

## [1 Cor 1:1-3](#)

### Reading 2

#### Jerome Biblical Commentary

**(I) Introduction: Greeting and Thanksgiving. (1:1-9).** **1. Paul:** An authentic apostle, like the Twelve, by virtue of a divine call. *Sosthenes, the brother:* A Christian well known to the Corinthians. Probably not the Sosthenes of Acts 18:17, since nothing suggests his conversion. The name was quite common. **2. the church of God:** This phrase recalls the *ekklesia* (assembly) of the Lord in the LXX (Dt 23:2-4), the *qahal Yahweh* of the MT (→ Pauline Theology, 79:150-151). *sanctified in Christ Jesus:* Incorporated by baptism into Christ, whom God has made our wisdom and our justice, our holiness and our redemption (1:30; 6:11), Christians are holy, just as Israel was a holy nation by divine election (Ex 19:6). *Kl tois hagiois*, usually rendered “called to be saints,” probably means “the convoked saints” or “the holy convocation,” an allusion to the *kl t hagia* (LXX) and *miqr ' q deš* (MT) in Ex 12:16 and Lv 23:2-44. Christians constitute in Christ the Israel of God (Gal 6:16); they form a “sacred assembly,” the community of the Lord (see L. Cerfaux, *The Church in the Theology of St. Paul* [N.Y., 1959] 114-20; K. L. Schmidt, “Ekklesia,” *ThDNT* 3, 501-36).

*in Christ Jesus:* An original and favorite Pauline formula to express the Christian’s intimate and vital union with the risen Jesus (→ Pauline Theology, 79:138). *all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place:* The expression, to call upon the name of the Lord, occurs frequently in the OT with the meaning to adore God (e.g., Ps 99:6; Jl 2:32). In the NT it designates the faithful united by their adoration of Jesus as “Lord.” The expression clearly indicates Christian faith in the divinity of Christ. *theirs and ours:* That is, Lord. A common adoration of Christ unites all the faithful. Paul is stressing the unity of the faithful in contrast to the divisions of the Corinthian community. *together with all...in every place:* This implies that *ekklesia* in this verse designates the local community of Corinth, the assembly of God’s people in that city, and not the universal Church (→ Pauline Theology, 79:150-151). **3. grace and peace:** Paul’s customary salutation signifies the gracious goodness of God and the gifts that are the effect of the divine liberality. In the NT *charis* is a soteriological term; it is the favor God shows and the gift he gives to men whom he saves in Christ. “Peace” is the fruit of the salvation God gives in Christ. It includes the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God as well as

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LXX Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT)

MT Masoretic Text (of the Hebrew Bible)

ThDNT G. Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1964-). English version of *ThWNT*

OT Old Testament

NT New Testament

harmony among men. Perfect peace will be realized only at the parousia, when Christ's redemptive work is completed. These blessings, grace and peace, are desired by Paul for all his correspondents (→ NT Epistles, 47:8). **Kyriou I sou Christou**: Grammatically this phrase may modify **theou patros** as does **h m n**, i.e., "from God, the father of us and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Grace and peace, the essential blessings of Christianity, come from God. The Corinthians enjoy them because they are brothers of Jesus Christ, children of his father. But it is more probable that "God" and "the Lord Jesus Christ" are coordinated. Grace and peace are given by God the Father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Haydock's Catholic Commentary**

**Ver. 1.** *Paul called to be an apostle.* St. Paul had preached to the Corinthians, and had remained a long time with them, to instruct and confirm them in the faith. During his absence, the faithful of Corinth were divided into several parties, on occasion of some new teachers, who had come amongst them. (Calmet) --- It was to heal the wounds caused by these divisions, that the present epistle was written. (St. Thomas Aquinas; Haydock) --- *And Sosthenes.* There are various conjectures made concerning the person St. Paul here mentions. Some are of opinion that this Sosthenes is the same mentioned, Acts xviii. 17. who was beaten before the tribunal of Gallio, proconsul of Achaia, when St. Paul was carried before that magistrate. Eusebius says, that Sosthenes was one of the 72 disciples, and a different person from the one mentioned in Acts. Estius takes him to be St. Paul's secretary. The common opinion is, that he was a great sufferer for the faith at Corinth, and St. Paul here mentions him as a man worthy their imitation. (Calmet)

**Ver. 2.** *In every place of theirs and ours.* Inasmuch as among Christians in all places there ought to be such an union in faith, and conformity of discipline, as if they were all in one place. (Witham)

### **An Exposition of First Corinthians by Charles Hodge (non-Catholic)**

**Paul** declares himself to be a divinely appointed messenger of Christ, 1 Cor. 1:1. In this character he addresses the church at Corinth, as those who were sanctified in Christ, and called to be saints. He includes in his salutation all the worshippers of Christ in that vicinity, 1 Cor. 1:2; and invokes upon them the blessings of grace and peace, 1 Cor. 1:3.

