



The Calling of God

By Peter Salemi

BICOG Publication

The Calling of God

Why is that you and only you can see the truth? The truth of God seems so clear and obvious; it makes total sense to YOU, but others in your family just don't see it? You explain the truth of God from the Bible, but others will argue with you on each and every one of the points you make; and no matter how many answers to the arguments you give-no matter how much sense and proof you show, people still will not believe. Is there answer as to why this occurs?

The Minds of People

One who is called by God, chosen of God eventually will come across this dilemma explained above. All of God's people have experienced this one way or another. Why can't the unconverted see it? Why is it that the converted care so much for the word and work of God, and the unconverted do not? Why do Christians continually keep God's laws, whereas the unconverted (including people who profess to be Christian) care not to, or say they believe in God but don't obey him; or say that God's law is done away and we don't have to keep it? Is there something that the converted Christian *has* that others do not?

The Carnal vs. the Spiritual Mind

The Apostle Paul wrote about this subject in the book of Romans. The Apostle Paul knew that the mind by *itself* cannot see the truth. He wrote: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh..." (8:5). The fleshly carnal mind does not think on the things of God nor does it care for the things of God. Paul said, "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God..." (8:7). The Carnal mind is hostile towards God, and does not want to be subject to him. This is why many reject the message or just can't see the truth of God, their minds are not open and they, "resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7:51).

On the other hand, there are the ones who are "spiritually minded" those who love the things of God, and God is in all their thoughts. Paul said, "...but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." (Rom 8:5).

But how does one become "spiritually minded?" And why is one spiritually minded while the other is not? There is something inside the spiritually minded person that the carnal minded person does not have-THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD! "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, *if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.* Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom 8:9). It is the spirit of God that reveals his truth to you, and one will be able to see what others cannot (1 Corinth 2:10). It is what convinces us of what we are, and that we need to obey Almighty God.

Paul said, "For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: *for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" (Rom 8:6-7). God's law is "life and peace." The spirit of God shows us the way of Salvation which is God's law, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom 8:4). When one receives the spirit of God, the law of God is written on the fleshly tables of our heart, it is evidence that one has the spirit of God. The carnally minded people will not subject themselves to it; therefore do not have the spirit of God.

The Calling of God

If so called “Christians” say the “law is done away” they do not have the spirit of God, for the spiritually minded subject themselves to the law of God. Certainly the world does not follow God, so the world does not have the spirit of God. In fact another spirit is working in the world and that spirit is the spirit of disobedience to God (Ephesians 2:2). Satan the Devil is influencing this world and has the whole world deceived (Rev 12:9).

How does one receive the spirit of God? Is there a process one has to go through to belong to Jesus, and to actually be his possession? “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom 8:9).

The Calling of God

This subject of the calling of God has been vastly misunderstood by many in the so called professing Christian world.

Most professing Christians feel that God is now calling everybody to salvation. Others think that God calls to salvation those who wish to be called, or those who seek to be called by deciding to “give their hearts to the Lord .” Still others feel God must surely call only the best society has to offer - the “good people” who try to obey God as they see Him.

A few feel that a person has not been called unless he has had some type of special religious experience such as “speaking in tongues.” Certain preachers must feel that they have the power to call people, since they tell people at tent meetings to come forward and profess Christ.

Amazingly, all these common teachings and impressions are proven false by the Bible.

Although many people use the biblical expression and profess to having been “called” (e.g., “It has been two years since I was called to the Lord”), few have ever stopped to realize and understand what they are saying.

The New Testament was written in Greek, and the English is only a translation. Nonetheless the English word “call” well reflects the process described in the Bible. To be called is to be invited or hailed by God, much as a person might telephone a group of friends and invite them to a party.

Notice the illustration in Matthew 22:1-14, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,
“And sent forth his servants to *call them that were bidden to the wedding...*” (vv.2-3).

Quite plainly, then, God’s calling is an invitation. Galatians 1:6 says it is a calling - an invitation - to the grace of Christ. 1 Peter 2:9 says it is a calling from darkness to light.

Briefly, being called means that one is invited to be a member of God’s Church, with all the responsibilities that entails and the hope of salvation.

The Greek word translated “church” in the New Testament is *ecclesia*, which literally means

The Calling of God

“called-out ones.” Hence when we are called we become part of the “called-out ones”—that is, the Church, ‘called out’ (Greek *ek*, ‘out,’ and *kaleín*, ‘to call’)” (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, under “Church”).

