

## Doctrine of the Call

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1. The verb, *kaleo* is used some 147 times in the New Testament. It has a variety of meanings.
2. It is used seventy-two times with the meaning "*to name, to designate as, to appoint to be.*" For example, in Matthew 1:21 we read: "*And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.*"

See also Matthew 1:23, 25; 2:23; 5:9, 19 [twice]; 21:13; 22:43, 45; 23:7, 8, 9, 10; 27:8; Mark 11:17; Luke 1:13, 31, 32, 35, 36, 59, 60, 61, 62, 76; 2:4, 21,23; 6:15, 46; 7:11; 8:2; 9:10; 10:39; 15:19, 21; 19:2, 29; 20:44; 21:37; 22:3, 25; 23:33; John 1:42; Acts 1:12, 19,23; 3:11; 7:58; 8:10; 9:11; 10:1; 13:1; 14:12; 15:22, 37; 27:8, 14; 27:16; 28:1; Romans 9:7; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Hebrews 3:13; 11:18; 1 Peter 3:6; Revelation 1:9; 11:8; 12:9; 16:16; 19:11,13.

3. This word is also used twenty-five times in a way that does not pertain to salvation. It means, "*to summon, invite, appeal.*" For example, "*Then Herod secretly called the magi, and ascertained from them the time the star appeared*" (Matt. 2:7). In this passage, as in a few others (e.g., 1 Cor. 7:15), the act of inviting or summoning can be more forceful and thus approach the notion of "*to command.*"

See also Matthew 2:15; 4:21; 20:8; 25:14; Mark 1:20; 3:31; Luke 7:39; 14:7,8 [twice], 9, 10 [twice], 12, 13, 16, 17, 24; 19:13; John 2:2; Acts 4:18; 1 Corinthians 10:27.

4. It is used seven times in the Gospels in a context dealing with salvation. In each case it means, "*to summon, to invite.*" Of these seven, in four cases the summons or call is clearly resistible or effective (Matt. 22:3,4,8,9) and in three it is ambiguous (Matt. 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32).

- *Matthew 22:3-4 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.*
- *Matthew 22:8-9 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.*

5. In two other texts (Heb. 11:8; Rev. 19:9) the word again means, "*to invite, to summon,*" with salvific import.

- *Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

- *Revelation 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*
6. In three texts the word is used with the sense "to appoint" or "to call to some task or vocation".
- *1 Corinthians 7:17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.*
  - *1 Corinthians 7:20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*
  - *Hebrews 5:4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*
7. In several passages the word means "to name, to designate, to appoint," not simply as an address or verbal utterance, but in the sense "to cause to become" that which one is called.
8. The action of calling is causative, itself bringing to realization the state of affairs or status in view.
- *Romans 4:17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*
  - *Romans 9:25-26 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. 26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.*
  - *Hebrews 2:11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,*
  - *James 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*
  - *1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*
9. The usage with which we are primarily concerned is that in which the verb to call is employed as a metaphor for God's sovereign and effective action of bringing an individual to saving faith in Jesus Christ and all its attendant blessings. Of these thirty-one occurrences, twenty-four are in the letters of Paul:

- *Romans 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*
- *Romans 9:11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)*
- *Romans 9:24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*
- *1 Corinthians 1:9 (called into fellowship with Christ)*
- *1 Corinthians 7:18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.*
- *1 Corinthians 7:21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*
- *1 Corinthians 7:22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.*
- *1 Corinthians 7:24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.*
- *Galatians 1:6 (called in or for sanctification) I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:*
- *Galatians 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,*
- *Galatians 5:8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.*
- *Galatians 5:13 (called to freedom) For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*
- *Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*
- *Ephesians 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*
- *Colossians 3:15 (called to the peace of Christ with other Christians) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

- *1 Thessalonians 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.*
- *1 Thessalonians 4:7 (called in or for sanctification) 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*
- *1 Thessalonians 5:24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*
- *2 Thessalonians 2:14 (called through the gospel) Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- *1 Timothy 6:12 (called to eternal life) Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*
- *2 Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*
- *Hebrews 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*
- *1 Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;*
- *1 Peter 2:9 (called out of darkness into light), 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:*
- *1 Peter 2:21 (called to suffer as Christ did) For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:*
- *1 Peter 3:9 (called to inherit a blessing) Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*
- *1 Peter 5:10 (called to eternal glory in Christ) But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*
- *2 Peter 1:13 (called by God's glory and excellence) 13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; The related noun calling klesis is used eleven times, nine of which are in Paul's letters.*

10. In one passage it refers to a vocation, a task or life's work, or possibly a status or condition in society.

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

11. In the other ten cases it refers to the salvific calling of the elect.

- We are to walk worthy of our calling.

*Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

*Ephesians 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

*2 Thessalonians 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:*

- Our calling is high (or upward, Phil. 3:14), holy (2 Tim. 1:9), and heavenly (Heb. 3:1).

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

*2 Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

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

See also Romans 11:29; 1 Corinthians 1:26; 2 Peter 1:10 (in which calling is almost synonymous with election).

12. There is another noun (kletos) often translated "the called," that is used ten times, again largely by Paul.

- In Matthew 22:14 it is used of a resistible, ineffective summons to salvation.

*Matthew 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.*

- Twice Paul refers to himself as one "*called*" to be an apostle.

*Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,*

*1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,*

- Believers are "the called of Jesus Christ" (Rom 1:6), "called to be saints" (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2), and "the called according to God's purpose" (Rom. 8:28). See also 1 Cor. 1:24; Jude 1; Rev. 17:14.

13. The verb for "call" has many shades of meaning.

- It can mean to label something or someone.

*Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

*Genesis 1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.*

*Genesis 3:20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.*

*Genesis 4:25 And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.*

- It can mean to summon or beckon (Esther 5:10) such as a divine summons to salvation (Rom. 8:28).

*Esther 5:10 Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.*

*Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

- It can mean to say something good about God.

*Luke 20:37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*

- The expression is used for the act of praying.

*Genesis 4:26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.*

*Psalms 105:1 O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.*

*Isaiah 64:7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.*

*Jeremiah 10:25 Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate.*

*Zephaniah 3:9 For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.*

14. Who are the called of Jesus Christ? Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
15. The purpose for which Paul received the position of being an apostle was so that He might be obedient to the faith among all nations. In particular, Paul was commissioned to go forth and preach the gospel among the nations of the world. And Paul was obedient to the faith.
16. In the name of Jesus and for the name of Christ, Paul journeyed from city to city with the good news of redeeming grace. As Paul went, he called men to repentance and belief of the gospel.
17. Among those called upon to believe in Christ were the citizens of Rome. Many individuals who came into contact with the gospel responded in a positive way and were converted. They heard not only the external call of the gospel in the mouth of the minister but the internal call of the Holy Spirit. Being objects of distinguishing grace, beloved of God, the souls in Rome were now called saints.
18. It is important to realize that there is an external call of the gospel but an internal call as well. The Scriptural evidence is compelling.
  - In the external call, the gospel is preached to all people indiscriminately. Anyone can hear it but not all will respond to the spiritual truths communicated (Matt. 22:3-9).
  - In the external call of the gospel, the good news is sown. Gospel truth falls upon rocky soil and good soil alike.
  - In the external call, the gospel is easily dismissed.
19. The internal call of the gospel is different than the external call.

- The internal call of the gospel is the voice of the Holy Spirit effectively applying the gospel message to the hearts of individuals with sovereign power to repentance, faith, salvation, and service.

*Mark 2:17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

*Luke 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

*Mark 1:20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.*

*Acts 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

- The external call gives spiritual power for the dead soul to live in order to believe the gospel.
- The internal call cannot be denied nor does the renewed heart want to reject the gospel. There is the effective evocation of faith by the Holy Spirit

*Romans 8:30 Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

*1 Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Gal. 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,*

*2 Thes. 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*

*2 Tim. 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

*Heb. 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*

*1 Pet. 2:9 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:*

*2 Pet. 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: The reason why so many can turn away from the Lord and reject Christianity is because they have yet to hear the internal call of the gospel.*

- Once the internal call is heard, there are ethical implications. A worthy walk is demanded (Eph. 4:1) to be characterized by holiness, patience, and peace.

*1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

*1 Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;*

*1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:*

*1 Corinthians 7:15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.*

*Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

20. It would not be wrong to talk honestly to people and ask them if they have heard the internal call of Christ, which converts the soul and causes the heart to love Jesus.
21. The curse of the modern Church is that people sit in pews, accepting the outward signs of salvation while secretly being unsure whether or not Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world who was crucified, buried, and rose again the third day.
22. Have you ever asked the Lord to grant you that gospel grace of being able to hear the internal call to salvation.