

Discussion 32

# CALLED OF GOD.

Compiled by Darrell Crow based upon personal studies, notes and prayer.

**THIS LESSON IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING REVISIONS**

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# CALLED OF GOD

The Bible uses the word 'Call/To Call/Called' in nearly every usage of the word as currently exists in our English use of the word today.

In the Bible, the word "call" is used most frequently to refer two types of calls

1. Mankind is called by God to God through His Universal Gospel Invitation.
2. Believers are called by God to specific tasks or ministries or occupation as a participant in God's redemptive work.

Throughout scripture, I see that the **Call of God** involved different types of calls. In the following four cases, it is God taking the initiative and calling upon man.



God calls with respect to men when he designates them to some **special office**

- *Ex. 31:2*<sup>2</sup> "See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.
- *Isa. 22:20*<sup>20</sup> "Then it will come about in that day, That I will summon My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah,
- *Acts 13:2*<sup>2</sup> While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

God calls when he invites people to **accept his offered grace**

- *Matt. 9:13* <sup>13</sup> *But go and learn <sup>[a]</sup>what this means: 'I DESIRE <sup>[b]</sup>COMPASSION, <sup>[c]</sup>AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*
- *Matt 11:28* <sup>28</sup> *"Come to Me, all <sup>[a]</sup>who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest*
- *Matt 22:4* <sup>4</sup> *Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast."'*

**Gospel Call:** In the message of the gospel His call is addressed to all men, to Jews and Gentiles alike. But this universal call is not inseparably connected with salvation, although it leaves all to whom it comes inexcusable if they reject it

- *1 Tim 2:4* <sup>4</sup> *who desires all men to be saved and to come to the <sup>[a]</sup>knowledge of the truth.*
- *1 Peter 3:18* <sup>18</sup> *For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the <sup>[a]</sup>spirit;*
- *2 Peter 3:9* <sup>9</sup> *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*
- *Matt. 22:14* <sup>14</sup> *And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.*
- *Matt. 28:19* <sup>19</sup> <sup>[a]</sup> *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,*
- *Mark 16:15* <sup>15</sup> *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.*
- *John 3:14-19* <sup>14</sup> *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; <sup>15</sup> so that whoever <sup>[a]</sup>believes will in Him have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world, that He gave His <sup>[b]</sup>only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. <sup>18</sup> He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the <sup>[c]</sup>only begotten Son of God. <sup>19</sup> This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.*
- *Rom. 9:24, 25* <sup>24</sup> *even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. <sup>25</sup> As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"*

**An effectual call** is something more than the outward message of the Word of God to men. An effectual call produces results. It is internal, and is the result of the enlightening and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit effectually drawing men to Christ, and disposing and enabling them to receive the truth

*John 6:44-45* <sup>44</sup> *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.*

*John 16:14* <sup>14</sup> *He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you*

*Acts 26: 18* <sup>18</sup> *to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'*

*Acts 16:14* <sup>14</sup> A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; <sup>[a]</sup>and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

*Eph. 1:17* <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the <sup>[a]</sup>knowledge of Him

We are given the **call to salvation**. This is how God establishes a personal relationship with us. As we discussed what it meant to be Lost, we saw that God also reveals Himself to each of us in the wonders of nature all around us (*Romans 1:20*. *20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*)

To all men, God has issued a general call to salvation, as Jesus said in the conclusion of the parable of the marriage feast, “<sup>14</sup> For many are <sup>[a]</sup>called, but few are chosen.” God has invited all men to the blessings of salvation through Christ. <sup>9</sup> *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.* Every believer is under obligation to pray for all men and to witness to all men:



<sup>3</sup> *This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,* <sup>4</sup> *who desires all men to be saved and to come to the <sup>[a]</sup>knowledge of the truth.* <sup>5</sup> *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,* <sup>6</sup> *who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony <sup>[b]</sup>given at <sup>[c]</sup>the proper time.* (*1 Timothy 2:3-6*)

This general call is an expression of divine grace. It alone does not save nor does it always lead to salvation. Man must respond to this call. Paul wrote, <sup>13</sup> for “*WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.*” (*Romans 10:13*). However; not every man answers God’s general call by calling upon Him. Many are called, but few are chosen. The chosen are those who are the results of God’s effectual call. They are the called ones according to God’s eternal purpose. It is God’s direct will that these called receive ALL THAT IS INVOLVED IN GOD’S GIFT OF SALVATION. (<sup>30</sup> *and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.* *Romans 8:30*) These called have already (according to God’s sovereign decree) been foreknown and predestinated. Their justification and glorification are just as certain as their calling.

The saved are those who have responded by faith to both God’s eternal and effectual call.

The unsaved reject God’s general call. Because of the greatness of God’s effectual call, Paul exhorted the Christians of his day and of ours to walk worthy of the vocation or calling we are called (*Ephesians 4:1* *4 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,* ). The believer can have confidence that God will complete the purpose of His divine call because of His faithfulness — the faithfulness of His character and His faithfulness to His Word (*1 Thessalonians 5:24* <sup>24</sup> *Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.*)

*Acts 16:14* <sup>14</sup> A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; <sup>[a]</sup>and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

*Eph. 1:17* <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the <sup>[a]</sup>knowledge of Him

The Lord then issues no fewer than four specific calls to every single believer. Once we have accepted God's call to Salvation, then we are called to participate in His redemptive work in the world.



