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## **Isaiah chapter 49**

### **New International Version**

**1** Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name. **2** He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver. **3** He said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor.'

**4** But I said, 'I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all. Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand, and my reward is with my God.' **5** And now the LORD says-- he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength--

**6** he says: 'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.' **7** This is what the LORD says-- the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel-- to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: 'Kings will see you and stand up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.'

## Psalm chapter 40

### New International Version

**1** For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. **2** He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. **3** He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him. **4** Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. **5** Many, LORD my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare. **6** Sacrifice and offering you did not desire-- but my ears you have opened -- burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. **7** Then I said, 'Here I am, I have come-- it is written about me in the scroll. **8** I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.' **9** I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, LORD, as you know. **10** I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly. **11** Do not withhold your mercy from me, LORD; may your love and faithfulness always protect me.

### Context Summary

Psalm 40:1–10 delivers a steady stream of thanksgiving, as David recounts the Lord's deliverance of him from his enemies. He is grateful for giving him a new lease on life. He commits himself to doing the Lord's will and to telling others about how the Lord delivered him from his enemies. Psalm 37:1–7 emphasizes the fact that the Lord delivers those who wait on Him and commit themselves to His will. Hebrews 10:5–9 quotes the Greek version of Psalm 40:6–8 and applies the passage to Jesus the Messiah

Psalm 40:1, NIV: For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry.

### **What does Psalm 40:1 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

David recalls that he waited patiently for the Lord to answer his urgent prayer. The Hebrew construction here uses the same root word twice, with different tenses. This most literally means something like "waited, waited," or "I waited to wait." This technique indicates David's perseverance in prayer for the Lord to answer.

The second phrase in this verse also includes a turn of phrase. The Hebrew root word *natah* implies something turning or bending. In a poetic image, God is "leaning forward" to hear David, the way a person might do for a child who speaks quietly. The Lord heard David's urgent prayer.

Believers are admonished in the New Testament to keep praying without giving up. Jesus told His disciples a parable showing they should always pray and not lose heart (Luke 18:1). The parable involved a widow who kept coming to a judge to ask for justice against her adversary (Luke 18:2–3). The judge was neither godly or caring, but he grew tired of the widow's persistent asking for justice, so he granted her request (Luke 18:4–5). Jesus asked in verse 7, "And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night?" Certainly, God will answer the urgent prayers of His people, therefore we should pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Psalm 40:2, NIV: He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

### **What does Psalm 40:2 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Scripture does not record any literal events in David's life such as being trapped in a pit. Rather, this is additional poetry describing how deeply desperate was David's plight. David's warlike life was full of near-death experiences, some of which seemed so hopeless that they were like being in a trash pit or slimy swamp. One can imagine being abandoned in a cavernous hole in the ground

filling with water, mud, and slime. In such a predicament it is impossible to get a foothold, but the Lord reached down to David, answered his cry for help, and pulled him to safety. David says the Lord set his feet on a rock and made his steps secure. The imagery indicates that the Lord rescued David from his enemies and provided security for him.

The patriarch Joseph experienced the calamity of being thrown into a pit, in a very literal sense. His brothers despised him and tried to get rid of him by putting him into a pit. However, in God's providence, Judah, one of the brothers, persuaded the others to draw him out of the pit and sell him to a caravan of Ishmaelites bound for Egypt. The brothers received twenty shekels of silver from the traders (Genesis 37:12–28).

Psalm 40:3, NIV: He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him.

### **What does Psalm 40:3 mean? [\[↑ See verse text ↑\]](#)**

David was so joyful and appreciative of God's deliverance of him from his enemies that he lifted his voice in a song of praise to the Lord. He shared this praise with his countrymen so that they would reverence the Lord and trust in Him. This "reverence" is the meaning of the term "fear" in passages such as this.

When God delivers sinners from their sin, He draws them out of what seems like a pit (Psalm 40:2). Those who cry to the Lord for salvation and believe on Jesus as Savior are rescued. God gives them a brand–new life (Ephesians 2:4–10; 1 John 3:14). Second Corinthians 5:17 declares that anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The Lord not only saves them from the pit of sin but also establishes their steps and gives them a new direction in life. Saul of Tarsus found forgiveness and a new life in Christ (Acts 9). He testified in 1 Timothy 1:15–16 that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom he said he was the foremost. But he received mercy in order for Jesus Christ to display His perfect patience as an example to other believers.

Psalm 40:4, NIV: Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods.

