

The Doctrine of Effectual Calling

I. Understanding the Gospel Call

Matthew 11:28-30

Mark 16:15-16

Acts 17:30

Romans 10:12-14

Revelation 22:17

Concerning the relationship of the Gospel call to the doctrine of election, Anthony Hoekema has aptly observed:

The Scriptures clearly teach that the gospel must be preached to all. Whether we can square this with particular election is another question. But the rule for our preaching must always be the revealed will of God. In the last analysis, it is God's business to bring into harmony the predetermined outcome of the preaching of the gospel with the general offer of salvation. We are bound to the means God has prescribed for bringing people to salvation. And the most important of these means is the preaching of the gospel. (*Saved By Grace*, p. 68)

II. Understanding the Effectual Call

Wayne Grudem has helpfully defined effectual calling, which he refers to as *effective calling*, this way: "Effective calling is an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which he summons people to himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith" (*Systematic Theology*, p. 693).

John 6:44-45

Romans 8:28-30

1 Corinthians 1:9; 22-24

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

1 Peter 2:9-10; 5:10

Wayne Grudem offers a typical description of the difference between effectual calling and the Gospel call when he writes:

In distinction from effective calling, which is entirely an act of God, we may talk about the *gospel call* in general which comes through human speech. This gospel call is offered to all people, even those who do not accept it. Sometimes this gospel call is referred to as *external calling* or *general calling*. By contrast, the effective calling of God that actually brings about a willing response from the person who hears it is sometimes called *internal calling*. The gospel call is general and external and often rejected, while the effective call is particular, internal, and *always* effective. However, this is not to diminish the importance of the gospel call – it is the means God has appointed through which the effective calling will come. Without the gospel call, no one could respond and be saved! 'How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?' (Rom. 10:14). (*Systematic Theology*, p. 693)