

WALK WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING

EPHESIANS 4:1

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of Master of Divinity in  
Grace Theological Seminary  
May 1983



Title: WALK WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING: EPHESIANS 4:1  
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Degree: Master of Divinity  
Date: May, 1983  
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From a structural and thematic viewpoint, Ephesians 4:1 stands as the pivotal verse of the book. Paul's exhortation "to walk worthily of the calling to which you are called" provides the logical connection between the more doctrinal content of the first three chapters and the more ethical content of the final chapters.

One of the primary issues that arises is, what does Paul mean when he refers to the "calling"? Both Pauline and non-Pauline writing attest to the wide range of meaning for  $\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$  and its cognates. Clearly, however, this term does not refer to the special selection by God of men for the pastorate. The normal process for choosing spiritual leaders was based upon the man's desire and qualifications for the position. There is a call which comes from God which is linked (especially in Rom 8:28-30) with God's sovereign activity. Calling provides a sense of assurance to the believer. This assurance (based on God's activity) does not absolve the believer of responsibility. Hence, in Paul,  $\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$  is primarily used with reference to an ethical lifestyle. Walking "worthily" of the  $\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$  involves measuring up in an ethical sense to its demands.

The exhortation by Paul in Ephesians 4:1 is to be understood as both an expression of his care and concern, and also of his authority. He is a prisoner because of his faithfulness in proclaiming the gospel. Therefore, the Ephesians are also expected to risk whatever is necessary to live as they should. In their calling the Ephesians find the basis for enabling them to live (walk) in such a way. In parallel statements from other letters it is evident that Paul's attitude toward the ethical issue was consistent, while his approach varied with the needs of the recipients.

The richness of God's calling reaches into the life of every believer, providing him with hope and direction for ordering the course of his life. The Spirit enables the believer "to walk worthily of the calling." He initiates the believer into this new life and He provides the motivation and power for maintaining the quality of life which God demands. Thus the calling of God is maintained on the basis of grace alone. Such grace demands a response on the part of the believer. Paul's emphasis, therefore, is primarily ethical--for it is in the moral decisions of life that love and devotion for God are best expressed. Whatever ethical demands God makes in His word are to be considered as part of the calling of which Paul exhorts his readers to "walk worthily."

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary  
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree  
Master of Divinity

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	vii
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Chapter	
I. THE CHRISTIAN CALLING . . . . .	7
The Biblical Usage of καλέω, κλησις, and κλητός . . . . .	7
Non-Pauline Usage--OT/LXX . . . . .	7
Non-Pauline Usage--NT . . . . .	12
Pauline Usage . . . . .	21
Calling and Vocation . . . . .	27
Old Testament Men "Called" of God . . . . .	28
New Testament Men "Called" of God . . . . .	29
The Confusion Continues . . . . .	33
An Important Distinction . . . . .	34
Calling and Predestination . . . . .	35
Calling as a Source of Assurance . . . . .	35
Effectual Call . . . . .	38
External Call and Effectual Call . . . . .	43
Conclusion . . . . .	47
II. WORTHILY . . . . .	49
The Biblical Usage of ἀξίως, ἀξιόω, and ἄξιος . . . . .	49
Non-Pauline Usage--OT/LXX . . . . .	49
Non-Pauline Usage--NT . . . . .	50
Pauline Usage . . . . .	56
Conclusion . . . . .	60
III. EPHESIANS 4:1 . . . . .	62
Content . . . . .	62
Οὖν . . . . .	62
Παρακαλῶ . . . . .	63
Περιπατῆσαι . . . . .	67
Ὁ δέσμιος ἐν κυρίῳ . . . . .	70
Context . . . . .	71
Transitional Nature . . . . .	71
Previous Reference . . . . .	71
Theme of Ephesians . . . . .	74

Parallel Passages . . . . .	79
Colossians . . . . .	79
1 Thessalonians 2:12 . . . . .	82
Philippians 1:27 . . . . .	84
Conclusion . . . . .	85
IV. THE ONE WHO WALKS WORTHILY . . . . .	86
The Richness of the Call . . . . .	86
The Spirit and the Call . . . . .	86
Salvation and the Call . . . . .	88
The Call to Ethical Behavior . . . . .	90
Conclusion . . . . .	91
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	93

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

AB	The Anchor Bible
BAGD	<u>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</u> by Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, Wilbur F. Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker
BDB	<u>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</u> by Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs
BDF	<u>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</u> by Friedrich Wilhelm Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk
IBD	<u>Illustrated Bible Dictionary</u>
KJV	King James Version
LSJ	<u>A Greek-English Lexicon</u> by Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones
LXX	Septuagint
MGM	<u>Concordance to the Greek Testament</u> by W. F. Moulton, A. S. Geden, and H. K. Moulton
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NICNT	New International Commentary of the New Testament
NIDNTT	<u>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</u>
NIV	New International Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
TDNT	<u>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</u>
TWOT	<u>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</u>

## INTRODUCTION

When Paul met with the Ephesian elders on his way back to Jerusalem they wept because he told them that they would never see him again (Acts 20). This meeting, however, did not prove to be the end of their relationship. Several years later Paul found himself writing to the believers in Ephesus with the same concern he had for them on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It was there that he told them: "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27). In the book of Ephesians he continues to make this declaration, with the balance between doctrine and practice which is a peculiar trademark of his. This balance is recognized by almost every commentator. Eadie notes that in Paul, "ethics follow theology."<sup>1</sup> Lloyd-Jones characterizes this feature as Paul's invariable practice of moving from principles to particulars.<sup>2</sup> Mitton reflects the apologetic nature of Paul's writing when he says, "Ethical instructions are seen as a logical consequence

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<sup>1</sup>John A. Eadie, Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 266.

<sup>2</sup>David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Christian Unity (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 23.



of the doctrinal affirmations of chapters 1-3."<sup>1</sup> Wuest identifies Ephesians 4:1 as the break between doctrine and exhortation.<sup>2</sup> Barth raises the interesting idea that the distinction introduced in this verse is between ethics and praise.<sup>3</sup> Finally, William Carver, who "feels very sure that Paul would never have consented to any division in his teaching into 'doctrinal' and 'practical'" himself raises his own set of distinctions--that which exists between exposition and application.<sup>4</sup>

However one wishes to characterize the shift which takes place in Ephesians 4:1, it is evident that such a shift does occur. By the presence of οὖν it announces the logical conclusion to that which came before; and, in so doing, it introduces the theme of what is to follow. At the heart of this transition is Paul's exhortation (παρακαλῶ) to the Ephesians to "walk worthily of the calling to which you have been called" (ἀξιῶς περιπατῆσαι τῆς κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε). These words form the vital link between two sections of

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<sup>1</sup>C. Leslie Mitton, Ephesians, The Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company; London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott Publishers, 1973), p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>Kenneth Samuel Wuest, Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), p. 93.

<sup>3</sup>Markus Barth, Ephesians, 2 vols., AB (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1974), 2:426.

<sup>4</sup>William Owen Carver, The Glory of God in the Christian Calling (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1949), pp. 20-21.

Paul's letter. How this is accomplished, and the dynamic role which Ephesians 4:1 plays in the unity of the letter will be discussed further in another chapter. Even before this can be done, however, a proper understanding of the words which comprise the verse must be gained. What did Paul mean to communicate when he referred to the "calling" of the Ephesians? How were they to "walk worthily"? To help in answering these questions concentrated word studies of the Greek terms κλησις (calling) and ἀξίως (worthily) are included.

Such a concentrated word study is necessary with regard to κλησις precisely because so much confusion exists concerning this word "call." Churches "call" pastors. Men feel "called" to the ministry. Theologians discuss the general "call" as opposed to the effectual "call." The discussion which develops in Chapter 1 shows that even in biblical times the word "call" could be understood in many different ways. Because such a wide range of meanings exists it will be helpful to determine for each occurrence of κλησις and its cognates (ἐπικαλέω, καλέω, προσκαλέομαι, μετακαλέομαι, and κλητός) the sense in which they are to be taken in the given context. Several patterns emerge from such a procedure which help to throw insight on Paul's use of κλησις and καλέω in Ephesians 4:1.

This biblical study of "calling" leads naturally into a discussion of two confusing and controversial issues. The first of these involves the current use of the word to describe one's choice of occupation, especially with regard to a man or woman who sense a certain amount of compunction to enter into formal Christian service, usually as a pastor or missionary. Does the Bible support or demand such a "call" to the ministry? It is evident from questions asked in many licensing and ordination examinations that the belief is widespread that it does. This belief is so pervasive that it constitutes the traditional view on the subject. However, the Bible bows to no tradition, and it becomes evident from the study of pertinent passages employing the term κλησιν or the concept of "calling" that this is one tradition that ought to be left behind.

The second area of controversy which arises out of a consideration of κλησιν, etc., involves the relationship of calling and predestination. Many passages bear upon this issue, and several are included here. These are: Matthew 22:1-14 which includes the statement by Jesus that "Many are called, but few are chosen" (v. 14); Romans 8:28-30 in which the κλητοι are promised ultimately only good; and Revelation 17:14 in which the κλητοι are numbered among the chosen (ἐκλεκτοι) and faithful (πιστοι). It becomes evident from a consideration of these passages that the Bible does

distinguish between a general (external, universal) call and a specific (special, effectual) call.

Following the study of ἀξίως and its cognates (ἀνδξίως, ἀνδξιός, καταξιόμαι, ἀξιόω, and ἀξιός), Chapter Three turns the discussion to the text of Ephesians 4:1 itself. Each element of the verse is viewed with regard to its contribution to a correct understanding of the verse.

The discussion then moves from content to context. The transitional nature of Ephesians 4:1 in the book of Ephesians itself has almost universally been acknowledged. However, it is important to determine what the nature of that transition is. Κλήσεως (calling) and ἀξίως περιπατῆσαι (to walk worthily) reflect the nature of that transition: the tremendous privilege of the believer's calling (Eph 1-3) is to result in a lifestyle that measures up to that privilege (Eph 4-6). Obviously it is here that the expanded word studies of Chapters One and Two are of the greatest help.

From a consideration of passages such as Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, and Philippians 1:27, it becomes increasingly apparent that Paul used the idea of κλήσις in contexts such as these to refer to a course of life offered by God to the believer. It is true that such a calling has its roots in the past counsels of God and that it has as its ultimate goal of conformity to Christ and enjoyment of Him forever. But, for the Ephesians, and for all who name the

name of Christ, Paul's exhortation must be put into effect in the concrete realities of life's situations.

The final chapter provides a synthesis of all the foregoing material, with the view to developing a consistent pattern of living. Paul has left no area of life untouched by his teachings. He also provides every conceivable spiritual motivation to the believers to implement this teaching in their lives. The παρακαλῶ of Ephesians 4:1 demands such implementation. All that remains is for believers to understand what Paul is asking them to do and then (most importantly) to do it.

Any treatment of Ephesians 4:1 which fails to join voices with Paul in calling for a response can never do justice to the verse. It is hoped that the material presented in the following pages will help to clarify what constitutes a walk that is worthy of the believers' calling. Furthermore, it is hoped that such clarification will strengthen the resolve of the reader to pattern his life in accordance with the pattern suggested by Paul.

## CHAPTER I

### THE CHRISTIAN CALLING

#### The Biblical Usage of καλέω,

#### κλησις, and κλητός

One of the first questions which confronts the reader of Ephesians 4:1 involves what Paul meant to communicate when he referred to their "calling" (κλησις). What was this thing of which they were to "walk worthily"?

In order to answer this question it will be most helpful to divide the discussion into two parts. The most natural procedure to follow is to discover how Paul elsewhere uses the terms and concepts of καλέω (to call), κλησις (calling), and κλητός (called). A study of Pauline usage will doubtlessly yield the greatest insights for this area. However, Paul did not exist in a vacuum; nor did his readers. Therefore, a study of non-Pauline usage of these terms should also yield some valuable insights.

#### Non-Pauline Usage--OT/LXX

In the Old and New Testaments there are approximately 700 occurrences of the word "call" as verb, noun, or adjective.<sup>1</sup> With few exceptions, "call" is used to translate

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<sup>1</sup>The Illustrated Bible Dictionary (hereafter cited as IBD), s.v. "Call, calling," by M. R. W. Farrer, 1:226.



the Hebrew קָרָא and the Greek καλεῖν. In all but a few instances the Hebrew verb קָרָא is rendered in the LXX by the Greek καλέω (approximately 300 times) and its cognates, ἐπικαλέω (approximately 150 times) and προσκαλέομαι (11 times).<sup>1</sup>

### Naming/summon

קָרָא is often found in the sense of naming: "God called the light Day" (Gen 1:5); "so his name was called Jacob" (Gen 25:26). The second major sense in which קָרָא is found is that of "to summon" or "to invite" usually by name: "the Lord God called to the man" (Gen 3:9), "He called an appointed time (or feast) against me" (Lam 1:15), "David called for Zadok and Abiathar" (1 Chr 15:11).

When God is the One who calls, it implies that He has a certain claim or authority over that which He calls: "I have called you by name; you are Mine!" (Isa 43:1). "The Mighty One, God, the Lord, has spoken, And summoned (called) the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting" (Ps 50:1). This idea is even conferred to man when he is given the responsibility to "call" the animals by name (Gen 2:19).

The idea that the call which is extended expects a response is inherent in the word קָרָא itself.<sup>2</sup> Farrer

<sup>1</sup>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (hereafter cited as NIDNTT), s.v. "Call," by Lothar Coenen, 1:273.