### **What does Psalm 40:4 mean? [[↑↑ See verse text ↑↑](#)]**

Many Scriptures declare that happiness is most likely when a person trusts and obeys God (Proverbs 1:7; Psalm 37:5–9). Trials and hardships will come, even to those who honor God (John 16:33), but those who love the Lord are guaranteed eventual victory (Romans 8:28–30).

David had learned in the wilderness to rely on the Lord for safety, and he was not disappointed. His trust in God brought him great happiness. The person who puts their faith in the Lord doesn't take advice from arrogant, worldly people. Nor does he imitate those who follow lies, false ideas, or foolishness (1 Corinthians 2:12; Romans 12:1–2; Proverbs 5:22–23).

When Satan tempted Eve in the garden of Eden, he lied to her. He told her she would not die for eating the forbidden fruit, although God had said clearly, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:16–17). Those who spread lies against David were following the evil pattern established by Satan (John 8:44).

Psalm 40:5, NIV: Many, LORD my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare.

### **What does Psalm 40:5 mean? [[↑↑ See verse text ↑↑](#)]**

David speaks not only on his own behalf but also on behalf of the people of Israel in this verse by declaring that the Lord had given them many, many signs of His power and love for them. Many of these events are seen in the dramatic events of the Exodus (Exodus 7:3; Deuteronomy 6:20–25; Jeremiah 32:21–23).

God worked in wondrous ways to preserve David when his enemies pursued him just as He protected and provided for the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings. He had given them shoes that did not wear out (Deuteronomy 29:5).

He had provided water from a rock for them (Exodus 17:6). He had kept them safe from warlike tribes (Exodus 17:13; Numbers 21:21–24). He had fed them with manna and quail (Exodus 16:9–16, 31).

The Lord's thoughts toward David and the people of Israel included His plans for them. He was their provider and protector in the past and He would remain so in the future. David would proclaim the Lord's wondrous deeds and thoughts, but he acknowledged that they were "more than can be told" (John 20:30–31; 21:25).

Psalm 40:6, NIV: Sacrifice and offering you did not desire-- but my ears you have opened -- burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.

### **What does Psalm 40:6 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

David ponders how he might show his gratitude for all the wondrous things God had done him (Psalm 40:1–5). Certainly, David knew that God accepted and even commanded certain physical sacrifices under the Old Testament law. However, David has enough wisdom to understand that God looks at the worshiper's heart and not simply at his sacrifices and offerings.

King Saul had learned the hard way what David knew: The Lord delights in obedience and not in the ritual of offering sacrifices while the heart is not in tune with His will. Samuel reprimanded Saul for disobeying the Lord by not slaying Agag and all that pertained to Agag and by offering sacrifices after disobeying the Lord. He told Saul: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). David testifies that the Lord had given him an open ear; that is, David listened to hear what the Lord commanded him.

The phrasing used here is apparently a Hebrew idiom—a figure of speech—which in many literal translations implies "digging ears." The meaning of the phrase is God forming the body such that a person has the privilege of hearing from God. The Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament, takes this approach, which is why Hebrews 10:5 speaks of God preparing a body. Whether in the poetic form of Hebrew or the literalized version of Greek, the point is the same: the Lord has "dug out," or "opened," or "created" the ears of David so he can hear from God.

Psalm 40:7, NIV: Then I said, 'Here I am, I have come-- it is written about me in the scroll.

### **What does Psalm 40:7 mean? [[↑↑ See verse text ↑↑](#)]**

This statement implies that David is available to the Lord for the performance of His will. The Psalms often refer to God's written Word as the source of wisdom and truth (Psalm 12:6; 40:8). The reference here to scrolls and book is the same: a mention of the written Scriptures. David was ready to do God's will, and he perceived that God's will was presented in these writings.

That comment also points us prophetically to Jesus, who fulfilled every Scripture that identified Him as God's obedient servant. His life from conception to crucifixion and resurrection was prophesied in the Old Testament. He was the prophesied Messiah, who was obedient to God's will in all things, including His sacrifice for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). In John 8:29 Jesus asserted, "And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."

The book of Hebrews cites this verse as part of an explanation of Jesus' role as Savior (Hebrews 10:5–7).

Psalm 40:8, NIV: I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.'

### **What does Psalm 40:8 mean? [[↑↑ See verse text ↑↑](#)]**

This is connected to the verses cited in Hebrews 10:5–7, which applied this passage to Jesus the Messiah. As do many New Testament citations, this uses the Septuagint translation, in Greek. Phrasings between that and the Old Testament Hebrew are often different. The Hebrews reference shows that God's ultimate intent for our salvation involved a physical body, fulfilled in that of Jesus Christ (Psalm 40:6).

