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The Voices of God's Call--  
Especially Dreams, Visions, and Angelic Messages

Presented By  
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A Thesis submitted to the Department of Theology of  
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## Thesis Statement

The purpose of this paper is to examine the voices through which God calls, such as the different voices God uses, the call of God upon selected Biblical figures, the call upon the spiritual leaders from the Pre-Reformation, the Reformation, and the Post-Reformation, and the call of God upon persons in modern times, in order to speculate what voices God may use to call persons in the future.

## Statement of the Problem

The scope of this study is to examine the different voices through which God calls persons into the ministry in order to discover if God may use another means besides the means or voices of the past to call persons in the future.

## Introduction

The road was wet, very wet, as I drove along Highway 20. This stretch of highway is called, "the road to Decatur," by the local people because it leads to Decatur, Alabama. As I drove towards the Muscle Shoals area, away from Decatur, I was happy to discover that I had missed the brunt of a storm which had passed by to my left. I could tell by the heavy thunder and the flashing lightning that it had been a strong storm. There were sticks and small limbs scattered throughout the roadside as I continued my journey toward my parents' home.

As I drove, the car began to fish-tail because it was hydroplaning, which made me begin praying to God to get my car on the right track. As I prayed, I suddenly realized that what I had been doing in the past few days was sinning, and I began to ask God to forgive me for my sins. I prayed that God would get my sinful life back on the right track. Immediately as I prayed this prayer, I began to feel differently, and suddenly it lightened. As the flash illumined the sky, I noticed that the trees that had been along the side of the road the night before had been pushed down. As I looked closer, another flash occurred, and I saw three large crosses standing on a small knoll where the trees had been the night before. It lightened again, and I asked God what the three crosses meant. As I looked back to the road, a fourth cross appeared ahead of my car and moved rapidly toward

my car. I began asking God over and over again what the crosses meant. The fourth cross passed by my car, and I watched it as it passed by without hitting me. As I looked back to the road again, a light flashed in front of me. This light was much brighter than the lightning had been and seemed to be clear, but very, very bright. I began to tingle as I prayed to God to help me. As I was praying, I felt as if I had left my car and was moving upward very quickly. I looked up and saw a figure standing above me with its arms outstretched. I could not see a face because of the bright light, but I noticed to the left side of the figure was another figure which was standing with its arms at its sides. I prayed to God to tell me what this meant as I closed my eyes. When I opened my eyes, I was back in my car and was still on Highway 20. I began to cry as a small, still voice told me, "Go into the world and teach them that Jesus Christ is Lord." I knew then that God had called me into the ministry.

From that moment onward, I began learning experientially who Jesus Christ really was and is. I had always prayed to God, even as a small child, but as a result of the vision, I realized that Jesus was my personal Lord and Savior. As a result of this new knowledge, my life changed drastically over the next few weeks, and all the sinning I had been doing came to a halt. My friends knew that something had happened in my life that they did not understand, and they left me. My co-workers began to ask what had happened to me-- I had become a new creature in Christ.

I gave up my promising and lucrative career as a manager, and I enrolled in seminary to learn more about Jesus Christ, His Church, the Holy Spirit, and our Father God. My relatives who are not Christians could not believe that I would leave everything behind, including a fiancée. I explained to them that God had called me into the ministry and that the call was something which I could not fight. Some of them scoffed, but I went to seminary anyway.

My relatives who were Christians had no problem with my leaving. They seemed to have a certain "knowing," an understanding, about doing God's work. They knew the passage, Luke 14:26-27, which states, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

I know I have been called to be Christ's disciple, and as a disciple, I have been called to get all the education that is possible so I can go into the world and teach the people all that I have learned and will learn. Part of my call is to prepare myself for a life of teaching others about Christ and what these persons are to do if they want to join the Kingdom of God. It is my responsibility to do what I have been told to do. For that reason, I attended seminary.

I feel my call even though I do not completely know where I

will be going. I may be called to go to South Africa, or Russia, or the former Eastern Block countries, or even downtown Lexington, Kentucky. But, wherever it leads me, I know that I must go as an act of obedience to that call. I pray that God will lead me to the place where I can use the talents He has given me to perform to the best of my ability and to the glory of Him and His Kingdom.

I cannot say that seminary has been a perfect place, or even a place where I would choose to always stay or live for the rest of my life, but I know it has been a place I have been called to attend. Therefore, I have attended it. And, as I leave seminary, I do not know where I am going. But wherever it is, I know that the God who called me to go to seminary will also be with me when I leave.

## Definition of Terms

Angel-- In common language today, the word, "angel," is used in a twofold sense. It means, "a messenger from God," and "a spiritual being," according to the The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.<sup>1</sup> In The New Compact Bible Dictionary, an "angel" is identified as " a supernatural or heavenly being a little higher in dignity than man."<sup>2</sup>

In the Bible, the earlier sections distinguishes between the twofold meaning. These early sections show that while every divine messenger is regarded as a spiritual being, not every spiritual being is a divine messenger. It is only in the later, post-exilic books of the Old Testament and in the New Testament does this distinction break down.

In the Old Testament the usual Hebrew word for "angel" is the word which means "messenger, envoy." In the patriarchal and monarchic narratives the principle functions of these messengers are to convey the mandates of God to men, to announce special events, to protect the faithful, either individually or collec-

1. Buttrick, George A., ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 128.

2. Bryant, T. Alton, ed., The New Compact Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 39.

tively, and execute just punishment on their adversaries, and to serve as instruments of the divine displeasure against sinners and unruly, and opposing persons within Israel itself.<sup>3</sup>

Angels appear to humans in human form as is evidenced in Genesis 18 by the appearance of the "visitors" to Abraham. An angel appeared in the guise of a man standing before Joshua at Jericho with a drawn sword in Joshua 5:13-14. Manoah, the father of Samson, realized that he had been visited by an angel when the angel disappeared in the flame of a sacrifice in Judges 13:20-21.<sup>4</sup>

Angels possess extraordinary "goodliness" or beauty as is stated in I Samuel 29:9, and II Samuel 14:17, and 19:27. Angels also know everything that occurs on the earth as is stated in II Samuel 14:20. Angels also have a human characteristic as in eating. In Psalms 78:24-25, angels are said to eat a special food which is identified as manna. Angels have also been said to commute between heaven and earth by the means of a ladder as is mentioned in Genesis 28:13.<sup>5</sup>

Angels besides messengers were also recognized by the Hebrews as being in a wider class of celestial beings which possess the same essential nature. These angels are mentioned sporadically-----

3. Buttrick, op. cit., 129.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., 129-130.



cally throughout the Old Testament. They are comprehensively called, "the sons of God," in Genesis 6:2 and in Deuteronomy 32:8. They are called, "holy ones," in Deuteronomy 33:2, Job 15:15, Psalms 89:5, and 7, and Zechariah 14:5. They are also called, "holy myriads," in Deuteronomy 33:2, and are called, "sons of the Most High," in Psalms 82:6, and Luke 6:35.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to anthropomorphic angels, the earlier portions of the Old Testament mention certain celestial beings who are described as having wings. These angels are called cherubim and seraphim. The cherubim stand sentinel over the way to the tree of life in Eden in Genesis 3:24, and they also support the throne of God in Isaiah 27:16. In II Samuel 22:11, and Psalms 18-10, Yahweh flies through the air mounted on a cherub. In Ezekiel 1:4-28 and 10:3-22, there is an elaborate description of the cherubim in which they are portrayed as four-winged and four-faced creatures, accompanied by whirling wheels. This description is viewed as being idiosyncratic rather than typical. The only time the seraphim are mentioned is in Isaiah 6:2-6, which describes them as being six-winged, as standing beside the throne of Yahweh in heaven, and as ones who offer praises to Yahweh.<sup>7</sup>

In the New Testament, angels are viewed in much the same way as in the Old Testament. The angel Gabriel announced the birth  
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6. Ibid., 130.

7. Ibid., 131.

of John the Baptist in Luke 1:11-20, and another angel which was unidentified announced the forthcoming birth of Jesus in Luke 2:8-14. Angels also intervene to give ministry to persons in crisis, and they are referred to as "the powers" in Romans 8:38, I Corinthians 15:24, Ephesians 3:10, and I Peter 3:22. Angels surround the throne of God in heaven and chant His praises as is stated in Luke 2:13, and Revelation 4:9. The "elemental spirits of the universe" which are mentioned in Galatians 4:3 and Colossians 2:8, are evidently angelic phenomena, according to the use of the term in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Angels are identified as spirits in Hebrews 1:7, and they also play a major role in the eschatology shown in Book of Revelation. The good angels assist Michael against the forces of the evil angels Belial in the final conflict in Revelation 12:7. Seven angels pour seven bowls of God's wrath on creation in Revelation 16. <sup>8</sup>

Jesus acknowledged angels as His words in Luke 12:8-9 states, "everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God." <sup>9</sup>

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8. Ibid., 134.

9. Ibid.

Church-- The English word for the "church" of today is represented by many diverse terms in the New Testament. In contemporary English usage, "church" as a word dominates the ecclesiological vocabulary. It comes through the German language and the Latin language from the Greek word, *kuriakon*, which means "that which belongs to the Lord." The New Testament word, *ekklesia*, is almost always translated in English by "church," but of the 112 appearances of this word, 90 per cent are found in Paul's letters, the Book of Acts, and Revelation. From the ten other books, Mark, Luke, John, II Timothy, Titus, I-II Peter, I-II John, and Jude, this word is absent. "Ecclesia" was used to describe a particular communal reality, not to describe its qualitative aspects because other terms were used to describe these aspects.<sup>10</sup>

The Church is sometimes identified as a community gathered by God through Christ. The nature of this community is therefore constantly qualified by the One who summons or gathers it. The *ecclesia* or *ecclesiai* of God is referred to in Acts 20:28; I Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; II Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; I Thessalonians 1:4; I Timothy 3:5, 15. The *ecclesia* belongs to God because He has called it into being, He dwells within it, He rules over it, and He realizes His purpose

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10. Buttrick, George A., ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 607.

through it. The entire covenant community is considered a single unity whether or not it is used in the singular or plural because it has been gathered or summoned by the one God.<sup>11</sup>

In Romans 16:16 and in Galatians 1:22, the word, "ecclesia", is qualified by the phrase, "the churches of Christ," or by the double phrase, "the church ... in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," as in I Thessalonians and II Thessalonians 1:1. These phrases assume recognition that God in Christ is the power which has constituted this particular ecclesia. Because the ecclesiai belong to Christ, and to God, they constitute together a world-wide covenant community which is embodied in localized form wherever a congregation exists, as is evidenced by Colossians 4:15-16 and I Thessalonians 1:1.<sup>12</sup>

Ecclesia may be viewed from the standpoint of God's action toward and upon humankind. Ecclesia becomes equivalent to those whom God has called, chosen, gathered, foreknown, justified, glorified, and sanctified. These persons who have been "sanctified in Christ Jesus" are called "saints," and are referred to in I Corinthians 1:2.<sup>13</sup>

Ecclesia may also be viewed from the standpoint of a personal, communal response to God's action through Christ. This

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11. Ibid., 608.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 609.

response is empowered by the Holy Spirit. God calls persons, and in response, they call upon the name of the Lord. Those who call constitute the ecclesia. Christ calls persons to follow Him and to be sent by Him, as in Mark 3:14 and Mark 6:7. Those who respond constitute the ecclesia.<sup>14</sup>

Ecclesia may also be viewed from the standpoint of the basic duties in which this response of faith entails. The church is composed of those persons who through faith have accepted the enlistment as being slaves, stewards, ministers, witnesses, confessors, ambassadors, soldiers, and friends. The Greek term, "diakonia" is descriptive of the ecclesia. All believers are "ipso facto" servants, and the same Spirit energizes all forms of service as is evidenced in I Corinthians 12:5.<sup>15</sup>

The Christian ecclesia is also viewed throughout the New Testament as the people of God which is in many ways as the continuation and consummation of His covenant community. This is why the church understands itself in terms of the living Scriptures, and interprets these Scriptures in the light of its own experience of community in Christ.<sup>16</sup>

The church is considered as the gathering of God's people and is viewed also in terms of those institutions which had been

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14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., 610.