**First**, we are given the **call to salvation**. This is how God establishes a personal relationship with us. As we discussed what it meant to be Lost, we saw that God also reveals Himself to each of us in the wonders of nature all around us (*Rom. 1:20*). <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

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<sup>3</sup> This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the <sup>[a]</sup>knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony <sup>[b]</sup>given at <sup>[c]</sup>the proper time. (*1 Timothy 2:3-6*)

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The believer is also designated as elect and chosen. Jesus said to His disciples, <sup>16</sup> *“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”* The disciples did not originate the choice; Jesus said He did. He chose them out of the world of lost, guilty sinners. This choice was made in eternity. Paul says, <sup>4</sup> *“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before <sup>[a]</sup>Him.”* (Ephesians 1:4)

The purpose of God’s choice was our perfect standing.

- **Negatively:**

- We are without blame;
- Our sins have been forgiven
- The guilt of our sin has been pardoned.

- **Positively**

- We are holy in position because we are completely covered by Christ’s righteousness
- As God’s elect, no one can condemn us, because our position is secure
- Our election is according to God’s foreknowledge
- Our salvation is based on faith
- Our election is appropriated by faith *Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, <sup>[a]</sup>for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, (Titus 1:1)*
- Our salvation is made evident by the outward signs of a conversion experience (1 Thessalonians 1:3-7) <sup>3</sup> *constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and <sup>[a]</sup>steadfastness of hope <sup>[b]</sup>in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, <sup>4</sup> knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; <sup>5</sup> for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we <sup>[c]</sup>proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup> You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup> so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.*

Our conversion should cause a change of moral character and behavior (Col 3:12-17) <sup>12</sup> *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and <sup>[a]</sup>patience; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. <sup>14</sup> Beyond all these things put on love, which is <sup>[b]</sup>the perfect bond of unity. <sup>15</sup> Let the peace of Christ <sup>[c]</sup>rule in*

- *your hearts, to which <sup>[d]</sup>indeed you were called in one body; and <sup>[e]</sup>be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of <sup>[f]</sup>Christ richly dwell within you, <sup>[g]</sup>with all wisdom teaching and admonishing <sup>[h]</sup>one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing <sup>[i]</sup>with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.*
- Christ is also called “The elect of God” (1 Peter 2:4). The fact and fulfillment of the election of believers are just as sure as His.

**Second**, all believers experience the **call to sanctification** (Lev. 11:44). This is the Father summoning His children to experience godly living. Sanctification can be defined as being set apart-or made holy-for the purposes of God. (Leviticus 11:44) <sup>44</sup> For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth

**Third**, every Christian receives the **call to service**. Scripture clearly reminds us that all believers-not just pastors and full-time missionaries-are called to serve the body of Christ and to spread the good news of salvation; each of us was "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand for us to do" (Eph. 2:10). This means we all have specific and important tasks to accomplish. (*Ephesians 2:10*) <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

**Fourth**, we all have the **call to accountability**. The Bible teaches that each of us will one day stand before our Lord and give an account of our life. This is not something to fear if we are presently seeking to walk in His ways. Rather, it will be a time of great reward and rejoicing.

The calling to belong to Christ goes deeper than the kinds of workplace “calling”. It is a call to a restored relationship with God and with other people and with the world around us. It encompasses all of a person’s being and doing.

Jesus said <sup>44</sup> *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day..”* (John 6:44).

Many refer to this verse in an effort to support a man-made doctrine which says that only those whom the Lord "calls" in some mystical way can be saved. They say that this calling is some sort of direct operation of the Spirit. Calvinism teaches that man is totally passive and cannot do anything unless God chose him before time with some special anointing, thereby enabling him to believe. Calvinism also teaches that while God ordained some for salvation the rest were chosen for eternal damnation. Such an idea is foreign to the scriptures.

Our Lord does draw people to Him, and no one can come to the Lord apart from God's drawing power. But this is not a matter of God electing to save some of us and condemning others arbitrarily. Consider: God wants all to be saved, and the reason some are lost is not because God has unconditionally chosen them to be.

### **For Whom Does God Desire Salvation?**

Everyone. The good news is that God does not desire anyone to be lost.

Not one!

God is "...patient, not wishing for any to perish."

