



God calls Isaiah.

Isaiah 6:8

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Seeing the Lord and listening to the praise of the angels, Isaiah realized that he was sinful before God, with no hope of measuring up to God's standard of holiness.

When Isaiah's lips were touched with a live burning coal, however, he was told that his sins were forgiven.

It wasn't the coal that cleansed him, but God. In response, Isaiah submitted himself entirely to God's service. No matter how difficult his task would be, he said, "Here I am. Send me." The painful cleansing process was necessary before Isaiah could fulfill the task to which God was calling him.

Before we accept God's call to speak for him to those around us, we must be cleansed as Isaiah was, confessing our sins and submitting to God's control. Letting God purify us may be painful, but we must be purified so that we can truly represent God, who is pure and holy.

God calls Barnabas and Saul

Acts 13:2

While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

This was the beginning of Saul's (Paul, see 13:9) first missionary journey. The church was involved in sending Paul and Barnabas, but it was God's plan.

Why did Paul and Barnabas go where they did?

- (1) The Holy Spirit led them.
- (2) They followed the communication routes of the Roman Empire, making travel easier.

(3) They visited key population and cultural centers to reach as many people as possible.

(4) They went to cities with synagogues, speaking first to the Jews in hopes that they would see Jesus as the Messiah and help spread the Good News to everyone.

God calls Jeremiah

Jeremiah 1:4

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying.

God knew you, as he knew Jeremiah, long before you were born or even conceived. He thought about you and planned for you. When you feel discouraged or inadequate, remember that God has always thought of you as valuable and that he has a purpose in mind for you.

Jeremiah was "appointed" by God as his "prophet to the nations."

God has a purpose for each Christian, but some people are appointed by God for specific kinds of work.

Samson (Judges 13:3-5),

David (1 Samuel 16:12, 13),

John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-17), and

Paul (Galatians 1:15, 16) were also called to do particular jobs for God.

Whatever work you do should be done for the glory of God (Philippians 1:11). If God gives you a specific task, accept it cheerfully and do it with diligence.

If God has not given you a specific call or assignment, then *seek* to fulfill the mission common to all believers—to love, obey, and serve God—until his guidance becomes clearer.

God Calls Jonah.

Jonah 1:2

"Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before me."

Jonah is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25. He prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II, the king of Israel from 793 to 753 B.C. He may have been a member of the company of prophets mentioned in connection with Elisha's ministry (2 Kings 2:3).

God told Jonah to preach to Nineveh, the most important city in Assyria, the rising world power of Jonah's day. Within 50 years, Nineveh would become the capital of the vast Assyrian Empire. Jonah doesn't say much about Nineveh's wickedness, but the prophet Nahum gives us more insight.

Nahum says that Nineveh was guilty of

- (1) Evil plots against God (Nahum 1:9);
- (2) Exploitation of the helpless (Nahum 2:12);
- (3) Cruelty in war (Nahum 2:12, 13);
- (4) Idolatry, prostitution, and witchcraft (Nahum 3:4). God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, about 500 miles northeast of Israel, to warn of judgment and to declare that the people could receive mercy and forgiveness if they repented.

God calls Saul.

Acts 16:10

When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

The use of the pronoun we indicates that Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke and of this book, joined Paul, Silas, and Timothy on their journey. He was an eyewitness to most of the remaining incidents recorded in this book.

God's calls Moses

Exodus 28:1

"Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me--Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

God was teaching his people how to worship him. To do so, he needed ministers to oversee the operations of the Tabernacle and to help the people maintain their relationship with God. These men were called priests and Levites, and they could only be members of the tribe of Levi.

Chapters 28 and 29 give some details about priests. Not only was a priest from the tribe of Levi, but he also was a descendant of Aaron, Israel's first high priest. Priests had more responsibilities than Levites.

As high priest, Aaron was in charge of all the priests and Levites. The priests performed the daily sacrifices, maintained the Tabernacle, and counseled the people on how to follow God.

They were the people's representatives before God and thus were required to live worthy of their office. Jesus is now our High Priest (Hebrews 8). Daily sacrifices are no longer required because he sacrificed himself on the cross for our sins.

Today ministers no longer sacrifice animals. Instead, ministers lead us in prayer and teach us about both the benefits and the commandments that characterize our new life as Christians.

God calls Bezalel

Exodus 31:2

"See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.

