

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUAL REVIEW

The Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to the church in the prosperous port city of Corinth, which he founded during his second missionary journey (Acts 18). Written from Ephesus around 54 or 55 AD, the letter addresses an assembly navigating a major commercial center known for wealth, trade, philosophy, and open immorality.

Though Paul addresses them as those who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" and "called to be saints" (1:2), he later diagnoses their spiritual condition as "men of flesh" (*sarkinoi*) and "babes in Christ" (3:1). They were "still fleshly" (*sarkikoi*), characterized by jealousy and strife (3:3).

Crucially, **behavior does not impact identity**. The repeated phrase "in Christ" confirms their secure positional standing. They possessed the Holy Spirit but were not consistently walking in accordance with the truth. This carnal behavior produced practical problems—divisions, immorality, lawsuits, and assembly disorder (1:11, 6:1, 11:17).

GRAMMATICAL FOUNDATION FROM VERSE 2:

- **"Sanctified"** (ἀγιάζω *hagiazō*) is a perfect passive participle used substantively. The perfect tense indicates a completed past act with ongoing, perpetual effects. Positionally, sanctification forms the unalterable identity of the believer the moment they are convinced by the gospel.
- **"Saints"** (ἅγιος *hagios*) means "set apart". Being a saint is not determined by performance or behavioral metrics. When *hagiazō* (being set apart) is before God, it is His work alone.

EXPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS: VERSES 3–9

Verse 3 — The Economy of Grace and Peace

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The Principle of Grace (*charis*): Grace is the absolute operating system for the believer. We are not under law but under grace (Romans 6:14). In the economy of grace, all spiritual blessings are freely extended, and all judicial curses are permanently removed based entirely on Christ's work. Under law, blessings and curses were direct recompense for human performance. Under grace, the believer shuns evil and pursues right action out of objective gratitude for an already secured position, never out of a fear-based motivation to avoid condemnation.

The Principle of Peace (*eirēnē*): Peace is the objective legal status we possess having been justified by faith (Romans 5:1). This permanent position of *peace with God* provides the secure foundation through which the believer can experience the subjective *peace of God* in daily practice (Philippians 4:6–9).

Verse 4 — The Ground of Thanksgiving

Paul demonstrates a proper understanding of divine source of blessings. He focuses on the reality that the Corinthians received grace "in Christ Jesus," a direct reflection on their initial justification. Their standing before God is completely apart from human effort.

Verses 5–7 — The Super-Abundance of Spiritual Provision

This section is the super abundance of grace that God provided to them. "in all things you (all) were enriched in Him." The word for enriched is "*πλουτίζω ploutizō*" this means to have abundance, more than enough, to be rich.

The aspect of this is spiritual not physical. Paul states in all speech, in all knowledge. This is saying, "you have everything, you lack nothing." This is common for Paul's letters (Ephesians 1:3) Peter states this in his letter (2 Peter 1:3).

Some have concluded that the "in all speech and all knowledge" refer to spiritual gifts (Chapters 12-14). However, the concept is broader than that (Romans 15:14). During the writing of the Scripture, they no doubt needed utterance and knowledge. As the Apostolic Era ended, those revelations from God waned.

Are we enriched in everything? Do we have all speech and all knowledge? I am convinced that we have everything that the Corinthian believers had and more. We have the full and complete Word of God which gives us everything we need for life and godliness.

In verse 6, "confirmed" is the verb "*βεβαιώω bebaioō*," meaning to put something beyond doubt or to establish firmly. This verb is in the passive voice; it denotes that the historical reality of the gospel message was proven and established beyond doubt to them.

The result is that they are not lacking any gift. The word for gift is "*χάρισμα charisma*." Our natural assumption is to read ahead and think that this is a reference to Chapters 12-14. But we must not assume that. Paul refers to full and complete doctrine as a spiritual gift (Romans 1:11). Salvation is a gift of God (Romans 5). Therefore, "gift" should not be restricted to supernatural manifestations. It denotes the structural provisions of God provided entirely by grace. It encompasses salvation, complete doctrine, and every operating provision needed while waiting for the revealing (the anticipated return) of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians Lesson 4

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Verses 8-9 – When we read a text, it is easy at times to bring preconceived notions to it. This is why asking questions about the text is so valuable.

Let's break this down so that we have a very clear understanding of Paul's declaration.

Questions:

Who will confirm you? Jesus Christ will confirm you,

Who is left out of that action? The believer has no say in the matter.

What does it mean to be confirmed? This is the same word as verse 6 “βεβαιόω bebaioō” to put something beyond doubt (confirm, establish) or to be firm in commitment. There are two typical understandings here.

What does it mean to be blameless? ἀνέγκλητος anenklētos – the alpha negative is used in conjunction with “ἐγκαλέω egkaleō” which means to bring charges, accuse, call into question. So, this word means irreproachable, unable to even be accused.

Positional vs. Behavioral Preservation

Some read this verse as a promise that Christ will cause a believer to develop a flawless behavioral commitment by the end of their earthly life. Is that true?

Notice how he ties the promise directly to a future day, “in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (verse 8b), with the clarification that “God is faithful” (Verse 9). The “will cause you to be committed” does not fit the timing of the context.

The second is that this is positional statement, This view contradicts the reality of the Christian experience and the immediate context of the letter. Believers sin, and their actions can give valid occasion for earthly accusation. Because this promise is explicitly tied to a future forensic reality ("in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ") it must be understood as a **positional reality**. Because we are united to Christ, no legal charge can stand against us in the court of heaven. This indicates that Jesus will present believers fully established from this day to the end. Is this true?

With the word “βεβαιόω bebaioō” already being used in context of being established beyond a doubt, we have a clue that this is accurate. Hold this thought let's look at the next phrase.

Verse 9 — The Unshakable Foundation

The Source of Certainty: The ultimate guarantee does not rest on the consistency, performance, or behavior of the believer. It rests single-handedly on the declarative truth: "God is faithful".

The Legal Reality of *Koinōnia*: The text states we were called into "fellowship" (*koinōnia*) with His Son. In 1st-century normative and legal papyri, *koinōnia* was not an emotional sentiment or a casual social gathering; it designated a binding legal partnership, a joint venture, or a shared tenancy. By calling the believer into *koinōnia* with Jesus Christ, God establishes a structural partnership where the assets, righteousness, and standing of the Senior Partner (Christ) are fully shared with the junior partner (the believer). If no charge can be brought against Christ, no charge can legally stick to those in joint-partnership with Him.

Is there Scripture that confirms our conclusions?

The Bible does present a possibility of believers being blameless before the assembly and the outside world (community of non-believers). 1 Timothy 3:10; Titus 1:6-7 – These texts test believers who desire to be elders/leaders in the assembly. An elder must not have anything in their lives that can be used to accuse them of improper behavior in the congregation or the world so that they will not dishonor the Gospel and not be condemned by the world.

Scripture also presents believers as being blameless before the father as presented to God through the agency of the Son.

Colossians 1:22: Clarifies the precise mechanism of our positional blamelessness. The basis for being presented holy, blameless, and beyond reproach (ἀνέγκλητος *aneklētos*) before God is exclusively the atoning physical death of Jesus, not progressive behavioral refinement.

Romans 8:31-34 – This passage in Romans 8 beautifully reinforces the positional security Paul described in 1 Corinthians 1:8-9. There, Christ will confirm believers blameless (ἀνέγκλητους) to the end. Here in Romans, Paul drives home the same truth: because of what God has done in Christ, no charge can stick and no condemnation can stand. Let's break it down with a few key questions.

What shall we say in light of all that God has done for us in Christ? "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

1 Corinthians Lesson 4

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Paul has just unfolded the wonders of God's eternal purpose, foreknowledge, calling, justification, and glorification (28-30). With God sovereignly on our side, no opposing force can ultimately prevail.

How do we know God is completely for us? "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"

The cross is the greatest proof. If the Father gave His own Son for us, He will not withhold anything necessary to bring us safely home. This is the solid ground for our security.

Who can successfully accuse us? "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;"

"bring any charge" translates from ἐγκαλέω (*egkaleō*), the exact root of the word "blameless" ἀνέγκλητος (*anegklētos*) in 1 Corinthians 1:8. Paul asks rhetorically: who could possibly lodge a successful accusation against those God has chosen? The answer is no one, because God Himself is the One who justifies. Our legal standing before Him is settled by His declaration, not by our performance.

Who can condemn us? Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

No one can condemn us because the only One with the right to judge has already died in our place, been raised, and now lives to intercede for us at the Father's right hand. Condemnation was exhausted at the cross.

Tie-Back to 1 Corinthians 1:8-9

Just as Paul assured the struggling Corinthians that Christ would confirm them blameless in the day of the Lord, Romans 8:31-34 declares that no charge can be brought and no condemnation can stand against God's elect. In both places the security is positional, rooted in God's justifying work and our union with Christ, not in our behavior. God is for us, Christ intercedes for us, and He will see us through blameless to the end.

CONCLUSION

For believers today this is profoundly encouraging. Our salvation and our final presentation before the Lord are not fragile realities that depend on our track record. They are held fast by the faithful God who called us into fellowship with His Son. This truth should not produce carelessness but gratefulness, living that looks forward to that day with joy rather than fear. As Paul expresses the same confidence elsewhere, "I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).