16. Ibid.

central in the life of Israel--the kingdom and the temple. Believers are spoken of as kings and priests in Revelation 1:6 and 5:10. Their society is called a holy nation and a royal priesthood in I Peter 2:9. 17

The church is also understood to be the eschatological gathering of God's people into His household, to become His "house" and His family. The church is to be a brotherhood as is mentioned in I Peter 2:17, and I Peter 5:9, as well as it is to be composed of the sons of God, according to Romans 9:26, II Corinthians 6:16-18, and Hebrews 2:10, who have one Father as Matthew 23:9 states.<sup>18</sup>

The church is also called the "bride of Christ." Jesus is presented as the bridegroom, and His coming is symbolized as a wedding feast according to Matthew 22:10,; 25:1-13, and to Him the bride belongs according to John 3:29. The prayer of the bride is for Jesus to "come", according to Revelation 22:17. 19

The church is also viewed as the ecclesia which is described in the Pauline letters as "one body in Christ" in Romans 12:5, and as the Body of Christ in Ephesians 1:23. The believers are called members and as a member of Christ's body, should regard himself or herself as such. The person is no longer his or her

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17. Ibid., 611.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., 613.

own, but is bound to Christ and the other members. This intimate relationship is a sharing of mutual dependence, a shared suffering, and the power of love which knit together all parts of the body according to Romans 12:5, I Corinthians 12:14-26, II Corinthians 4:7-12, Ephesians 4:16, Philippians 3:10-21, and Colossians 1:24.<sup>20</sup>

The church is also viewed as the beginning of a new creation, which is a new humanity, in which Jesus Christ is the last Adam, whose image all are destined to bear. The persons who belong to Him are being transformed to His image, from one degree of glory to another according to II Corinthians 3:18.<sup>21</sup>

The Church is the body of Christ, and each member of the body has to serve according to his or her calling and ability. "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace," according to I Peter 4:10.<sup>22</sup>

Gifts of the Spirit-- The gifts of the Spirit are known throughout the Scriptures as, "charismata," or gifts of grace. There is an internal connection between the graces and the gifts in the administration of the Spirit. These gifts are the divinely ordained means and powers with which Christ endows his Church in

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20. Ibid., 614-615.

21. Ibid., 615.

22. Ibid., 621.

order to enable it to properly perform its task on earth. Paul summarized the Scriptures concerning spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12:4-11. There are two other scriptures from which Paul refers to the gifts of the Spirit in a more official capacity. One of them is found in Ephesians 4:11, which is concerned with the general order of the ministry, and the second one is found in Romans 12:6-8, which is concerned with the gifts which attach to the ordinary service of the Church.<sup>23</sup>

The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural endowments for service, and they are determined by the character of the ministry to be fulfilled. For the Church to succeed with her spiritual mission, these gifts must function properly, as well as together.<sup>24</sup>

The gifts of the Spirit must be distinguished from natural gifts or endowments even though there is a close relation between them. While the gifts of the Spirit transcend the gifts of nature, they function through them.

Grace purifies the affections, quickens the powers of the mind, and enables the will to energize with new strength, and yet, the gifts of the Spirit transcend even sanctified human powers. It is because of Him who dwells in the hearts of the sanctified that the Church is given its strength. It is the -----

23. Wiley, H. Orton, Christian Theology, vol. 2 (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1964), 317-318.

24. Ibid., 318.



indwelling of the Spirit who divides to every person severally as He will, then He pours His own energy through the organism which He has created.<sup>25</sup>

In the Church, there is a diversity of gifts. Each member does not have all the same gifts as the others. The Spirit takes into account the ability of the sanctified nature, and its capacity to receive and function spiritually, but the energizing power is not the natural spirit alone, it is the power that works in us as Ephesians 1:19 states.<sup>26</sup>

The gifts of the Spirit take their character from the positions which the various individual members contain in the mystical body of Christ. The Apostle Paul compares the Church as a spiritual organism, to the natural human body with its many and varied members. Each part functions for the good of the whole. The Spirit who creates the spiritual body, of necessity creates the members which compose that body, "for the body is not one member, but many," as is stated in I Corinthians 12:14. The gifts of the Spirit are those divine bestowments upon individual members which determine their functions in the body of Christ. Each member needs the others, as is stated in I Corinthians 12:21-25.<sup>27</sup>

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25. Ibid., 319.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., 320-321.

The gifts of the Spirit are exercised in conjunction with, and not apart from, the body of Christ. For this reason, members cannot function or exist without the rest of the body. The true gifts of the Spirit are exercised as functions of the one Body, and under the administration of the one Lord.<sup>28</sup>

The gifts of the Spirit are essential to the spiritual progress of the Church. The spiritual mission of the Church is carried forward by spiritual means. The gifts of the Spirit are always latent in the Church. They did not cease with the death of the Apostles, but are available to the Church in every age.<sup>29</sup>

Nine gifts of the Spirit are mentioned in I Corinthians 12:7-11, and are wisdom, knowledge, faith, miracles, healing, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.<sup>30</sup> Other lists of the gifts of the Spirit are included in Romans 12:6-8, in I Corinthians 12:28-30, and in Ephesians 4:11, and emphasize the same general categories, with some specific reference to the various ministries of the church. No matter what the gift, or the way they are placed into categories, the Spirit is the source.<sup>31</sup>

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28. Ibid., 320-321.

29. Ibid., 321.

30. Ibid., 319.

31. Buttrick, op. cit., 435.

God-- In the broadest terms, God may be defined as the uncaused cause of all things which exist. He is the ultimate origin and sovereign governing principle of all.<sup>32</sup> In Exodus 3:14, God says, "I Am That I Am," which asserts His existence with no attempt at any proof, and further implies that His essence can be known only to Himself. Therefore, God can be known to us only through a revelation of Himself. God is Spirit and is holy in nature and attributes, absolute in reality, infinite in efficiency, perfect in personality, and thereby the "ultimate ground" (as Paul Tillich suggested), adequate cause and sufficient reason for all finite existence. God is one eternally existent, infinite God, the Sovereign of the universe.<sup>33</sup>

The view of God in the Old Testament is that He is Yahweh, who is personal. He is the Living God who wills to be the Lord of all humankind's thinking and living. Practically all of the Old Testament is theology, and the Israelites thought in relation to the God who has revealed Himself in dramatic deeds of history and who has entered into a relationship with His people.<sup>34</sup>

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32. Lawson, John, Introduction to Christian Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1986), 10.

33. Wiley, H. Orton, Christian Theology, vol.1 (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1964), 217-218.

34. Buttrick, George A., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 2 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 417.

It is a fundamental article of the Christian Faith that God is a personal God. This fact means that the transcendent God is a thinking and feeling being, who knows Himself to be Himself, a being who is separate from and superior to His creation, of which He is the intelligent sovereign ruler. The contact and control of the immanent God is an intelligent and thoughtful control, not a bare law of action, according to Matthew 10:29. God is the principle of existence and of "values," moral, intellectual, and aesthetic. God is also a thinking, feeling, living, active being, who is personally interested in humankind. The leading and most striking biblical phrase which expresses the idea of a personal God is that He is "the Living God," according to Deuteronomy 5:26, Jeremiah 10:10, and Acts 14:15. One of the most important part of Christian doctrine about God is that it is possible for humankind to have a personal relationship with Him. Therefore, worship is not just meditation about God, it is communion with Him.<sup>35</sup>

God, who is known as the Creator and Governor of the universe by Christians, is also known as Father. This was the name that Christians learned from our Lord, according to Matthew 6:9. The word, "Father," as applied to God, aptly indicates the two contrasting propositions that God is the One who gives to us our being, infinitely superior to us, the governor at whose absolute

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35. Lawson, op. cit., 11.

disposal humankind is, and also that He loves us and is interested in us with personal and sympathetic care.<sup>36</sup>

H. Orton Wiley discusses the attributes of God in his book, Christian Theology, written in three volumes. He says that there are three classifications of divine attributes: the Absolute Attributes, the Relative Attributes, and the Moral Attributes. The Absolute Attributes or the Immanent Attributes are those qualities which belong to God apart from His creative work. They are the attributes of a Personal Being and may be summed up as spirituality, infinity, eternity, immensity, immutability, and perfection. The Relative or Casual Attributes are those arising out of the relation existing between the Creator and the created, and which of necessity require the creature for their manifestation. These attributes are God's Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and Omniscience. The summation of His moral quality of Goodness as related to Perfection, as His moral government through His Holiness, and His Love are the Moral Attributes.<sup>37</sup>

W. E. Vines, in his book, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, says that the attributes of God in the New Testament that are ascribed to God are: His unity, or monism, e.g., Mark 12:29; I Timothy 2:5; self-existence, John 5:26; universality, Matthew 10:29; Acts 17:26-28; almighty power, Mat-

36. Ibid., 12.

37. Wiley, op. cit., 329.

thew 19:26; immutability, James 1:17; eternity, Romans 1:20; creative power, Romans 11:36; I Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Revelation 4:11; 10:6; absolute holiness, I Peter 1:15; I John 1:5; infinite knowledge, Acts 2:23; 15:18; Romans 11:33; righteousness, John 17:25; faithfulness, I Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; I Thessalonians 5:24; II Thessalonians 3:3; I John 1:9; love, I John 4:8, 16; mercy, Romans 9:15,18; truthfulness, Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18.<sup>38</sup>

Holy Spirit-- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and is the personal Agent by whom God the Father and God the Son more expressly and effectually operate in the world, and in the world of humans. Humankind's salvation is one of the most important divine works of the Holy Spirit. In every time and place where the Church is, and where every member of the Church is, the Holy Spirit is operating. The Holy Spirit mediates the sense of Christ risen and glorified, and continues in present experience the effect of saving work accomplished once and for all in the incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord.<sup>39</sup>

The Holy Spirit is the mysterious power of God who was con-  
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38. Vines, W. E., An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Chicago: Moody Press, 1940), 160.

39. Lawson, John, Introduction to Christian Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1986), 111.

ceived in the first place as the mode of God's activity, manifested especially in supernatural revelation to selected individuals and in their being possessed by a force which gave them marvelous strength, courage, wisdom, and the knowledge of God's will and His dealings with humankind. The Holy Spirit was later identified with the personal Presence of God, and was regarded as the distinctive endowment of His people. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is understood as the mode of God's operation in the Church, made possible through the work of the Christ and mediating the glorified Christ to His people and the Church to its exalted Head.<sup>40</sup>

The work of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the Christian salvation of humankind, or to the Church. The whole creation and providential government of the world is an act of God through His Spirit, and so is the spiritual guidance of the hearts and minds of all persons whether or not they name the name of Christ as Lord.<sup>41</sup>

The Holy Spirit rested upon the first apostles and called and equipped those who later joined the apostolic office, according to Acts 13:2, as well as other ministers in the Church, as in Acts 6:3. The whole New Testament Church was possessed of a

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40. Buttrick, George A., ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 2 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 626.