<sup>2</sup>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (hereafter cited as TWOT), s.v. "קָרָא," by Leonard Coppens, 2:812.

suggests that God's call constitutes an invitation or summons to serve Him in some capacity.<sup>1</sup> A relationship is indicated between God and those who or that which which He calls. God named that which He created and He ordered that creation to serve His specific purposes. Speaking to Cyrus in Isaiah 45:4 God declares: "I have called you by your name"--indicating that Cyrus is to respond to God's bidding.

### Calling on the Lord

Subsumed under the idea of the call as a "summons" is its use in the Old Testament of "calling on the Lord." In the LXX ἐπικαλέω is most often used in this construction:<sup>2</sup> "Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen 4:26; cf. 1 Sam 12:17; Ps 50:15; 55:15; Jer 29:12; 33:3; Jon 1:6). Such a plea is sanctioned and encouraged by God, for it implies a relationship between God and the supplicant. The psalmist assures his readers that "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him" (Ps 145:18).

### Vocation

In only one instance does קרא seem to indicate an appointment to a specific task or vocation. Isaiah 49:1 speaks of the Servant of the Lord being "called from the womb." On the basis of this verse it appears that calling

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<sup>1</sup>Farrer, "Call," p. 226.

<sup>2</sup>NIDNTT, Coenen, "Call," 1:272.



as vocation cannot be entirely ruled out of the Hebrew idiom. Martin Noth presents a good case for the idea of divine calling in the Old Testament although he admits that "'called' is never used in the Old Testament to describe the authorization of the prophets,"<sup>1</sup> or of priests or kings either. Yet it is apparent from the Old Testament narrative that certain men are identified as having a special "calling" from God. This "calling" Noth calls the "charismatic element."<sup>2</sup> It is an element which is totally lacking in the process of choosing the priests or the cultic prophets. Individuals alone are called--always either an independent prophet, judge, or a king. In the northern kingdom of Israel kingship was conferred through God's prophets. In the southern kingdom of Judah the calling to kingship also was to individuals, but always to an individual of the House of David.

In the case of the major prophets (as opposed to the cultic prophets) H. H. Rowley also recognizes the presence of God's call which he characterizes as a "constraint which they (the prophets) believed to be of God."<sup>3</sup> It is a call which demands a response:

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Noth, The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>3</sup>Harold Henry Rowley, The Biblical Doctrine of Election (London: Lutterworth Press, 1950), p. 104.

Though he may seek to evade it, he responds to it not merely because the hand of God is laid upon him, but because he is what he is, a man of sensitive spirit who is alive to the touch of God and willing to respond.<sup>1</sup>

Jeremiah was a man constrained to respond almost in spite of himself. To withhold his words of prophecy would be like trying to contain a raging fire (Jer 20:9). Thus there is certainly at least the presence of the idea of a divine calling in the life of a specific individual. The verse from Isaiah (49:1) must allow for it, although קרא is nowhere else used in this way.

Having allowed for the possibility that calling may equal a specific vocation, certain things need to be noted. Those who were "called" in the Old Testament were either judges or prophets or kings raised up by God for a specific purpose. They were extraordinary men and women who were notable for the special favor shown them by God. They were not normal or normative. The average faithful Israelite (rare though he was) was not "called" in the same sense of these judges, prophets, and kings. Furthermore, no priest of God is ever accorded the honor of such a calling. Noth makes the following observation:

Direct intervention by God could be expected above all in that office which was specifically concerned with communication between God and Man--the office of priest, but according to Old Testament tradition it is just here that such directness is completely lacking.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>Noth, Laws, p. 230.

Neither in the life of the average Israelite believer nor in the lives of Israel's cultic priests and prophets was there any sense of having been individually called to a specific vocation. God's calling to a specific vocation and to a special task was always the exception.

#### Non-Pauline Usage--NT

The New Testament portrays a wide range of meanings for καλέω and its closely related cognates (προσκαλέομαι, ἐπικαλέω, μετακαλέομαι, κλησιν, and κλητός). These words appear a total of 219 times in the New Testament, 167 occurrences of which are in the Non-Pauline writings.<sup>1</sup>

#### Call by name

Several senses of καλέω, etc., which appear in non-Pauline New Testament literature do not appear in the writings of Paul. Absent from Paul but present in the writings of Matthew, Luke, and John is the meaning "to call by name, to give a name to." Two Greek verbs are employed: ἐπικαλέω and καλέω. Καλέω is used in this sense especially in the narratives concerning the births of John and Jesus when the angel of God tells the parents of these two men what their names are to be called (Matt 1:21; Luke 1:13, etc.).

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<sup>1</sup>All tabulations of word frequencies are based on listings in William Fiddian Moulton and Alfred Sherington Geden, eds., A Concordance to the Greek Testament (hereafter cited as MGM), 5th ed. revised and augmented by H. K. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978).

A closely related use of these two verbs can be seen in those places where a writer wishes to identify a particular person: Luke 19:2--"a man whose name was called Zaccheus"; Acts 4:36--"who was also called Barnabas," or a place: Luke 7:11--"a city called Nain"; Revelation 1:9--"island which is called Patmos."

#### Invite/summon/call together

"To invite, summon, call together" is another sense of the word "call" which is only barely recognized in Paul (occurring only once in 1 Cor 10:27). This usage is well represented in the synoptic gospels (especially in Luke and Acts). In Matthew 22 Jesus offers the parable of the wedding feast which ends with the enigmatic statement: "For many are called (κλητοί), but few are chosen (ἐκλεκτοί)" (v. 14). This statement and the remainder of the parable will be discussed later. However, it is helpful to note now that the "calling" to which this refers, if the parable is understood merely in its literal sense, is simply an invitation to the wedding.

#### Call out

Also absent from Paul's writings and only present in the New Testament in Matthew 4:21 and Mark 1:20 is the meaning of "to call out." Both of these passages record the incident where Jesus, walking along the shore, sees James

and John mending their nets. He calls out to them and they immediately leave nets, boat, and father to follow Jesus.

### Call together

Paul never uses καλέω to mean "to call together," although in Acts 20:17, Luke says that Paul "called (μετεκαλέσατο) to him the elders of the church." Καλέω and προσκαλέομαι are often used in this sense elsewhere in the New Testament. Workers or servants are gathered (Matt 20:8; Luke 19:13). Jesus often gathered His disciples together (Matt 10:1; 15:32; Mark 6:7; 12:14), or the multitudes (Matt 15:10; Mark 7:14; 8:34).

### Summon

Related to the idea of "gathering together" is that of "summoning." This is one of several usages of καλέω which Paul shares with other New Testament writers. This meaning is distinguished from that of "inviting" by the more formal relationships which exist between the one who summons and those who are summoned. Coenen finds in the verb a "note of command."<sup>1</sup> It is used in situations where those in higher authority call their subordinates. In Matthew 2:7 Herod summons the Magi. The apostles are summoned by the Jewish Council in Acts 4:18. Likewise, Paul is summoned before his captors (Acts 24:25). Luke gives some indication

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<sup>1</sup>Coenen, "Call," 1:224.



of Paul's exalted status as a Roman citizen when he reports that Paul summoned a centurion who was guarding him (Acts 23:17, 23). In the parables of Jesus, servants and debtors are both summoned (Luke 15:25; 16:5).

### Call upon

The verb ἐπικαλέω reflects the meanings of its compound parts when it is translated "to call upon." Luke is the only non-Pauline author to employ this usage. It is used to describe the appeal which Paul makes to his Roman captors. In Acts 25:21 he appeals to be held in custody rather than being turned over to the Jews. This appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:11, 12, 25; 26:32; 23:19) constitutes a request for help based upon the position of the one appealed to. Caesar is in the position of ultimate authority with regard to Roman law.

It is easy to see how this idea of "appeal" comes to be used in a religious sense, as when men "call upon the name of the Lord." This phrase does refer to an appeal for aid but it goes beyond that by implicating the ultimate authority which the Lord exercises in the lives of those who call upon Him. It is used by Peter in his sermon in Acts 2:21 to refer to the calling upon the Lord for salvation. This is also the probable meaning in Acts 22:16 in which Paul is giving an account of his own conversion experience. When Stephen called upon the Lord in Acts 7:59, his appeal,

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," was acknowledgment of the salvation which he knew he possessed. The practice of praying to God in this way was so distinctive of the early believers that, even before Paul's conversion, they were known as those "who call on the name of the Lord" (Acts 9:14, 21).

### Designate

The practice of designating someone or something as something else for the purpose of identification is another common usage for the verbs ἐπικαλέω and καλέω. This usage involves the assigning a quality or identity to another. In Hebrews 11:16 God is not ashamed to be designated (called-- i.e., "known as") "their God." He is also designated as "Father" (1 Pet 1:17). People may be identified by the place where they are born or reside: "Mary called Magdalene" (Luke 8:2), "Judas called Iscariot" (Luke 22:23); or by a position: "call them Rabbi" (Matt 23:7); or by a quality or characteristic: "the one who was called barren" (Luke 1:36), "which is called great" (Acts 8:10), "who is called faithful and true" (Rev 19:11).

### Declare to be

Such characterizations are meant to imply the reality of the quality designated. Because of this, "The pass. kalesthai was used as a virtual synonym of einai to

be."<sup>1</sup> Liddell and Scott note that this is especially true "with words expressing kinship or status."<sup>2</sup> A few examples of this type of usage appear in the New Testament. This usage is so close to that of "to designate" mentioned above that it is difficult at times to distinguish between them. However, some distinction appears to be warranted.

The distinction between "Judas called Iscariot" (Luke 22:23) and "he will be called a Nazarene" (Matt 2:23) is clear. The former identifies Judas' hometown, while the latter is a prophetic statement which is intended to tell what will actually come to be. Likewise, when the Lord quotes Isaiah 56:7 saying, "My house shall be called a house of prayer" (Matt 21:13) it is meant to imply that it will actually be a house of prayer (cf. Luke 1:32, 35; 1 John 3:1).

### Vocation

There is some evidence in both Pauline and non-Pauline New Testament writings for the sense of calling as a "vocation, position, station in life." Aaron and all subsequent high priests were appointed by God to that position according to the author of Hebrews (5:4). In Acts 13:2 Barnabas and Paul are called to a specific task by the Holy

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<sup>1</sup>Coenen, "Call," 1:271. Both Coenen and LSJ find this usage in classical Greek, but such usage also continued into the NT.

<sup>2</sup>LSJ, p. 866.



Spirit. They are appointed as missionaries and, apparently, their appointment included the general locality of their work; for, following prayer and fasting, they were sent out to do their work (Acts 13:3-4). At another point in the career of Paul the missionary, he had a vision of a Macedonian man asking for help. Paul and his companions understood this as a call from God to go and preach in a specific location (Acts 16:9-10).

### Theological usage

By far the most confusing and controversial use of κλησις, etc., is its use in the theological sense. Since this chapter includes a section on the relationship of calling to predestination, involving a discussion of the general and specific call, these matters are not given comprehensive treatment here. What is to be noted is that κλησις is used theologically to represent various things.

It may be a calling to share in eternal rewards or that which culminates in the sharing of eternal rewards (Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 5:10). In both these verses these rewards are regarded as certain, based on the character and activity of the One who calls. In Hebrews 9:15 it is the ἐπαγγελία (promise) of God which is in view.<sup>1</sup> God's character of faithfulness and trustworthiness guarantees the fulfillment

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<sup>1</sup>The ἐπαγγελία of the Holy Spirit is also given to "all whom God shall call to Himself" (Acts 2:39).

of that promise. In 1 Peter 5:10 καλέω is used in a phrase which describes the God who will perfect (καταρτίσει), confirm (στηρίξει), strengthen (σθενώσει), and establish (θεμελιώσει) believers. The assurance intended to be conveyed by these words is obvious.

The call is also used with regard to a lifestyle that is marked by holiness and separation from the sinful world. Jesus' call to repentance must be included here (Matt 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32). There is also a call to holiness (1 Pet 1:15) and a call from darkness into light (1 Pet 2:9).

The connection between a holy lifestyle and the call of God is less direct in the following verses. However, the context demands that such a connection be made. In 2 Peter God is again identified as ὁ καλῶν (the One who calls). The question remains: "What does He call to?" Second Peter 1:3 claims that God "has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness." Verse four characterizes the κλητοί as those "having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." Peter's intent is to remind his readers that they have a calling from God<sup>1</sup> who meets their needs for fulfilling that calling. Thus, while it is a holy and separate lifestyle, it is also one which is provided by God.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Heb 3:1 "partakers of a heavenly calling" (κλησεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι) in which ἐπουρανίου is to be regarded as a genitive of source.

Further along in the letter Peter admonishes his readers "to make certain about His calling and choosing (ἐκλογήν) you" (v. 10). He does this in order to remind his readers of the cleansing of sins which is theirs (v. 9). Based on this reality they ought to confirm (βεβαίαν . . . ποιεῖσθαι) their κλησίς by practicing the qualities which Peter has enumerated above (vv. 5-7). They need to place their κλησίς on a firm foundation.<sup>1</sup> That is, assurance is proper only for those whose lives reflect the reality of having been called by God. If such confirmation is present then believers may be assured of "entrance into the eternal kingdom" which is "abundantly supplied" (v. 11).

In Jude 1 and in Revelation 17:14 κλητοί is employed as a descriptive title for those who are in particular intimacy with Christ. In Jude 1 these κλητοί are "beloved of God and kept by<sup>2</sup> Jesus Christ." In Revelation 17:14 the κλητοί, ἐκλεκτοί, and πιστοί constitute three characterizations of the same people. These are those who return with the Lamb in triumph over His enemies. The point of both these passages is to demonstrate the special intimacy with God Himself that the κλητοί enjoy.

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<sup>1</sup>NIDNTT, s.v. "Firm, Foundation, Certainty, Confirm" (βεβαίως), by Hans Schönweiss, 1:658-60.

