

The Calling of God
Lesson Outline
Presented by Elder Mitchell Glasscock
on January 24, 2019
at Fairview Memorial Missionary Baptist Church
2019 Winter Bible Study on “The Attributes of God”

Considering the theme of the study, “The Attributes of God”, we understand it is impossible to cover all His attributes in ten lessons. Also, God’s attributes are beyond our comprehension – actually, each attribute encompasses more than we are able to comprehend!
It certainly is so with the topic I have been assigned, “The Calling of God”.

The aim of this lesson: To talk about the broadness of the calling of God; to consider the calling is made to mankind; to look at reactions to and ways of answering the calling; to encourage thankfulness for the opportunity of calling on God.

Reading Lesson: **Genesis 3:7-13**

Text: **2 Peter 1:10**

Calling is a form of the word call. The words can be used both as a verb or a noun. According to Noah Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language* the word call (used as a verb) comes from Hebrew meaning “To hold or restrain.” to which is added “In a general sense, to drive, to strain or force out sound.” After this general description detailed definitions are given for the word call used as a verb and a noun.

The following definitions are taken from Noah Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*:

Calling (noun): 1. A naming, or inviting; a reading over or reciting in order, or a call of names with a view to obtain an answer, as in legislative bodies.

2. Vocation; profession; trade; usual occupation, or employment.

[1 Corinthians 7:20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.]

3. Divine summons, vocation, or invitation.

[Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. 2 Peter 1:10]

Call (verb):

1. To name; to denominate or give a name. [And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. Genesis 1:5.]

2. To convoke (call together); to summon; to direct or order to meet; to assemble by order or public notice; often with together; [as, the king called his council together; the president called together the congress.]

3. To request to meet or come. [He sent his servants to call them that were bidden. Mathew 22:4.]

4. To invite. [Because I have called and ye refused. Proverbs 124.]

5. To invite or summon to come or be present; to invite, or collect. [Call all your senses to you.]

6. To give notice to come by authority; to command to come; as, call a servant.

7. To proclaim; to name, or publish the name. [Nor parish clerk, who calls the psalm so clear.]

8. To appoint or designate, as for an office, duty or employment. [See, I have called by name Bezaleel. Exodus 31:2-5.] & [Paul called to be an apostle. Romans 1:1.]

9. To invite; to warn; to exhort. [Isaiah 22:12.]

10. To invite or draw into union with Christ.

11. To own and acknowledge. [Hebrews 2:11.]

12. To invoke or appeal to. [I call God for a record. 2 Corinthians 1:23.]

13. To esteem or account.
14. To utter a loud sound, or to address by name; to utter the name; sometimes with to. [The angel of God called to Hagar. Genesis 21:17.]
15. To stop, without intention of staying; to make a short stop; as, to call at the inn.

Call (noun):

1. A vocal address, of summons or invitation; [as, he will not come at a call.]
2. Demand; requisition; public claim; [as, listen to the calls of justice or humanity.]
3. Divine vocation, or summons; [as the call of Abraham.]
4. Invitation; request of a public body or society; [as, a clergyman has a call to settle in the ministry.]
5. A summons from heaven.
6. Authority; command.
7. A short visit; as, to make a call; to give one a call or to have a short conversation with.
8. Vocation; employment. In this sense calling is generally used.
9. A naming; a nomination.
10. In legislative bodies, the call of the house, is a calling over the names of the members, to discover who is absent or for other purpose; a calling of names with a view to obtain answers from the person named.

According to *Strong's Greek and Hebrew Dictionary* there are primarily two Hebrew words translated as call (ed) (ing) in the Old Testament.