David was thrilled to do God's will, whom he knew personally as "my God." He also held God's Word in his heart. His devotion to God's will and God's Word pictures Jesus' relationship to God and His Word. When the Devil tempted Jesus for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, Jesus refused to abandon His worship of the Father by falling down to worship the Devil. The Devil took Jesus to an exceedingly high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. He promised to give Jesus all the kingdoms and their glory if Jesus would down and worship him (Matthew 4:8–9). But Jesus resolutely refused the offer. He rebuked the Devil and appealed to the biblical command: "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve" (Matthew 4:10). Jesus continued that pattern throughout His earthly ministry (John 4:34; 5:19; 17:4–6).

Psalm 40:9, NIV: I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, LORD, as you know.

### **What does Psalm 40:9 mean? [[↑↑ See verse text ↑↑](#)]**

David addresses the Lord in this verse, claiming he has proclaimed God's works to others. Those who are in the "great congregation" are presumably the faithful people of Israel. David held nothing back when he reported how the Lord rescued him from his enemies.

When Jesus drove out numerous demons from a man who had been driven by them and existed in a deranged state of mind, He told him to return home "and declare how much God has done for you" (Luke 8:39). Obediently, the liberated man went home and proclaimed throughout the entire city how much Jesus had done for him. Every Christian has a story to tell about how the Lord delivered him or her from sin and judgment. Every Christian is an ambassador for Christ, and through us God is appealing to others to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20). The apostle Paul viewed himself as an ambassador for Christ. He testified, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Like Paul, we should love to tell the story!



Psalm 40:10, NIV: I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly.

### **What does Psalm 40:10 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

As in the prior statement (Psalm 40:9), David affirms that he did not keep secret what the Lord had done for him. He told the great congregation—the worshipers in the sanctuary—about the Lord's reliable rescue. Divine attributes such as trustworthiness and love are expressed by God towards all of His people.

Amidst lamenting what befell Jerusalem, Jeremiah consoled himself with the assurance that the Lord is faithful and loving at all times. He wrote: "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22–23). The salvation David alludes to here is likely the deliverance the Lord gave him when David was hunted and attacked by his enemies in the wilderness.

Following David's example, we too should not keep hidden the truth that the Lord is always reliable and loving. Nor should we keep it a secret that the Lord has saved us. He has delivered us from our sins and eternal judgment, and what He did for us He can do for others. But, as Romans 10:14 asks: "How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? and how are they to hear without someone preaching [proclaiming]?"

Psalm 40:11, NIV: Do not withhold your mercy from me, LORD; may your love and faithfulness always protect me.

### **What does Psalm 40:11 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

To this point, David has expressed praise for what God has done, in the past. Now he expresses confidence in what God will do now and in the future. He trusts that the Lord will never show him less compassion than He has shown him in the past. Furthermore, David believes the Lord's unfailing love and faithfulness will always keep him safe.

Believers today are also kept safe. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Even when we suffer persecution and hardship, He is still with us (John 16:33). The apostle Paul testified: "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38–39). Our love of God may weaken, but God's love of us will remain steady always. Also, His compassion and trustworthiness are unending. Lamentations 3:22–23 assures us that His mercies never end and His faithfulness is great. God always holds us safe in His mighty arms!

## **1 Corinthians chapter 1**

### **New International Version**

**1** Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,  
**2** To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours:  
**3** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
**4** I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.  
**5** For in him you have been enriched in every way--with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge--  
**6** God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you.  
**7** Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.  
**8** He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
**9** God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Context Summary**

First Corinthians 1:1–3 follows Paul's normal pattern in the greeting for this letter to the Corinthians. He identifies himself and Sosthenes, who is with him in Ephesus. His recipient is God's church in Corinth. He describes his readers as those who are sanctified—set apart for a special purpose—in Christ Jesus. They are called to be saints with all Christians everywhere. Paul offers them grace and peace from God the Father and from Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:1, NIV: Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

### **What does 1 Corinthians 1:1 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Paul begins this letter to the church in Corinth in a way echoing most of his writing. He states right from the beginning that he is writing as a representative of Jesus Christ. He writes from his official office of *apostle*. That word, in the general sense, means one who is sent by another to fulfill a specific task or, especially, to deliver a specific message, on their behalf. In the New Testament, the word "apostle" most often refers to the specific role filled by the 12 disciples of Jesus and Paul, all sent by Jesus to carry the message of Christ's good news to the world. Paul did not choose this role for himself. He was chosen by the will of God (Acts 9:15).