This invitation that goes out to the whole world is the preaching of the Gospel that the church is to preach (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18).

The Chosen

When the call goes out—the preaching of the Gospel, and one hears it, how does one become “chosen?” This is when the individual responds, and God examines his response, and then God will actually choose that person because of the individual’s response.

Notice the parable Jesus gave of the sower: “A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

“And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

“And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

“And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold...” (Luke 8:5-8).

Here Jesus gives the analogy of the preaching of the Gospel, and the reactions of people who hear the Gospel and what their actions are.

Jesus begins to explain, “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.” (v.11). The word of God is preached to the world, as Jesus said “many are called” (Matthew 22:14).

Notice now how people react, and this is how God chooses by the reaction of the people who hear the word of God, “Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

“They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

“And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.” (vv.12-15).

First is Satan that snatches away the word away like a “fowl” so the word cannot take root.

Then those whose hearts are like a rock the seed cannot take root. Jesus said these are “believers,” and receive the word with “joy,” but when temptation comes they abandon the word of God.

The thorns are those who hear the word *but* care for the things of this world “choke the word,” (Mark 4:19) and the world takes over their life.

Then there are the people of “good ground.” These are they that hear the word and “keep” it, “and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some

The Calling of God

sixty, some thirty.” (Matthew 13:23). God observes how people react to the word. People of good ground they take action; they prepare their hearts to hear and receive the word.

God said through Jeremiah and Hosea, “For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, *Break up your fallow ground*, and sow not among thorns....Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart...Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; *break up your fallow ground*: for *it is* time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” (Jer 4:3, 4; Hosea 10:12). A fallow ground is an uncultivated ground, and ground that is hard-a *hard hearted person*. In a hard uncultivated ground, a seed cannot penetrate and take root. Those that listen to the word of God, and study, are cultivating the ground of their hearts, *taking out all the preconceived ideas and traditions purging the ground* so the word of God takes root and penetrates. It doesn't happen as fast as you read it. As it takes time to cultivate the ground so does it take time to cultivate your mind. As Gill's commentary writes, “that is, of their hearts; which were like ground *unopened, unbroken, not filled and manured, nor sown with seed, but overrun with weeds and thistles*; and so were they, *hard and impenitent, destitute of grace, and full of sin and wickedness*, and stood in need of being renewed in the spirit of their minds; which this exhortation is designed to convince them of, and to stir them up to make use of proper methods of obtaining it, through the efficacious grace of God;” (emphasis added). When one is called and seed is sown a bit at a time, the person cultivates his mind further to receive more and more of the word of God. Conversion is a process one must go through until it's complete. The others in this parable do not do this!

One example-Jesus during his ministry said to Peter who was called by Jesus, “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and *when thou art converted*, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:32). Peter was not *completely* converted. This happened when he received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost when he was begotten by Almighty God and became a begotten child of God. At this time when one is “begotten,” one will “grow in grace, and *in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*” (2 Peter 3:18), till eventually becomes “born” of God at the resurrection.

So God sees this reaction to the Gospel and during this time of conversion one becomes chosen, how? Paul says, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” One who has the spirit of God is Christ's. He belongs to him, he is chosen, “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning *chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit* and belief of the truth:” (2 Thess 2:13). Unless God personally, directly, miraculously intervenes in a person's life and opens that person's mind - unless that person submits his life to God and receives God's Holy Spirit - unless that person has God's Spirit leading him, motivating him, guiding his thoughts and actions, he is not a true Christian!

How does one receive the Holy Spirit? Peter said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:38). When one is baptized, then a baptized member or a minister “through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given” (Acts 8:18). One becomes chosen of God.

The Calling of God

Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...” (John 6:44). The called are drawn to God by his spirit, till eventually they become chosen when the Holy Spirit is given.

A similar statement is made by Hosea about Israel being called out of Egypt, “When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt... I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love:” (11:1, 4). The “cords of a man” is Moses. The name Moses means “to draw out” (see Exodus 2:10). Moses drew out the Israelites by the Spirit of God, “Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, *and* his people, *saying*, Where *is* he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? *where is he that put his holy Spirit within him?*

“That led *them* by the *right hand of Moses with his glorious arm*, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?” (Isaiah 63:11-12).

Jesus being the second Moses does the same thing, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.” (John 12:32).

He also said, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain:” (John 15:16). Jesus told them they were chosen before the Holy Spirit was given but Jesus knew the future and knew these were his disciples. Later in the Gospel of John Jesus told them, “Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

“And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:” (John 20:21). Did they receive the Holy Spirit? No! Jesus was preparing them for what was to come at Pentecost. So Jesus knew the future and knew these were the chosen and told them in advance.