- <sup>9</sup> *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (II Peter 3:9).*

God is "compassionate"

- *Matthew 9:36; <sup>36</sup> Seeing the <sup>[a]</sup> people, He felt compassion for them, because they were <sup>[b]</sup> distressed and <sup>[c]</sup> dispirited like sheep <sup>[d]</sup> without a shepherd.*
- <sup>15</sup> *But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and <sup>[a]</sup> truth. (Psalm 86:15)*

God is "...just"

- *Romans 3:24-26 <sup>24</sup> being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; <sup>25</sup> whom God displayed publicly as a <sup>[a]</sup> propitiation <sup>[b]</sup> in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, <sup>[c]</sup> because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; <sup>26</sup> for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who <sup>[d]</sup> has faith in Jesus.*

God is "Sorrowful" that all men are lost

- *Ezekiel 18:23; 31-32; <sup>23</sup> Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "<sup>[a]</sup> rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?*
- <sup>31</sup> *Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup> For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."*
- *Matthew 23:37 <sup>37</sup> "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.*

To suggest that man cannot respond to God's gospel apart from a special anointing or predestination calling that God gives to them that He does not give to all others makes God responsible for the lost being lost. That does not fit with the Biblical description of God's character and nature.

Furthermore it makes God .....

- Makes God responsible for the lost being lost.
- God would not have 'patience' waiting for the lost to repent had he predestined them to be lost.
- God would not have 'compassion' for the lost as he had selected them to be lost.
- God would not have 'sorrow' over the lost had he selected them to be lost.
- God is just. He is just for all. To be selectively just is not just.

God made salvation available to all. Salvation is available for all men, not just a select few.

## Jesus died for everyone

- (Hebrews 2:9) <sup>9</sup> But we do see Him who was made <sup>[a]</sup>for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. ;
- (John 3:16) <sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that He gave His <sup>[a]</sup>only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life).



## God wants all to come to know the truth

- 1 Tim 2:4 <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the <sup>[a]</sup>knowledge of the truth.

## The invitation is open to all, 24 hours a day. There's no such thing as waiting on God's "special call."

- (Matthew 11:28-30) <sup>28</sup> “Come to Me, all <sup>[a]</sup>who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke is <sup>[b]</sup>easy and My burden is light.”
- (Revelation 3:20) <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.
- (Revelation 22:17) <sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

He has already issued His call, and it has gone out unto the whole world. Any of us can choose to answer it, or not.

## In God's Universal Call, He Draws People Unto Himself

The context of Jesus' statement explains how God draws men and women to Himself. There is nothing mystical about it. The following verse in the context reveals how God draws men unto Himself.

<sup>45</sup> *It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me..* (John 6:45)

Note the words "taught" and "they shall all" (all drawn the same way; by being taught) and "hear" and "learn" and "come". These are not mystical words. They are common, everyday words which are used to describe how it is that people are drawn to Christ.

What is it that is taught and heard and learned?

The means or method by which God "calls" or "draws" all men is the Gospel. <sup>14</sup> *It was for this He called you through our gospel, <sup>[a]</sup>that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ..* (II Thessalonians 2:14).

There is no predestination of saved/lost or a special, mystical anointing of the Holy Spirit, but rather, the Holy Spirit calls men through the gospel; and it is the gospel that is the power <sup>16</sup> *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).

God draws people unto Himself through the teaching of the gospel. The preaching of the gospel is God's power, his drawing power, to save

(I Corinthians 1:18-21). <sup>18</sup> *For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who <sup>[a]</sup>are perishing, but to us who <sup>[b]</sup>are being saved it is the power of God.* <sup>19</sup> *For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."* <sup>20</sup> *Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?* <sup>21</sup> *For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the <sup>[c]</sup>message preached to save those who believe.*

Therefore, all people, when they hear the gospel, at any moment, have the ability to respond to God's gospel call. They also have the ability to reject it

(Acts 13:45-48). <sup>45</sup> *But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were <sup>[a]</sup>blaspheming.* <sup>46</sup> *Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.* <sup>47</sup> *For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY <sup>[b]</sup>BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.'* <sup>48</sup> *When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of <sup>[c]</sup>the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.*

Sinners are saved by God's grace when they respond in faithful obedience to the gospel that draws them to God (Matthew 7:21). <sup>21</sup> *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.*

God is always ready for men to repent and obey (*Acts 17:30*) . <sup>30</sup> *Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,*

It is those who will do so that God has predestined for salvation (*1 Thessalonians 5:9*). <sup>9</sup> *For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

This is an important concept to recognize. God has not predestined individuals to be saved or lost, but rather, has predestined the method by which we are saved.

If we obey the gospel, we are baptized "into Christ" (*Romans 6:3,4*). <sup>3</sup> *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?* <sup>4</sup> *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

God has predestined all those "in Christ" to be "blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (*Ephesians 1:3*). <sup>3</sup> *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, But it is up to us as to whether we will obey or not.*

Conversely, I see that man calls upon God especially in times of trouble when man is so troubled, he finally humbles himself and prays.



We are commanded to call upon the Lord daily in prayer as ‘lovers of God.’

**To cry for help, hence to pray (Gen. 4:26).** Thus men are said to "call upon the name of the Lord" (Acts 2:21; 7:59; 9:14; Rom. 10:12; 1 Cor. 1:2).

- *ACTS 9:14* <sup>14</sup> and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.”
- *ROMANS 10:12* <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;
- *1 CORINTHIANS 1:2* <sup>2</sup> To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, <sup>12</sup>saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:



