
1. Introduction

Many people say they are apostles or prophets because God has called them to this ministry. However, being called does not mean God has chosen us for these ministries. We know by the fruitfulness of our ministry whether He chooses us. It takes time to mature both the gift and the character needed to be effective. Furthermore, we need the wisdom to move effectively in the church.

2. Calling versus Chosen

This scripture shows that God makes a difference between called and chosen.

MATTHEW 22:14
"FOR MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN."

Called to the Family of God

This passage of scripture concerns the marriage feast at the end of the age.

Those who God refuses are those who try to enter through the law.
Those who do enter are those who believe in Jesus Christ.

The character of Christ is our wedding garment.

GALATIANS 3:26
FOR YOU ARE ALL SONS OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.
FOR AS MANY OF YOU AS WERE BAPTISED INTO CHRIST HAVE PUT ON CHRIST.

We put on Christ when our old ways are nailed to the cross.

EPHESIANS 4:23-24
AND BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND,
AND THAT YOU PUT ON THE NEW MAN, WHICH WAS CREATED ACCORDING TO
GOD, IN TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS.

3. Called to be in Service of the King

REVELATION 17:14
THESE WILL MAKE WAR WITH THE LAMB, AND THE LAMB WILL OVERCOME THEM,
FOR HE IS LORD OF LORDS AND KING OF KINGS; THOSE WITH HIM ARE CALLED,
CHOSEN, AND FAITHFUL."

4. Called to be a Disciple

We are called to be a disciple.

MATTHEW 4:21-22

GOING ON FROM THERE, HE SAW TWO OTHER BROTHERS, JAMES, THE SON OF ZEBEDEE, AND JOHN, HIS BROTHER, IN THE BOAT WITH ZEBEDEE, THEIR FATHER, MENDING THEIR NETS. HE CALLED THEM, AND IMMEDIATELY, THEY LEFT THE BOAT AND THEIR FATHER AND FOLLOWED HIM.

5. Called to Disciple Others

A. We are called to disciple others.

LUKE 9:1

THEN, HE CALLED HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES AND GAVE THEM POWER AND AUTHORITY OVER ALL DEMONS AND TO CURE DISEASES.

The disciple's calling to become Apostles happened after returning from their commission.

LUKE 9:10

AND THE APOSTLES, WHEN THEY HAD RETURNED,

But just because they were called does not mean they moved into the ministry gift of apostles immediately.

This teaches us that fruitfulness is essential in transitioning from a call to being chosen. One of the pieces of evidence of being an apostle is miraculous powers.

6. Chosen to Leadership

ACTS 6:5

AND THE SAYING PLEASED THE WHOLE MULTITUDE. AND THEY CHOSE STEPHEN, A MAN FULL OF FAITH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND PHILIP, PROCHORUS, NICANOR, TIMON, PARMENAS, AND NICOLAS, A PROSELYTE FROM ANTIOCH,

A. Depth of Character to Lead takes Time.

God may call us to leadership; this is not an automatic confirmation that He has chosen us.

1 TIMOTHY 5:22

DO NOT LAY HANDS ON ANYONE HASTILY, NOR SHARE IN OTHER PEOPLE'S SINS; KEEP YOURSELF PURE.

B. Appointment of Elders

Paul appointed elders approximately two years after he planted the churches. So, we must also be careful when rushing to put people into leadership.

ACTS 14:23

SO WHEN THEY HAD APPOINTED ELDERS IN EVERY CHURCH AND PRAYED WITH FASTING, THEY COMMENDED THEM TO THE LORD IN WHOM THEY HAD BELIEVED.

7. Called to the Ministry Gifts

A. God called Paul to be an apostle at his conversion.

ACTS 22:21

THEN HE SAID TO ME, 'DEPART, FOR I WILL SEND YOU FAR FROM HERE TO THE GENTILES.'"

ROMANS 1:1

PAUL, A BONDSERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST, WAS CALLED TO BE AN APOSTLE, SEPARATED TO THE GOSPEL OF GOD.

Paul recognises that he had the calling of apostleship in his life. However, he does not state that God has chosen him yet.

Here is his long road from called to chosen:

B. Paul's Road From Called to Chosen

Let's look at the New Testament example of Paul, from when he was called to an apostle to when he was chosen. His journey starts with His conversion in 33CE, three and a half years after Jesus' death and resurrection.