But notice God Himself decides to call and choose him or her-not those who wish to be, nor those who try to be, nor those who are talked into joining churches by well-intentioned but misguided preachers, nor just the “good” among people. Rather, He calls those He decides to call for His own reasons. It’s not something you can choose to do, no matter how much you may want to. God must make the choice to call you and begin working with you.

Notice how Paul states it in Romans 9, where he discusses this precise topic: “So then it [one’s calling] is not of him who wills [he who wants to be called], nor of him who runs [he who even tries in his own way], but of God who shows mercy” (verse 16). Paul is not saying those not now called will not be saved, only that their chance for salvation is not now in this age, the age of man, but later in the Kingdom those who are left of the nations or in the second resurrection will receive their first chance for salvation.

Unfortunately only a precious few respond to God call, as Jesus said, “For many are called, but few *are* chosen.” (Matthew 22:14). Jesus called his church the “little flock” (Luke 12:32). As Jesus said in Matthew 22, “And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: *and they would not come.*” (v.3). Most reject the calling of God. Most people cling on to their ways and traditions and do not want to hear the true word of God.

The Calling of God

Jesus makes this point in Matthew 13. The disciples asked, “Why speakest thou unto them in parables?” Jesus deliberately clouded the meaning of his parables for a specific reason. He said, “Because it is *given unto you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” (v.11). The disciples did not reject the word of God, they had good hearts and wanted to learn more and cultivate their hearts to receive more and drink in the word of God. The others did not, and Jesus was showing them the difference between the called and the ones who were not.

Jesus said, “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because *they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not*, neither do they understand.

“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

“*For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed*; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” (vv.13-15). Jesus said “they” closed their hearts, ears and minds. This is why they cannot understand, they cling on to their traditions and beliefs and ways, and reject the word of God. So one can preach the truth to unconverted people all day long unless God is calling them and opens their minds to the truth and they react rightly to the truth, they will not understand and be healed.

This is a valuable lesson to the converted Christian. It is not our responsibility to convert people. We are to be a “light” to the world so people “can see your good works” (Matthew 5:16). We are a witness to the world and preach the Gospel as a “testimony” against them (Matthew 10:18). It is up to God to reveal the truth and choose the person, and the converted will come to the church and will want to be part of the work of God and live God’s way, “***And the Lord added to the church*** daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). No one can be forced to convert; it is God that shows him or her, the way and the truth through the preaching of the Gospel, and the truth of God in the Bible that the church proves and demonstrates to the world. Then it is up to the individual by his or hers own freewill to come to God.

And Faithful...

The Apostle John when he saw the great vision of Jesus coming back to this earth he saw those that followed him, the armies of heaven and said, “...they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.” (Rev 17:14). These are the three stages one must go through.

First, to be “called,” as we have examined above, “For many are called” by the worldwide preaching of the Gospel (the invitation).

Then chosen, who are but few “but few *are* chosen.” Those that respond to the calling and go through the conversion process and become baptized and receive the spirit of God are the elect and chosen of God.

Then the chosen remain “faithful.” These are people who remain faithful to Jesus and the Father and have not fallen away. Jesus said to the church, the chosen of God, “be thou faithful unto death,” (Rev 2:10).

The Calling of God

He continually told his followers, “Then said Jesus to those Jews which *believed on him*, If ye *continue in my word, then* are ye my disciples indeed;” (John 8:31). Once we are chosen we must remain obedient to God and overcome this world and not fall away.

Jesus told his church, “And he that overcometh, and *keepeth my works unto the end*, to him will I give power over the nations:” (Rev 2:26; see also Matthew 24:13; Isaiah 64:5-6; James 1:25; Gal 3:10). Those that fall away from the faith are not the faithful, they have broken the covenant with God and Jesus Christ and will receive the punishment of Gehenna fire. (Read our booklet Can a Christian lose Salvation? For more details).

What is the Purpose of the Calling?

To what purpose is this calling today? God’s Word clearly defines the commission - the Work – that God’s called people are to be carrying out at this time.

God’s called people in this age are given the commission of carrying Christ’s Gospel message - the good news of the coming kingdom of God everywhere they go to as many people as possible. That is the Work every true Christian should be part of.