41. Lawson, op. cit., 117.

vivid sense of being indwelt and guided by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was the atmosphere of the Church's life, so that the company of believers were "in the Spirit," which is stated in Romans 8:9<sup>13</sup>. The Holy Spirit bestowed upon the Church the fullness of spiritual "gifts," devotional, moral, intellectual as is mentioned in I Corinthians 12:4-14.<sup>42</sup>

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of prophecy which inspired the Old Testament as is in II Peter 1:21, and the Holy Spirit inspired the authors of the apostolic writings and guided the Church in the selection of them to form the canon of the New Testament. Therefore, the whole Bible is the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. The Holy Spirit guides the Church, and in particular the fellowship of reverent and learned teachers within the Church, to a fuller understanding of God's revelation declared in Christ and preserved in the Holy Scriptures (John 16:13-15).<sup>43</sup>

The Holy Spirit works in the believer a renewed and righteous character of love, purity, and unselfishness (Galatians 5:16-17, 22-25). The Holy Spirit calls persons to the sacred ministry, and to other branches of Christian service. The Holy Spirit also guides the Church in her responsible task of deciding whether those who profess this call, and who offer themselves to

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42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.



the Church, are indeed so qualified by divine call and by gifts and graces of character to make it right to admit them and authorize them for their office. It is essential to the rightful making of a Christian minister that he or she be first called by God (Hebrews 5:4), for no person is good or wise enough to be qualified as a volunteer, by his or her own wisdom or goodness. The person can only act or speak for God if he or she goes as one sent by God.<sup>44</sup>

The Holy Spirit, working through the due laying on of hands during the consecration of bishops and the ordination of presbyters and deacons, inwardly stamps or seals the ministers of Christ to the end that their ministerial actions may be in due ecclesiastical order in the Church, and as such, the objects of God's promise to give grace to believing persons through the ministrations of the Church (I Timothy 4:14). The Holy Spirit also gives grace to all Christ's servants, especially to those ordained to the sacred ministry, to enable them effectually to preach the gospel and to give pastoral counsel in faith and morals, to the people for whom they bear responsibility.<sup>45</sup>

The Holy Spirit also operates through the sacraments to make them effectual and operative means of grace to the believing Church, and to every faithful soul (Acts 2:38, 19:5-6). The Holy

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44. Ibid., 118.

45. Ibid.

Spirit also prompts persons to accept the gospel when it is preached to them, and He also moves them to faith in Christ (I Corinthians 12:3). The Holy Spirit also stimulates and guides man's power of prayer (Romans 8:26). The work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer to give the person a witness of his or her adoption, and of his or her salvation is emphasized in some branches of evangelical Christianity. This idea is based on Romans 8:14-17. The Holy Spirit also operates in Confirmation, and in other rites of dedication leading to the status of communicant Church membership, in which He seals these vows and to enable those who have pledged their allegiance to Christ and His Church to what they have promised (Acts 8:14-17, 19:6).<sup>46</sup>

Jesus Christ-- In Luke 2:21, The name of "Jesus" is given to the baby that had been born. The use of a human name and personal name symbolizes to humankind the first stage of the meeting of humankind and the Christ. "Jesus" is the English name for the Greek name which represents the Hebrew name of "Joshua." Both names mean, "Savior."<sup>47</sup>

Jesus was called a prophet by many of the people of His life on the earth because He reminded the people of the prophets which had come before Him in time. He was a man of commanding person-  
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46. Ibid., 119.

47. Lawson, John, Introduction to Christian Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1986), 42.

ality, and He possessed an unique grasp of spiritual things. The people were amazed at His power to heal, and to cast out demons.<sup>48</sup>

Jesus, in answering to the human office as a prophet, received as a preparation for His public ministry the typical prophetic equipment of a baptism of the Spirit of the Lord (Mark 1:9-11). Jesus gradually became aware of His unique nature and office, and He became aware of this through the operation of His natural human facilities. The illumination which came at His baptismal inspiration was a decisive stage in His self-realization. Jesus came to this realization on account of what He already was by nature.<sup>49</sup>

The New Testament word, "Christ," in the Greek language is the same word, "Messiah," in the Hebrew language. Both words mean, "the anointed one."<sup>50</sup> Peter stated that Jesus was the long-expected Messiah, the Christ, in Matthew 16:13-16, which was revealed to him by God. The original feature of the distinctive Christian confession of faith is that Jesus is the Christ. It was upon those who first made this confession under the leadership of Peter which the foundation of the Church was built.<sup>51</sup>

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48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., 43.

As the Messiah, Jesus Christ is to usher in the Kingdom of God. Jesus's central theme of His preaching is the coming of this long-expected kingdom (Luke 4:43).<sup>52</sup>

Jesus is also called the Son of Man. Jesus often referred to Himself as the Son of Man, as in Matthew 16:13, and Mark 2:10. It seems, however, to have been a somewhat vague title, and a somewhat guarded claim (John 12:34).<sup>53</sup>

Jesus is the Son of God. In the history of theological thought, this phrase connotes the essential deity of Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God, or better, God the Son, the second person of the triune Godhead.<sup>54</sup> Jesus is the Son of God because He is God and partakes of the divine nature. The purpose of the Gospel of John is to show that Jesus is both the Christ and the Son of God. The prologue of John demonstrates Jesus as the Son of God, the Logos, and was personally preexistent, was Himself God, and became incarnate for the purpose of revealing God to humankind. In Romans 8:3, this is what the Apostle Paul means when he says that God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to do for humankind what the Law could not do.<sup>55</sup>

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52. Ibid., 44.

53. Ibid.

54. Ladd, George Eldon, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 159.

55. Ibid., 161.

Jesus Christ was incarnated, that is, He "became flesh." Jesus was born unto a virgin, Mary. The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is that the divine Son, who from all eternity is God in the same full sense that the Creator-Father and the Holy Spirit are divine, completely and permanently joined Himself to the genuine human nature, so as to form one real person who was at once fully divine and fully human. It is in this way that God joined Himself to humankind, and lived a real human life in this world (Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:1-8, 5:5-8). In the Nicene creed, Jesus is said to be "of the same substance" with the Father, or "homooousis." The intention of this word is to affirm without a doubt that God the Son, who became incarnate as the Lord Jesus Christ, is divine in the fullest and most exact sense of the word, just as the Father is divine.<sup>56</sup>

Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, and He became the perfect sacrifice for the redemption of humankind, thus reconciling, or atoning, humankind to God. It was through the sufferings of the righteous Lord on the Cross that His mission was accomplished. The Cross became the propitiation where the work of Christ wiped away the guilt and defilement of sin by the God-appointed means. Jesus Christ paid the price, his death, for the ransom of many, as the perfect sacrifice. Jesus Christ offered to the heavenly Father the sacrifice of life of perfect obedience, even to suf-

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<sup>56</sup>. Lawson, op. cit., 49, 51-52.

fering and death.<sup>57</sup> The Lord Jesus not only was the bringer of a perfect revelation and doctrine, but He is the worker in this world of a divine saving act of redemption and sin.<sup>58</sup>

Jesus Christ was crucified, and when He died, He was buried. On the third day, Jesus Christ was resurrected by God. The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that there was the reversal of death. It was the abundantly triumphant "more-than-reversal" of the death of shame (Romans 6:8-9). The crucifixion of Christ on the Cross was a victory. The resurrection showed that Jesus was the Messiah, and He was an example of the life everlasting after death. That God could raise Christ from the dead is the supreme case of eternal life for humankind with God after death.<sup>59</sup>

Last Days-- Eschatology is the doctrine of "the end" and that is to say, of the end of this present Age, and of the coming of the Day of God which will bring the unveiling of God's sovereignty, the overthrow of the power of wickedness, and the redemption of God's people. The teachings of Jesus showed that He was vitally concerned throughout His life with the arrival of the Day of God, and the first Christians lived in vivid expectation of it (Acts

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57. Ibid., 86-88.

58. Ibid., 65-66.

59. Ibid., 102.

17:30-31, 24:25; Romans 13:11-14).<sup>60</sup>

The Last days are the days before the Lord will come again. The Church knows that the Lord will come again and is just "at hand" (Philippians 4:5; James 5:3, 7-9). Accordingly, the Lord cries out: "Surely I am coming soon," and the church replies: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20). In the church's teaching, the Lord is present by His Spirit in His church at all times, and equally at all times His parousia or coming is "drawing nigh." Similarly, the church is living in the "last days," and yet, the end has not yet come but is near at hand.<sup>61</sup>

Theophany-- Theophany is an appearance or transient manifestation, which is unsought, of a divine being or of God to humankind.<sup>62</sup> In The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary, a theophany is defined as "the visual manifestation of a deity to human beings, often accompanied by an auditory revelation." Most theophanies that are recorded in the Bible, are in the Old Testament, particularly in the Pentateuch and in the Prophetic books.<sup>63</sup>

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60. Lawson, John, Introduction to Christian Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1986), 45.

61. Buttrick, George A., ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 2 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 139.

62. Buttrick, George A., ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 4 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 619.

63. Myers, Allen L., ed., The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 997.

Trinity-- The Trinity is the coexistence of The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead.<sup>64</sup> Although "trinity" is not found anywhere in the Bible, and the Scriptures have not furnished a finished trinitarian statement, the New Testament does contain most of the building materials for a doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>65</sup>

While insisting on one God, the Scriptures present Jesus Christ as the divine Son in distinction from God the Father, and presents the Holy Spirit or Paraclete as a divine person distinct from the other two. The New Testament presents events, claims, practices, and problems from which the church fathers crystallized the doctrine in succeeding centuries. A classic statement from Augustine has come down the centuries as the 15th and 16th verses of the Athanasian Creed: "(15) So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; (16) and yet they are not [or, there are not] three Gods, but one God."<sup>66</sup>

The Biblical doctrine of the Trinity is expressed in the words of Christ in the "Great Commission," in Matthew 28:18-20. Another indication of the Trinity is in II Corinthians 13:14.

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64. Buttrick, George A., ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 4 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 711.

65. Bromiley, Geoffrey W., ed., The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 914.

66. Ibid.



The doctrinal formalization of the Biblical data on the Trinity is stated in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, "There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." Throughout the entire range of the Judeo-Christian sources, the unity of the Godhead is unanimously attested (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Isaiah 44:6-8; 45:21-23; I Corinthians 8:5-6).<sup>67</sup>

That the persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not modes of one Person, is shown by the prayer life of Jesus (cf. John 17), in which Jesus speaks objectively to the Father, by the Father's witness to the Son (Mark 1:11; 8:7; and John 12:28,29), and by other numerous objective references to the Holy Spirit (John 15:26; 16:7-15). As the result of these revelations, four convictions were established in the minds of the New Testament Christians. The first one is that God is One. The second one is that Jesus is God. The third one is that the Holy Spirit is God. And, the fourth one is that the three Persons are Subject and Object, "I and Thou," each to the others.<sup>68</sup>

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67. Bryant, T. Alton, ed., The New Compact Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 594.