1. Hebrew Word: קָרָא **Transliteration:** qārā' **Phonetic Pronunciation:**  [kaw-raw'](#)

English Words used in KJV: call 528, cried 98, read 38, proclaim 36, named 7, guests 4, invited 3, gave 3, renowned 3, bidden 2, preach 2, *miscellaneous translations* 11 [Total Count: 735]

a primitive root [through the idea of *accosting* a person met]; to *call* out to (i.e. properly *address* by name, but used in a wide variety of applications) :- bewray [self], that are bidden, call (for, forth, self, upon), cry (unto), (be) famous, guest, invite, mention, (give) name, preach, (make) proclaim (-ation), pronounce, publish, read, renowned, say.

2. Hebrew Word: אָמַר **Transliteration:** 'āmar **Phonetic Pronunciation:**  [aw-mar'](#)

English Words used in KJV: said 4874, speak 179, answer 99, command 30, tell 29, call 7, promised 6, misc. 84 [Total Count: 5308]

a primitive root; to *say* (used with great latitude) :- answer, appoint, avouch, bid, boast self, call, certify, challenge, charge, + (at the, give) command (-ment), commune, consider, declare, demand, × desire, determine, × expressly, × indeed, × intend, name, × plainly, promise, publish, report, require, say, speak (against, of), × still, × suppose, talk, tell, term, × that is, × think, use [speech], utter, × verily, × yet.

Several Greek words are translated to a form of call in the New Testament. Without listing each word separately, below is a list of meanings from *Strong's* for the various Greek words:

“ask, bid, boast, call, describe, give out, name, put forth, say (-ing, on), shew, speak, tell, utter.”

“to “*call*” (properly aloud, but used in a variety of applications, derivative or otherwise) :- bid, call (forth), (whose, whose sur-) name (was [called]).”

“to *call toward oneself*, i.e. *summon, invite* :- call (for, to, unto).”

“to *sound towards*, i.e. *address, exclaim, summon* :- call unto, speak (un-) to.”

“to emit a *sound* (animal, human or instrumental); by implication to *address* in words or by name, also in imitation :- call (for), crow, cry.”

“to *remind*; reflexive to *recollect* :- call to mind, (bring to, call to, put in), remember (-brance).”

“to *convoke* :- call together.”

“to *utter*, i.e. *speak* or *say* :- call, say, speak (of), tell.”

“to *entitle*; by implication to *invoke* (for aid, worship, testimony, decision, etc.) :- appeal (unto), call (on, upon), surname.”

“to *call elsewhere*, i.e. *summon* :- call (for, hither).”

” a “*name*” (literal or figurative) [*authority, character*] :- called, (+ sur-) name (-d).”

“to *send* from *elsewhere*, i.e. (middle) to *summon* or *invite* :- call (send) for.”

“to constitute a *firm* for business, i.e. (generic) *bear* as a *title* :- be called, be admonished (warned) of God, reveal, speak.”

“an *invitation* (figurative) :- calling.”

“to *name*, i.e. *assign an appellation*; by extension to *utter, mention, profess* :- call, name.

With these definitions in mind we consider first the different aspects of the calling of God.

Aspects of the calling of God:

To speak or to say:

In Genesis 1, “And God said, Let ... “ – God spoke the world, the universe as we know it into existence. I believe we can say He called creation into existence.

Throughout the scripture we read what God has said and says to His creation. When He speaks the elements of creation respond. When He speaks the forces of nature obey. *“But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!”* Matthew 8:27.

To name or give a name to:

As He called each part of creation into existence, God named each one: “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night...” (Genesis 1:5); “And God called the firmament Heaven...” (Genesis 1:8); “And God called the dry *land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: ...” (Genesis 1:10). God gave names to men and changed men’s names. *“Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.”* (Genesis 17:5). *“... and thou shalt call his name Isaac: ...”* (Genesis 17:19). He changed Jacob’s name to Israel, Saul’s name to Paul and He said the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth would be called John. God gave names by which He was to be called and known - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What God called someone or something is the name thereof.

Authority; command; To proclaim; to give notice to come by authority; to command to come:

God made man in His own image forming him of the dust of the ground and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. God gave the man dominion over other parts of the creation. God called upon the man (commanded him) to obey a single rule (Genesis 2:16-17).