Paul often mentions who is with him when he is writing. In this case, it is a fellow believer in Jesus named Sosthenes. It is possible, though not certain, this could be the same Sosthenes described in Acts 18:17. That Sosthenes was the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth who helped lead an effort to try to shut down Paul's preaching of the gospel by dragging him before the Roman leader in the city. Instead of arresting Paul, however, the Roman proconsul Gallio decided the dispute was none of Rome's business. In a shocking twist, Sosthenes was beaten by a mob in response.

If this is the same Sosthenes, Paul's readers in Corinth would know of his seemingly unlikely conversion from Judaism to Christianity, from someone who wanted to shut Paul down to someone who was now working together with Paul in his mission to spread the gospel of Jesus.

Scholars also suggest that this Sosthenes, whomever he may be, is also mentioned here because he was serving as Paul's stenographer for this letter, a position known as an *amanuensis*.

1 Corinthians 1:2, NIV: To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours:

### **What does 1 Corinthians 1:2 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Paul's letters follow the general standard for introductions used in his era. He identified himself in the previous verse. Now he describes who the letter is for, adding to that some beautiful theology about all of us who are Christians.

Paul is writing to God's church in Corinth. Corinth was a big city on a major trade route. Paul had introduced Christianity and planted a church there, staying for over a year and half to serve the people (Acts 18:1–18). He knew these Corinthians and their environment well.

Paul says he is writing to Christians, those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus. The word "sanctified" refers to something that has been "set apart" for special purposes. Every person who is a Christian has been marked by God, as His own possession, set apart from the rest of humanity for His own purposes. Christians are not hoping, by good behavior, to become sanctified someday. By God's grace through faith in Christ, that has already happened.

Paul next says these Christians in the church in Corinth are called to be saints, together with all the other Christians—those who call on Jesus' name—in all the other places in the world. Theologians sometimes call this group of all the saved people everywhere the "universal church."

Paul writes that one thing we all have in common is that Christ is our Lord. This is true for every Christian.

1 Corinthians 1:3, NIV: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **What does 1 Corinthians 1:3 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Paul concludes the introduction of his letter with a standard Christian greeting. Though it was standard, it also carries the weight of a prayer offered by an apostle of Christ for those who are in Christ. He asks God for grace for them, along with peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even in this, Paul is helping the Corinthians—and all who read this letter—to understand more clearly what is true about our relationship with God. He alone is our source of grace and peace. God is one and consists of both the Father and Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, who is not mentioned here. God intends for us to be in relationship with Him as a Father and as our Lord.

### Context Summary

First Corinthians 1:4–9 is about God's grace to the Corinthians. Before beginning to address problems in the church, Paul first declares his thanks to God for the people. Specifically, he is thankful for God's grace and the good gifts God has given to them. Those gifts confirm that the Corinthians are truly in Christ. This means Christ will sustain them all the way to the end. Because they are in Christ who has paid for their sin with His blood, they will stand blameless before God on the day of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:4, NIV: I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.

### What does 1 Corinthians 1:4 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]

Paul begins his letter to this troubled church with some remarkably positive words for them. These are also encouraging for all of us who are Christians. This opening is even more striking because of the bold words of correction Paul will use later. He is writing to respond to wrong behaviors and attitudes he has heard about among them. At the same time, he seeks to answer their questions about how to live as believers in a godless culture.

Paul starts, though, by declaring that his first thought when the believers of Corinth come to mind is to thank God for them. He does this "always," meaning regularly and continually. He expresses that he is truly grateful to God for these people he spent so much time with. Next Paul describes why he is so grateful for

them. First, he gives thanks because they have been given grace from God in Christ Jesus. In other words, God has already welcomed them into His family and given them a place with Him in eternity because they came to Him through faith in Christ.

Neither we nor the Corinthians deserve that enormous gift. We have earned quite the opposite with our sin and, in many ways, we continue to fail to live up to the good God has given to us. Paul is so glad for the grace they have received, even as they continue to fail to do what is right in some important ways.

1 Corinthians 1:5, NIV: For in him you have been enriched in every way--with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge—

### **What does 1 Corinthians 1:5 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Paul is writing a letter that will focus heavily on correcting wrong actions and attitudes among the Christians in Corinth. Still, he begins by giving thanks to God for them. He has made clear that they are already sanctified in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2) and have received God's grace in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:4).

Now Paul adds that God's grace to these Christians in Corinth included being made rich in Christ in all speech and all knowledge. The word "speech" as used here may refer to speaking in tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit, something Paul will deal with at length later in his letter. Or, he may have in mind the idea of "speaking well:" being able to express ideas about Christ clearly and articulately. Such skill in communication was highly valued in the Greek and Roman culture of the day.