68. Ibid.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Call of God

All persons are called to be Christians, and as Christians, they have been called to be in the ministry, which is variously described as the call to discipleship of Jesus Christ while hearing and doing of the Word of God and calling persons to repentance and faith.<sup>69</sup> The theologian, H. Richard Niebuhr, stated this idea so that Christians everywhere would recognize their responsibility as ministers to persons outside the Church, to each other, and to their pastors, too. We are all in this ministry together as the Body of Christ. We have all been called to work for the same Master. We are His hands, and we are bidden to do His work. We, as Believers, are given His grace to do the things that He leads us to do. His Holy Spirit will not only help us along the way, but the Paraclete will guide us and strengthen us to do the tasks which are before us. But, we must let His will be done. His will must take precedent over our

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69.Niebuhr, H. Richard, The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956.) 64.

wills. And, if we are living the way that Christ instructed us to live, His will shall be done through His working of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, not only are we called to work together as one Church to accomplish God's will, but we are also called to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. It is at the time when we turn all of our lives over to God that the Holy Spirit will direct us to a better understanding as to what we are to do as ministers.

God not only calls some persons into the ministry as Christians, but He also calls some of these persons into special or *secret ministries*. This type of call is an inner persuasion or experience whereby a person feels himself or herself directly summoned or invited by God to take up the work of the ministry.<sup>70</sup> The call into these ministries are not just a longing to do God's will, but they are also calls which are an abiding inner impression. These impressions are not easily dismissed once they occur. A person can fight these impressions for many months and sometimes even years. The person may do everything in that person's power to refuse that impression. However, God seems to usually win in the end. The Holy Spirit will go to the person and convict that person, and usually, that person will eventually give in to the impression and accept it as the call of God into the ministry.

God calls some persons into the ministry which has a very

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70.Ibid., 64.

special purpose. These persons are called into a special ministry. This call is different from the general call to be a Christian in that it brings the person to a place where they not only feel a pull in that direction, but it also is confirmed by the fruit which is borne from that ministry.

The call of God to a special or secret ministry is not an easily explained phenomena. In fact, it is sometimes seen as unusual to others who have not had this type of call. Persons who have not had a call into the ministry do not know what it is like to have the growing desire to serve God. The person who is called has a desire to serve God, with or without the approval of persons who find a call into the ministry as being unusual.

It is as we serve God that we realize that we are here to serve His people whether they are churchied or not. Our purpose is service to all. We should not deem ourselves as better than other persons just because we have been called to a special ministry. It is in our service to others that we can truly experience what it means to love others as ourselves.

As God prepares the persons called to a special or secret ministry, He equips these persons with certain gifts of the Spirit. In the book for lay persons, Gifts of the Spirit, Dr. Kenneth C. Kinghorn states that these gifts are twenty in number, but no one ever has all twenty of them. For that reason, we are to use the gifts we have with the gifts of the others so as to create a complete community called the Church. These gifts

are to be used in conjunction with all persons who are Christians so as to function as "one." We are to be "one" because we, as the Church, are the bride of Christ.

The gifts of the Spirit are very important to realize. These gifts are prophecy, teaching, serving, exhortation, giving, giving aid, compassion, healing, working miracles, tongues, interpretation of tongues, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, discernment, apostleship, helps, administration, evangelism, and shepherding.<sup>71</sup> These gifts are also present in Christians who are not called to a special or secret ministry, and a pastor is wise to help his congregation learn what their gifts are and how to use them.

Dr. Kenneth C. Kinghorn reminds all Christians that we are empowered by the spiritual gifts, but they do not make us supermen or superwomen. They are supernatural, but it is the Holy Spirit working that makes them that way, not our natural selves. The biblical concept of spiritual gifts includes both God's power and humankind's responsible use of that power.<sup>72</sup>

I Corinthians 12:4-6 states, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and, there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one." In this pas-  
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71. Kinghorn, Kenneth Cain, Gifts of the Spirit (Nashville: Abingdon Press; 1976.) 38.

72. Ibid., 34.

sage there are three words which are very important to notice: *gifts*, *service*, which are ministries, and *working*, or results, or effects.<sup>73</sup> We are called to use these three gifts together, so these gifts can enhance the ministry and the results or effects.

The call of God is not to be taken in isolation, nor is it just for the person who is called. The person who is called is to be a part of the community of Believers. The call into a community means that we are responsible for each other, and we should always be there for the help and support of others. It is every Christian who shares both the calling to bear witness to Jesus Christ and in the calling to partake in the servant-ministry of the Church.<sup>74</sup> Believers are to be servants to each other because we are to love others as ourselves, as the second most important commandment of Jesus states.<sup>75</sup> We are to be Christ-like and do as He did--to serve. The alternative to a professional ministry in the church is a called ministry where the individual person conceives his or her service in the church as a

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73. Ibid., 36.

74. Niles, D.T., The Preacher's Calling to be Servant (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959.) 13.

75. Matthew 22:39, The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible (Indianapolis: New International Version, B.B. Kirkbride Bible Co., Inc., Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI., 1983). (For the remainder of this study, all Bible references will be referred to as, "N.I.V.")

stewardship under God. This person serves as the church sets him or her apart in conscious recognition of his or her gifts. The person serves then, not as one who receives rewards from the people of the church, but as one who is in service for no monetary gain. The person serves others because he or she can never forget the call of God and his or her responsibility as a slave of God. The slave has no concern for monetary gain, for none is expected. The slaves's only concern is faithfulness with which he or she serves that person's Lord.<sup>76</sup>

Each person's call into the ministry is an individual experience. The call is fundamentally from God, but the voices by which He calls are different. One example of such a voice through which God calls is that of the voice of an inborn imperative. This voice is the feeling and believing that a person was born into the ministry. The person feels that he or she has inherited the call into the ministry. The person has an inner urge and conviction that is what he or she should do and must do. The person cannot ever remember having any other urge to do anything else except that of being a minister for Christ.<sup>77</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr calls this kind of call, a "providential call."

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76. Beyler, Clayton, The Call to Preach (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: The Mennonite Publishing House; 1963) 25.

77. Bishop, J.O., "The Voice of An Inborn Imperative," Op. cit., Frye, Edwin G. 9.

Another voice that God uses to call persons is that of the voice of a pursuing haunting insistence. This voice causes the person to want to run and hide from God. But, this voice never really leaves the person until he or she gives in and accepts the call. This was the type of call that Jonah had, which led him to Ninevah.<sup>79</sup>

Another voice that God uses to call persons is that of the voice of the Church's call. Richard Niebuhr states that this type of call is an ecclesiastical call.<sup>80</sup> Just as God through the church has given the call to salvation, so God through the church calls individual persons into the ministries within the church.<sup>81</sup> The church many times nurtures a person from the person's childhood, and in doing so, the child may want to continue with the work of the church by becoming a minister. This type of call seems to be completely natural to the person. The call is a progression from kindergarten to high school to adulthood. The person progresses in his or her walk with God as the person matures physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Another voice that God uses to call persons is that of the  
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78. Niebuhr, op. cit., 64.

79. Stauss, R.A., "The Voice of a Pursuing and Haunting Insistence," op. cit., Edwin G. Frye, 13-15.

80. Niebuhr, op. cit., 64.

81. Beyler, op.cit., 25.



voice of family and friends. This call usually is the result of many persons telling the person that he or she would make a good minister. The family not only suggests the idea, but they also try to direct the person to the right school or college. Family friends sometimes offer to give the person money for the person's tuition to college or seminary. The negative side to this type of call is that the person many times feels obligated to accept the money and goes to the college or seminary without really being called by God. The person has been forced into the ministry to make the family and friends happy. Some parents constantly remind the person that he or she has a grandfather, uncle, or father who has been or is in the ministry. This type of call should be confirmed by God, and the person should inform the family and friends as to if the person is truly called. The person must stand up to the true vocation to which the person is called.

Another voice that God uses to call persons is that of having a growing and maturing awareness of mission. This type of call is a desire to go to the mission field, whether it is in Africa or downtown Chicago. The persons with this type of call are persons who have a desire to go directly to where the poor, the hungry, and the homeless are, and to teach them about Jesus and what He can do for them. The person with this call will go wherever the Spirit leads them because they have a burden for others.

Another voice that God uses to call persons is that of the voice of a direct command. Some persons have a call in which an audible voice is heard. Oscar A. Hyden says that he was called by an audible voice which was the Lord who came to him after an especially enriching church service. The voice of the Lord came to him with unmistakable clarity, saying, "Go preach my gospel!" Hyden says that from that day to this, a span of thirty years, the validity of that call has not once been punctuated with interrogation marks.

Hyden also says that the work of his call became a necessity. He felt he had to preach the gospel, and there was no alternative. He knew had been entrusted with a great and holy trust.<sup>82</sup>

Many persons who have been called by the direct command also feel as he does about the call. They felt as if there was no struggle when coming to a decision as to whether he or she should accept the call or not. The work never became commonplace. It was rather as "the growing stem of experience into the beautiful bloom of Christian stewardship of life." <sup>83</sup>

Another voice through which God calls persons into the ministry is that of person's deciding that it is what they want

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82. Hyden, Oscar A., "The Voice of a Direct Command," op. cit., Frye, Edwin G., 21.

83. Hyden, op. cit., 21.

to do with their lives. These persons choose the ministry as their vocation. Some of them say they have not been called into the ministry, but that they looked at all the possibilities for employment and chose the ministry. Many of them are successful at their "job," but most of them say that they wished that they had chosen a different vocation.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Call of God Through Dreams, Visions, and Angelic Messages

Other voices through which God uses to call persons to the ministry is that of dreams, visions, and angelic messages. These voices of God are the major voices of God that I want us to examine. These voices are not more important than the voices that have been mentioned earlier, but they are of interest because they are recorded throughout the Scriptures.

There are twelve different words and expressions which were used in the Greek language which meant that a person had come into contact with some reality other than that perceived through the senses according to Morton T. Kelsey who has written two books, God, Dreams, and Revelation, and Dreams--A Way to Listen to God. According to Kelsey, the authors who wrote the New Testament did not define the visions, trances, and "appearances" in a strict sense. These authors used the same words to describe the occurrences of something real that was like a dream, but could happen to some people when they were not exactly asleep.

These words refer to experiences which are alike, but they describe them in different terms. The first word is that of *onar* which is the common word for "dream." It has been used since the time of Homer to describe experiences in which the spiritual world would speak. This word is used very closely to what we think of "dream" to mean. <sup>84</sup>

Another word, *enupnion*, which signifies a thing or vision seen in sleep. It is derived from the commonly used word for sleep, *hupnos*, which means literally "in sleep," or the events or happenings that occur during sleep. This word stresses the givenness, at an almost surprise quality, of what is received in sleep. <sup>85</sup>

The word for "vision" in our vocabulary is different in Greek in that there are three words. These words come from the verb, *horao*, which can mean either to see or notice in the sense of outer perception, or to see something that is not physical, a vision. The most common of these words is, *horama*, vision, which is used the most in the New Testament. It is the most interesting of the words because it can refer to visions of the night or sleeping experiences, as well as waking visions. This word, therefore, covers both the words for dream and vision in our language. But, when the Hebrew words for dream or vision are -----

84. Kelsey, Morton T., God, Dreams, and Revelation (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974), 80-81.

85. Ibid., 81.

used, the word, *horama*, is used. <sup>86</sup>

A second word, *horasis*, can mean the eye as the organ of sight, an appearance of any kind, even a spectacle, but there are instances in the new Testament in which it means a supernatural vision, as in Acts 2:17 and Revelation 9:17. This word refers to the supernatural content received rather than to the act or psychological process of seeing it. It has to do with the appearance conferred on things. And, there is a lack of distinction between the perception of the physical and the non-physical in the Greek. However, both "seeings" are genuine perception. <sup>87</sup>

Another word, *optasia*, is a word for the supernatural vision derived from *horao*, which refers almost exclusively to this kind of seeing. This word is derived from the aorist passive tense of the verb, and it has the sense of self-disclosure--of "letting oneself be seen." It can refer either to the content of the visionary experience or to the state of being of the divine. It is such that the Deity permits a human being to see either his or her own divine being or something else usually hidden from human sight. <sup>88</sup>

The New Testament sometimes refers simply to the fact that some reality stands by *ephistemi*, *paristemi* in the night as in -----

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid., 82.