C. Paul's Conversion

33 CE: Paul (called Saul) is born again on his way to persecute the churches in Damascus:

ACTS 9:4-5

**THEN HE FELL TO THE GROUND AND HEARD A VOICE SAYING, "SAUL, SAUL, WHY ARE YOU PERSECUTING ME?"
AND HE SAID, "WHO ARE YOU, LORD?"
THEN THE LORD SAID, "I AM JESUS, WHOM YOU ARE PERSECUTING.**

D. Call to Apostleship

33 CE: Paul travels to Damascus and receives his call to be an apostle.

ACTS 9:15

BUT THE LORD TOLD HIM, "GO, FOR HE IS A CHOSEN VESSEL OF MINE TO BEAR MY NAME BEFORE GENTILES, KINGS, AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

E. Wilderness

34 CE: Paul's Sojourn in Arabia.

GALATIANS 1:17

NOR DID I GO UP TO JERUSALEM TO THOSE WHO WERE APOSTLES BEFORE ME, BUT I WENT TO ARABIA AND RETURNED TO DAMASCUS.

F. Return to Civilisation

36 CE: Returns to Damascus, where he stays for many days,

ACTS 9:23-25

NOW, AFTER MANY DAYS HAD PASSED, THE JEWS PLOTTED TO KILL HIM. BUT THEIR PLOT BECAME KNOWN TO SAUL. AND THEY WATCHED THE GATES DAY AND NIGHT TO KILL HIM. THEN, THE DISCIPLES TOOK HIM BY NIGHT AND LET HIM DOWN THROUGH THE WALL IN A LARGE BASKET.

However, he has to leave because of the persecution. We know this happened before 39 CE when King Aretus IV died.

2 CORINTHIANS 11:32-33

IN DAMASCUS, THE GOVERNOR, UNDER ARETAS, THE KING, WAS GUARDING THE CITY OF THE DAMASCENES WITH A GARRISON. HE DESIRED TO ARREST ME, BUT I WAS LET DOWN IN A BASKET THROUGH A WINDOW IN THE WALL AND ESCAPED FROM HIS HANDS.

G. Revelation Shared

36 CE: Paul then goes to Jerusalem for a fortnight.

GALATIANS 1:18

THEN, AFTER THREE YEARS, I WENT TO JERUSALEM TO SEE PETER AND REMAINED WITH HIM FOR FIFTEEN DAYS.

ACTS 9:28-29

SO HE WAS WITH THEM AT JERUSALEM, COMING IN AND GOING OUT. AND HE SPOKE BOLDLY IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS AND DISPUTED AGAINST THE HELLENISTS, BUT THEY ATTEMPTED TO KILL HIM.

H. Into the Wilderness Again

In God's view, Paul is still not ready for the ministry of the prophet or apostle. Therefore, in 37 CE, God sent him to be a tentmaker in Tarsus for approximately 7-8 years.

ACTS 9:30

WHEN THE BRETHREN FOUND OUT, THEY BROUGHT HIM TO CAESAREA AND SENT HIM TO TARSUS.

Some people think Paul was preaching to Syria and Cilicia during this time. Although he may have done so as part of his second wilderness experience, there is no evidence until Acts 16, around 49 CE.

I. Ministry of Teaching

It is at approximately 43CE that Barnabas seeks out Paul in Tarsus.

ACTS 11:25

THEN BARNABAS DEPARTED FOR TARSUS TO SEEK SAUL.

They return to Antioch, where Paul spent a year as a teacher.

ACTS 11:26

WHEN HE HAD FOUND HIM, HE BROUGHT HIM TO ANTIOCH. SO, FOR A WHOLE YEAR, THEY ASSEMBLED WITH THE CHURCH AND TAUGHT A GREAT MANY PEOPLE.

J. Paul's Mercy Ministry

In 44 CE, Agabus prophesied the famine that extended from Jerusalem to Judea and extended to Greece and Italy.

ACTS 11:28

THEN, ONE OF THEM, NAMED AGABUS, STOOD UP AND WAS SHOWN BY THE SPIRIT THAT THERE WOULD BE A GREAT FAMINE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, WHICH ALSO HAPPENED IN THE DAYS OF CLAUDIUS CAESAR.