In addition, by God's grace and in Christ, the Christians in Corinth had been made rich in knowledge. Paul likely means they understood much about the things of God as he—Paul—had taught them during his time with them. In other words, they really "got it." Because of God's gift of grace to them, they truly understood and retained all the meaningful ideas Paul had passed on to them.

However, as this letter will later make clear, being rich in speech and knowledge does not always translate to being rich in love and faithfulness to God. Still, these are things Paul thanks God for giving to them.

1 Corinthians 1:6, NIV: God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you.

### **What does 1 Corinthians 1:6 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Paul has given thanks, in the previous verses, for God's grace to the Christians in Corinth, including his grace in making them rich in speech and knowledge.

He says now that "the testimony about Christ was confirmed" in them. In other words, Paul sees clear, doubtless evidence that they genuinely believed his teaching. He is assured they have trusted in Christ for their salvation. Their speech and knowledge, among other gifts, showed that they had received God's grace through faith in Christ, just as Paul presented that testimony to them.

Major issues needed to be corrected in the Corinthian church, but Paul was first and foremost grateful for their faith in Christ and God's grace to them. This is a useful piece of information in our understanding of the Christian faith; reminding us that true believers are not immune from spiritual error, and that spiritual mistakes do not prove someone is a non-Christian. Paul makes the Corinthians' position in Christ even more clear in the following verses.

1 Corinthians 1:7, NIV: Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

### **What does 1 Corinthians 1:7 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Paul is giving thanks for what God has done and will do for the Christians in Corinth. Much of his letter to them will focus on corrections they must make in their attitudes and behaviors. Here, though, Paul assures them that a lack of gifts from God is not one of their problems.

In verse 5, Paul wrote that, by God's grace, the believers of Corinth have been enriched in all speech and all knowledge. This may have been a reference to

unique spiritual gifts, possibly including speaking in tongues. Paul will address that later in this letter. Now he adds they are not lacking in "any gift." In other words, God has fully equipped the Corinthian Christians with everything they need to lead the lives He is calling them to.

As Paul wrote in the previous verse, this confirms they have truly believed and are already accepted by God. Their salvation is settled. Now they can look forward to the revelation of Jesus at His return, instead of dreading it. When that day of the Lord comes, God will welcome them because of His grace through their faith in Jesus.

Paul speaks often in his letters about this day of Christ's return and judgment, as he does in the following verse.

1 Corinthians 1:8, NIV: He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **What does 1 Corinthians 1:8 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

This is one of Scripture's truly great promises about what it means to be in Christ. Paul has been giving thanks to God for all the amazing things He has done for the Christians in Corinth. Everything he has mentioned is true of all Christians.

Reading these words, it's important to notice that nothing Paul has written mentions anything the Corinthians themselves have done. God has done it all, in and for them, as a free gift because of their faith in Christ. The rest of Paul's letter will show that as individuals and as a church, these believers in Corinth struggle with major spiritual problems. They are indulging in attitudes and actions that are sinful. Still, Paul writes the words of this verse to them and to all who are in Christ. God will not stop giving the Corinthians His good gifts. He will not stop sustaining them, keeping them going, holding them together. They will remain guiltless or blameless in His eyes all the way to the return of Christ on the day of the Lord.

How is this possible? Why would God do this? God's grace to us is rightly called "amazing." For those who come to Him by faith, God receives Christ's death as payment for our sins and gives us credit for Christ's righteous, sinless life on



earth (Romans 5:6–11). That's why, instead of dreading the return of Christ, Christians can wait for it with eager hopefulness (Galatians 5:5; Romans 8:19–25).

1 Corinthians 1:9, NIV: God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **What does 1 Corinthians 1:9 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

In this brief opening section, Paul has described the glory of God's grace to us in Christ. In short, it is this: Christ does all the work, and we receive all the benefits. Paul has described his own personal gratitude that God has done this for the Christians in Corinth, people Paul knows well from the time he spent with them.

Paul has written that God has sanctified them in Christ, has made them rich in spiritual gifts, and that God will hold them blameless on the day of the Lord. Now he closes the section with an enormous understatement: God is faithful. The rest of this letter will reveal deep and ugly problems among the church in Corinth, but none of those things will keep God from being faithful, by His grace, to any person who has come to Him through faith in Jesus.

Paul's readers, these troubled Corinthian Christians, were called by God into the fellowship of His own Son Jesus. All Christians are called into that fellowship. This tells us two things about what God intends for us. First, He does not mean to save us and then have us keep our distance until we arrive in eternity. God sees us as being in fellowship, a deep and direct relationship, with Him, with Christ. Second, Paul is emphasizing that all who are in Christ are, by definition, in relationship with each other.