88. Ibid.

Acts 23:11, and 27:23, or is made to stand *histemi* in the day as in Luke 1:11, and Acts 10:30, and 16:9. The idea given may be the Lord, it may be an angel, or even a man who appears and commands attention in order to bring some message. It was thus that the author of Acts described the vision which led Paul to go to Greece. 89

The word, *angelos*, or angel, occurs very often in the New Testament. The word can mean either an actual physical envoy, a messenger, or a divine being which has been sent by God. The passages in the Bible are usually clear and describe something which is seen and usually heard, but the being is not physically concrete. 90

The Old Testament shows that the Hebrew people believed that Yahweh is concerned with human beings and makes direct contact with them in order to give them direction and guidance. One way in which Yahweh communicated with the Hebrew people is by dreams and visions. It was through this type of communication that God could reach the people without having to deal with their egos. God brought the people special knowledge of the world around them and gave them knowledge of His divine reality and will. The Bible expresses reverence for dreams because God used them to speak to the people. They referred to dreams and visions as the  
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89. Ibid., 83.

90. Ibid., 83-84.

same type of phenomena. The dream, *chalom*, or the verb, *chalam*, is related to the Aramaic or Hebrew verb, "to be made healthy or strong." Basically, the dream is spoken of almost as if this were the form of the experience whose content comes through as a vision. Therefore, the dream is the mode or expression of the experience, and the vision is the content which is the substance of what is seen or visualized or experienced. Dreams are thought of as the normal way to receive such experiences. But, the same content can appear through the waking moments, and this can happen suddenly or as a person turns to this reality for direction.<sup>91</sup>

The Hebrew words for a vision, a visual image which is something seen that is not an immediate perception of any outer physical object, is *chazon*, or *marah*. These words and their many variations actually mean "to see." But, we must not overlook the fact that the visions are also accompanied by an audible voice. The person is described as listening to God or speaking with Him. And, there is a realization that there is something beyond a person's ordinary self which appears to speak to the individual in his or her own language.<sup>92</sup>

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91. Ibid., 19.

92. Ibid., 20.



## Dreams

As mentioned earlier, one voice by which God calls persons is that of the voice of dreams. Dreams have been used by God to get a person's attention when the person would not pay attention in the hours in which the person was awake. It seems that dreams throw light into the darkness, and many of them give us counsel.

God has called many persons through dreams. These dreams somehow seem much more serious than other dreams, and the person who has them has no doubt that the dream was very much different from the dreams which usually occur nightly. A regular nightly dream usually is jumbled and incoherent, but dreams that are used by God to call persons into the ministry are usually decidedly different. Sometimes they too are jumbled and are not coherent, but God usually will decipher them to the persons by using His Holy Spirit or by using one or more of His people to interpret the dream.

Although dreams have been interpreted for thousands of years and have been of interest to many of the people of the world throughout humankind's existence, it has only been in the last few decades that dreams have been examined and studied. One of the persons who has studied dreams is that of C.G.Jung. Jung believed that dreams speak clearly through a rich language of

symbols. He believed that the problem has come because modern men and women have forgotten how to think in symbols. Jung maintained that by paying attention to symbols, access can be gained to a new realm that brings a balance to our conscious view, rather than a mere reiteration of what we already know. Therefore, the task of dream interpretation is that of learning a strange language with many nuances in which we learn to understand the symbolic communications of the unconscious. He believed that there is no attempt for the unconscious mind to deceive or distort what it is trying to convey. The unconscious mind is only using the best method of communication which is available to it. Jung insisted that this idea is what we need to learn to understand.<sup>93</sup>

One of the greatest and most basic ideas from Freud is the idea that the dream reveals the unconscious. From this idea, we explicate the thought that dreams are the roadways to the unconscious. But, Freud is thought to have treated the dream too simplistically. He continually emphasized the notion that dream images were merely a scrambled code that needed deciphering. He believed that the dream images were not really alive or autonomous in their own right, but were merely reflectors of the depth of the human being which was not really understood.<sup>94</sup>

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93. Ibid., 198.

94. Kelsey, Morton, Dreams- A Way to Listen to God (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 31-32.

Dreams occur during sleep, so to understand dreams better, we must look at the way brain-wave patterns which occur during sleep. The initial stage is like that of entering a hypnotic state, and it is difficult to tell whether we are awake or asleep. This is known as Stage One. When we experience Stage Two or Stage Three, we have fallen asleep. We next experience Stage Four where dreaming occurs. During this period, the dream is so vivid that we actually feel the dream to be completely real, and at this stage, rapid eye movements occur. These movements are also called R.E.M.'s. When studying a person who is asleep, these R.E.M.'s prompt the researchers as to when the deepest sleep is occurring. The occurrences that are studied have shown that if a person is awakened every time he/she begins R.E.M.'s, the person who loses this part of sleep will begin having symptoms of mental illness. However, if the person is able to return to a regular sleeping pattern, the person's mental health returns to a normal level of mental health. For some reason that has yet to be explained, humans must dream, whether they remember them or not, in order to be mentally and physically healthy.<sup>95</sup>

Dreams are taken very lightly by the Western culture today. The Western culture does not understand dreams, so the people try to ignore them, or the persons who remember them try to laugh

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95. Ibid., 33.

at them. These persons, as well as Christians, should be taught that Christianity once provided the understanding of dreams. The early Christian church originally had a very well developed theory about dreams, which was based on both the Old and New Testaments. This understanding was also consistently expressed by the early fathers of the church. These Christians believed that God actually reached down and touched humankind, especially in dreams. In fact, they believed that dreams were the principal way in which God spoke to humankind. The Eastern Orthodox Christians still have this belief today; however, the Western Christian churches have gotten away from the belief and set it aside. In Western churches today, there is no society or organization which would encourage any one to try to understand their dreams as a source of Christian insight to life. The Christians of the twentieth century just assume that the idea of trying to find religious meaning or reality in dreams is a fallacy that fizzled out in the Dark Ages and should remain out of their lives today.

In the past history of Christianity, dreams were understood to give persons access to a reality that was difficult to contact in any other way. This view is held in the Old and New Testament, as well as, the church fathers up to Aquinas. The people of today think these people were not on the right track partly because of the brainwashing which occurred during the Enlightenment. This era led people to believe that God would not, or could not, break through to these people. Everyone was believed

to live a life which is locked into a self-contained universe. This universe was believed to have been a space-time box and was closed to anything but its own systems. The church and most theology followed this teaching which stated that God can be known only through the historical process. Therefore, many believe dreams can obviously have no religious importance because there is no way they could relate to revelation. <sup>96</sup>

However, there is a growing new interest in learning more about dreams and how they relate to Christianity as we enter into the twenty-first century. This idea of God calling persons to the ministry through dreams in the future will be discussed later in Chapter 5.

### Visions

As mentioned earlier, God also calls persons into the ministry through visions. These phenomena have occurred often in the Bible, but not as often as the call of God through dreams. Moses had a vision of a burning bush, Ezekiel had a vision of a gigantic wheel, and Peter had a vision of a sheet with pictures of animals on it. These visions were very important because they not only changed the seer's life, but they also changed many other people's lives. These visions were to be shared with

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96. Kelsey, op. cit., God, Dreams, and Revelation, pp. viii-1.

others to help others in the community. Therefore, the persons who had the visions never kept to themselves, but shared them with everyone.

Visions were also valued by the people of these past eras, and they were thought of as a means of communication. This communication was between God and the people. And, the person who saw the vision was not thought to be insane, but was respected. The visions were not doubted, and the amount of skepticism about them was at a minimum. However, as the Enlightenment Era came about, the belief in them greatly decreased, and the skepticism about them greatly increased. The scientific mind of the "thinking" ages had lost the desire to trust in something that could not be measured quantitatively with scientific ways and devices. It seems as if a person should not believe in something if that person cannot have positive, tangible proof that it exists. Karl Rahner states that even genuine imaginative visions are as a rule only indirectly caused by God. He believes that visions are the result of the imagination which has been developed which causes a person to have an imagination reflex. He doubts that even the mystical experiences of the saints in the past were the results of these persons really having had a vision because they can not really prove them. He believes that visions are only a "picture" of the actual divine contact, and also of the person who receives it. He, therefore, thinks that many of the visions are historical falsehoods, theological errors and

distortions, and are mainly subjective in nature. 97

People who have visions in today's society, especially in the Western world, usually are very careful as to whom they tell about the experience. The majority of persons who have had visions do not want other persons to think that they are losing their minds. But, given the right place and person, the person who has had a vision will tell about it. These persons who have had one or more visions usually describe the ordeal as being "effectively charged," meaning that they characteristically induce strong emotion from the subject. The effect of the ordeal may sometimes be comforting, sometimes frightening, sometimes awe-inspiring, or sometimes enrapturing. The affective relation is personal-- the person knows that the vision is directing itself to the person. The person knows that he or she is being watched or spoken to. There is a "second-person relation", an "I--you" relationship. 98

Some persons who have had visions have stated that they were very sleepy, while others stated they were not asleep, or even sleepy, but sometimes were rather actively doing something. Some of the persons have stated that they were praying when the vision occurred. These persons said they were asking Christ to take

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97. Rahner, Karl, Visions and Prophecies (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), 64-66.

98. Beardsworth, Timothy, A Sense of Presence, (Oxford: Manchester College, 1977), 2-3.

over or they had turned to God for a solution. Some of these persons have stated that they thought at first that they were dreaming, but realized that it was not a dream that was happening.<sup>99</sup>

Visions usually have an illumination about them. This illumination is often accompanied by an audible voice, but not always. The light that is there seems to be much brighter than every day light such as the sun or even indoor lighting. The person usually feels surrounded by or enveloped in the light. Some persons have reported that the light seemed to be inside of them. The light also gives an affective reaction to it by a state of warmth, of serenity, and of peaceableness. Many of the persons felt as if their cognitive states were increased, and they felt an inner strength and a knowing of certainty.<sup>100</sup>

Some persons stated that they thought the vision lasted for a short duration of time, such as a few seconds or a few minutes, but others stated that the vision that they had experienced had lasted for over an hour. Many persons said that the after-effects are long-lasting. Many persons state that they have never been the same as they were before the vision. These persons said that their way of looking at life and other things had changed remarkably. However, some persons stated that nothing in their

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<sup>99</sup>. Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>100</sup>. Ibid., 15, and 22-24.



lives changed at all. 101

Visions have been reported to have occurred at any place or time. Some persons have stated that they were in bed, others were walking, others were talking, while others were driving an automobile. Some of the persons said that they were not alone when the vision occurred, and the person or persons with them did not act as if anything was going on about them.