It was so severe that the church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas with funds to help the church in Jerusalem.

ACTS 11:29-30

THEN, THE DISCIPLES, EACH ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITY, DETERMINED TO SEND RELIEF TO THE BRETHREN DWELLING IN JUDEA. THEY ALSO DID THIS AND SENT IT TO THE ELDERS AT BARNABAS AND SAUL'S HANDS.

Acts 12 refers to the death of Herod Agrippa, which occurred in 44 CE.

K. Ministry of the Prophet

The first time Paul (still called Saul) is referred to as a prophet is in 47 CE:

ACTS 13:1

NOW IN THE CHURCH THAT WAS AT ANTIOCH, THERE WERE CERTAIN PROPHETS AND TEACHERS: BARNABAS, SIMEON, WHO WAS CALLED NIGER, LUCIUS OF

**CYRENE, MANAEN, WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP WITH HEROD THE TETRARCH,
AND SAUL.**

8. Chosen to the Ministry Gifts

Paul became an apostle between 13 and 17 years later:

**ACTS 13:2
AS THEY MINISTERED TO THE LORD AND FASTED, THE HOLY SPIRIT SAID, "NOW
SEPARATE TO ME BARNABAS AND SAUL FOR THE WORK TO WHICH I HAVE
CALLED THEM."**

Therefore, it took 14 - 15 years (from 33 CE to 47 CE) from when Paul was called to when he was chosen and sent.

9. Jesus- 30 years from Calling to Choosing

A. Jesus' Call

Jesus' call was at His dedication.

**LUKE 2:28-29
HE TOOK HIM UP IN HIS ARMS AND BLESSED GOD AND SAID:
"LORD, NOW YOU ARE LETTING YOUR SERVANT DEPART IN PEACE,
ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD..."**

B. Jesus' Preparation

**HEBREWS 5:8-9
THOUGH HE WAS A SON, HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE BY THE THINGS HE SUFFERED.
AND HAVING BEEN PERFECTED, HE BECAME THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL
SALVATION TO ALL WHO OBEY HIM.**

C. Jesus' Choosing

**MATTHEW 3:17
AND SUDDENLY A VOICE CAME FROM HEAVEN, SAYING, "THIS IS MY BELOVED
SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASSED.**

10. King David - Calling and Choosing

A. Calling at between 13 and 17 years.

1 SAMUEL 16:13

THEN SAMUEL TOOK THE HORN OF OIL AND ANOINTED HIM AMID HIS BROTHERS, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD CAME UPON DAVID FROM THAT DAY FORWARD. SO SAMUEL AROSE AND WENT TO RAMAH.

B. David Received Partial kingship when he was thirty years old.

2 SAMUEL 2:4

THEN THE MEN OF JUDAH CAME, AND THERE THEY ANOINTED DAVID KING OVER THE HOUSE OF JUDAH. AND THEY TOLD DAVID, SAYING, "THE MEN OF JABESH GILEAD WERE THE ONES WHO BURIED SAUL."

C. He had full kingship when he was 37 years old.

2 SAMUEL 5:3

THEREFORE, ALL THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL CAME TO THE KING AT HEBRON, AND KING DAVID MADE A COVENANT WITH THEM THERE BEFORE THE LORD. AND THEY ANOINTED DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL.

11. Apostle Peter - Called and Chosen within three and a half years.

JOHN 21:15

SO WHEN THEY HAD EATEN BREAKFAST, JESUS SAID TO SIMON PETER, "SIMON, SON OF JONAH, DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THESE?"

HE SAID TO HIM, "YES, LORD; YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU."

HE SAID TO HIM, "FEED MY LAMBS."

ACTS 2:14

BUT PETER, STANDING UP WITH THE ELEVEN, RAISED HIS VOICE AND SAID TO THEM, "MEN OF JUDEA AND ALL WHO DWELL IN JERUSALEM, LET THIS BE KNOWN TO YOU, AND HEED MY WORDS."

12. Summary

1. The moment our Heavenly Father calls us into the family of God, and we accept, the process of choosing becomes complete. The calling and choosing happen instantaneously.
2. God may call us to the ministry, but that does not mean God has chosen us immediately.