These relationships themselves are a gift. Paul's letter will show, though, that the Corinthians were not valuing, in all cases, the gift of their fellowship with each other in Christ.

## **John chapter 1**

**29** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! **30** This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' **31** I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.'

**32** Then John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. **33** And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' **34** I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One.'

**35** The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. **36** When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, 'Look, the Lamb of God!'

**37** When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.

**38** Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, 'What do you want?' They said, 'Rabbi' (which means 'Teacher'), 'where are you staying?' **39** Come,' he replied, 'and you will see.' So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

**40** Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. **41** The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ). **42** And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter).

### Context Summary

John 1:29–42 is a conversation between Jesus and John the Baptist, and records the moment when Jesus recruits His first two disciples. Jesus is identified as “The Lamb of God,” and “The Son of God.” The Baptist describes his vision of the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, landing on Jesus. This confirms that He is the Messiah. The Baptist tells two of his followers, John and Andrew, to go and follow Jesus. They, in turn, introduce Jesus to Peter.

John 1:29, NIV: The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'

**What does John 1:29 mean?** [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]

Verse 29 uses the fourth of John's seven names for Jesus, "The Lamb of God." Lambs were required as a yearly sacrifice for all Jewish families. This was for the celebration of Passover. This holiday looked back to the days of Moses, when lambs' blood covered the doors of Israel, and allowed God's judgment to "pass over" them (Exodus 12:22–23). Isaiah 53:12 predicted that the Messiah would "bear the sins of many." The connection to Passover is the primary reason Jesus is referred to as "The Lamb of God." His crucifixion also symbolizes other Old Testament sacrifices. Instead of a lamb, the sin offering specified in the book of Leviticus is a goat. Lambs were sacrificed in the temple for Passover, but goats were cast out of the camp. Jesus will be taken outside the walls of the city to be sacrificed on the cross.

This verse is also the first of seven "witnesses" in the gospel of John. These are people who specifically state that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. The others include Nathanael (John 1:49), Peter (John 6:69), the blind man (John 9:35–38), Martha (John 11:27), Thomas (John 20:28), and Jesus Himself (John 5:25; John 10:36).

The events of verse 29 occur the day after the Baptist's conversation with the Pharisees' messengers. It's likely that many of the same people were there once again

John 1:30, NIV: This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'

### **What does John 1:30 mean? [[↑](#) [See verse text](#) [↑](#)]**

John the Baptist (different from the disciple John, the author of this gospel) specifically points out Jesus as "the One" he had previously spoken of. The Baptist's entire mission was to make a path for this man. Because the Baptist was not the Messiah, he pointed all attention and honor towards Jesus, rather than himself. He had gone so far as to say he wasn't worthy to untie the Promised One's sandals (John 1:27). The Baptist also repeats that Jesus "existed before me," a reference to Jesus' divinity. It's important to remember that

the Baptist was born several months *before* Jesus. And yet, he knows that Christ existed before he did, as God (John 1:1). After preaching repentance, and warning people that the Messiah was coming, the Baptist can now point to Him and say, "He's here!" Jesus will later refer to John's testimony as one of the reasons to believe in His message (John 5:32–33).

John 1:31, NIV: I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.'

### **What does John 1:31 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

In verse 31, John the Baptist strangely claims that he did not recognize Jesus as Messiah at first. He had simply been baptizing, so that Christ would be revealed to Israel. Although the Baptist and Jesus were related through their mothers, and the Baptist had responded to the presence of Jesus while in the womb, they probably hadn't spent much time around each other. Since Jesus hadn't yet performed any miracles, it's reasonable to think that the Baptist didn't know Jesus was the Messiah until seeing the vision of the dove (John 1:32). This is part of the mystery of Jesus' youth: the Bible doesn't give many details about Jesus prior to the start of His ministry. The word used for "baptism" is the Greek *baptizo*, which literally means "to immerse," but with a specific spiritual context. John's purpose in calling people to repentance, demonstrated by baptism, was to open the path of understanding for Jesus. Once Christ appeared on the stage, it was time for the Baptist to step aside.

John 1:32, NIV: Then John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.'

