

Lesson #1

Called by God

If we would understand what God's calling is, we need to realize that it is included in the initial stage of God's full salvation, that is, in the stage of regeneration. God begins to save us by calling us. In eternity God foreknew us, chose us, and predestinated us. Then in time He created us. In time we also became fallen. Then God came in to save us, and the first thing in His salvation is that He calls us. This means that the One who foreknew us, chose us, and predestinated us before the foundation of the world, one day came to visit us. In His visitation He may have caused us to think about salvation. Our thinking concerning salvation was not initiated by us but by the calling God. Our thinking about salvation is a sign of God's calling.

The believers are called by God Himself. This means that God's calling is not originated or initiated by the called ones. It is initiated by God, the One who calls. God is the Originator of His calling.

Verses related to being called by God:

1. 2 Timothy 1:9

Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages

2. Romans 1:6

Among whom you also are the called ones of Jesus Christ;

3. Acts 7:2

And he said, Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,

4. 2 Peter 1:3

Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,

5. 1 Corinthians 1:2

To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, *who is* theirs and ours:

6. 1 Corinthians 1:9

God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

7. Ephesians 1:18

The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Study on the verses related to being called by God:

2 Timothy 1:9 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages

- called

God not only saved us to enjoy His blessing but also called us with a holy calling, a calling for a particular goal, in order to fulfill His purpose.

- purpose

God's purpose is His plan according to His will to put us into Christ and make us one with Him to share His life and position that we may be His testimony. Grace is God's provision in life given to us that we may live out His purpose.

Romans 1:6 Among whom you also are the called ones of Jesus Christ;

- called

God calls us for the purpose of bringing us into Christ that we may belong to Him. All the fullness of God is in Christ (Col. 2:9; 1:19). When we are brought into Him and belong to Him, we partake of all the fullness of God. Of His fullness we have received all that is of God, even grace upon grace (John 1:16). This matter is covered in detail in

the first eight chapters of this book (cf. 8:9).

Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,

- glory

It might have been visible glory (cf. v. 55), as when the cloud and the fire appeared to Israel (Exo. 16:10; 24:16-17; Lev. 9:23; Num. 14:10; 16:19; 20:6; Deut. 5:24) and filled the tabernacle and the temple (Exo. 40:35; 1 Kings 8:11). It was the God of such glory who appeared to Abraham and called him. His glory was a great attraction to him. It separated (sanctified) him from the world unto God (Exo. 29:43) and was a great encouragement and strength that enabled him to follow God (Gen. 12:1, 4). In the same principle, God calls the New Testament believers by His invisible glory (2 Pet. 1:3).

2 Peter 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,

- Him

Referring to God, who is our Savior and our Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 1-2). He called us to His glory and virtue by His glory and virtue. His disciples saw His glory and virtue (v. 16; John 1:14) and were attracted by them. Then by this glory and virtue He called them to this glory and virtue. It is the same with all believers in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, *who is* theirs and ours:

- called

The believers in Christ are the called saints, not called to be saints. This is a positional matter, a sanctification in position with a view to sanctification in disposition. See note 192 in Rom. 6

- call

To call upon the name of the Lord implies to believe into Him (Rom. 10:14). All believers in the Lord should be His callers (Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16). We have been called to call, called by God to call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- into

I.e., to partake of the fellowship of the union with God's Son, Jesus Christ, and of the participation in Him. God has called us into such a fellowship that we may enjoy Christ as our God-given portion. This word, like the word in v. 2 concerning Christ's being theirs and ours, stresses again the crucial fact that Christ is the unique center of the believers for the solving of the problems among them, especially the problem of division. This book unveils to us that the very Christ, into whom we all have been called, is all-inclusive. He is the portion given to us by God (v. 2)... We should concentrate on Him, not on any persons, things, or matters other than Him. We should focus on Him as our unique center appointed by God, that all the problems among the believers may be solved. It is into the fellowship of such a One that we have been called by God.

- calling

God's calling is the sum total of all the blessings listed in vv. 3-14: God the Father's selection and predestination, God the Son's redemption, and God the Spirit's sealing and pledging. When we were called, we participated in the Father's selection and predestination, the Son's redemption, and the Spirit's sealing and pledging.

(Based on footnotes in the New Testament Recovery Version, published by Living Steam Ministry.)

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,