesus is the Lamb of God and God’s Son, then He must be the Messiah. He wants to share this great news with someone close to him like his brother. (CSB)

Messiah (Christ). *Messias* is transliterated from the Hebrew. It means “a consecrated or anointed person. . . . In ancient times not only the king, but also the priest and the prophet were consecrated to their calling by being anointed” (2. Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. [Chattanooga: AMG Publishers], 1993). It is curious that at first (v 38), Andrew referred to Jesus as “Rabbi,” but then, perhaps from further reflection on John’s words, he calls him the Messiah. Even though there were many ideas as to who this Messiah would be, Andrew at least here is connecting Jesus with the removal of sin—this rather than the more popular idea of the Messiah returning Israel to its former earthly glory under David and Solomon. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)

Once again John remembered to translate the Aramaic term for his Greek readers. Andrew had found the “Messiah,” which is the “Christ.” (PBC)

“We have found the Messiah” (v 41) is the third Epiphany declaration about Jesus. Like “the Lamb of God,” the key theological term *Messiah* has a rich Scriptural background, including 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 2. One of the former disciples of John the Baptist is identified as Andrew. Most commentators agree that John, the future apostle and gospel writer, was the other. With characteristic humility, he fails to identify himself, just as elsewhere in his gospel he omits his name and designates himself with the periphrastic description “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” That self-effacing humility is a model for how the person of the preacher should not obstruct the congregation’s view of Christ; we should minister so that they see him, not us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 1)

“‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ).” Andrew fully believes his former teacher’s confession about Jesus’ identity. In his exuberance, he is the first to spread that testimony to another who had not heard the Baptizer’s own words. Here Simon, Andrew’s brother, is brought to Jesus, where he will be rechristened as Cephas (v 42b). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 1)

1:42 *Peter*. † In the Gospels, Peter was anything but a rock; he was impulsive and unstable. In Acts, he was a pillar of the early church. Jesus named him not for what he was but for what, by God’s grace, he would become. (CSB)

John? Peter’s father, Jonah of Bethsaida (cf Mt 16:17). (TLSB)

Jesus looks at Peter and says, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (v 42). The naming or the renaming of an individual is rooted to the original creation when God asks man (Adam) to name the animals (Gen 2:19). By naming animals, man shows power and authority over, the animals. “You made him ruler over the works, of your hands; you put everything under his feet.” (Ps 8:6) Now Jesus, by renaming Simon, makes a claim on him. Peter means “rock” or “rocklike.” Jesus’ claim on Peter’s discipleship and the shape of that discipleship are seen in his renaming of Simon. From Peter’s bold confession to his preaching, from his courage under fire to his legendary martyrdom, Peter’s name described his life as a disciple. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

At every Baptism we call out the name of the baptized in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Lord then has authority over the baptized, for the baptized is called forth from the world to a new identity with Christ (Is 43:1). Baptism is God redesigning his people for discipleship. Daily baptismal renewal is a reidentification with Christ and a rejection of the world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

When Jesus renames Simon, he is pointing out what he will be, not what he is now. Peter will go from one who tends to bend in the wind to a pillar of the Church, as Paul calls him (Gal 2:9). Peter will become steadfast and stalwart, a “rock,” even to the point of being led off to die for his Lord. This was not always the case, as his triple denial at Jesus’ trial shows. Paul also reminds us of his failure when facing the Judaizers (Gal 2:11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 1)