### **What does John 1:32 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

John the Baptist said earlier that he hadn't recognized Jesus as the Messiah, at first. Though they were related, Jesus and John the Baptist probably didn't spend much of their childhood together. Scripture is almost silent about Jesus' life prior to the start of His active ministry. Jesus frequently mentions that He is on a divine timetable, so His younger years were not "His time." At some point, the Baptist

saw a vision of a dove, representative of the Holy Spirit, "remaining" on Jesus. This confirmed for the Baptist that Jesus was the Messiah. The word "testify" is from a very specific Greek term meaning "giving information one has direct personal knowledge of." There was no doubt in the Baptist's mind who this man was. The gospel of John does not actually record the baptism of Jesus. The author, John the disciple, wrote his book many years after Matthew, Mark, and Luke's were known. He assumed that the reader was already familiar with the basics, and presented a different perspective on the story.

John 1:33, NIV: And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'

### **What does John 1:33 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

John the Baptist seemed to recognize Jesus as the Promised One when they were both in the womb (Luke 1:41). However, they probably didn't see each other all that often as children. We can't be sure, from the Bible, how well the Baptist knew Jesus personally prior to this. Verse 33 repeats John the Baptist's comment from verse 32, that he hadn't immediately recognized Jesus. Now, he partly explains why. The Baptist's directions from God were to baptize and preach repentance, waiting for the Messiah to appear. When the Promised One came, he would see the Holy Spirit on Him. In verse 32, the Baptist had claimed to see this exact vision with respect to Jesus. The Baptist also makes a point of mentioning that Jesus has come to baptize with the Holy Spirit, in contrast to his own ministry of water baptism. This spiritual baptism would not be complete until the day of Pentecost, after Jesus' resurrection.

John 1:34, NIV: I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One.'

### **What does John 1:34 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

John the Baptist (not the same as John the disciple, author of this gospel) once again states that Jesus is the Promised One. He also confirms a title of Jesus first suggested in John 1:18: "The Son of God." The Baptist was told that when

he saw the Spirit of God remaining on a man, that would be a sign that this was the Messiah. John has already told the crowd what he saw in verse 32. Here, he repeats this claim, something he has seen with his own eyes. The word for "testify" is a Greek term implying a very specific, direct, personal knowledge. This personal testimony is important, and Jesus will refer to it later. When explaining why people ought to believe Him, one piece of evidence Jesus mentions is the testimony of other people, specifically that of John the Baptist (John 5:32–33).

John 1:35, NIV: The next day John was there again with two of his disciples.

### **What does John 1:35 mean? [[↑](#) [See verse text](#) [↑](#)]**

A major lesson to be learned from John the Baptist is how to direct others towards Jesus. In particular, he is an example of how to redirect attention from ourselves towards Christ. The Baptist gained a following as a result of his preaching, but was more than willing for Christ to get the glory, the followers, and the attention. As he sees Jesus walk by, he will voluntarily tell two of his own disciples to follow the Messiah. Later, the Pharisees try to spark a rivalry between Jesus and John the Baptist (John 3:25–26). The Baptist's view is that Jesus is the real purpose of his mission, so he's actually happy to see people leave in order to follow the Messiah. The Baptist refers to this using wedding terminology: Jesus is the groom, and the Baptist is like his "best man." Seeing the groom's success doesn't make the best man jealous, it makes him happy (John 3:29-30).

John 1:36, NIV: When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, 'Look, the Lamb of God!'

### **What does John 1:36 mean? [[↑](#) [See verse text](#) [↑](#)]**

In verse 29, John the Baptist referred to Jesus as "The Lamb of God." This actually doesn't refer to a temple sacrifice, but to the days of Passover and Moses. The final plague of Egypt was the death of the firstborn, and only those whose doors were covered with the blood of a lamb were spared. The preparation for sudden travel, and the covering of blood, made a powerful symbol

of Jesus' work on the cross. In fact, the instructions given to Moses would have created a bloody cross on every Israelite door, from the blood of that sacrificed lamb (Exodus 12:21–23). After the judgment, those who stepped through that door were free. This is a metaphor for salvation in Christ. Only those covered by the blood are spared from judgment; only by going through that door can a person be set free. This is a change in the Baptist's ministry. Up to this point, he had been telling people that the Messiah was coming. Now, he tells people that Messiah is here!

John 1:37, NIV: When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.

### **What does John 1:37 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

The two disciples referred to in verse 37 are John (the author of this gospel), and Andrew. Ancient writings very rarely used a "first person" style. It was uncommon for a descriptive text to say, "I did this, I said that." Letters were a different form of writing, as seen in Paul's epistles. John is also being modest by not bringing extra attention to himself. Instead, he refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and other terms. John was most likely a young teenager at this time. Though all of the other disciples would be martyred for their faith, John would still be writing to fellow Christians nearly 60 years later. This means John was not only one of the first to follow Jesus as a disciple, but he was also the longest-surviving of the apostles. He was the first to follow Jesus on earth, and the last to follow Jesus into heaven. The fact that John was present for many of the events in Jesus' life is proven by the minute details he offers in his gospel.