<sup>2</sup>This preposition is variously translated "in" (KJV, NEB, Dartmouth Bible), "by" (NIV), and "for" (NASB).

### Pauline Usage

As was mentioned above, Paul uses κλησις, etc., in much the same ways as the rest of the New Testament authors. His range of meaning is more limited, but those which he does employ are found elsewhere.

#### Invite

The meaning of "to invite" for καλεῖν appears only once in Paul. In 1 Corinthians 10:27 he advises that there is no reason to avoid eating with unbelievers if one is invited to do so.

#### Call upon

Calling upon God for help (ἐπικαλέω) is also present in Paul's writings. Men may call upon God for salvation (Rom 10:13-14). Such a plea will result in abundant riches from God (Rom 10:12). Any plea for help must arise from a pure heart (2 Tim 2:22). Such prayers for God's help are to characterize God's children (1 Cor 1:2). Finally, God may be appealed to as a witness (2 Cor 1:23).

#### Designate

The meaning of "to name" does not even appear in Paul's writings but the idea of "to designate" is present. This meaning is only found in Romans. In 4:17 Paul speaks of God and says: "He calls the things which do not exist as existing" (NASB margin). That is, God regards as certain

events which have yet to occur, but which are in His sovereign power to bring about.

One of these things is to be found in God's promise in Romans 9:6-8. There he explains that God designated Isaac as Abraham's legitimate descendent. Verse twenty-five of this same chapter includes another example of this usage. God says, "I will call those people who were not My people, 'My people.'" This is how God chooses to designate them.

Paul understands how undeserving men are of this special attention from God. In 1 Corinthians 15:9 he denigrates himself and questions his fitness to be designated as an apostle. This closely parallels Jesus' use of *καλέω* in Matthew 23:7-8 where he warns his disciples against being known as "Rabbi." The meaning of "to designate" is difficult to separate from that of "to be." Paul is called an apostle because he is one. "They shall be called sons of the living God" (Rom 9:26) because this will be their genuine condition. The idea of "to designate," however, has in it the implication of social intercourse, therefore, it is helpful to keep the ideas separate.

#### Position/station

There is some evidence in Paul of the meaning of being "called to a position or station in life." In regard to his own life he is called to the position of apostleship (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1). Paul has no doubts about his mission--



he is sent (ἀποστέλλω) to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13). It is a mission ordained by God (2 Cor 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1) which primarily involved preaching and teaching (1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11).

The idea of κλησις as a station or position in life really appears clearly in only one instance. In 1 Corinthians 7 it is obvious that Paul uses κλησις, etc., in a number of ways. In verse 20 this is especially clear when Paul advises, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (KJV).<sup>1</sup> The context demands that the first "calling" in this sentence must refer to a condition of life which existed at the time when God's call came. Paul gives examples of the types of conditions (callings) which may have been true of those he is addressing when they were converted. Thus, a "calling" might be: circumcision or uncircumcision (v. 18), slavery (v. 22), marriage to or separation from an unbeliever (vv. 12-16). Paul's point in this section of the passage is to stress the advisability of remaining content with one's lot in life (v. 17). The call of God does not demand a change in external, non-moral circumstances, and it

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<sup>1</sup>William Edwyn Vine, An Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words, 4 vols. (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1940; reprint ed., 1 vols., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 1:165. Coenen's suggestion ("call," 1:275) that Paul here is referring to a "particular place or station (perhaps even in the church?)" must be rejected primarily because it would make little sense in the context.

is inadvisable to seek such change if it interferes with one's service to God.

### Condition

A reference to the believer's condition of life without reference to theological questions can be seen in 1 Corinthians 1:26.<sup>1</sup> In this verse Paul exhorts his readers to βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν. The "calling" they are to look at is characterized by lack of human wisdom, lack of strength, and lack of noble birth. This describes the condition of the οὐ πολλοὶ. Paul is saying: "Look at yourselves! You are not so smart, nor are you strong, nor do you possess social status." Paul then uses these facts to remind his readers that all the power that is demonstrated in the lives of believers is God's power.

### Theological usage

The power of God is most clearly seen in the works of grace He produces in believers. In order to enlist men in His program God calls them.<sup>2</sup> Thus κλησις, etc., are used by Paul in a truly theological sense. In Paul God is often identified as the One who calls (ὁ καλῶν) without any

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<sup>1</sup>Nigel Turner provides a valuable discussion of this meaning in which it is linked with 1 Cor 7:20 in Christian Words (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980), pp. 61-62.

<sup>2</sup>Believers then come to be known simply as κλητοί-- "the called" (Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 1:24).

reference to what such a calling constitutes. Primarily it is Paul's intent to remind his readers that their κλησις is initiated by God; it involves a relationship with God; and it indicates a responsibility to God. This reference to God as ὁ καλῶν is found especially in Romans and Galatians (Rom 4:17; 8:30; 9:11, 24; Gal 1:6, 15; 5:8).

In Romans 11:29 the κλησις τοῦ θεοῦ is linked with the relationship between God and Israel described as "beloved" (v. 28). This same sentiment is to be seen in Romans 8:30 where God's calling of believers is one proof that, in a special way, He is "for" them (v. 31). God's role as the sovereign Source of the call is emphasized in the ninth chapter of Romans (vv. 11 and 24).

Paul refers to the working of this sovereign calling in his own life in Galatians 1:15. Such calling is a pure act of God's grace (Gal 1:6), but it does imply an element of human responsibility (cf. Rom 1:6). The One who calls has the right to expect adherence to His truth (Gal 5:8). It is an "upward call" (Phil 3:14) in that it directs the activities of believers to the Source of that call.

Though the call of God implies responsible action, it yet remains in Pauline theology as a demonstration of the goodness of a sovereign God. In Ephesians 1:18 His calling contains a "hope" that is ultimately linked with the glorious riches of a future day (cf. Eph 4:4). That day is promised to believers based on the faithfulness of the One who calls



(1 Thess 5:24; 2 Tim 1:9). He is the One who will sanctify believers and preserve them complete and without blame (1 Thess 5:23). Thus, in a very real sense, the call of God has eschatological ramifications. Paul may speak of being called into God's own kingdom (1 Thess 2:12); or he may exhort Timothy to "take hold (ἐπιλαβοῦ) of eternal life" (1 Tim 6:12). Yet both these verses connect the acquisition of eternal blessing with a life properly lived in the present. Thus, the Thessalonians are to "walk in a manner worthy of God," and Timothy is to "fight the good fight of faith."

Paul's understanding of the κλήσις of the believer is very concrete with regard to conduct in the present life. In both Ephesians 4:1 and in 2 Thessalonians 1:11 Paul employs κλήσις as a standard against which believers are to measure their daily conduct.<sup>1</sup> He provides specific examples of the types of things such a calling ought to include. This holy or sanctified calling (Rom 1:7; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 Cor 1:2) includes: a call to fellowship with Christ (1 Cor 1:9); a call to peace (1 Cor 7:15; Col 3:15); a call to freedom (Gal 5:13); and, negatively, a call not to impurity (1 Thess 4:7).

The call may also be a call to salvation, but such salvation is gained both through sanctification and faith (2 Thess 2:13-14). Thus the call becomes the initiatory act

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<sup>1</sup>See the discussion of ἀγιος and its cognates in the next chapter for further amplification of this idea.

by which God implements the program of salvation in the life of the believer.<sup>1</sup> Salvation is never regarded as a once-for-all event in Scripture, but rather, it stretches from conversion to glorification. Thus, the call to salvation may refer to any part or all that is included in the salvation of sinners. This range of activity is seen clearly in Romans 8:28-30 in which the κλητοί of God are viewed as they relate to God's purpose. They are κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς (called according to [God's] purpose).

### Calling and Vocation

Whenever people begin to talk about God's purposes in the lives of individuals the conversation usually includes references to God's will concerning such things as whom God would have one marry or what career God would have one pursue. This latter concern about career becomes especially significant for the man or woman considering a vocation in the pastorate or on the mission field. Few people talk about a "call" to carpentry or automobile sales, yet talk of a "call" to the ministry is quite widespread.

This can be excused somewhat when one considers certain biblical references. Paul maintains he was called to be an apostle (Rom 1:1). Luke reports that the Holy

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<sup>1</sup>That Paul regards the call as coming at a particular point in time is evident from 1 Cor 7:18-24 in which Paul refers to various circumstances which may have been true when God's call to salvation came (cf. Gal 1:15).

Spirit provided specific instructions as to where Paul and Barnabas were to carry out their missionary enterprise (Acts 13:2-4). At another point in time Paul has his vision of the Macedonian man which the apostle regards as a call to cross over into Greece (Acts 16:9-10).

### Old Testament Men "Called" of God

#### Isaiah/Jeremiah

In the Old Testament are the accounts of the "calls" of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Isaiah is provided with a dramatic visual demonstration in the temple which results in the question from the Lord: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isa 6:8). Isaiah's response has been held up as the proper one for the someone called of God to make--"Here am I. Send me!"

In Jeremiah's case the response to God's call is somewhat different. The Lord tells Jeremiah: "I have appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jer 1:5). To this Jeremiah begins to make excuses: "I do not know how to speak . . . I am a youth" (1:6). Yet Jeremiah did respond obediently to the call of God, becoming a prophet to the nations.

#### Others

Other examples of great men called by God come easily to mind: Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Jonah, etc. Each

one was fitted for and called by God to a special task.<sup>1</sup>  
 The question arises, however, as to whether or not such examples are offered by the Lord as norms to be followed.

Already it has been pointed out that priests, whom one would expect to be the direct agents of God, were appointed to office year after year in accordance with the schedule that had been adopted. Schools of prophets existed from among which only a few really gifted men arose. The major prophets, judges, and kings held their positions solely by the sovereign prerogative of God. These men were the exception rather than the rule.

#### New Testament Men "Called" of God

##### Uniqueness of the apostles

The same pattern is easily detected in the New Testament. The apostles of Christ were not the forerunners of a long line of apostles yet to come. They occupy a unique position in the *πρόθεσις* of God.<sup>2</sup> These twelve men (with the exception of Judas and the addition of Matthias) constitute the foundation stones of the church along with the

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<sup>1</sup>The Bible does not specifically say of each of these men that God "called" him. One could as easily say that they were "chosen" or "appointed" by God for their tasks. The point is that God initiated the action.

<sup>2</sup>For a helpful discussion of the uniqueness of the apostles see Garry Friesen with J. Robin Maxson, Decision Making and the Will of God (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1980), pp. 313-14; also John F. MacArthur, The Charismatics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), pp. 73-104.

prophets (Eph 2:20). The disciples' desire to maintain the number of the twelve by the choice of Matthias (Acts 1:26) indicates their sensitivity to the importance of this particular group of men for the early establishment of the church.

After the death of James (Acts 12:2) apparently the church felt it was no longer necessary to maintain the number of the twelve. There may be two reasons for this.

First, it was said of Judas that he had turned from (παραβαίνω) his apostleship (Acts 1:25). This was not true of James. Second, the church was firmly established by the time of James' death. The critical period had passed when the loss of the leaders could have ended the movement. Christianity had already overflowed the boundaries of Jerusalem following the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1). The basis for the diaconate had been established to care for the more mundane matters of church administration (Acts 6:2-6). This office was filled, not by men with a special call from God, but by men chosen by the congregation because of spiritual qualities they possessed (1 Tim 3:8-13).

#### Signs of an apostle

The unique position of the apostles is attested by Paul<sup>1</sup> who refers to "signs of a true apostle" (2 Cor 12:12).

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<sup>1</sup>In Paul is found the closest approximation of true meaning of ἀπόστολος. His special ministry sets him apart from the other apostles, as does the circumstances of his conversion. His importance in this discussion is to show the uniqueness of the office of apostle from any other office.



These signs marked the man who performed them as a special man of God (a "sent one"). If such signs were normative for Christians of the apostolic age, it would be rather foolish to appeal to them as something unique. Thus, Paul is clearly demonstrating that the office of apostle is not to be equated with that of elder, deacon, etc. Therefore, an appeal to the fact that apostles were specially called is not a valid argument for a defense of a call to other positions. Neither the pastorate nor missionary service are unique in the sense that the apostolic office was.

#### Special case of Paul and Barnabas

No place else in the New Testament is a call to a special vocation mentioned. First Corinthians 7:20 constitutes a "general rule"<sup>1</sup> which includes any condition which may have been true of the believer at the time of his conversion. It could be a vocation, but not one to which the believer had been specifically called. Paul and Barnabas were already following their "calling" when the Holy Spirit instructed the church of Antioch to separate these two men from the rest of the congregation and commission them to a particular task (Acts 13:2). The uniqueness of this situation again argues against expecting such direct divine instruction. God had specially called Paul to the work of

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<sup>1</sup>Charles R. Smith, Can You Know God's Will for Your Life? (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1977), p. 13.

preaching to the Gentiles at the time of his conversion (Gal 1:15-16). In Antioch the Holy Spirit initiated this work in a special way. Barnabas ("son of comfort") was included to aid the apostle in his work.

The call of these two men was unique for several reasons. To begin with, Paul was an apostle and held a unique position in the church by virtue of this calling. Also, he and Barnabas were the first missionaries to be officially commissioned by a church. Other believers had, to a limited extent, been "scattered abroad" (Acts 8:1), but no formal campaign had been undertaken. Another element of the uniqueness of this call was that it was given by direct revelation: "the Holy Spirit said." Note also the fact that this call came "while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting." Nothing indicates that Paul and Barnabas were seeking such guidance. This contrasts sharply with the would-be missionary who agonizes in prayer awaiting his or her call. God simply stepped in when His purpose demanded it.<sup>1</sup>

It should also be noted that a consistent application of the events of the book of Acts would demand that the missionary call must be accompanied by a direct revelation of

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<sup>1</sup>Prayer for wisdom and right motivation ought to accompany all major (and many minor) decisions, but to wait for a call that is nowhere promised will only result in feelings of guilt and may hinder one's present ministry.

