

**EXEGETICAL  
NOTES  
EPISTLE  
TEXTS**

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**Series B**

**Festival Season Sundays**

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Advent I: I Cor. 1:1-9: Paul Greet the Corinthian Christians.

1. Kretzmann has a nice summary of the situation at Corinth: "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 unchastity, 5:1-11; 6:15-18; 11:21. . . . Factions were formed in the congregation which tended to disrupt the entire work of Paul, I Cor. 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 unchastity, 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 feasts 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, chapters 12 and 14; some even denied the resurrection of the dead, 15:12."
2. Vs. 1: Note that klētos, a passive verbal adjective, is used of Paul, vs. 1, and of the Corinthians, vs. 2. His conversion and status as an Apostle were only through God's call. Their conversion was only through God's call. Christou Jēsou is subjective genitive. Christ made him an apostle. The thelēma theou here is God's gracious will. Bengel quotes II Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1, Col. 1:1 and II Tim. 1:1 on "by the will of God" and then adds: "This is the ground of his authority toward the churches and of a lowly and zealous disposition in Paul himself." 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." Kretzmann: "The call of Christ and the will of God have worked together in conferring upon him this distinction (of being an apostle)." 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. Reinecker: "Probably the Sosthenes of Acts 18:17." Lenski denies this. Kretzmann says: "Whether this man was the same as the one named in Acts 18:16, cannot be ascertained; at any rate, he must have been known and esteemed in the congregation at Corinth as a brother in the Lord." Sosthenes is not called an apostle but "the brother." Perhaps the ministry was his primary occupation. Lenski suggests: "Sosthenes and Paul had talked over all the contents of this letter and had fully agreed on all that is here transmitted." That makes sense.
3. Vs. 2: Now follows the addressees. On the word ekklēsia, Bengel notes: "Writing somewhat familiarly to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, and Galatians, (Paul) uses the term 'church'; to the others he employs a more formal periphrasis." ekklēsia is a collective noun, denoting a local congregation. It is modified by theou. Reinecker says: "The genitive is possessive and is at once a protest against party spirit, the church of God, not of any one individual." On theou Lenski says: "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." Kretzmann says: "In addressing the Corinthians, (Paul) charitably assumes that they are all members of the true congregation of the Lord, of the communion of saints." And then he adds: "This is shown by the explanation: to them that

are sanctified in Christ Jesus, to the chosen saints." hēgiasmenois, as many perfect participles, denotes an existing state. hagiazō means to "set aside." In conversion, for Jesus' sake, God sets the Christian aside for Himself and His service. en Christō, an adverbial prepositional phrase denoting cause. Only because of what Christ did for them are they sanctified. Note that hagiois, a common term in the NT for Christians, emphasizes the idea in hēgiasmenois and klētois means that they have become such only through the call of the Spirit in the means of grace. Rienecker: "hēgiasmenois, the perfect emphasizes the state or condition resulting from a previous action." On the same word Bengel says: "Those who have been claimed for God. Making a prelude already to the discussion, he (Paul) reminds the Corinthians of their own dignity, lest they enslave themselves to men." Lenski: "The idea expressed in hagiazein 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. . . . Appositionally Paul now adds 'called as saints.'" The remainder of the sentence which begins with the preposition syn is in apposition to the words from hēgiasmenois to hagiois. syn means "along with." 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. On epikaleomai cf. Acts 2:21; 7:59; 9:14.21; 15:17; 22:16; Rom. 10:12.13.14 and II Tim. 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." (Rom. 10:13). In other words hoi epikaloumenoi is a synonym for "Christian" but reminds us that their faith is active in praying and confessing the name of Jesus. Rienecker notes: "The present tense emphasizes the habitual act which characterizes their life." Bengel says: "The consideration of the Church universal frees the mind from party bias, and sways it to obedience. It is therefore at once suggested to the Corinthians." "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 in panti topō 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 man through the Gospel. The final three words in vs. 2 are elliptical for "both their Lord and ours." RSV. JB has an interesting translation "for he is their Lord no less than ours." Rienecker says: "Christians share in a common holiness because they share a common Lord." Very likely the antecedent of autōn is pasin and the antecedent of hēmōn is Paul, Sosthenes and the Corinthians. The point is the universality.

4. Vs. 3: We become so accustomed to this verse that it loses its force for us. charis is the unmerited kindness of God which caused Him to redeem us through Christ. eirēnē 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 kai plainly shows the divinity of Jesus. By the way, note well the expression Christos Jēsous or Jēsous Christos in every vs. of our text, with the exception of vs. 6 where it is only Christos. Let's look at every case: in vs. 1 Christ called Paul as Apostle; in vs. 2 we have been set aside only because of Christ Jesus and He is mentioned again at the end of the verse; in vs. 3 the two nouns which summarize Christianity (charis kai eirēnē) have their origin in Christ; in vs. 4 grace is ours only as a gift in Christ; in vs. 5, He is referred to by the pronoun autō, the source of our wealth, in vs. 6 His testimony has confirmed us; in vs. 7 we are assured that He will come

again; vs. 8 of our Lord on the last day; and, vs. 9 speaks of our fellowship with Jesus Christ. A remarkable repetition throughout our text. On this vs. Lenski observes: "The order of these two, grace and peace, remains constant, grace always first, peace always second." He notes the equality of the Father and Jesus here. 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." This is such a simple statement, but so very necessary for us. Here ends Paul's greeting to the Corinthian Christians.