To invite or summon to come or be present:

Falling under this aspect of the calling of God is the call to repentance and righteousness. Consider the scripture lesson read from Genesis 3. The man violated the rule he was called upon to keep! Adam and Eve tried to cover their sin and hide from God. God first summoned (called out) the man and the

woman. God then invited them back to a relationship with Him through the plan put into place before the foundation of the world – the atoning blood of Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15, 21). We can see the call to repentance (and faith) extended throughout the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation (Acts 17:30, Revelation 22:17).

People are summoned and invited (called) not only to repentance but to righteousness, the righteousness of God. God invites us to maintain fellowship with Him which when done will be reflected in our lives. Jesus calls on His disciples to be “*the salt of the earth*” and “*the light of the world*” for men to see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:13-17). We are unable to be this “salt” and “light” without reflecting the righteousness of God placed within us. Ephesians 2:8-9 speaks of God’s grace (Lesson: The Grace of God) in salvation, then look at the verse which follows: “*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” (Ephesians 2:10)

Divine summons, vocation, or invitation; To appoint or designate, as for an office, duty or employment:

This portion of the definition can be used to describe the calling of God to service. Throughout the scripture we read about God calling people to service. In particular, He calls men to preach His word. Old Testament examples: Noah (Genesis 6:8, 13-14), Abram/Abraham (Genesis 12:1), Moses (Exodus 3:1-10), Gideon (Judges 6:14), Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-10), Isaiah (Isaiah 6:2-10), Jeremiah (1:4-10), Jonah (Jonah 1:1-2) and the other prophets (“thus saith the Lord”; “the word of the Lord that came”; etc.) New Testament examples: John the Baptist (John 1:6), Peter and Andrew (Matthew 4:18-20), James and John (Matthew 4:21-22), Matthew (Matthew 9:9), Other disciples (Matthew 10:1-5), Paul (Acts 9:4-16), Barnabus (Acts 13:1-4), Timothy (Acts 16:1-5). Ephesians 4:11-12 tells that the men God calls to preach are called to different offices”

- Some apostles (a *delegate*; specifically an *ambassador* of the Gospel; officially a *commissioner* of Christ (“apostle”), (with miraculous powers):—apostle, messenger, he that is sent – special office now ceased)
- Some prophets (a *foreteller* (“prophet”); by analogy an *inspired speaker*; by extension a *poet*)
- Some evangelists (a *preacher* of the gospel)
- Some pastors and teachers (Of uncertain affinity; a *shepherd* (literally or figuratively):—shepherd, pastor. – an *instructor* (generally or specifically):—doctor, master, teacher

God’s call to service is not just men to be preachers. Various scriptures teach that God summons, invites, designates, and appoints (often through His church) others to positions in support of His cause. Examples: priests & Levites (Old Testament), deacons, singers & other musical talent, teachers, support and assistance givers, prayers, testimonies, faithful attendance, etc. I believe God calls on all His redeemed to have a place in His service. Paul writing to the Ephesian church said in Ephesians 4:1-8, “*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*²*With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*³*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*⁴*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*⁵*One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*⁶*One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*⁷*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*⁸*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”* Look also at 2 Peter 1:1-10.

To convoke which means to call together:

The pattern of worship through much of scripture involved regular and special assembly for worship. Numerous Old Testament scriptures speak of the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. Jesus established His church while He walked here on earth. He built it and continues to add to it with redeemed, baptized believers. Church membership through scriptural baptism is commanded. The Lord

calls upon His church to assemble for collective worship. Look at Hebrews 10:19-25 noticing in particular verses 24 & 25, “²⁴And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

A short visit, to give one a call, a short conversation:

God wants fellowship with His redeemed. He calls on us from time to time just to share some of our time. How many times had God come walking in the cool of the day to have fellowship with Adam and Eve? Consider the words of Jesus in **Matthew 11:28-30**, “²⁸Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” and **Revelation 3:20**, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

The Purpose of the Calling of God

All the aspects of the calling of God are directed at mankind – His special creation. Consider this question, why does God call in the various ways He does?