God. Most proponents of the traditional call would be uneasy with such a demand.

### The Confusion Continues

The traditional call is being questioned more and more by the Christian community. Yet the idea is dying hard. Horace Fenton contends that:

By a misreading of the Scripture and by a consequent misunderstanding of the purposes of God down through the years, we have given a false representation of the missionary call to many generations of Christians.<sup>1</sup>

Yet Fenton does not deny that "there is a special sense in which some may be called to cross geographic and cultural frontiers for Christ."<sup>2</sup> It is just this idea of a "special sense" that continues to confuse the issue of the call. Consider the ambiguity of the following quotes:

"When the Lord is calling you, you will know," smiles the older Christian when being asked about guidance. Such words can be deeply frustrating to a young Christian who is looking for a cut-and-dried answer; but somehow they are true.

It is impossible to disentangle the mass of factors which were woven together to form God's word to us, and yet somehow we can testify with Jeremiah that "the word of the Lord was to me."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Horace L. Fenton, Jr., Myths About Missions (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21. Fenton's thesis is admirable--that a call is issued in Scripture to all Christians--but he contributes to the misunderstanding by referring to a call in a "special sense." Such terminology is needlessly ambiguous.

<sup>3</sup>Martin Goldsmith, Don't Just Stand There! (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), p. 105.



If, by these quotes, Fenton and Goldsmith are referring to an awareness that all that transpires in life is called forth through God's sovereign will, then their sentiments are wholly biblical. But the implication of their statements is that God communicates His desire for missionary service through some subjective, undefinable means. The Bible simply does not support the idea of a call to the ministry. Leaders in the church were appointed on the basis of their qualifications (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim 3:8; Tit 1:5) and with regard to their own desires (1 Tim 3:1). If some argue that such desires are God's means of calling, it must be pointed out that Christians have many desires which certainly do not come from God but from the sin principle that lingers within.

#### An Important Distinction

##### God's determinate will

Much of the confusion arises concerning this question of vocational calling because of the failure to distinguish between God's sovereign, determinate will and His desired will.<sup>1</sup> That God is in control of all that transpires is clear from such verses as Ephesians 1:11 where God is

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<sup>1</sup>It is best to avoid the terminology which distinguishes between "secret will" and "revealed will" as proposed by Friesen, Pink, etc. Friesen, Decision Making, p. 151; Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1930), p. 297. Much of God's determinate will is known. It is secret only in respect to the future. The distinction that must be drawn is that which exists between what God guarantees will happen, based on His sovereignty, and that which God asks or requires of men (but

described as One "who works all things after the counsel of His will." The psalmist declares that no one is able to resist God's will (Ps 115:3).

### God's desired will

That God has a desired will which includes many things that do not or will not happen is also clear from Scripture. He desires the salvation of all men (1 Tim 2:4). He desires to gather the inhabitants of Jerusalem under His protective care, but men refuse Him (Matt 23:37).

Thus, the Bible indicates that there are two aspects of God's will. Furthermore, the Bible provides information concerning each aspect. It is impossible for anyone to miss the determinate will of God for it includes everything that has happened, is happening, or shall happen. All that is necessary to know God's desired will for one's life is to be found in the moral injunctions of the Bible, beginning with the command to believe (John 6:29). Nowhere within the canon is there instruction for determining one's vocation.

### Calling and Predestination

#### Calling as a Source of Assurance

The question of God's determinate will becomes especially significant in a discussion of God's plan of

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does not guarantee) based on His moral character. For a good discussion of the two aspects of God's will, see Smith, Can You Know God's Will?, pp. 7-8.

salvation. Romans 8:28-30 connects the κλησις of the believer with the πρόθεσις<sup>1</sup> of God. Believers are κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοίς. This calling which grows out of the foreknowledge and predestinating activity of God,<sup>2</sup> results in the justification and glorification of the κλητοί.

Thus, the calling of the believer constitutes a vital link in the "chain of salvation."<sup>3</sup> But how does this link function? For an answer to that question a closer look at Romans 8:28-30 is in order.

This text comes at the end of Paul's discussion of the role of faith in salvation. The focus of Romans 8 is upon the work of the Spirit as He enables the Christian to lead the life of faith (vv. 1-17). But Paul understands that life is not without its struggles and sufferings (vv. 18-27). Indeed, all of creation suffers from the effects of sin and eagerly awaits its release from bondage to decay (vv. 21-22). Likewise, the believer looks forward to his own glorification,

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<sup>1</sup>"This term when used with reference to God uniformly denotes the determinate will of God," John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965; reprint ed., 1980), 2:17-18.

<sup>2</sup>Carver provides the needed reminder that foreknowledge and predestination had as their object the development of Christ-likeness in the believer. He adds that, "The whole passage is part of the elaboration of the insistence that the man of faith is irrevocably committed to the conquest of sin and to godliness in character and life (chap. 6-8)." Carver, Glory of God, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>William Hendriksen, Romans, 2 vols., in New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 1:281.

"the redemption of our body" (v. 23). In his present condition, the believer is not abandoned because the Spirit "helps our weaknesses" (v. 26) by bringing the believer's needs before the Father. Thus, the context for Romans 8:28-30 is one which speaks of great hope--in spite of his present sufferings the believer can be assured of his own ultimate redemption and of the Spirit's present concern.<sup>1</sup>

Romans 8:28-30 continues this theme. For the same God who is with the believer in his present troubles (cf. v. 31) has been concerned with the believer from the beginning and will continue to be with him throughout eternity. Assurance is the theme of Romans 8; and the κλησις of God is one factor which is involved in providing that assurance.

In addition to calling the believer these verses teach that God foreknows (προγινώσκω), predestines (προορίζω), justifies (δικαίω), and glorifies (δοξάζω) the believer. Each of these other four aspects of the five-fold process describes an activity of God which is wholly dependent upon His working. Because it is God who does these things the believer may be assured that they will come to pass (or have come to pass). "Calling," however, by definition implies a response in the one called. If this response were not under the sovereign control of God, then an element of uncertainty is introduced into the process. But it is Paul's purpose in

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<sup>1</sup>A Theological Word Book of the Bible, s.v. "Determine," by J. K. S. Reid, p. 67.

this passage to provide certainty and assurance. The only possible recourse, if one is not to regard Paul's argument as crumbling at this point,<sup>1</sup> is to view the calling of God as something which He uses to produce a guaranteed response in the one called. This is known as the effectual call.<sup>2</sup>

### Effectual Call

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:24

The idea of an effectual call is supported by 1 Thessalonians 5:24 in which Paul links the κλησις with the πίστις of God. In this passage Paul expresses his desire that the Thessalonian believers might be sanctified and free from blame by God. God is faithful in respect to believers. At one point He called the Thessalonians to holiness and He will be true to that call. Again, the purpose behind Paul's statements is to provide assurance to those who are faced with the uncertainties of life (in this case the temptation to sin).

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<sup>1</sup>Murray, Romans, 1:320-21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2:19; Brooke Foss Westcott, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Macmillan Company, 1906; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), p. 25; Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology, s.v. "Vocation," by Georg Molin, 3:957.



## 2 Timothy 1:9

In 2 Timothy 1:9 Paul again links κλήσις with the πρόθεσις (plan) of God.<sup>1</sup> It is a calling that is οὐ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ἡμῶν ("not according to our works"). Once again it lines up with God's own (ἰδίαν) purpose. He is the One who is at work within (Phil 2:13). This is a word of encouragement to Timothy who must suffer with Paul for the gospel's sake (v. 8). Because God is the Source of their calling, there is no need for fear (v. 7).

## Effectual call described

From the usage of κλήσις in these three texts it becomes apparent that the Bible does teach concerning an efficacious call. This call has been variously described:

Calling, then, is that choice on the part of God of an individual through an efficacious working in the mind and heart by the Holy Spirit, to the end that the will of the one who is called may be moved by its own vision and determination in the exercise of saving faith.<sup>2</sup>

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to

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<sup>1</sup>Murray, Romans, 2:37: "Never in Paul is calling anything else than according to purpose."

<sup>2</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, 8 vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 7:67.



that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.<sup>1</sup>

By calling, he (God) receives them into his family and unites them to him so that they may together be one.<sup>2</sup>

The last quote by Calvin is not precisely a definition in the sense that the others are, but it includes more of the Pauline flavor in that it focuses on the calling as the action of a loving Father. This concept is important to bear in mind as one considers the plan of God and predestination. "All things work together for good," (Rom 8:28). God's will and God's plan are always viewed by Paul from his perspective of God's love and concern (Eph 1:4-5).

This theme is not absent in the other two descriptions of the call. Both are careful to show that God does not force Himself upon men against their wills. He changes their thinking with regard to Himself. No one is dragged involuntarily into a righteous relationship with the Father. In Acts 16:14 the Lord opens the heart of Lydia to heed the things she is hearing. Such "hearing" comes from the Father (John 6:45).

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<sup>1</sup>Westminster Confession X:1 as quoted in Gordon H. Clark, Biblical Predestination (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1969), pp. 123-24.

<sup>2</sup>John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2 vols., trans. and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill, The Library of Christian Classics, eds. John Baillie, John T. McNeill, and Henry P. Van Dusen (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 2:966.

Romans 8:28-30

God's love is well expressed in His choice of individuals for salvation. In Romans 8:28-30, Paul reminds his readers of God's loving choice of them. Προορίζω certainly contains the idea of choice as does προγινώσκω for only the saved are spoken of as having been predestined or foreknown or called. Of the six times that προορίζω appears in the New Testament (Acts 4:28; Rom 8:29, 30; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11),<sup>1</sup> five occur in Paul. In each case predestination grows out of the plan (πρόθεσις) of God and is directed toward some goal or benefit in the lives of believers. They are predestined: to "be conformed into the image of His Son" (Rom 8:29); to "the adoption of children by Jesus Himself" (Eph 1:5); or to be made heirs (Eph 1:11).

The five-fold process of Romans 8:28-30 divides easily into three phases: 1) that which came before the salvation of the believer; 2) that which is presently involved in the salvation of the believer; and 3) that which is yet future in the salvation experience of the believer. By these three stages Paul demonstrates the comprehensive nature of God's concern.

The first phase is comprised by the foreknowing and predestinating activity of God. This activity precedes any direct activity in the life of the individual. God was

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<sup>1</sup>MGM, p. 853.

involved in that life from all eternity, though no person yet existed. Foreknowledge and predestination are particularly concerned with the intent of God's plan as it relates to those He elects. This means that in God's plan for the universe, He has made special provisions for certain people. These are "those on whom His eye fixed from all eternity with love."<sup>1</sup>

In a moment the second phase will be discussed. Looking now at the third phase, that of glorification, one sees the ultimate goal of the believer's redemption, when he shall be *συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ*. To be like Christ is the ultimate goal of salvation, and it is the guaranteed goal of all whom God has foreknown, predestinated, called, and justified. Thus, the bridge that spans the gap between God's design (foreknowledge and predestination) and His goal (glorification) is what concerns the believer here and now. "In making the decree," (predestination) says Alford, "He left it not barren, but provided for those circumstances, all at His disposal, by which such decree should be made effectual in them."<sup>2</sup> The activities of *καλέω* and *δικαιόω* constitute this provision of God.

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick L. Godet, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, trans. and ed. Talbot W. Chambers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956), p. 325.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Alford, The Greek New Testament, 4 vols., revised by Everett F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), 2:399.

The predestinated intent of God is realized in His acts of calling and justification. In this second phase God moves from the eternal to the temporal. The distinction and relationship between calling and predestination is explained most clearly with regard to time. With the call, issued in the present life of the believer, God implements that predestined plan of salvation which He conceived before the ages. The connection between predestination and the call of God is very close. Both are distinct acts. Both are certain. Both ought to be a source of assurance to the believer. Both demonstrate the power and authority and love of God. Both are vital links in the purpose of God to make men over into the image of His Son. Yet the distinction between them is clear. The call perfectly matches the predestined design of God, but it differs from it in the same way a tune played by a composer differs from the tune conceived in his mind.

#### External<sup>1</sup> Call and Effectual Call

The above discussion has dealt with the call only in its effectual sense. However, it has already been demonstrated that "call" has many meanings in the New Testament, one of which is to "invite, summon." Since an invitation is

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<sup>1</sup>Sometimes the terms "general" or "universal" are used to designate this type of call; but such terms imply a democratic distribution of the call which has not occurred. Not all men are given the opportunity to hear.

always involved when God effectually calls a person to salvation confusion between the usages is quite common. Thus, men argue that God's call is not effectual because it can be resisted, when actually their failure is to distinguish between a call which merely invites and one which is an activity of the determinate will of God.

#### Matthew 22:1-14

A brief look at the parable of the wedding feast from Matthew 22 will help to demonstrate the state of confusion existing with regard to the call of God.

In verse three the king sends his servants out to call (καλέσαι) those who had been called (κεκλημένους) to the feast. This second calling is rejected for various reasons, even to the point of mistreating and killing the king's servants (v. 6). The king responds with judgment on the murderers and their cities (v. 7). Other servants are sent to invite (call) people from the highways to replace those κεκλημένοι οὐκ ἦσαν ἄξιοι (vv. 8-9). Even among these κλητοί, however, one is found without wedding clothes, who is subsequently bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness (vv. 11-13). Jesus concludes with the assertion that, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (v. 14).