Many persons who have had visions stated that after they had had the vision, they trembled but had no fear. Some of the persons stated that they experienced a love and compassion for people, while others felt an ecstasy. But, the majority of them felt a happiness and a sense of warmth about them. Almost all of the persons felt a sense of awe or humility. Many of the persons cried tears of joy after the vision. 102

Sometimes visions tell a person to go and to do something, especially for the Lord. These visions may not always tell the persons as to how or when they are going to accomplish a certain task or a type of work. But, the person must put their faith in the vision and try to do what he or she has been told to do. It seems that a mixture of faith with the vision's original suggestion causes the work to get done. One example of this is that of Moses who had a vision and who acted in faith to accomplish being

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101. Ibid., 25.

102. Ibid., 35-42.

the leader of the Jewish people by bringing them out of Egypt.

Visions are thought to be a thing of the past, but they are still happening today even in a world of vast high technology and of ever increasing scientific knowledge. The idea of God calling persons into the ministry through visions in the future will be discussed later in Chapter 5.

### Angels and Angelic Messages

Another voice which God uses to call persons into the ministry is that of angelic messages. These messages were delivered by angels, who are called God's messengers. Actually, the angels are the most often perceived vision in the Bible. The angel is a visionary reality, and is one of great importance and power. The angel usually inspires an emotional reaction of awe and fear when it appears. This reaction is always present when a person comes into contact with the numinous or holy. Usually the first action that the angel takes is of reassurance so as to calm the fear of the person who is experiencing the angelic visit. In the Bible, there are many places mentioned that after a visit with an angel has been described, the author later refers back to the vision that has been experienced. Actually, there is hardly a reference in the New Testament in which angels can be seen as anything but visionary contents, or as beings without physical reality which

are still powerful and very real, as well as significant.<sup>103</sup> Angels in the Old Testament are fearsome and mighty beings, but in the New Testament, they are toned down. Nevertheless, the impressions of angels are still that of superhuman bigness and are mighty and fearsome beings.<sup>104</sup>

Angels are said to have bodies. Just what these bodies are composed of has been argued for thousands of years. Councils in early church history held that their bodies were ethereal and firelike. But, the scholastics and the Lateran Council decided that their bodies were material bodies. Many Jews believe that their synagogical literature suggests that the bodies of angels are contained within the writings. Some rabbis believe that the body of an angel is described in Daniel 10:6. Angels appear with bodies so as to make the angel conceivable to humans, because a creature without corporality is close to being inconceivable. And, corporality is the goal of all the ways of God. Jesus Christ shows us that the resurrection of the bodies of His people will be equal to the bodies of the angels, which they possess now. The nature and texture of the angelic body is unknown and has not been revealed to humankind yet.

Angels appear in human form, but they also appear dressed in white garments, or raiments. These are a type of covering which  
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103. Kelsey, Morton, op. cit., God, Dreams, and Revelation; 84.

104. Boros, Ladislaus, Angels and Men (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), 31.

are white as snow and have a light of glory glowing about them.<sup>105</sup>

Angels are spirits which have been called into existence by an immediate act of God. The total and substance of an angel is to be a messenger of God, who bears a message for some person, or persons.

In theory, there is really no need for these messengers because God is everywhere and does not need to send messengers. However, God does send messages by these messengers, the angels. It is beyond human comprehension as to why God uses angels to send messages. But, it seems that He sends them across the greatest distance as a bridge to humankind. <sup>106</sup>

The message which is given to the person is not always good news. Angels deliver the message of glory or of gloom or doom. The messages are usually short, and they are adapted to human comprehension in their simplicity. However, the message has contained within it, a deeper meaning concealed beneath the primary one.<sup>107</sup>

Hebrews 1:14 states, "Are not all angels ministering spirits

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105. Gaebelein, Arno Clemens, The Angels of God (New York: A.C. Gaebelein Publication, 1924), 32-33.

106. Westermann, Claus, God's Angels Need No Wings (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 11-17.

107. Stier, Rudolf, The Words of the Angels (London: J. C. Nimmo & Bain, 1879), xvii.

sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" 108 The angels have been perceived as celestial spirits who have had a very intimate association with the spiritual and eternal welfare of man. They have also been appointed by God to occupy their powers and to engage their thoughts. And, to some extent, it may be, the habitude of their lives, in connection with those who will one day be associated with them in glory. This is a wonderful thought. The whole company of angels are beings which are ministering spirits, ministering in connection with men, ministering in connection with the world, ministering in connection with beings that are destined to be associated with them in the bliss, the purity, and the glory of heaven. The angels will be with us in heaven, and it may be that we will be able to know them. 109

God's angels are there to lead us and help along the way. They are present when the Word of God is presented to the people, they are there when the people leave the church to go home, too. Angels are present when people accept Christ as their Lord and Savior, and they rejoice whenever a person chooses to repent. Jesus states in Luke 15:10, "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." 110

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108. Hebrews 1:14, op. cit., N.I.V.

109. Rawson, James, The Nature and Ministry of Holy Angels (New York: Clarton and Lanahan, 1848), 61-62.

110. Luke 15:10, op. cit., N.I.V.

In Matthew 18:10, Jesus states that the angels of little children see the face of the Father.<sup>111</sup> These words testify to a major purpose of the angels. They are to guard and watch over the people of God. Many persons call these angels, "guardian angels." These angels not only help us and lead us, but they also fight for us, thus helping us to stay away from the clutches of demons who seem to know our weaknesses.<sup>112</sup>

God has sent His messages by angels so that people would understand His will. He has sent angels to call persons into the ministry, and He has used them to do other actions for His people here on the earth. God's chief angel, or archangel, who is nearest to God, is the main Divine messenger and executes God's judgments. In Daniel 10:13, Michael, which means "who is like unto God" in Hebrew, is the prince of the angels. This fact is stated by the angel Gabriel. And, Gabriel appears to be lower in rank than Michael. In Daniel 12:1, Michael is referred to as the great prince who stands for the children of "your" people. Therefore, Michael is divinely declared to stand in a special relationship to God's people on earth, and he has been held in high esteem for many centuries. Michael has been known as the

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111. Matthew 18:10, op. cit., N.I.V.

112. Regamey, Pie-Raymond, What Is An Angel? (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1962), 94-95.

tutelary, which is the guiding or guardian, prince of Israel. 113  
Michael "is the viceroy of God, and the special defender of  
Israel," and "He is the medium for transmission of the Law of  
Moses and Israel." 114

When Gabriel appeared to Zacharias to inform him that he was  
to have a son, John the Baptist, he told Zacharias who he was and  
stated that he is, "Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God."  
Gabriel's message was one of "good tidings." Gabriel also was  
sent to Mary to tell her of her call to be the mother of Jesus,  
the Son of God. Angels were also used to speak to Joseph in his  
sleep as to what he was to do with Mary, before and after the  
birth of Jesus.

Some angels must also have been in human form, as is evi-  
denced in Revelation 19:10 in which the angel identified himself  
as being one of the fellow servants like the author of the book.  
115

Humans do not know everything about angels and may never  
know everything about them because they are a part of the mystery  
of God and His Kingdom.

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113. Odom, Robert Leo, Israel's Angel Extraordinary  
(New York: Israelite Heritage Institute, 1985), 14-17.

114. Ibid., 17.

115. Revelation 19:10, op. cit., N.I.V.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Call of God on Biblical Figures

Throughout the Scriptures, we often read about the call of God on many persons' lives. In Genesis, Abram was called of God, and because of his faith and obedience, he became the father of many nations. God's call is never taken lightly in the Old Testament, not even by Jonah, who ran from the call, but who eventually did as God told him to do.

The prophets regard their call of God as a decisive moment in the prophet's life, which started the prophet on the career as a "speaker of God." The prophets accepted their calls as being life-changing and did as God told them to do, without having to argue with Him about where they were going. The Prophets were very courageous persons because they had to put themselves in the position of telling a King or other ruler the words of God, knowing that if it was bad news, the ruler usually had the messenger killed. <sup>116</sup>

The call of Samuel happened at a very young age. He an-

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116. Schaeffer, Henry, The Call to Prophetic Service (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1926), 12-13.



swered God's call, and he remained faithful to that call. His mother had promised Samuel to God, and she remained faithful to her promise, and gave him to God for His service.

The Twelve Disciples did not run from their call from Jesus to follow Him. They did as they were asked to do. And, they became fishers of men as Jesus promised them.

### The Call of God on Moses

One spectacular example of a call on a person's life in the Old Testament is that of God's call on Moses's life. Moses lived as a prince of Egypt until his true identity was revealed to him. He discovered that he was a Jew. And, as a result of God opening this knowledge to him, he became the leader of the Jews, God's Chosen People. Moses's call was a strong, undeniable call from God. When he fled from Pharaoh to Midian, he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. It was there that Moses saw a burning bush, which from it spoke the angel of the Lord. Moses approached the bush which the fire did not consume. From the burning bush, The Angel of the Lord spoke to Moses and told him who He was, and told Moses that He had heard the cries of the people of Israel, who were captives of Egypt. The Angel of the Lord told Moses that He was sending him to Pharaoh to bring God's people, who were called the Israelites, out of bondage from Egypt.

Moses questioned God's choosing him, but after God's persuasion, Moses, with his brother Aaron, went to Pharoah and declared God's proclamation. After God performed many miracles, signs, and wonders, Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt.

Even if Moses had decided not to accept God's call, it seems as if God would have been persistent, and Moses would have eventually given in to the call. God's call is almost like a drive which has to be fulfilled. And, as Moses found out, it was not an easy journey. But, the Angel of the Lord, Michael, was with Moses. The Angel of the Lord stayed with the Hebrew people at the Exodus, at the crossing of the Red Sea, and throughout the rest of their lives.

The study of Moses's call into the ministry is of interest to everyone who is entering the ministry. Reading about Moses and his call brings the people of God into the sanctuary of God's presence, and it shows His people how the invisible and mysterious, yet ever-present God still comes near the earth to personally choose servants for His work.

Some theologians believe that the call of God is irresistible, while others think that the "call" is but a figment of our own making. But, since God has given us our own will, I believe that a person can resist it, for at least a time. I have not found anyone who has totally resisted His call, even though I know of several persons who have run from it for many years. Just as Moses wanted God to choose someone else, these persons

wanted God to choose " a better" spokesperson. However, God used them for the glory of His Kingdom.

Henry Schaeffer states in his book, The Call to Prophetic Service, that the person who knows to do good and does not do it, that person is sinning. He believed that many of persons are not responding to the divine call, and even their own consciences accuse them of sinful procrastination. He believed that these persons who are being called should fling to the winds all their personal considerations, all their likes, and dislikes, and give in to the one who is calling them--God. <sup>117</sup>

#### The Call of God on Paul's Life

Another example of God's call on a person's life is found in the New Testament. The call of Saul of Tarsus is a call which not only changed his name to Paul, but also changed his life and the history of Christianity. Saul of Tarsus and some of his men were on the road to Damascus making their way to persecute the Christians. As they traveled along, suddenly a very bright light flashed around Saul and a voice asked him, "Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?" It was Jesus and he wanted to know why Saul was persecuting Him. Jesus instructed Saul to do what Jesus was

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117. Schaeffer; op. cit., 54.

going to instruct him to do. And in obedience, Saul, who was renamed to Paul, did as he was told.