John 1:38, NIV: Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, 'What do you want?' They said, 'Rabbi' (which means 'Teacher'), 'where are you staying?'

### **What does John 1:38 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Jesus has a habit of cutting right to the most important questions. In this case, His question is the same one God asks everyone who claims to seek Him: "what are you looking for?" The reasons a person seeks Jesus are just as important as

what they find. What a person *wants* affects what they're *willing* to believe. It's often more important to find out why a person is asking a question than to answer it right away. What the other person seeks is critical to how they will interpret the answer. John and Andrew are very cautious towards Jesus. Referring to Him as "Rabbi" was a gesture of respect. Notice that verse 38 defines the term "Rabbi" for the reader, something John does often in this gospel. Asking Jesus where He was staying suggests that John and Andrew didn't expect to talk much with Him, right then and there. They expected Him to be busy, or on His way somewhere else. So, they skipped right to asking where they might have a chance to meet Him later. Jesus' willingness to spend time with them, in verse 39, is not only gracious, but surprising.

John 1:39, NIV: Come,' he replied, 'and you will see.' So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

### **What does John 1:39 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

John and Andrew approached Jesus cautiously. They referred to Him with respect, and asked where they might be able to find Him later on (John 1:38). Instead of being too busy for John and Andrew, Jesus has time for them right now. And not a small amount of time; verse 39 says Jesus stayed with them "that day." This is another important aspect of seeking Christ: He will always have the time, and the interest, to speak to those who really want to be with Him. Jesus' personality will constantly surprise people. He was hailed as the Promised One by John the Baptist. The Baptist claimed he wasn't worthy to untie Jesus' sandals. And yet, Jesus makes a great deal of time for two total strangers. John indicates that they met Jesus at about "10 in the morning." In this gospel, John seems to use the Roman time system, which is more or less identical to the one we use today.

John 1:40, NIV: Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.

### **What does John 1:40 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**



Verse 40 says Andrew was one of the two who heard John the Baptist's command to follow Jesus. The Bible doesn't specify if Andrew and John were the only ones who heard, audibly, or if they were the only ones who listened to the Baptist's instructions. Either way, these two men are the first to follow Jesus as disciples. "Andrew" is a Greek name, not a Hebrew one. This is evidence of how much influence Greek culture had on the people of Israel by this time. Jewish people of that day used a fairly small set of given names. Even within the Bible, there are multiple characters with the same "first" name. Three of the four women at the foot of Jesus' cross are named "Mary." Andrew's brother had the common name of Simon, but would later be renamed "Peter" by Jesus. Their father was named Jonah (or John), according to John 1:42. The term *bar* means "son of," so Simon Barjona is literally, "Simon, the Son of Jonah."

John 1:41, NIV: The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ).

### **What does John 1:41 mean? [[↑](#) [See verse text](#) [↑](#)]**

Andrew is constantly bringing people to Jesus. This seems to be his default response to every problem or new development. When Jesus feeds thousands of people, it's Andrew who brings the boy with bread and fish to Him (John 6:8–9). The first person he introduces to Him is his brother, Simon. Jesus will soon rename this man "Peter." This is from the Aramaic word *Cephas*, translated into Greek as *Petros*, both meaning "stone." Peter proves to be an emotional, volatile man in the New Testament. It's safe to assume he already had that reputation when he met Jesus for the first time. There's some divine humor in Jesus naming a volatile, emotional, unstable person "Rock." Andrew tells Simon (Peter) that Jesus is "the Messiah." John often explains Jewish customs and words to his readers, and he translates this word as "Anointed One." In Greek, the term is translated as *Christos*, from which we get the English title "Christ."

John 1:42, NIV: And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter).

**What does John 1:42 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Andrew's response to just about everything is "bring it to Jesus." He has already told his brother Simon that the man he's met is the "Messiah," meaning "The Anointed One." The Greek term is *Christos*, which eventually became the English word "Christ." This is the fifth of John's seven names of Jesus in chapter 1. Jesus immediately tells Simon that he will have a new name: "Cephas." This is actually an Aramaic word meaning "stone." In the original Greek, John translates Cephas as *Petros*, from which we get the English name "Peter." Peter's friends probably thought it was strange that someone known to be emotional and unstable was now going by the name "Rock," but he would eventually earn that title. Long before he'd done anything worth noticing, Jesus could already see his potential, and gave him a name worthy of his future. The Hebrew term *bar* literally means, "son of," so Simon Barjonah is literally "Simon, Son of Jonah (or son of John)."