To help in answering this question consider why we call, call out, make a call, etc. Some reasons: attention, commands or instructions, information, reaction or answers, obedience, etc.

Here I want to note some of the ways God calls and speaks to us. Just as we can issue a call in different manners, God can do likewise. No doubt many scriptures state or indicate God speaking in an audible voice to an individual or group. Examples: The Ten Commandments given to the children of Israel (Exodus 20); His conversation with Adam, Eve, and Satan in Genesis 3; perhaps in His calls to Noah, Abraham, Jacob and other Old Testament figures; Saul (Paul) in Acts 9, and of course Jesus (God in the flesh) when He walked here on earth. He speaks to the inner man in that “*still small voice*” spoken of in 1 Kings 19:12. He speaks and calls through His word, both the living Word and His written word. He speaks through other means such as nature (Psalm 8:3-4, Psalm 19:1, Psalm 97:6, Romans 1:20), angels (Abraham, Jacob, Zacharias, Mary, Joseph), people (prophets, apostles, preachers, teachers, parents, His saints).

God wants (and deserves) our **attention!**

God wants us to hear and heed what He says.

God wants to reveal Himself (His names, His personality, His hand, His mind, His light, His city) to us.

God wants us to learn of Him and about Him to partake of His grace, to avoid His wrath, to labor in His cause, to walk in and reflect His light, to look for and forward to His Holy City.

God wants our obedience to His commandments, His word and His will.

Reactions to and ways of answering the calling of God – Possible results

Before I speak of the ways of answering the calling of God, I feel it necessary to emphasize the magnitude of the calling of God. It is a most high calling actually the **MOST HIGH CALLING** ever experienced by mankind because it comes from the highest power in the universe. At some point it is extended in one or more of the aspects described on an individual, personal basis. This knowledge should cause us to give serious and prayerful consideration to how we react and answer the calling of God.

Scripture References:

Philippians 3:14 ¹⁴*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Hebrews 3:1 ¹*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

John 15:16 ¹⁶*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

1 Corinthians 1:26 ²⁶*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not*

many mighty, not many noble, are called:

1 Corinthians 7:20 ²⁰*Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*

Some possible reactions to the calling of God

- Misunderstood
- Denial
- Resistance even rebellion
- Indifference or delay
- Question of ability (and/or worthiness)
- Surrender (acceptance)
- Tried spiritually
 - Be sure it is God calling

1 John 4:1 ¹*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*
 - Be sure of what the calling is to do

Philippians 2:12-13 ¹²*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*
¹³*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

2 Peter 1:10 ¹⁰*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:*
- Obedience
- Answered
- Embraced

Possible ways of answering the calling of God

- Refusal
- Reluctance
- Resistive
- Dread
- Indifference
- Giving up of self
- Embraced and Followed with zeal and energy

God listens for a call from us

Not only does a calling go out from this all powerful, all knowing, ever present, righteous God to mankind, He gives mankind, each of us individually and groups of us collectively, to call on, call out to, call upon Him. What a blessing!

Just a few examples: the children of Israel in Egyptian bondage (Exodus 3:9-10), Hannah in 1 Samuel 1, David in Psalm 40:1-3, the thief on the cross (Luke 23:42-43), Saul (Paul) (Acts 9:6).

Some scriptures to encourage us:

Isaiah 55:6 ⁶*Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:*

Acts 17:27 ²⁷*That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:*

Hebrews 4:14-16 ¹⁴*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.* ¹⁵*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* ¹⁶*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

A final thought on this attribute which hopefully will lead into the next lesson on “The Light of God”:

1 Peter 2:9 ⁹*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*