Paul himself testifies that the mighty change was not wrought out in his own thoughts or in his conscience mind. He was really against Jesus before his conversion. Physical factors had nothing to do with the vision he had, nor did it originate in the physiological constitution of the man, Saul. He was not converted by the ordinary operation of spiritual laws within the realm of human personality. His conversion and call was a sudden transformation which is an unheralded event-- a unique experience.

Paul's call into the ministry was a call of total change for Paul in that he had first to completely turn around and become a new creature in Christ. Instead of persecuting the Christians, he had to become a spiritual leader for Jesus Christ. Paul had many hurdles he had to face. He had to let the Christians learn about his conversion and then get them to trust in him. Paul is a perfect example of a person who was called into the ministry who had to suffer many things for the name of Jesus Christ. But, no matter what trouble came upon him, whether being beaten, being shipwrecked, being sick, having to contend with his "thorn in the flesh," or being imprisoned, he remained faithful to his call into the ministry. Paul also did everything in his power to let God use him to bring millions of people to know the true Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, redeemer and friend.

Paul's call was paramount in shaping the beginning missions of the new church. His travels took him to wherever the Spirit would lead him. He preached the Gospel to persons who he knew would persecute him. He even preached the gospel to Caesar's household and others as he was chained to a soldier of the guard. But, he had been called, and he knew he had to do as he was told. And for this reason, as he was imprisoned, he wrote many letters to the persons of the churches he had visited earlier in his journeys. These letters are now a very important part of our Bible, and they are a witness to the call of God on a person's life.

The life of Paul is an example of what can happen in our lives if we will let God use us as He wants to do. We should not be afraid to let him use us for His glory because "great is our reward in heaven." Though the test may be long and difficult and our task may seem at first like a burden, we must press onward to do what we have been called to do-- work for our Father, God.

## CHAPTER 4

### The Call of God on Spiritual Leaders from the Pre-Reformation, the Reformation, the Post- Reformation, and the Modern Era

The call of God did not end when the New Testament was finished. In fact, God's call has been a constant throughout time immortal. If we research any era of man after Christ's church was started, we would find that each era not only has many people who have been called into the ministry, but we would also find that God has called some outstanding persons to be His servants. These persons, or servants, of God not only impacted the era of time that they have lived in, but they have also impacted each generation which has lived and died. These persons and their influences are discussed in schools, colleges, universities, and seminaries throughout the world. These persons are studied and examined, as well as their work and their writings. These persons' lives have been preserved for the next generations.

It is amazing to notice that each one of these servants of the Lord were called in a different way. Each of these persons have devoted their lives to God and His Kingdom.

## The Call of God on St. Augustine

The first outstanding person that we should examine is that of St. Augustine. Before Augustine became St. Augustine, he was a boy in Thagaste in North Africa where he was born in 354 A.D. Augustine was born into a family of a pagan father, but his mother, Monica, was a Christian. Because of his mother, he was raised as a Christian. At the age of sixteen, he left home and went to Carthage so that he could finish his education in law. In 375 he became very interested in philosophy while reading Cicero's *Hortensius*.<sup>118</sup> He was soon converted to the Manichean religion for nine years which resulted in his virtual renunciation of the Christian faith. He lived a sinful life with a mistress for over fifteen years and had an illegitimate son, Adeodatus. It was during this time that Augustine's mother, Monica, had a vision which consoled her about Augustine and his life. Augustine moved to Rome to teach rhetoric, then to Milan. He soon became dissatisfied with Manichaeism, and he became influenced by the preaching of St. Ambrose.

In Augustine's book, Confessions, he tells about a long inner struggle he experienced. This agonizing ordeal led him to

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118. Pine-Coffin, R.S., editor, Augustine- Confessions (New York: Penguin Books; 1961), i.

turn from Manicheism, to renounce all his unorthodox beliefs, and to turn back to Christianity. Augustine was in the garden at his home, and he heard a child's voice chanting. Augustine knew that the chant was God's way of speaking to him. So, at this time, Augustine was converted and in 386, he was baptized.

In 388, God called Augustine to go back to Africa, where he and some of his friends established a quasi-monastic life. In 391, against his wishes, he was ordained a priest.

Augustine lived in a community with his cathedral clergy where God used him to write over 113 books and treatises, over 200 letters, and more than 500 sermons. His understanding of Christian Revelation was shown in his voluminous writing, and his work has proved to be more influential in the history of modern thought than any other Christian writer since the Apostle Paul. God used him to write the most famous of his works, Confessions, the sermons on the Gospels and Epistle of John, the De Trinitate, and the City of God.

Augustine answered God's call, not only by writing, but also with his life in the community. He helped the growth of the church by acquiring property for the church. He served others by caring for the poor, by preaching, and by acting as judge in civil as well as ecclesiastical cases. He became bishop and was an upholder of order in a time of political strife. <sup>119</sup>  
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119. Farmer, David Hugh, The Oxford Dictionary of Saints (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 28-29.



## The Call of God on Martin Luther

Martin Luther was born in the town of Eisleben, Germany, on November 10, 1483. His father, Hans, was a miner, and his mother Margarete, was a member of the Zeigler family from Eisenach. Martin Luther was a country boy and throughout his lifetime he also reverted back to that attitude inwardly and outwardly. 120

His homelife was of singing with his mother and strict discipline from all of the adults in his family. His early school days were also filled with strict discipline which included physical punishment; he never forgot the bitterness he had for the rod at home or at school.

When he was fourteen, he attended a school at Magdeburg, and while there, he and his school-mates visited the monastery of the Brethren of the Common Life. The brethren taught the young men to study the Scriptures, and their influence on him was everlasting. These men made an impression on Luther because of their stark simplicity of the Christian life and their love and sympathy for others.

It was while he was at Magdeburg that he saw a young prince, who had given up his wealth to become a monk, begging throughout the town. This was perhaps the beginning of Luther's call to -----

120. Ritter, Gerhard, Luther--His Life and His Work  
(New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 25.

become a monk. This incident and other incidences created in Luther a feeling that the only way for a person to secure "salvation" would be to embrace a non-secular life. <sup>121</sup> But, he did not act on this call at this time of his life.

Luther attended the University of Erfurt, studied philosophy, and was taught Ockhamist voluntarism and nominalism. He graduated from the university in 1505, and his father wanted him to go into the legal profession.

Luther was traveling back to the University of Erfurt after a visit with his parents when a storm broke with flashes of lightning and great jolts of thunder. A bolt of lightning flashed and struck Martin Luther, thus knocking him to the ground. Terror raced throughout his body and mind. Because of all of his religious background and his mother's superstitions about natural events and their relationship to human affairs, Martin was forced to see the hand of God upon him. Although he was not physically harmed, He had been penetrated by the sense of God's inexorable and terrible judgment firsthand. <sup>122</sup> Luther cried out to Saint Anne, his father's patron saint as the heavenly guardian of miners, promising, "Saint Anne, save me! I will become monk!" When he raised from the ground, he had been

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121. Pittenger, W. Norman, Martin Luther--The Great Reformer (New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1969), 22-23.

122. Ibid., 47-48.

"saved," his vowed made, and his call obtained. 123

His call led to write many books and to lead the Reformation of the Church, thus beginning Protestantism. His impact on the world of Christianity is immeasurable. His call to the ministry was dramatic and so was the life of Martin Luther.

### The Call of John Wesley

The call of John Wesley was not as dramatic as Martin Luther's call, but as a small boy of five years, John Wesley was pulled from a fire which occurred at the rectory where he and his family lived. His father, the rector, could not save the young boy from the fire so he fell upon his knees and commended his soul into the hands of God. But, John was saved. Because of his rescue by some men making a human ladder to reach him, he always thought that he was "a brand plucked from the burning," as his mother referred to him. John, who had been born on June 28, 1703, was a very special child to her.

John Wesley was educated at the Charterhouse School in London at age eleven, where he regularly attended church and went to communion. He later stated that he considered himself to be a

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123. Ibid., 48.

Christian even at that time in his life. 124

Wesley went to Oxford in 1720, when he had just turned seventeen. He was very interested in his studies and worked very hard on them, thus refusing to participate in almost all of the trivial aspects of the university life. His fun was in writing poetry and hymns. 125

At Oxford, Wesley began writing his now famous journal. It was also at this time he began to seriously think about going into the ministry, when one of his friends died and he spoke at the funeral in 1725. His father, Samuel, advised him that he did not think it was what he should do, but his mother, Susanna, encouraged him to go and do the work of serving God. Soon, his father joined in his wife's encouragement, and John became an ordained deacon in the Anglican Church on September 19, 1725. Then, three years later, he received ordination as priest.

Wesley was called into the ministry before he was ever converted. His conversion occurred at Aldersgate when he felt his "heart strangely warmed," on May 24, 1738, when he truly trusted in Christ, and Christ alone. 126

Wesley's call led to a split in the Church as it was in his

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124. Haddal, Ingvar, John Wesley (London: The Epworth Press, 1961), 23.

125. Ibid., 27.

126. Joy, James Richard, John Wesley's Awakening (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1937), 64.

time, even though he did not want any split to occur. He left the Christian world at new denomination, the Methodists, hundreds of writings, and many various subjects. In speaking of the call of God as to if a person must have the call before he or she ever preaches, he stated, "I allow that it is highly expedient, whoever preaches in his name should have an outward call as well as inward call; but that it is absolutely necessary I deny." 127

James Laver states in his book called, Wesley, that John Wesley was a man in whom the love of God and the love of man burned with a steady flame which no opposition could quench, and whose heat will still be felt and whose light will still be seen as long as the Christian faith endures.<sup>128</sup>

#### The Call of God on Billy Graham

William (Billy) Franklin Graham, Jr., was born on November 7, 1918, and was the first child. His parents received him as a blessing from and God, and they prayed that he would be called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. His Christian family, which lived on a farm, taught him discipline, and how to be responsible. His mother encouraged him to be a leading part of the family devotions, and it was then that Billy began memorizing  
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127. Niebuhr, op. cit., 26.

128. Laver, James, Wesley. (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons LTD, 1938), 160.

Bible verses. Billy Graham's first passage was Proverbs 3:6, which states, " In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." 129 And, many times, the Bible verses got through to him.<sup>130</sup>

When Billy Graham was a teenager, he rebelled against the Bible devotions at his home because he considered them to be "hogwash." It was during this time that his father and thirty of the men from his hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina, held a prayer meeting for the city in May, 1934. During the meeting, the leader, Vernon Patterson prayed that "out of Charlotte the Lord would raise up someone to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth."

These men persuaded a well-known evangelist, Mordecai Ham, to conduct a campaign in Charlotte. Billy Graham was sixteen years old and was starting his senior year in high school. He attended several services of this revival meeting, and he was personally confronted his own hour of decision. When recalling the commitment Billy later stated, "there were no tears, no blazing vision, no gift of tongues. Right there I made my decision for Christ. It was as simple as that and as conclusive." His newly found conviction and definite commitment led to an

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129. Proverbs 3:6, op. cit., N.I.V.

130. Lockard, David, The Unheard Billy Graham (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publishers, 1971), 12-13.

inward peace which undergirded his future decisions. From that time onward, Billy was determined to be "God's man." 131

Billy Graham attended Bob Jones University where he found that it was not the place for him and his favorite sport, baseball. He transferred to Florida Bible Institute, in Tampa, Florida, which later became known as Trinity College and moved to Clearwater, Florida. Billy became passionately concerned with the need for the people of God to live and walk like the people of God when two Christians that he admired were accused of serious moral defections. This incident made Billy determined that nothing should ever be allowed into his life, whether known or unknown, that would harm the name of Christ.