The other main part of what God’s people are called to do is to grow in Godly character - come to think and act just as God does. God’s begotten children are to be preparing to be married to Christ at His return (Rev 19:7). God’s Church is actually being judged by God now, in preparation for birth into God’s very Family at Christ’s return (1 Peter 4:17).

Is it any wonder that Paul says true Christians are called with a “holy calling” (2 Tim. 1:9), or that he tells God’s called people to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph. 4:1, AV)?

How does a called and converted person “walk worthy of the vocation”? Peter says, “As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” (1 Peter 1:15). Peter later noted that true Christians should live as Jesus Christ lived (1 Peter 2:21-22).

Are you being called?

Have you truly been called by God? Is God calling you now -leading you by His Holy Spirit? How would you know?

If you are being called by God, you will come to have a deep, abiding belief that God exists, and that He is in charge of everything that goes on in this physical realm: “He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb 11:6).

If you are being called by God you will believe that the Bible is God’s Word – God’s instruction book for man - that every word of the Bible is true. What is more, with the Holy Spirit guiding your mind, you will begin to actually understand what you read in the Bible. You will begin to actually want to study the Bible, striving to dig out every gem of truth it has to offer (2 Tim 3:16-17).

The Calling of God

You will desire a closer relationship with the great God who created you and who is revealing His truth to you. This type of relationship is fostered through intensive Bible study and fervent prayer. You will understand as you never have before the importance of prayer and how to pray, and you will want to do so regularly. “Draw near to God,” writes James, “and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8).

If God’s Spirit is actually leading you, you will begin to feel a sense of purpose in your life, perhaps for the first time. You will develop an inner sense of urgency about the times we live in, an excitement over the truth you are coming to understand and an expectation about what is ahead. And yet, you will feel an inner peace and calm unlike any other you have ever known. This is the “peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (Phil. 4:7), which God’s Spirit offers.

You will begin to understand the true doctrines of the Bible and the purpose of human life. You will also be ready to do the hardest thing any human can do—admit you are wrong. This is the beginning of real repentance, and you will want to change your life, and you will have the power to say no to all your wrong urges and habits, because you will understand what is sin, which is breaking the law of God and see how evil this world really is.

Called to do the Work

Once called and chosen, Jesus said to “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15-16).

Does this mean it’s your responsibility to convert people? That you have to come with some sort of quota for God and produce fruit? Is it up to you to save? Must you force someone to convert?

As noted in the booklet, the clear answer is no! If one is not directed by the spirit of God, the person will not see the truth. The church’s commission is to preach the gospel as a witness (Matthew 10:18). This is the calling. The choosing and the individuals reaction to the gospel message is up to God and the individual, not up to the church and its converted members.

The Apostle Paul *before he preached a word* in Corinth Jesus told him, “Be not afraid, *but speak*, and hold not thy peace:

“For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: *for I have much people in this city.*” (Acts 18:9, 10). Already Jesus knew who would respond to the call—to hear the gospel message and to be chosen by him. It is up to God to choose, and it is up to us to be faithful.

Paul said, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

“But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the *things of God knoweth no man*, but the *Spirit of God*.”

The Calling of God

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (1 Corinth 2:9-13). The carnal mind left to itself does not search, does not know the deep things of God. *It takes an added ingredient to understand the truth, and that is the Holy Spirit!* Unless the spirit of God is directing that person, he or she will not understand. Only the spirit of God can reveal the truth. So one cannot be forced to convert. There are no quotas. It's up to God to choose and to know the truth at this time and he brings them into the church, not the church members. We are tools in his hands. The church preaches, teaches and baptize *in his name* to bring about his will.

The Whole World will be Called

But eventually the entire world will know the truth. God said, “And he will destroy in this mountain [Kingdom of God see Isaiah 2] the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.” (Isaiah 25:7). Satan's deception will be eliminated and all will see the truth of God. God says his knowledge will no longer be among the “little flock” but “for the earth shall be *full of the knowledge of the LORD*, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9).

Jesus in the Kingdom will send representatives to the world to know the truth, and will demand all nations to come to Jerusalem to learn the ways of God (Isaiah 2).

Even Israel will be a missionary people once again to preach the Gospel, “And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations [Israel], *to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.*” (Isaiah 66:19).

Those that have come and gone and have not known the way of Salvation. These will receive their first chance of salvation during the second resurrection when all will stand before God and be judged as the church is being judged now (Rev 20:5, 11-12). So if you have a loved one who was not called by God in this age, he or she will receive their first chance at the great white throne judgment. God is truly merciful.

(Inspired by Vicki Milner)