The introduction is as usual commendatory. He thanks God for the favor shown to the Corinthians; for the various gifts by which the gospel had been confirmed among them, and by which they were placed on a full equality with the most favored churches, 1 Cor. 1:4-7. He expresses his confidence, founded on the fidelity of God, that they would be preserved from apostasy until the day of the Lord, 1 Cor. 1:8, 9.

**1:1 Paul, called (to be) an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes (our) brother.**

**Paul**, so called after his conversion and the commencement of his labors among the Gentiles. His Jewish name was Saul. It was common for the Jews to bear one name among their own people, and another among foreigners.

***Called (to be) an apostle***, that is, appointed an apostle. The apostleship being an office, it could not be assumed at pleasure. Appointment by competent authority was absolutely indispensable. The word ***apostle*** means literally ***a messenger***, and then ***a missionary***, or one sent to preach the gospel. In its strict official sense it is applied only to the immediate messengers of Christ, the infallible teachers of his religion and founders of his church. In calling himself an apostle Paul claims divine authority derived immediately from Christ.

***By the will of God***, that is, by divine authority. Paul was made an apostle neither by popular election, nor by consecration by those who were apostles before him; but by immediate appointment from God. On this point, see his explicit declaration, Galatians 1:1.

***And Sosthenes (our) brother***. In the Greek it is ***the*** brother. He was a brother well known to the Corinthians, and probably one of the messengers sent by them to the apostle, or whom they knew to be with him. In Acts 18:17 a man by this name is mentioned as the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth, and a leader of those who arraigned Paul before the judgment seat of Gallio. This identity of name is not a sufficient proof that the person was the same, especially as the name was a common one. The companions of the apostles, whom he associates with himself in his salutations to the churches, are not merely placed in the position of equality of office and authority with the apostle. On the contrary, they are uniformly distinguished in these respects from the writer of the epistles. Thus it is "Paul ***the apostle***," but "Sosthenes ***the brother***;" or, "Paul the apostle and Timothy the brother," Colossians 1:1, and elsewhere. They are associated in the salutation, not in the epistle. Very probably Sosthenes was the amanuensis of Paul in this instance, and Timothy in others.

***1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called (to be) saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.***

***To the church of God***. The word ***church*** is used in Scripture as a collective term for the people of God, considered as called out from the world. Sometimes it means the whole number of God's people, as when it is said, Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, Ephesians 5:25. Sometimes it means the people of God as a class, as when Paul said, he persecuted the church of God, Galatians 1:13. Sometimes it means the professing Christians of any one place, as when mention is made of the church in Jerusalem, Antioch, or Corinth. Any number, however small, of professing Christians collectively considered may be called a church. Hence we hear of the church in the house of Philemon, and in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, Romans 16:5. It is called the church ***of God***, because it belongs to him. He selects and calls its members, and, according to Acts 20:28, it is his, because he has bought it with his blood.

***To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus***. This is explanatory of the preceding clauses, and teaches us the nature of the church. It consists of the sanctified. The word ( ) translated ***to sanctify***, means ***to cleanse***. And as sin is presented under the twofold aspect of guilt and pollution, to sanctify, or to cleanse from sin, may mean either to expiate guilt by an atonement, or to renew by the Holy Ghost. It is used for expiation by sacrifice in Hebrews 2:11, 10:14, 13:12, and elsewhere. The word also means to render sacred by consecrating any person or thing to the service of God. In the present case all these ideas may be united. The church consists of those whose guilt is expiated, who are inwardly holy, and who are consecrated to God as his peculiar people.

*In Christ Jesus*, that is, in virtue of union with him. It is only in him that we are partakers of these inestimable blessings. It is because we are in him as our head and representative, that we are justified by his righteousness; and it is because we are in him as a branch is in the vine, that we are purified by his Spirit.

*Called (to be) saints*, that is, by the effectual call of the Holy Spirit constituted saints. "The called" always mean the effectual called as distinguished from the merely externally invited.

*Saints*. The original word ( ) sometimes signifies *sacred*, set apart to a holy use. In this sense the temple, the altar, the priests, the prophets, and the whole theocratic people, are called holy. In the New Testament the word is commonly expressive of inward purity, or consecration of the soul to God. Believers are saints in both senses of the word; they are inwardly renewed, and outwardly consecrated. It is not to be inferred from the fact that the apostle addresses all the nominal Christians in Corinth as saints and as sanctified in Christ Jesus, that they were all true believers, or that those terms express nothing more than external consecration. Men are uniformly addressed in Scripture according to their profession. If they profess to be saints, they are called saints; if they profess to be believers, they are called believers; and if they profess to be members of the church, they are addressed as really belonging to it. This passage teaches also, as Calvin remarks, the useful lesson that a body may be very corrupt both as to doctrine and practice, as such corruption, undoubtedly prevailed even in Corinth, and yet it may be properly recognized as a church of God. **Locus diligenter observandus, ne requiramus in hoc mundo ecclesiam omni ruga et macula carentem: aut protinus abdicemus hoc titulo quemvis coetum in quo non omnia votis nostris respondeant .**

*With all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*. To call upon the name of any one is to invoke his aid. It is properly used for religious invocation. Compare Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16. Romans 10:12, 13; 2 Timothy 2:22. To call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, is to invoke his aid as Christ, the Messiah predicted by the prophets, and as our almighty and sovereign possessor and ruler. It is in that sense Jesus is Lord. All power in heaven and earth has been committed unto him; and he died and rose again that he might be the Lord of the dead and of the living; that is, that he might acquire that peculiar right of possession in his people which arises from his having purchased them with his blood. To call upon the name of Jesus as Lord is therefore to worship him. It is to look to him for that help which God only can give. All Christians, therefore, are the worshippers of Christ. And every sincere worshipper of Christ is a true Christian. The phrase expresses not so much an individual act of invocation, as an habitual state of mind and its appropriate expression.

It might at first view appear from this clause that this epistle was addressed not only to the church in Corinth, but to all the worshippers of Christ. This would make it a catholic, or general epistle, which it is not. To get over this difficulty some explain the connection thus: "Called to be saints together with all who call upon the name of Christ:" that is, the Corinthians as well as all other worshippers of Christ were called to be saints. A reference to 2 Corinthians 1:1 suggests a better explanation. It is there said, "To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints which are in all Achaia." The same limitation must be supplied here. This epistle was addressed not only to the Christians in Corinth, but also to all their brethren in the province of which Corinth was the capital.

*Theirs and ours*. These words admit of two connections. They may be connected with the word Lord, "Their Lord and ours." There were certain persons in Corinth who claimed a peculiar

relation to Christ, and said, "We are of Christ;" to whom Paul said, "If any trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, as he is Christ's, so are we Christ's," 2 Corinthians 10:7. It is possible that he may have intended at the very opening of his epistle, to rebuke this exclusive Spirit, and to remind his readers that Christ is the common Lord of all who call upon him. The position of the words however renders it more natural to understand the apostle to mean, "in every place, theirs and ours." If this be the true construction, then the sense may be, "In every place of worship theirs and ours." This interpretation supposes that the divisions known to exist in Corinth had led to the separation of the people into different worshipping assemblies. There is, however, not only no evidence that such external separation had occurred, but clear evidence in 1 Cor. 11:18 to the contrary. Others understand the sense to be, "In every place, theirs and ours," i.e. "where they are, and where I am." This supposes the epistle to be general. A third interpretation has been proposed. The epistle is addressed to all Christians in Corinth and Achaia, wherever they might be. Every place is at once theirs and ours. Their place of abode, and my place of labor.

***1:3 Grace (be) unto you, and peace from God our Father, and (from) the Lord Jesus Christ.***

**Grace** is favor, and **peace** its fruits. The former includes all that is comprehended in the love of God as exercised towards sinners; and the latter all the benefits which flow from that love. All good, therefore, whether providential or spiritual, whether temporal or eternal, is comprehended in these terms: justification, adoption and sanctification with all the benefits which either accompany or flow from them. These infinite blessings suppose an infinite source; and as they are sought no less from Christ than from God the Father, Christ must be a divine person. It is to be remarked that God is called our **Father**, and Christ our **Lord**. God as God has not only created us, but renewed and adopted us. God in Christ has redeemed us. He is our owner and sovereign, to whom our allegiance is immediately due; who reigns in and rules over us, defending us from all his and our enemies. This is the peculiar form which piety assumes under the gospel. All Christians regard God as their Father and Christ as their Lord. His person they love, his voice they obey, and in his protection they trust.