The overriding theme of this parable concerns the contrast between the Jewish nation and the Gentiles. This is borne out especially in the preceding context. In



chapter 21 Jesus tells the Jews who are challenging His authority that "the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it" (21:43). Furthermore, the one who falls on the stone which the builders rejected will be broken and scattered (21:44). Jesus then proceeds to offer the parable of the wedding feast as an example.

The importance of this parable is to indicate that the external call<sup>1</sup> is offered to both Jews and Gentiles. The Jewish nation rejects its Messiah, and so the invitation goes to the Gentiles. The invitation however, is conditional--those not properly clothed for the wedding are expelled (v. 13). In this Jesus is referring to the righteousness which He alone provides to those who believe.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the call comes to many,<sup>3</sup> to Jew and Gentile alike, but only a

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<sup>1</sup>Hodge says: "This external call includes, (1) A declaration of the plan of salvation. (2) The promise of God to accede to the terms of that plan. (3) Command, exhortation, and invitation to all to accept of the offered mercy. (4) An exhibition of the reasons which should constrain men to repent and believe, and thus escape from the wrath to come. All this is included in the gospel." Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (London: James Clark & Co., 1960), 2:641-42.

<sup>2</sup>Stendahl also understands the wedding clothes as representing righteousness, but a righteousness of works. This is probably the way in which Jesus' hearers understood the figure. However, subsequent revelation makes it very clear that there is no true righteousness apart from Christ. Krister Stendahl, "The Called and the Chosen," in The Root of the Vine, ed. Anton Fridrichsen (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), p. 75.

<sup>3</sup>Hodge deals effectively with the Lutheran error that the external call has somehow been actually communicated to all men, Systematic Theology, pp. 645-46.



few are chosen (v. 14). The distinction here between the κλητοί and the ἐκλεκτοί is that which exists between those who are only externally called and those who are also called effectually. This must be the meaning here for in Revelation 17:14, οἱ κλητοί and οἱ ἐκλεκτοί are used appositionally along with οἱ πιστοί to identify those with Christ. They are "convertible terms."<sup>1</sup>

## 2 Thessalonians 2:14

In 2 Thessalonians 2:14 there is almost an imperceptible blending of the ideas of the external and internal call. This is to be expected since all who do respond to the gospel would regard their hearing of the gospel as the means by which salvation was offered to them.<sup>2</sup> The same gospel falls on many spiritually deaf ears. Thus the gospel may be regarded as the instrument of both the external and effectual call and preachers of the gospel as the intermediate agents of the call. But only in the direct personal Agent of the Holy Spirit is the call made effectual (1 Thess 1:5; Tit 3:5).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>2</sup>Those who resist the gospel for many years and then are saved may be regarded as exceptions, but they would still maintain that it is in the gospel that they "hear" the call of God.

<sup>3</sup>Alva J. McClain, syllabus for the class "Salvation and Christian Life," revised by Charles R. Smith (Winona Lake, IN: Grace Theological Seminary, n.d.), p. 87.

### Conclusion

From the foregoing material it is easy to see that the term κλησις is used in many different ways by the LXX translators and by the authors of the NT. In Paul, however, it acquires a particularly theological flavor. He builds upon the OT usages of κλησις by focusing on God as the Source of the call. This call from God is an expression of God's infinite love for His children, who, in an ultimate sense, are called to experience the benefits of an eternity with Jesus. In light of such tremendous love Paul focuses even more sharply on the response that such a call demands. For this reason κλησις for Paul denotes a lifestyle that is proper in the light of God's abundant mercy.

Paul is much more concerned with the calling as a way of life than as a vocation in life. In fact, in neither the OT nor the NT is κλησις commonly applied to a vocation to which God calls a man. The norm was for men to be chosen for office on the basis of their qualifications and desire for the position. The choice by God of such men as Abraham, Isaiah, and Paul was always accompanied by supernatural revelation and constitutes the exception rather than the rule.

The fact is that all believers have been called. They have been called forth by God for the ultimate purpose of being conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:28-30). This calling is one of the guaranteed "links" in the "chain

of salvation."<sup>1</sup> Part of the process involved in becoming like Christ concerns the determination of standards by which the believer may order his life. In the following chapter the term ἀξίως is considered. The idea of "measure" which inheres in this word will prove invaluable in leading to a correct understanding of the exhortation of Ephesians 4:1.

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<sup>1</sup>See above, p. 36.

## CHAPTER II

### WORTHILY

#### The Biblical Usage of ἀξίως, ἀξιόω, and ἀξιόσ

##### Non-Pauline Usage--OT/LXX

The Old Testament is of little help in determining the use and meaning of ἀξίως and its cognates. The Hebrew זָכָה is used for the concept of moral worthiness, while ἀξιόσ is used in the LXX with the sense of being deserving.<sup>1</sup>

In Proverbs 3:15 the LXX uses ἀξιόω to translate the Hebrew verb שָׁוָה which means "to agree with," "be like," "resemble."<sup>2</sup> This verse claims that all that a man might desire is not comparable to wisdom--i.e., it fails to measure up. In this one instance the use of ἀξιόω comes closest to its basal significance of being equal in weight.<sup>3</sup> In this sense it is related to the Semitic concept of weight equaling

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<sup>1</sup>NIDNTT, s.v. "Right, Worthy," by Erich Tiedtke, 3:348.

<sup>2</sup>BDB, p. 1000.

<sup>3</sup>TDNT, s.v. "ἀξιόσ," by Werner Foerster, "The scales," 1:379; Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1889; reprint ed. New York: American Book Company, n.d.), "Weighing, having weight," p. 52; LSJ, "Counterbalancing, weighing as much," p. 171; Tiedtke, "Tipping the scales," 3:348.

value. Hence, the phrase כבוד יהוה (glory of God) would have at its root the idea of the "weight of God." When the translators of the LXX came to the word כבוד, however, they rightly refrained from translating it δῆλος but chose rather to use δόξα. They did this because it was the impression created by God's presence which was the main sense of כבוד יהוה. δῆλος was too abstract a term by the time of the Septuagint translation. Though God is eminently worthy it is hard to imagine the "worthiness of God" filling the Temple (1 Kgs 8:11). Thus, even from the exclusion of δῆλος in the LXX in those places one might expect to find it, comes an indication of its significance in the Hellenic world of Paul's day.

#### Non-Pauline Usage--NT

##### Desire/deserve

The verb ἀξιόω occurs seven times in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> Twice it is used of a "strong request or desire": "but Paul kept on insisting that they should not take him (Mark) along" (Acts 15:38); "But we desire to hear from you what your views are" (Acts 28:22). The remaining five occurrences carry the sense of "to be deserving of something." It can be seen negatively stated in the incident from Luke 7 in which the friends of the centurion meet Jesus with the

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<sup>1</sup>MGM, p. 82: Luke 7:7; Acts 15:38; 28:22; 2 Thess 1:11; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 3:3; 10:9.

message that "I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You" (Luke 7:7). Positively, Christ is found to be "worthy of greater honor than Moses" (Heb 3:3).

### Approved

Another verbal form appears only three times in the whole New Testament (Luke 20:35; Acts 5:41; 2 Thess 1:5).<sup>1</sup> This is the verb καταξιόομαι. In all three instances it is the approbation of God which is in view. In Luke 20:35 Jesus is discussing those whom God will consider worthy to enter the eternal age (cf. 2 Thess 1:5). In Acts 5:41 the apostles rejoice because they see in the flogging they received a sign of God's approval of their activities. They are "considered worthy to suffer shame."

It should be noted that God considered the apostles to be worthy prior to their suffering. This does not mean that their worthiness was not based on concrete activity, for they were in prison and flogged because they obeyed God rather than men (Acts 5:29). Thus it was their obedience rather than their suffering which brought God's approval.

### Good character

The adjective ἅγιος can refer to a person of such character as when Jesus commissioned the twelve disciples to go to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" and find in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 536.



each city or village a person whose household is worthy (Matt 10:11, 13). Some Jewish elders deemed the centurion of Luke 7 to be such a man, though the centurion himself did not consider himself to be so (Luke 7:7). The character of the whole world in Hebrews 11:38 is denounced, being described as "not worthy" of the saints. This theme is also seen in Revelation 5:4 where "no one was found worthy to open the book."

#### Worthy to receive

There are four other ways in which ἀξιος is used by non-Pauline writers in the New Testament. Three of these meanings may be combined under the general heading of "being worthy to receive something." A person may be worthy to receive money (Matt 10:10; Luke 10:7). He may be worthy of reward (Acts 13:46; Rev 5:12) or punishment (Luke 12:48; 23:41; Acts 25:25; Rev 16:6). Finally, he may be worthy to receive a position (Luke 15:19, 21--"I am no longer worthy to be called your son"). It is in this sense that the negative form ἀνδξιος makes its only appearance in the New Testament when Paul asks the question of the Corinthians: "Are you not competent (worthy) to constitute the smallest law court?" (1 Cor 6:2).

#### Worthy of a standard

There is another general sense in which ἀξιος may be understood. This is the meaning of "being worthy of a

standard." That standard may be ethical: "fruits worthy of repentance" (Matt 3:8; Luke 3:8; Acts 26:20); or the standard may be a person: "he who loves his father or mother . . . son or daughter is not worthy of Me" (Matt 10:37); "the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie" (John 1:27; Acts 13:25).<sup>1</sup>

In Ephesians 4:1 it is the adverb ἀξίως which is used. This form appears six times<sup>2</sup> in the New Testament and its negative ἀναξίως appears once.<sup>3</sup> Ἀξίως appears in the New Testament outside of Paul's writings only once. This is in 3 John 6 in which John encourages Gaius with the advice that he would do well "sending them worthily of God." Again God is considered as a standard in this verse to whom the activities of Gaius ought to conform.

#### Balance/measure

The non-Pauline usage of ἀξίως, etc., continues to reflect the basal significance of the word which is that of "balance" or "measure." Generally speaking, there are usually two elements in the equation--actions which are worthy

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<sup>1</sup>It is obvious from this latter example that John has the person of Christ more in mind than the activity of untying a sandal. This is a hyperbolic statement in which John is asserting that even the position of Jesus' servant is too good for him; it is an exalted position because it implied nearness to Christ.

<sup>2</sup>MGM, p. 82: Rom 16:2; Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10; 1 Thess 2:12; 3 John 6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 61: 1 Cor 11:27.

of rewards or punishments; truths which are worthy of particular responses; people who are worthy of other people or standards. There are two apparent exceptions to this pattern.

The first of these is seen in those places where *ἀξιος* is without any genitive object. For instance, in Matthew 10:11 Jesus sends out the twelve and instructs them that in each city they are to "search for some worthy person." This person is not worthy of something, he is simply "worthy." Of course it can and must be argued that an object is implied. Two criteria are present in this passage--if the person has a reputation of worthiness (v. 11), or if the disciples themselves find the person to be worthy (v. 14). This same type of implied standard is found also in Revelation 3:4 and 5:2, 4, 9 in which purity from sin is to be understood as the basis for worthiness.

The second deviation from the pattern which calls for a balance between two elements occurs only in Acts 15:38 and 28:22. In both instances the verb *ἀξιόω* is present, followed by an infinitive (15:38--*ἡξιόω . . . μὴ συμπαραλαμβάνειν*; 28:22--*ἀξιόωμεν . . . ἀκοῦσαι*). *Ἀξιόω* means "to consider right, suitable, fitting."<sup>1</sup> Moulton and Milligan refer to the well attested legal sense of the term

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<sup>1</sup>Thayer, p. 53; BAGD, p. 78; TDNT, Foerster, "*ἀξιος*," 1:380.

meaning "to demand, claim."<sup>1</sup> Thus when Paul "kept on considering it right" (imperfect) in Acts 15:38 it probably retains some of the flavor of a courtroom. Paul makes his demand not to take Mark along on the basis of the evidence of Mark's past failure. Luke's use of the imperfect tense plus the context (that of a "sharp disagreement") justifies the translation "Paul kept on insisting" found in the New American Standard Bible.

In Acts 28:22 the context is less tense, reflecting Moulton and Milligan's assertion that ἀξιόω "frequently occurs in the weakened sense 'request,' 'ask.'"<sup>2</sup>

Though the idea of balance is not clearly articulated in these passages, its presence is felt nevertheless. In Acts 15:38 Paul is arguing that his decision not to take Mark along measures up to the evidence in the case. In Acts 28:22 the Jews "considered it right" to hear from Paul first-hand concerning the Christian "sect" of which they had only heard rumors. They realized that second-hand accounts do not measure up to the standard of what is right when a first-hand account is available.

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<sup>1</sup>James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprint ed., 1972), p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

### Pauline Usage

Paul does not differ to any great degree from his fellow writers of the New Testament in his use of *ἄξιος*. The idea of balance is most clearly demonstrated in Romans 8:18 where he compares the present sufferings of believers with the glory which shall be theirs--for Paul there is no comparison: *Λογίζομαι γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ ἄξια τὰ παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καρποῦ πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς*.

### Deserving of reward

By far, however, the most common usage of *ἄξιος* in the New Testament (in both Pauline and non-Pauline literature) is the usage which carries the sense of "deserving." This is the only meaning for the verb *καταξιόομαι* as it appears in the New Testament. Paul uses it in 2 Thessalonians 1:5 to describe his wish that the Thessalonians "may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God." Both here and in Luke 20:35 it is clear that Paul and Jesus are looking to this future time from the perspective of its constituting a reward to the faithful. The only other occurrence of *καταξιόομαι* is in Acts 5:41 where the apostles rejoiced because God considered them deserving enough to suffer shame for His name.

Paul uses *ἄξιος* to describe one who is deserving of monetary reward. In 1 Timothy 5:18 he repeats the proverb that "the worker is worthy of his wages" (also Matt 10:10 and



Luke 10:7). He uses this proverb to defend his statement in the previous verse that elders are "worthy of double honor." The apostle John expands this usage to include Christ, the Lamb, who is worthy "to receive power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing" (Rev 5:12).

Rewards and punishments of other sorts may be deserved by men. Paul notes in Romans 1:32 that men who practice all the vile things he has just listed are "worthy of death." The opposite side of this situation (that of reward) has already been noted in the discussion of καταξίωμα. The idea of eternal rewards and punishments is not foreign to Paul although in the case of his use of ἀξιος it is rare.

#### Deserving of a response

People and things may be deserving of a response from others. Masters deserve "full respect" from their slaves (1 Tim 6:1). Trustworthy sayings are deserving of "full acceptance" (1 Tim 1:15; 4:9). This type of usage begins to have a more direct bearing on the discussion of Ephesians 4:1. In these examples it is easy to see that Paul considered the position of a man to have some influence on the way he acts (i.e., a slave acts respectfully or, conversely, the position of "master" commands respect). In addition to this, truth itself is enough to elicit proper responses in men. Paul expected his declaration of repentance to be followed by deeds worthy of repentance (Acts 26:20).



### Worthy of a standard

In verses such as Ephesians 4:1, "walk worthily of your calling," and Philippians 1:27, "walk worthily of the gospel of Christ," Paul has in view a balance between an objective standard and lifestyle which reflects that standard. The gospel is a fairly well-defined quantity; but the concept of "calling" has been shown to be somewhat intangible. The calling of God moves the program of God into a man's life. Paul is therefore saying in these verses that believers must live (walk--περιπατέω) in such a way that what they do is congruent with the truth of the gospel and the type of lifestyle laid down in that gospel.

The adverb ὁσίων appears in Romans 16:1 with a genitive of person. The Romans are encouraged by Paul to receive Phoebe "in a manner worthy of the saints." Again the idea of an objective standard is present. Saints are "separated ones"--standouts in the world because of their moral purity, graciousness, humility, etc. Saints are those who would receive other saints in a way that reflects their conformity to this standard.

Saints, however, do not provide the highest standard. For this, Paul appeals to the example of God Himself. In Colossians 1:9-10 it is Paul's prayer for the believers in Colossae to be "filled with the knowledge of His will" so as to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord." The standard of conduct to which believers are to measure up is nothing

less than perfection. Remember Jesus' words: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48). This concept is repeated in 1 Thessalonians 2:12 in which God, who is the standard of worthy conduct, is identified as the One "who calls you into His kingdom and glory."

#### Worthy of a position

Two final meanings remain with regard to ἀξιός and its cognates. The first of these involves the idea of being "worthy of a position." This idea is common in Pauline theology, but only 1 Corinthians 6:2 is used in connection with the adjective ἀνάξιός (unworthy). In this verse Paul questions the Corinthians and asks: "Are you not competent (worthy) to constitute the smallest law court?" The obvious intent of this question is to demonstrate that the Corinthian believers are eminently qualified to fill that position. Their credentials measure up to the demands of the position. Compare this with Luke 15:19 and 21 in which the prodigal son declares that he no longer fulfills the requirements for the position of sonship.

#### Suitable/fitting/proper

The last use which Paul makes of ἀξιός, etc., involves the idea of being "suitable, fitting, proper." He uses it this way three times. In 1 Corinthians 11:27 Paul employs the negative adverb ἀναξίως to describe those who eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord improperly. For

some reason, their conscience was not in conformity with the standards of the Lord--whose death was represented in the bread and the cup. The privilege of partaking in the ordinance belongs only to those who measure up to the reality of the atonement for sin provided for them at the cross. Sin is an anomaly, an intruder in the life of the true believer. When sin is present it is totally incongruous (not fitting) for the believer to partake in something that declares his freedom from sin.

Another verse from 1 Corinthians contains the idea of "fitting." This verse is found in the sixteenth chapter where Paul, in discussing the Corinthians' gift to Jerusalem, mentions that it might be "fitting for me to go (to Jerusalem) also." In this case the advisability of making the trip was to be measured against the circumstances which would arise in the situation.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:3 Paul is certain of the situation. He knew about the great faith and bond of love which existed among the believers of Thessalonica. For this reason Paul says, "We ought always to give thanks . . . as is only fitting." The giving of thanks was the proper response to such good reports of faith and love.

### Conclusion

The term ἀξίως is not nearly as complex as κλησις considered in the previous chapter. The meaning of the word

changed little over many centuries. This remains true even when the objects being measured against one another become less concrete in nature. The fact that the meaning of ἀξίως remained so constant does not lessen the importance of its contribution to an understanding of Ephesians 4:1, however, for the idea of "balance" or "measure" serves to give the reader a clearer picture of what Paul means by his exhortation. It is an exhortation that evokes a comparison. The believer is to "measure up" to the standard of his calling. This study of ἀξίως, therefore, provides good warrant for understanding Paul's exhortation in a strongly ethical sense. A look at the remaining elements of the verse and the context of the verse itself will bear this out. This provides the subject of the next chapter.

### CHAPTER III

#### EPHESIANS 4:1

##### Content

The focus of this paper is upon what it means to "walk worthily of the calling." For this reason the foregoing discussions on κλησις and ἀξίως are to be regarded as essential. However, they are only two elements of the verse which they are a part of. The remaining elements of the verse and the context to which this verse belongs are also vital to a correct understanding of the calling which is to be pursued in a worthy manner.

##### οὖν

The verse opens with the postpositive connective οὖν. The connection which οὖν makes will be dealt with under the discussion on the context. Its importance is noted by Barth: "Whenever 'therefore' is used, at the beginning of a second, hortatory part of Pauline Epistles, it bears great weight; it emphasizes the logical dependence of ethical advice upon the preceding doctrinal statements."<sup>1</sup> The presence of οὖν in this verse appears to constitute an exception to Dana and Mantey's rule concerning the

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<sup>1</sup>Barth, 2:426. It has already been noted that Barth regards Eph 4:1 as an exception (see above, p. 2).

inferential use of this particle. They maintain that "When οὖν is inferential, that inference is expressed by the main verb in the sentence and not by the verb in a subordinate clause nor by an infinitive nor by a participle."<sup>1</sup> If this interpretation were adopted οὖν would connect Paul's act of exhortation with the preceding material, rather than the "walk" (περιπατῆσαι) which is the focus of his exhortation. The question is whether Paul's exhortation or the Ephesian's walk is intended as the logical response to the ethical teaching of the first three chapters. The latter alternative is to be preferred.

#### Παρακαλῶ

The main verb of the sentence begun in this verse is παρακαλῶ (exhort). In classical Greek this word is used of a simple request or exhortation without emotional nuance. With the production of the LXX it is used preponderantly to render πηγ "to comfort, console, pity."<sup>2</sup> It is probably best to see in Paul's use of this word a hint of the LXX meaning. This is probable because by the time Paul was

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<sup>1</sup>Harvey Eugene Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (New York: Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 253.

<sup>2</sup>"It is striking that in the Hel. world more is heard of asking and exhortation, while the emphasis is on comfort where the influence of the OT is felt." NIDNTT, s.v. "Exhort," (παρακαλέω), by Georg Braumann, 1:570. Also TDNT, s.v. "παρακαλέω," by Otto Schmitz and Gustav Stählin, 5:773-99.



writing his letters, "exhortation is almost a stereotyped part of church life"<sup>1</sup> (Acts 15:32; 16:40).

### Salvation basis

Schmitz sees in this an indication that παρακαλεῖν and its cognates "receive their content preponderantly in the NT event of salvation."<sup>2</sup> The exhortation would then be "distinguished from a mere moral appeal by this reference back to the work of salvation as its presupposition and basis."<sup>3</sup> It cannot be denied that exhortation did play a big part in the life of the church as believers ministered to one another.<sup>4</sup> Thus it would be easy to see how exhortation would come to be recognized as a technical ministry of comfort and concern, especially as it was expressed by a church leader such as Paul.

### Theological basis

Schmitz and Braumann both note the theological basis which Paul claims for his exhortation.<sup>5</sup> It is mediated "by the mercy of God" (Rom 12:1), "by our Lord Jesus Christ and

<sup>1</sup>Braumann, "Exhort," p. 570.

<sup>2</sup>Schmitz, "παρακαλέω," p. 793.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 795.

<sup>4</sup>Evidence for this is found in Acts 11:23; 14:22; 15:32; 16:40; 20:1-2 and in Paul's writings: 1 Cor 14:31; 2 Cor 1:4, 6; 2:7; 5:20; 6:1; 7:7, 13; 13:11; Col 2:2; 4:8; 1 Thess 2:11; 3:2; 4:18; 5:11, 14; 1 Tim 6:2; 2 Tim 4:2; Tit 1:9; 2:15.

<sup>5</sup>Schmitz, "παρακαλέω," p. 795; and Braumann, "Exhort," p. 570.

by the love of the Spirit" (Rom 15:30), or it comes "in the Lord" (1 Thess 4:1; 2 Thess 3:12). Thus, Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4:1 comes right on the heels of a great doxological passage which itself grows out of Paul's consideration of the believers' relationship to Christ. They are "fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus" (Eph 3:6). For it is in Christ that "we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him" (3:12). The exhortation of Ephesians 4:1 is made with full acknowledgment of the Lord of whom Paul considers himself a prisoner.

#### Imperative force

The idea that the παρακαλῶ of Paul is related to the LXX usage is affirmed by Markus Barth who says:

The verb translated "I beseech" can also be rendered by "I exhort," "I encourage," "I comfort," "I warn." While it includes a direct request (customarily expressed in Papyri epistles by the verb "I ask," (erotao), the word preferred by Paul signifies a will of the writer that is at the same time warm, personal, and urgent. Its sense is stronger than that of the English verb "I exhort."<sup>1</sup>

The forcefulness of the exhortation needs to be emphasized. It is possible that Paul himself reinforces the authority of his exhortation by reverting to a rare usage of the imperative infinitive. In verses 2-3 the participles ἀνεχόμενοι and σπουδάζοντες appear in the nominative case.

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<sup>1</sup>Barth, Ephesians, 2:426.

Abbott explains this by an appeal to a "common idiom" in which ὑμεῖς is the implied subject of ἀξίως περιπατῆσαι.<sup>1</sup> However, the nominative might also be explained if the sense of the construction in Ephesians 4:1 were understood as a command (i.e., περιπατήσατε). Robertson cites Wagner's observation that in Homer the imperativ infinitive occurs with the nominative.<sup>2</sup> Deissmann, commenting on 3 Maccabees 3:28, argues that the infinitive must "depend on a verb of command which the edict tacitly presupposes."<sup>3</sup> What is only implied in 3 Maccabees 3:28 is expressed by παρακαλῶ in Ephesians 4:1.

If this interpretation is accepted the participles themselves, rather than being circumstantial, are to be regarded as imperativ. Such a use of the participle is supported by both Barth<sup>4</sup> and Robertson<sup>5</sup> who find this usage common in Paul (2 Cor 6:3-10; 9:11, 13; Rom 12:9-13; Eph 3:17;

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, The Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, ICC (5th ed., London: T. & T. Clark, 1946), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup>Archibald Thomas Robertson, A Grammar of New Testament Greek in the Light of Historical Research (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 1092.

<sup>3</sup>Adolf Deissmann, Bible Studies, trans. Alexander Grieve (reprint ed., Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979), p. 344.

<sup>4</sup>Barth, Ephesians, 1:372; found in Barth's discussion of Eph 3:17.

<sup>5</sup>Robertson, Grammar, p. 946.

5:21; Col 2:2; 3:13). The context is the deciding factor in such instances.

#### With accusative + infinitive

Often (eight times) when Paul employs the word παρακαλῶ he follows it with an accusative of person plus an infinitive.<sup>1</sup> The content of the exhortation may involve many things: "To present your bodies as a living sacrifice" (Rom 12:10); "to strive together with me in your prayers" (Rom 15:30); "to keep your eye on those who cause dissension and hindrances" (Rom 16:17); "to reaffirm your love for them" (2 Cor 2:8); "not to receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor 6:1); "to live in harmony in the Lord" (Phil 4:2); and "to be sensible" (Tit 2:6). In the case of Ephesians 4:1 the exhortation is "to walk."

#### Περιπατῆσαι

The word "walk" conveys the sense of the movement of life--there is a progression involved. By using the aorist infinitive, however, Paul indicates that he has the total picture in view. It is a walk. Moule agrees that this is the possible intention for Paul's use of the aorist, but he prefers to regard it as inceptive.<sup>2</sup> Blass and

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<sup>1</sup>BAGD, p. 617.

<sup>2</sup>Handley Carr Glyn Moule, Ephesian Studies (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, n.d.), p. 173.

Debrunner lend support to his position when they note that, "Where the new life of the Christian, corresponding to the divine call which creates a new beginning, is meant, the aor. is used."<sup>1</sup> However, Paul has already commended the Ephesians for their faith and love (1:15). He has noted that they formerly walked (περιπατήσατε) according to the course of the world (2:1-2; cf. 2:3). Paul's exhortation is an encouragement to continue in the lifestyle they had already adopted.

That περιπατεῖν refers to the course or conduct of life is recognized by all. The source of this metaphor is to be found in the Hebrew use of הלך rather than in classical Greek.<sup>2</sup> This is so even though, as Ebel notes: "Only occasionally does peripateō denote in the figurative sense way of life (2 Kgs 20:3; Eccl 11:9)."<sup>3</sup> Thus, it is Paul who is primarily responsible for the use of περιπατεῖν in its figurative sense.

One finds in Paul two walks which are diametrically opposed to each other. One is the heathen walk which is characterized as being: like that of "mere man" (1 Cor 3:3); in opposition to Christ (Phil 3:18); "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the

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<sup>1</sup>BDF, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup>Thayer, p. 504. Moulton and Milligan, p. 507. Barth, Ephesians, 1:213.