5. Vs. 4: In Rom. 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 Thess. 1:3 he thanks God because of their labor of faith, toil of love and endurance of hope. In II Thess. 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 I Cor., 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 I Cor. 13, the great chapter on love. The more wayward the hearers, the more grateful the preacher because of God's grace. Note Paul says pantote "all the time." epi is adverbial causal. tou theou is subjective genitive. dotheisē, an aorist passive, adjectival participle, excludes every possibility of work-righteousness. The en phrase at the end of the vs. is causal, denoting the meritorious cause, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 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." Kretzmann quotes Besser: "The injury of the ungrateful Corinthians was great, but their ingratitude did not consume Paul's gratitude." And then Kretzmann adds: "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." This and the following verses is a model for every churchworker, for every Christian, in dealing with fellow Christians. There is so much which must be forgiven. There is so much weakness which must be endured. This does not mean, of course, that we be permissive toward sin. By no means.
6. Vs. 5: This hoti clause is causal and modifies the main verb eucharistō. in panti means "in every respect" and should not be watered down. epi implies that they were poor beggars, spiritually, before they came to faith in Christ. en autō 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 vs. contains three en 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. Reinecker says:

"logō, speech, utterance; gnōsis, knowledge. The first is the outward expression and the second the inward conviction." Bengel writes: "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." 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." Kretzmann quotes 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."

7. Vs. 6: On kathōs Rienecker remarks: "'just as, inasmuch as.' Produces not mere parallel but rather an explanation of what precedes." It is almost "because." to martyrion is here used as a synonym for to euaggelion, except that it stresses the facticity more than the good news. "Of Christ" could be either subjective or objective genitive, but here the latter is more likely. But Bengel says: "Christ is not only the object but also the author of this testimony." On "was confirmed" he adds: "By Himself (Christ) and by the accompanying gifts and miracles, 12:3; II Cor. 1:21,22; Gal. 3:2,5; Eph. 4:7,8; Hebr. 2:4." On kathōs Bengel remarks: "That the Corinthians needed nothing is proved by the fact that the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them." That is a very important remark. The charismatics claim that true Christians need more than faith in the Gospel. That is simply anti-Scriptural. A few remarks from 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 (vs. 4); 'making rich' (vs. 5) is more specific; 'confirming' (vs. 6) narrows the idea down still more and refers it to the very hearts of the Corinthians."
8. Vs. 7: hōste 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, NKJB 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 mē-mēdeni which makes the negative more emphatic. Rienecker defines charisma thus: "That which was given out of grace, empowerments given to the church from God or from the risen Lord." The hōste result clause depends on both ep'loutisthēte and ebebaiōthē, God being agent in both cases. Lenski remarks: "Since Paul is here speaking in general terms, 'in 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." Then he adds: "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.'" This is well said. apekdechomenous is a participle denoting attendant circumstance and modifies hymas. Charismatic gifts never cause a person to look forward to the last day. apokalypsin means the self-revelation of Jesus on the last day. tou kyriou is objective genitive. hēmōn is genitive of relation. And Jēsou Christou is in apposition to kyriou. Kretzmann has some worthwhile thoughts: "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, Phil. 3:20; Tit. 2:13; II Pet. 3:12." On apekdechomai Rienecker says: "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 attendant circumstance." Cf. its uses at Rom. 8:19.23.25; Gal. 5:5; Phl. 3:20; Hebr. 9:28; I Pet. 3:20. Except for the last reference it always denotes the earnest longing of the Christian for everlasting life, the appearance of Jesus. Bengel says: "The test of the true or false Christian is his waiting for, or dreading, the revelation of Christ."

9. Vs. 8: Note that the previous verse ends with a semi-colon which virtually makes vs. 8 an independent clause. hos amounts to a strong personal pronoun whose antecedent is Jēsous Christos. kai means "also" or "furthermore." A form of bebaioō occurred in vs. 6 with reference to the testimony of Christ, what it has done for the hearers up to that point. Now Christ Himself is the subject of bebaioō and the verb is in the future, telling us that He will establish the hearers. aneglētous is an adjective modifying the pronoun hymas. On this adjective cf. Col. 1:22; I Tim. 3:10; Tit. 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. heōs telous for the individual means either at the time of death or on the last day, whichever comes first. But the temporal phrase beginning with en makes it abundantly clear that on the last day the Lord Jesus will declare the individual believer blameless. Cf. Rom 8:1. Bengel writes: "'In the day' construed with 'blameless', I Thess. 5:23. After that day there is no danger, Eph. 4:30; Phil. 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." Lenski says: "The future tense 'shall confirm you' has the force of divine promise. . . . The verbal aneglētous is forensic." Correct. We are justified, forgiven, reconciled to God, made blameless forensically because of the blood of Jesus Christ. Kretzmann writes: "This blamelessness consists in the fact that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them by faith, Phil. 3:9." Here we also quote a passage from the F.C., S.D., 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 (I Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6ff; II Pet. 3:9; Hebr. 3:14)."

10. Vs. 9: pistos is a predicate adjective placed forward for the sake of emphasis. Cf. II Cor. 1:18; I Thess. 5:24; II Thess. 3:3; Hebr. 10.23; 11:11; I Jn. 1:9, where you have the same phenomenon. In addition to these references see II Tim. 2:13; Rev. 1:5 and Dt. 7:9. When pistos is applied to God it means that He keeps His promises. Bengel says: "He performs what He has promised." 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." 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." He adds a quote from 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." Lenski does not see election in this verse. Kretzmann does. That is reminiscent of the Predestinarian Controversy between the Ohio and Missouri Synods one hundred years ago. On the word eklēthēte cf. Rom. 8:30. Kretzmann is surely right. We end with a well-known quote from Luther's Large Catechism, the Creed, Tappert 417, 51-53: "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 (I Cor. 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." Note both natures of Christ in the words "of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord" and that hēmōn is genitive of relationship. 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.