At the end of a failed romance, Billy Graham decided that Christ was to come first in his life. He stated, "The Lord Jesus shall have all of me, I have determined to follow him at any costs." 132

As Billy Graham's deepening Christian experience caused him to think about the what it would mean to accept what he knew was God calling him into the ministry. He thought heavily about what the call would mean-- surrendering all his ambitions and endeavors to God. The night after a speech by the dean of his college in which the dean made a compelling appeal to spread the Word of

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131. Ibid., 14.

132. Ibid., 16.

God, Billy Graham, after praying on knees on the eighteenth hole, on the golf course, said, "All-right, Lord, if you want me, you have got me." 133

From the moment Billy Graham gave in to God's call, he and his whole life changed. He became a man with a mission, to spread God's word throughout the world, which he has done ever since, and continues to this day.

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133. Ibid.



## CHAPTER 5

### God May Call Through Dreams, Visions, and Angelic Messages in the Future

God may call persons in the future through the same major ways in which He has in the past-- especially through dreams, visions, and angelic messages. We can only speculate what the future will hold, but we can reason what should occur to the persons in the future, based on the voices through which God has called the persons in the past centuries.

#### God May Call Persons Through Dreams

Nowadays, there is a growing resurgence of certain persons who are being drawn to God through God's call, and this call is very attention getting. Even persons who were not really Christians are being informed by God of the need for the people of God to come together as one Church. Ministers are being called to go to the people of this generation to prepare them for what is to come. But, what is to come is a question which can only be answered by God and His Word.

After I conducted private interviews of fifty seminary

students and twenty-eight Bible college students, there seemed to be a consensus that they had been called to the ministry through many very diverse ways. Some were called by the ways mentioned earlier, such as the voice of the inborn imperative, the voice of a pursuing haunting insistence, the voice of the Church's call, the voice of family and friends, the voice of a growing awareness of mission, the voice of selecting a vocation, the voice of a direct command, and the area that we are studying, the voice of dreams, visions, and angelic messages.

Few of them were called by dreams. In fact, only five of these persons had had a dream which called them to begin thinking about going into the ministry. But, the significance of these five calls is that it seems that these five out of seventy-eight persons is actually a large percent when it is compared to the total number of persons who are presently in the ministry. These present pastors represent a time when God chose these persons to go into the ministry by other means than are mentioned in the Scriptures. This idea has led to the assumption that in the next few years, God is going to call persons into the ministry by dreams because it is a very good means in which He can get the person's attention. The person cannot run from the dream because it is contained in the person's mind. The dream may easily be recalled because God has a way to remind us of something which He wants us to remember-- by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will be the primary means through which God will

convict the persons. It is by His convicting these persons in their awakening hours and while they are asleep that God will let them know that He has a task for them to do.

God will let more and more persons dream dreams, as it is stated in Joel 2:28, and in Acts 2:17, "Your old men will dream dreams." This passage refers to the time in which it will be "in the last days," when "God will pour out His Spirit on all people." <sup>134</sup> Many persons may want to deny that we are in the last days, but they must realize that each day that passes brings us closer to the glorious day of the coming of the Lord. Other persons may think that the passage that was just stated is talking about old men and only old men. But, some of the persons who are being called into the ministry are not young first vocation persons, but are persons who are in their second careers. God will continue to keep this trend going as He calls more and more persons to proclaim the Word to His people.

#### God May Call Persons Through Visions

God will not call persons just through dreams. Joel 2:28, as well as Acts 2:17, states, "Your young men will see visions." This part of the passage does not refer only to young men,  
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134. Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17, op. cit., N.I.V.

because God will probably not limit Himself to calling persons into the ministry through visions who are young men. He will also call old men, young women, and old women, because He says in Joel 2:29, "Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." <sup>135</sup> If God will pour out His Spirit on all persons, it is reasonable to assume that He will let any of them see visions too.

As we get nearer to the Last Days when Christ will come again, and if we believe that we are really in the last days, it seems that we are going to see an outpouring of God's Spirit like no other generation has ever seen. God will use visions to inform His people as to what they should be doing, especially the persons He wants to be ministers. The visions will not be understood by everyone, especially the scholastic persons who have to have an explanation and a tangible demonstration. It seems that the persons who have never had such an experience have doubt and skepticism. They do not understand that God does not give everyone the understanding of one of His mysteries, such as visions. Jesus referred to such persons who will not "see" nor "hear," somewhat like the people in Matthew 13:13-15, in which Jesus refers to Isaiah 6:9-10. This passage states, "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: 'You will be ever -----"

135. Joel 2:29, op. cit., N.I.V.

hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; They have hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes." Jesus is stating that the people have spiritual blindness, spiritual deafness, and spiritual deterioration. These people lack any spiritual discernment, and they will not be included in the dreams or visions because of their disbelief.

As the end of time is nearing, even the persons who are known as the leading scholars of the day who say they do not believe, will be called to the ministry through visions. The reason this fact will be so is that as the prophecies are fulfilled, these persons will come to the realization that they cannot explain everything, especially the mysteries of God, their hardened hearts will become broken, and Jesus will show them the way.

The persons who will have visions will not be afraid of telling other persons about the visions. All the Lord's people, the believers in Jesus Christ, everywhere will have respect for these persons just as the persons in the Old Testament times had for persons who had visions. Persons who will have visions will help the others as they minister to them as the world comes to an end. The ministers' purpose will be to help everyone understand that God does not want them to perish, but He wants them to

repent and turn from their evil ways. 136

#### God May Call Through Angelic Messages

God may have to use angels to deliver messages to His people in order to call persons to the ministry. Ours is an age when it is very difficult to get someone's attention. We are bombarded with thousands of advertisements daily, and our minds have to pick and choose what we are to remember. Our minds do not always choose the correct thing to remember. Because the advertisements are not going to end any time soon, God may have to send angels with His messages to get and to keep the attention span of a person.

It has been many years since any persons have publicly announced that God has sent an angel with the message of calling them into the ministry. The reason is that the persons who have had a call into the ministry by angels are afraid of announcing it. The people of today would think that the person would have to be losing his or her mind. The people of the future will soon know that the end of time is at hand and will, hopefully, accept people who are called into the ministry by angelic messages. The true believers will soon trust in the people who say they have been called by angels, but they will still have to test the persons to make certain that the person is of God and what he or she

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136. 2 Peter 3:9b, op. cit., N.I.V.

says is from God's angels. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 states for the Church to, "Test everything." 137 And, in 1 John 4:1, "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." 138

1 John gives the Church the way to test the false prophets which will come into the world to try and confuse God's people. 1 John 4:2-3, it states, "This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world." 139

The people of the future, who will be discovering how quickly the Scriptures are being fulfilled, will not be surprised to hear about angels giving messages to persons. The Church will be welcoming these last days. As the bride of Christ, the Church will honor what the angels have told these people in order that it will be ready for its bridegroom. The bridegroom will come soon and take the persons who have been called to be Christians home with Him and His Glory. The church cries, "Come!"

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137. 1 Thessalonians 5:21, op. cit., N.I.V.

138. 1 John 4:1, op. cit., N.I.V.

139. 1 John 4:2-3, op. cit., N.I.V.

## CHAPTER 6

### God May Call Through Other Phenomena

In the future, God may use other forms of communication to get His message of calling someone into the ministry across to the person. There are many means of communication that God could use. It seems that the use of the telephone, television, the telegraph, the radio, and even the fax machines are going to remain in use in the future. But, it seems that God will use other means in which to communicate His will to us.

God will still use the Scriptures to speak to us. The Scriptures will continue to tell God's people what is to come in the future and to keep their faith, no matter how disheartening this task will appear to be. The Scriptures may be the most important way God will speak in the future.

### Why Not Theophany?

The question is asked, "Why will God not use theophany to call persons into the ministry in the future?" God used theophany in the Old Testament times, and it is recorded at least nine times, according to William M. Baker, in his book, The Ten



Theophanies." Theophany literally means, " A supposed visible appearance of God." 140

According to William M. Baker, the first theophany is recorded in the Book of Genesis, in Chapter 18. In this chapter, God visits Abraham at his tent in the appearance of a man, who eats, converses with him, and to whom Abraham is to make supplication for his relative, Lot. 141

The second recorded theophany is in Genesis 32. Jacob wrestles with a man all night, until the man blesses him. It is at this time that the man, who is God, names Jacob, Israel, which means "he struggles with God," and Jacob named the place, Peniel, which means, "face of God." 142

The third theophany is recorded in Exodus 24. God appears to Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel, who eat and drink. God tells Moses to go to the mountain, to stay there, and He would give the tablets of stone, with the law and commands that He had written for their instruction. 143

There are six other recorded references of theophany in the

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140. "Theophany," Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1960), 1511.

141. Baker, William M., The Ten Theophanies (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph and Company, 1883), 21.

142. Genesis 18, op. cit., N.I.V.

143. Exodus 24:9-13, op.cit., N.I.V.

Old Testament, such as Joshua 5:13-15,<sup>144</sup> Judges 6:11-24,<sup>145</sup> Judges 13,<sup>146</sup> Ezekiel 1,<sup>147</sup> and Daniel 3.<sup>148</sup> The last one recorded in the Old Testament is in the Book of Daniel in Chapter 10:4-19.<sup>149</sup>

The New Testament has no so-called theophany recorded in it. That is because when Jesus came as the Incarnate Christ, He no longer had to reveal Himself in this manner. In Jesus the sum of all theophanies is realized as God made Himself man, so as to reconcile God and man.

Therefore, the answer to the question is that the next time God appears to man, He will be Jesus Christ at His second coming. It will be at this time that He will reveal Himself to all true believers, as their Lord and Savior, but He will also reveal Himself to the non-believers who will perish because of their disbelief.

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144. Baker, op. cit., 99.

145. Ibid., 115.

146. Ibid., 130.

147. Ibid., 153.

148. Ibid., 175.

149. Ibid., 198.

## CHAPTER 7

### Conclusion

The voices through which God calls are as diverse as they are different. The call of God is a phenomena which is brought about through many different ways. But, no matter which way a person is called, whether it is through dreams, visions, angelic messages, or any other of the forms mentioned earlier, one fact remains-- God does the calling. It is the responsibility of the person called to accept the call. If a person refuses the call, God will send His Holy Spirit to convict and to convince the person to accept the call. The call may be in the preaching ministry, the pastoral ministry, the priestly ministry, or a combination of all of these ministries, or He may be calling the person to a teaching ministry or just to be a person who has the gift of giving, but no matter what part of the ministry which the person is called unto, he or she must accept the call by answering, "Here I am, Send me!"<sup>150</sup>

It is as the person accepts the call of God that the person must realize that the "giving in" to the call of God is not a smooth path with no problems. The road to doing God's will will

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150. Isaiah 6:8b, op. cit., N.I.V.

be filled with trials and tribulations because Satan will use his demon forces to try and convince the person that he or she is not only not worthy, but that the person cannot accept the call because the person will be a failure. But, the person must remember the call, and accept it, and be faithful to that call no matter what the demons say, or what unbelievers say, or what certain denominational standards say. The person must remember that God has called that person, and the person must do the task that God has sent the person to do for Him and His Kingdom.

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