<sup>3</sup>NIDNTT, s.v. "Walk," by Günther Ebel, 3:943.

power of the air" (Eph 2:2); marked by immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (Col 3:5-7). The other is the new walk of faith in Christ which is said to be: "in the newness of life" (Rom 6:4); "by faith" (2 Cor 5:7); "in the Spirit" (Gal 5:16); "in love" (Eph 5:2); "as children of light" (Eph 5:8).

In Ephesians 4:1 the adverb ἀξίως is used to describe the walk of the believer (cf. Col 1:10; 1 Thess 2:12). In Romans 13:13 and 1 Thessalonians 4:12 Paul's readers are encouraged to walk decently (εὐσχημόνως). In 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11 Paul encourages his readers not to walk idly (ἀτάκτως). These adverbs all connect the walk of the believer with a standard by which conduct is to be governed. Thus the believer is to walk worthily of the Lord, of God, and of the calling. He is to walk decently as becomes the day and as it is fitting toward outsiders. It is a "studied observance of the new rule of life."<sup>1</sup> Barth says, "Instead of denoting an aimless promenading or strolling about, in Paul and the Johannine epistles the verb means a choice of steps on a given ground in a given direction."<sup>2</sup> In Ephesians 4:1 this "ground" and "direction" is provided by the κλησίς of the believer.

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<sup>1</sup>IBD, s.v. "Walk," by F. S. Fitzsimmons, p. 1628.

<sup>2</sup>Barth, Ephesians, 1:213.



Ὁ δέσμιος ἐν κυρίῳ

The final element to be looked at in this verse is the phrase ὁ δέσμιος ἐν κυρίῳ which closely parallels the phrase in the first verse of the preceding chapter, ὁ δέσμιος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The change in case may be accounted for by the slight change in Paul's emphasis. In 3:1 Paul is affirming Christ's special claim on him for ministry to the Gentiles (τῶν ἐθνῶν),<sup>1</sup> while in 4:1 Paul is simply referring to his condition as a prisoner. Barth suggests this constitutes a shortened version of the periphrasis, "in the Lord's service."<sup>2</sup> The intent of the phrase in both verses is so similar that they may be regarded as equivalent.<sup>3</sup> Untenable is Robinson's suggestion that Paul is drawing his readers' attention to his condition in order to motivate them to a life of service which he is now unable to perform.<sup>4</sup> Such a sentiment is uncharacteristic of Paul (who regards imprisonment as an opportunity--Phil 1:12-13). In addition, the

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<sup>1</sup>For a unique sociological approach to a "servant style of life"--one which is to the nations; John Hamlin, "The Mission of God's People to the Nations," pp. 5-8; "The Proclamation of the New Earth," pp. 8-11; and "The People of the Servant," pp. 16-22; in The South East Asia Journal of Theology (April-July 1965).

<sup>2</sup>Barth, Ephesians, 2:426.

<sup>3</sup>Mitton, Ephesians, p. 137.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, 2nd ed. (London: Clark, 1922), p. 90.

context does not support such an interpretation. The focus of this passage is not on the church's ministry to the world but on the lives of individual believers as they interact with one another.<sup>1</sup>

### Context

#### Transitional Nature

The transitional nature of Ephesians 4:1 has been noted previously. This feature can be seen in the presence of the particle οὖν, which serves as the grammatical link, and in Paul's employment of the terms κλησις and περιπατησαι which serve as the logical link--"calling" reflects on the doctrinal truths of the first three chapters, while "to walk" reflects on the practical emphasis of the last chapters. This is not to say that 1-3 have nothing of a practical nature in them nor that 4-6 are exclusively practical. The distinction simply describes the kind of material which generally characterizes each section.

#### Previous Reference

The question arises concerning the amount of material from the first section which is referred to by οὖν. Meyer argues for the "suitableness of the nearest reference" and

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<sup>1</sup>Brooke Foss Westcott, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Macmillan Company, 1906; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), p. 29.

maintains that this is to be preferred to the "more vague" view that all of chapters 1-3 is intended.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it is a walk "in keeping with the praise of God in the church."<sup>2</sup> Eadie agrees that οὖν refers to the contents of the preceding paragraph, in which he sees a description of the richness and the fullness of the Christian calling.<sup>3</sup>

This theme is certainly present in the preceding paragraph (3:19), and more naturally suits the idea of calling than does Meyer's statement concerning the praise of God. However, the theme of the riches of the Christian calling is characteristic of the entire first section of the book. Chafer says:

It is thereby indicated that the preceding portion, setting forth the riches of divine grace (chapters 1-3), is now followed by its sequel in which is set forth that manner of life and conduct which becomes those who are thus enriched in the measureless divine grace.<sup>4</sup>

#### Riches of the Christian calling

This theme runs like a thread throughout the first three chapters: Christians are blessed with every spiritual

<sup>1</sup>Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Ephesians, 6th ed., trans. Maurice J. Evans, translation revised and edited by William P. Dickson, and with a preface, translation of references, and supplementary notes by Henry E. Jacobs (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 1884; reprint ed. Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979), p. 436.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Eadie, Ephesians, p. 266.

<sup>4</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, The Ephesian Letter (Findlay, OH: Dunham Publishing Company, 1935), p. 114.

blessing (1:3). They are adopted as evidence of the "kind intention of His will" (1:5). They have had the "riches of His grace" "lavished" upon them "freely" (1:6-8). They have "obtained an inheritance" (1:11, 14, 18). They have experienced the "rich" mercy of God (2:4) by being "made alive" (2:5). They are seated with Christ in the heavenlies as a promise of the "surpassing riches of God's grace" which will be theirs in the future (2:6-7). The salvation of Christians is totally a "gift of God" (2:8). Christians are "fellow-citizens with the saints, and are of God's household" (2:19); "fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise" (3:6). To them Paul has preached the "unfathomable riches of Christ" (3:8) in whom they have "boldness and confident access" (3:12). The internal blessings which are theirs are bestowed "according to the riches of His glory" for the purpose of experiencing the "fullness of God" (3:19).

The call of the believer certainly includes all the things mentioned in these verses. That Christians are called to experience certain privileges and rewards has already been demonstrated.<sup>1</sup> Yet these privileges are directly connected with a life that is properly lived in the present. Believers are "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (2:10). They are chosen before the foundation of the

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<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 25-26.

world to be holy and blameless before Him (1:4). God calls believers from their "former walk" (2:2) to a walk which is worthy of such a call.

#### Source of the Christian calling

That it is God who issues the call and guarantees the response is another thread which may be traced through the first chapters of Ephesians: "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (1:4). "He predestined us to adoption" (1:5). Believers were "predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will" (1:11). God prepared good works beforehand "that we should walk in them" (2:10). He has now revealed "the mystery which for ages has been hidden" (3:9), which was "in accordance with the eternal purpose" (3:11). The blending of God's effectual call with His call to an high ethical lifestyle is clearly demonstrated in these verses. Nowhere does Paul divorce the two ideas. Those who are called to salvation are equally called to a lifestyle of righteousness.

#### Theme of Ephesians

Both the themes which have been looked at, and to which the κλησις of Ephesians 4:1 refers, do not represent the major thrust of this epistle. Neither the glories of the riches of God's grace nor the lifestyle of righteousness provided by God constitutes the main theme of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Paul's concern is with the unity of



believers, and, particularly, the unity which exists between Jewish and Gentile believers. This is the doctrine which he declares and the practice which he seeks. This is the context into which Ephesians 4:1 is set.

Such unity is naturally expressed within the context of the church; and, thus the church plays a prominent part in Paul's discourse on unity.<sup>1</sup> Not everything included, however, relates directly to the church. Much of the material in Ephesians concerns interaction between individuals that ranges beyond the confines of the ἐκκλησία. The basis for the unity is always for Paul ἐν Χριστῷ<sup>2</sup> (Eph 2:13-22; Rom 12:5).

## Chapter 1

The theme of unity among believers is expressed in both sections of the letter. In the first chapter Paul reminds his readers that they are all adopted sons (1:5),

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<sup>1</sup>Boyer regards the Church as the overriding theme of the epistle. That the Church does occupy a prominent position cannot be denied, but unity may be expressed outside the context of the church. The unity which inheres in God Himself, for example (Eph 4:6) provides an analogous example of why unity ought to characterize the church. See: James L. Boyer, syllabus for the class "Greek Exegesis: Ephesians," revised ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Grace Theological Seminary, 1974), pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>Some authors argue that this phrase sums up the central focus of Paul's doctrine. See: Henry Angus Alexander Kennedy, The Theology of the Epistles (London: Duckworth, 1919), p. 124. James Stuart Stewart, A Man in Christ (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), pp. 147-53. See also: John A. Allan, "The 'In Christ' Formula in Ephesians," New Testament Studies 5 (1958-59):54-62.



and that they share with Paul in the same spiritual heritage (1:11-14). He commends them for their love for all saints (1:15). In the last verse he reminds them that the church is a body--a unified whole; and that it is the body of Christ.

## Chapter 2

In chapter two Paul addresses the issue of the barrier which existed between Jew and Gentile. He says in verse fourteen that God has made these two groups one by breaking down the barrier which divided them. They have become "one new man" who now exist in peace with one another (2:15). They were reconciled when God placed them both into one body "through the cross" (2:16). Salvation is on an equal footing as is their relationship to God in "one Spirit" (2:18). No longer strangers or aliens, Jew and Gentile are now fellow-citizens who (to change the metaphor) are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets and are "fitted together . . . growing into a holy temple in the Lord" (2:19-21). The unity of the church is to be reflected in the fact that the individual members are to be built together into a dwelling place for God's Spirit (2:22).

## Chapter 3

In chapter three Paul enters into an extended digression concerning his own ministry to the Gentiles which culminates in a paean of praise to God. Yet Paul does not

digress so far that he fails to remind his readers that the Gentiles are "fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise" (3:6). This he calls "the mystery which for ages has been hidden" (3:9).

#### Chapter 4

Ephesians 4:1 accomplishes the transition from the fact of unity to the act of unity.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter Paul begins to unfold the various ways that unity is expressed in the church and between individual believers. Humility, gentleness, and forbearance are cited as examples of the types of things that promote unity and love (4:2). These things express a diligence to maintain unity and peace (4:3). Paul then reverts again to doctrinal declaration to underscore the importance for unity and the basis of it. There is only one body of Christ, only one Spirit given to all (cf. 2:18), only one hope to which believers are called (cf. 1:18). They all serve one Lord. They all believe the same things. They all have been baptized by the Spirit without distinction. The ultimate Source of all unity is God (יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד--Deut 6:4). This includes all that is unified in church or cosmos.

It is because God is over all that He has the power to distribute gifts to men through Christ. Thus, some

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<sup>1</sup>That the Christian calling is not limited to a call for unity has, hopefully, been demonstrated. It is a life-style which promotes unity which is in view here.

diversity is included in the unity. Yet the goal of these diverse gifts is to promote a mutual ministry in which believers equip one another. In this way the whole body is built up into the unity of the faith (4:12-13). Believers really begin to act like a body in that each part fulfills the needs which are lacking in the other parts (4:16).

Unity may be expressed in such practical matters as finance: "share with him who has need" (4:18); or in conversation: "Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification" (4:29).

#### Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters five and six continue with the theme of unity along somewhat different lines. Mutual subjection is in view with the relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, and slaves and masters being discussed. Even in this discussion Paul's thoughts are not far removed from the church. A husband is to love his wife as his own body, just as Christ loves the church which is His body.

Paul's purpose in Ephesians is primarily to demonstrate the unity of all believers in Christ. In 4:1 he reminds his readers of the calling which is theirs. This is a calling to a lifestyle, provided by God, which promotes unity among believers.

## Parallel Passages

### Colossians

Even a cursory reading of the books of Colossians and Ephesians reveals a striking correspondence between the two. This fact has been interpreted to both support and deny Pauline authorship.<sup>1</sup> A number of problems do exist with regard to Pauline authorship<sup>2</sup> but the alternative raises more problems than it solves.

In Colossians Paul's main goal is to combat certain incipient heresies which are threatening the church in Colossae. Because this issue is lacking in Ephesians Paul uses terms in a slightly different manner in the two books. The similarity of thought is explained by the fact that both Ephesians and Colossians were written at the same time by Paul as he languished in a Roman prison.

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Guthrie provides a lengthy discussion of the major views regarding authorship of Ephesians. He effectively challenges the conclusions reached by C. Leslie Mitton. Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), pp. 479-508. See: C. Leslie Mitton, The Epistle to the Ephesians: Its Authorship, Origin and Purpose (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951). Also in support of Pauline authorship see: David Alan Black, "The Peculiarities of Ephesians and the Ephesian Address," Grace Theological Journal 2 (Spring 1981): 59-73.

<sup>2</sup>For instance, the lack of the words ἐν Ἐφῆσῳ from the oldest manuscripts or the lack of personal greetings in a letter to a church with which Paul was intimately acquainted.

In both epistles his imprisonment is said to be for the sake of his readers who were predominantly Gentile (Eph 3:13; Col 1:24). In addition to this, other thematic similarities are readily noted: Paul includes a section dealing with the relationships between husband and wife, children and parents, and slaves and masters (Eph 5:22-6:9; Col 3:18-4:1). He notes the reconciling work of God, though certainly from another perspective (Eph 2:11-22; Col 1:20-22). The  $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$  that Gentiles are also recipients of grace is present (Eph 3:8-9; Col 1:26-27). The contrast between being dead in sin and being made alive is seen in Colossians 2:13 (cf. Eph 2:5). Believers are raised with Christ (Eph 2:6; Col 3:1). Forgiveness is based on the prior forgiveness of God (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13). The idea of unity is also not lacking in Colossians (1:4; 2:2; 3:9, 13-16).