God regards all the skills of his people, not merely those with theological or ministerial abilities. Our tendency is to regard only those who are up front and in leadership roles.

God gave Bezalel and Oholiab Spirit-filled abilities in artistic craftsmanship. Take notice of all the abilities God gives his people. Don't diminish your skills if they are not like Moses' and Aaron's.

The three-fold calling of God.

Revelation 22:17

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come" And let the one who hears say, "Come" And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Both the Holy Spirit and the bride, the church, extend the invitation to all the world to come to Jesus and experience the joys of salvation in Christ.

God's calls Elisha

1 Kings 19:19

So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him.

The cloak was the most important article of clothing a person could own. It was used as protection against the weather, as bedding, as a place to sit, and as luggage. It could be given as a pledge for a debt or torn into pieces to show grief. Elijah put his cloak on Elisha's shoulders to show that he would become Elijah's successor. Later, when the transfer of authority was complete, Elijah left his cloak for Elisha (2 Kings 2:11-14).

God called Abram

Genesis 12:1

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you;

When God called him, Abram moved out in faith from Ur to Haran and finally to Canaan. God then established a covenant with Abram, telling him that he would found a great nation. Not only would this nation be blessed, God said, but the other nations of the earth would be blessed through Abram's descendants.

Israel, the nation that would come from Abram, was to follow God and influence those with whom it came in contact. Through Abram's family tree, Jesus Christ was born to save humanity. Through Christ, people can have a personal relationship with God and be blessed beyond measure.

God's call is an invitation to all.

Matthew 22:4

"Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast."'

In this culture, two invitations were expected when banquets were given.

The first asked the guests to attend; the second announced that all was ready.

In this story the king invited his guests three times, and each time they rejected his invitation.

God wants us to join him at his banquet, which will last for eternity. That's why he sends us invitations again and again. Have you accepted his invitation?

God calls for all to come for a satisfying portion.

Isaiah 55:1

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Food costs money, lasts only a short time, and meets only physical needs. But God offers us free nourishment that feeds our soul.

How do we get it? We are to come (55:1),

Listen (55:2), seek, and call on God (55:6).

God's salvation is freely offered, but to nourish our souls we must eagerly receive it. We will starve spiritually without this food as surely as we will starve physically without our daily bread.

God called for Noah to come into a place of safety.

Genesis 7:1

Then the LORD said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before me in this time.

Pairs of every animal joined Noah in the boat; seven pairs were taken of those animals used for sacrifice. Scholars have estimated that almost 45,000 animals could have fit into the boat.

Many have wondered how this animal kingdom roundup happened. Did Noah and his sons spend years collecting all the animals?

In reality the creation, along with Noah, was doing just as God had commanded. There seemed to be no problem gathering the animals—God took care of the details of that job while Noah was doing his part by building the boat.

Often we do just the opposite of Noah. We worry about details over which we have no control, while neglecting specific areas (such as attitudes, relationships, responsibilities) that *are* under our control. Like Noah, concentrate on what God has given you to do, and leave the rest to God.

God's Calls you to come for a personal cleansing.

Isaiah 1:18

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, and they will be like wool.

Crimson was the color of a deep-red permanent dye, and its deep stain was virtually impossible to remove from clothing.

The bloodstained hands of the murderers are probably in view here (see 1:15, 21). The stain of sin seems equally permanent, but God can remove sin's stain from our life as he promised to do for the Israelites.

We don't have to go through life permanently soiled. God's Word assures us that if we are willing and obedient, Christ will forgive and remove our most indelible stains (Psalm 51:1-7). Will you ask him to make you clean?

God's call to Paul to the Gentiles

Acts 26:16

'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;

Paul took every opportunity to remind his audience that the Gentiles had an equal share in God's inheritance. This inheritance is the promise and blessing of the covenant that God had made with Abraham (see Ephesians 2:19; 1 Peter 1:3, 4). Paul's mission was to preach the Good News to the Gentiles.

God calls for all to come to the gospel feast.

Luke 14:17

And at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.'

In this chapter we read Jesus' words against seeking status and in favor of hard work and even suffering. Let us not lose sight of the end result of all our humility and self-sacrifice—a joyous banquet with our Lord! God never asks us to suffer for the sake of suffering.

He never asks us to give up something good unless he plans to replace it with something even better. Jesus is not calling us to join him in a labor camp but in a feast—the wedding feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9), when God and his beloved church will be joined forever.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 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.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print