The importance of Colossians for an understanding of Ephesians lies in the fact that the reader of both epistles is given a larger view of the way Paul employed terms and phrases to meet the demands of his purpose. Having been written at the same time the books serve as a commentary on each other and as a warning to any who would regard language in too rigid a fashion.

#### Colossians 3:5

A verse in Colossians which provides literary equivalent to Ephesians 4:1 is Colossians 3:5. This verse



introduces the ethical portion of the letter which follows, in typical Pauline fashion, from the doctrinal. This verse actually constitutes the end of a gradual transition which begins at verse one. Colossians 3:1-4 is a reminder to believers of their privileged position in Christ. They are raised with Him (3:1). Their lives are hidden with Him (3:3). They will be revealed with Him in glory (3:4). These truths serve the same purpose as κλησις in Ephesians 4:1. Both describe the condition of Paul's readers that theirs is a high privilege; and both serve as motivation for ethical conduct.

#### Colossians 1:10

The verse which most closely parallels Ephesians 4:1 in terminology is Colossians 1:10. Yet these verses do not function in the same way in their respective books. Ephesians 4:1 is the watershed verse of the book while Colossians 1:10 is included as part of Paul's introduction. In Colossians 1:10 the worthy walk comes as a consequence of spiritual enlightenment (cf. Eph 1:18) and results in further knowledge of God and in good works. These results are considered to measure up to the standard of the Lord Himself. This verse closely parallels the thought of Ephesians 4:1, with one noticeable exception. In Ephesians 4:1, the walk is ἀξίως . . . τῆς κλήσεως, while in Colossians 1:10 it is ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου. In the former verse Paul focuses on the



believer's responsibility, in the latter on God's activity. This is true throughout both epistles. In Ephesians the Church is the main concern but in Colossians it is God (especially Christ).

#### 1 Thessalonians 2:12

Similar to this verse from Colossians is 1 Thessalonians 2:12. It appears in the middle of a section in which Paul is reminding the Thessalonians of the type of ministry he had among them. Included in that ministry was the exhortation (παρακαλοῦντες), encouragement (παραμυθούμενοι), and plea (μαρτυρόμενοι) to walk worthy of God, περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ. God is here described as τοῦ καλοῦντος, "the one who calls."

This verse is helpful for an understanding of Ephesians 4:1 for several reasons. First, the fact that exhortation comprised a part of Paul's normal ministry is affirmed. Second, this exhortation is described as something a father would do for his children. Thus, the exhortation of Ephesians 4:1 is not a stern imperative (as in a military command), but an expression of Paul's concern for the well-being of the Ephesian church.

The third thing to be noted in this passage is Paul's explicit reference to God as the Source of the calling. In Ephesians 4:1 this is only implied through Paul's use of the passive (ἐκλήθητε) and from the idea of calling itself

(implicating that there is one who calls). God is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians as the Source because it is Paul's intention again to emphasize His activity rather than the believers' responsibility. Paul does not remind them of how he had encouraged them to walk worthy of God, he only reminds them of the fact that he did encourage them.

Fourth, the κλήσις of 1 Thessalonians 2:12 is related to its ultimate goal which is to partake of God's kingdom and glory. Again, this idea is not totally absent in the passage from Ephesians. For there, it emerges in 4:4 in which Paul states, ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν. This hope is the "not yet" aspect of the Christian call. The fact that the calling has eschatological implications also demands that present existence lines up with that hope. Thus, when Paul exhorts his readers ἀξίως περιπατῆσαι τῆς κλήσεως ἧς ἐκλήθητε he sets before them a standard for life here and now which is based on the eschatological idea that at some point yet future they will become "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom 8:29).

Fifth, even the strongly eschatological flavor of this section from 1 Thessalonians does not totally divorce from it the idea of present conduct. For Paul continues to remind his readers that the word of God which he brought to them has produced a work in them (2:13). They have become "imitators of the churches of God" (2:14) in that they have

suffered for the sake of the gospel. God's call to the Thesalonians became His claim on their service for His cause.

#### Philippians 1:27

In Philippians 1:27, it is the gospel itself of which believers are to walk<sup>1</sup> worthily, ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε. Paul's purpose in telling his readers this is that he might hear good reports about them, especially with regard to their unity. For Paul wants to hear that they are "standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel."

In this verse it is the gospel of Christ which constitutes the standard by which the Philippians are to order their lives. The "good news" concerning Christ provides a point around which all believers may rally and experience true unity. It is the gospel which makes no distinction between Jew and Greek (Rom 1:16). Believers participate together "in the gospel" (Phil 1:5; 2:22; 4:3; 1 Thess 3:2). The gospel contains the "faith" for which believers are to strive (cf. Jude 3). Thus Paul is calling on the Philippians to live up to the standards of the body of doctrine they claim to believe.

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<sup>1</sup>"Politeuomai is found only at Acts 23:1 and Phil 1:27, where (as in the usage of Hellenistic Judaism) it means to walk, in a way keeping with the faith." NIDNTT, s.v. "People," by Hans Bietenhard, 2:804.

### Conclusion

Both the content and context of Ephesians 4:1 tend to indicate that Paul's use of "calling" ought to be understood in an essentially ethical sense. The exhortation to "walk worthily" is, at the same time, both gentle and urgent. Paul wants his readers to do something. He wants them to pursue a lifestyle which conforms with the one demanded by God in His word. Chapters 1-3 of Ephesians provide the basis for such a pursuit, and chapters 4-6 provide concrete examples of how this is done.

In the wider context of Paul's other writing it becomes immediately apparent that he is consistent in his approach to Christian ethics. In Colossians and in 1 and 2 Thessalonians the focus is shifted to the Source of the calling, yet, for Paul, this only provides a broader base upon which to build his ethic. Philippians 1:27 finds the standard for conduct in the gospel--that which God has revealed about Himself (especially in Christ), and that which calls for a response in men. The importance of this response is the concern of the final chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ONE WHO WALKS WORTHILY

When Paul wrote to the Ephesians and exhorted them to "walk worthily of the calling to which you have been called," he spoke those words intended to generate a response in his readers. In keeping with the theme of his epistle he helped them to fulfill this worthy walk by providing examples of conduct which would result in the establishment and preservation of unity. Humility, patience, forbearance, love, and a conscious effort to promote unity and peace were all necessary if true unity were to exist. Yet these qualities are merely representative of the kinds of things that promote unity. Indeed, the remainder of the book provides a wide range of qualities vital to unity between believers. Also included are: the sharing of ministries (4:12-13); integrity (4:25); honesty and generosity (4:29); edifying speech (4:29); kindness and forgiveness (4:31-32); and mutual subjection (5:21-6:9). But even an impressive list such as this does not exhaust the implications of the phrase.

#### The Richness of the Call

The idea of the Christian calling already had a long history before the Ephesians received their letter from Paul.

Christians were known as οἱ κλητοί even before Paul's conversion. Therefore when the Ephesians read these words they were already well acquainted with the concept and with the broad implications of the phrase. Barclay<sup>1</sup> suggests four major implications: (1) It is a summons which is either a challenge or an appeal, and which lays upon the recipient the "tremendous responsibility of answering"; (2) It is a summons to duty--"to be of use in this world"; (3) It is a call to privilege; (4) Finally, it is a call to judgment.

The Ephesians were not so spiritually ignorant that they would fail to appreciate the complexity of their calling. It is impossible to separate the ideas suggested above and for this reason they may all be assumed to be integral aspects of the Christian calling. The gospel which God uses does invite men, but it also demands repentance from sin because sin is incongruous with the privileges of union with God and because God's response to human sin is divine wrath.

Each of these elements of the divine call is present, in fact, in the epistle to the Ephesians (invitation/duty--4:1; privilege--1:18; judgment--5:5-8). For this reason William Carver has suggested that "The Christian Calling" ought to be regarded as the focus of this epistle.<sup>2</sup> It is

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<sup>1</sup>William Barclay, A New Testament Wordbook (New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d.), pp. 62-63.

<sup>2</sup>Carver, Glory of God, pp. 21, 141. Carver regards the three-fold repetition of the κλ-stem as being "intentional and significant"--i.e., Paul wishes to draw his



easy to understand why he makes this suggestion. Throughout Ephesians Paul argues for unity on the basis of the believers' mutual condition ἐν Χριστῷ.

### The Spirit and the Call

This condition provides both the reason for walking worthily and the power for doing so. God's call is effectual on two counts. First, He calls us as to enlighten the minds of sinners to accept the external call of the gospel. Second, He offers the power of the Holy Spirit to enable believers to walk worthily.

Paul's ethics do not start from anything which man can offer to God by way of virtuous conduct, but from what God has done for man. . . . Goodness springs from grace and life in the body of Christ. Only if a man ceases to be a slave to morality and becomes the slave of Christ (1 Cor 7:21f.) can the spirit enable him to live in freedom and love.<sup>1</sup>

### Salvation and the Call

Everything is of grace, including the sanctifying work of the Spirit. Believers are called to be holy (2 Tim 1:9) and the Spirit insures that this will come about.

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readers' attention to this verse, and to see in it the theme of the whole book. However, the elements of the Christian calling, though present in Ephesians, are not directly stated in the same way that Paul's emphasis on unity is. The importance of Eph 4:1 is not denied but it is important because it moves Paul's discussion from the basis of Christian unity to the expression of it. It is not the fact that believers are called but that they have a mutual calling that is Paul's main point.

<sup>1</sup>James Leslie Houlden, Ethics and the New Testament (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 34.

Deliverance from sin does not merely include deliverance from the punishment of sin but also from the necessity to sin which is the heritage of the sin nature. Warfield writes:

There is needed for man's recovery from sin, therefore, not merely atonement but renewal; that salvation, that is to say, consists not merely in pardon but in purification.<sup>1</sup>

This sentiment fits in well with the wide-ranging implications of the  $\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\iota\varsigma$  of God. It initiates the salvific plan of God in the life of the individual. It includes all the demands and privileges offered in the gospel. It sets forth a style of life in accord with the holy character of God.<sup>2</sup> And its ultimate implication is seen in the glories of the eternal state.<sup>3</sup> The believer has been called to take

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<sup>1</sup>Benjamin B. Warfield, "On the Biblical Notion of 'Renewal,'" reprinted in Biblical and Theological Studies, ed. S. G. Craig (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1952), p. 352. Compare Lloyd-Jones' statement: "God has called us not merely that we might not go to hell, and not only that we might know that our sins are forgiven; He has chosen us 'to be holy' and to be 'blameless before Him in love'": Lloyd-Jones, Christian Unity, p. 31. See also: Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1939), p. 530.

<sup>2</sup>"The moral law is basically a reflection of God's own character." Erwin W. Lutzer, The Necessity of Ethical Absolutes (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 80.

<sup>3</sup>A. R. C. Leaney argues that in Pauline literature the eschatological element "is made to serve an ethical appeal": A. R. C. Leaney, "'Conformed to the Image of His Son' (Rom VIII.29)," New Testament Studies 10 (July 1964): 470.

part in the total program of God. Thus, each step along the way the Scripture may speak of the believer as having been "called" to this--called to repentance (Luke 5:32), called to salvation (1 Cor 1:24), called to holiness (Rom 1:7), called to glory (1 Thess 2:12).

### The Call to Ethical Behavior

Most of what Paul writes concerns the call to holiness, to an ethical lifestyle that is "set-apart" from that of the world (the "former" walk--Col 3:7; Eph 2:3). His approach is "fundamentally ethical"<sup>1</sup> because of the nature of his mission. Paul was a church-planter in a culture that was completely unsympathetic to the gospel of Christ. It was imperative in his letters for Paul to continue to remind his readers of their unique status before God. Paul dealt quickly and decisively whenever heresy or immorality threatened the church (1 Cor 1-5; Gal 1:6-8; Col 2:16-23). When no immediate problem was on the horizon (as in Ephesians) Paul took preventative measures to strengthen the believers in their resolve. Sin is most frequently expressed in moral issues; thus, Paul's message was primarily ethical.

The calling of the believer includes all that is said in the Word of God appertaining to moral behavior. Carver says of Ephesians 4:1:

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<sup>1</sup>Archibald Browning Drysdale Alexander, The Ethics of St. Paul (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1910), p. 15.

"To walk" here, as usual includes the motive and purpose and acts of the whole content of living in social life. "Walking worthily of our calling" means that in all respects, within ourselves and toward all others, all actions are related to the meaning and purpose of our calling in the grace of God.<sup>1</sup>

An attitude toward life which is demanded by the above quote is not easy to maintain in the rigors of daily living. Murray correctly observes:

We are too ready to give heed to what we deem to be the hard, empirical facts of Christian profession, and we have erased the clear line of demarcation which Scripture defines. As a result we have lost our vision of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Our ethic has lost its dynamic and we have become conformed to this world.<sup>2</sup>

### Conclusion

It is imperative to maintain "vision" with respect to the call. It cannot be relegated only to theological discussions concerning "external" versus "effectual" call. Nor can it be regarded as applying to the more mystical "urge" to enter a full-time Christian ministry. It is not an esoteric few that have received the call, but all who put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is these who must live each moment of each day fully conscious of their unique position ἐν Χριστῷ. True, their calling was predestined from before the foundation of the world; and, equally true, they are assured of a rich inheritance with Christ after the

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<sup>1</sup>Carver, Glory of God, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup>John Murray, Principles of Conduct (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 205.

passing of this age. But here and now they have a calling to pursue which takes into account both past and future, but which also hears in the gospel of Christ the exhortation to walk worthily.

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