

(This is an excerpt from Brian Abasciano, “Paul’s Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9.1-9: An Intertextual and Theological Exegesis” (Ph.D. thesis; University of Aberdeen, 2004). This doctoral thesis has been revised and published under the same title. The original version is presented here since it is fuller.)

The mention of Romans 4 leads us to consider the use of the verb λογίζομαι in 9:8, since it is used extensively (11^x) in the former location. There it refers to God’s reckoning of those who believe in Christ to be righteous, and thus heirs of the promise to Abraham, equivalent to the seed of Abraham.¹ Those who are merely ethnic descendants of Abraham (roughly equal to οἱ ἐκ νόμου)² are not heirs, but those who are of the faith of Abraham (τῶ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ). Λογίζεται in 9:8 does not so much emphasize God’s sovereign freedom in election as commonly suggested,³ but the fact that God’s call in Paul’s argument refers to a designation or naming, i.e., a divine reckoning of election. Stemming from Romans 4, the resonant connotation of the word in collocation with seed and promise is to reckon, regard, or identify those who believe in Christ as the true seed of Abraham, who are heir to God’s promise to him. Genesis 21:12 makes it clear that the seed referred to is the *covenant* seed of Abraham.⁴

¹ Τῶ σπέρματι in v. 13 = κληρονόμοι in v. 14. This use of λογίζομαι supports the position that the language of justification in Paul refers to covenant membership (see e.g., N. T. Wright, *Climax*, 148, 203, 214, foreshadowed by Ellis, *Paul’s Use*, 121, who follows and cites A. Fridrichsen, “Jesus, St. Paul, and St. John,” 50f.), a now common view (see note 15 in ch. 5 below). Cf. E. P. Sanders’ (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, 544-46) position that the language of righteousness in Paul is transfer terminology indicating entrance into the body of the saved.

² This is to state the issue in the conceptual terms of Rom 2 and 9. Paul’s “of the Law” terminology in Rom 4 certainly does not primarily refer to ethnicity, but it most probably includes it. Those who keep the whole Jewish Law including its prime boundary markers of circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath, are primarily ethnic Jews. The two concepts (i.e., total Law keeping and Jewishness) are inseparable. This gives some support to the so-called New Perspective on Paul, though I would not embrace it without qualification. On the mounting scholarly opposition to the New Perspective, see note 213 in ch. 2 above; on my view of the New Perspective, see chapter 5 below.

³ E.g. by Cranfield, 476; Byrne, 294; Moo, 577 n. 34; Fitzmyer, 561. After all, Paul is defending God’s calling of a spiritual Israel on the basis of faith rather than ethnicity as faithful to what he had spoken.

⁴ Wright’s depiction of Paul as a covenant theologian is right on target, and finds corroboration from our investigation of Paul’s engagement with Scripture. See *Climax*; idem, “Romans and the Theology of Paul,” as well as Richard Hays’ (“Adam, Israel, Christ—The Question of Covenant in the Theology of Romans: A Response to Leander E. Keck and N. T. Wright”) call for such exegetical corroboration of Wright’s approach. In Hays’ judgment, “Future work must focus on the question of ‘covenant’ in Paul’s theology. This issue is crucial for any reconstruction of the theology of Romans . . .” (84). The current investigation helps to fill this need.

The verb κληθήσεται in Paul's quotation of LXX Genesis 21:12 clearly has the meaning "to name/recognize/identify/designate." It translates the Hebrew verb נקא which has the same meaning. The intent of Genesis 21:12 in both the MT and the LXX is to indicate that Abraham's covenant descendants would be identified by descent from Isaac. There is little doubt that this is the meaning of the term in Genesis. But is this its meaning in Romans 9?

Most notably, Cranfield has argued for this understanding.⁵ But BDAG have suggested that in Romans 9:7 the sense of the verb approaches that of "to be" and translates, "in (through) Isaac you are to have your descendants."⁶ However, this ignores the LXX attempt to translate נקא and the depth of Paul's engagement with the Genesis narrative. Moreover, BDAG actually make a point of emphasis here, and do not deny the naming sense to the verb.⁷ "Very oft. the emphasis is to be placed less on the fact that the name is such and such, than on the fact that the bearer of the name actually is what the name says about him."⁸ But it must be remembered that the depiction of existential state derives from the name/naming and cannot be separated from it. BDAG leave determination of the proper emphasis in translation to the subjective feeling of the interpreter. But we have two objective factors which help fix the sense of "name/identify."

The first is the Old Testament background already discussed. There the verb clearly means "to name," just as it does in Paul's quotations from Hosea 2:25 and 2:1 (Heb./LXX) in 9:25-26. It is true that both the Hebrew and LXX Greek can bear a fuller meaning in which the name expresses character or existence; that is the case here. But as implied above, this is a fuller use of the term rather than an alternative, and translating more weakly by "to be" obscures the richness of the term and the derivation of the

⁵ Cranfield, 474. Cf. Dunn, 540-41; Zeller, *Juden*, 119 n. 155. For a consideration of Paul's use of "calling" language in Romans 9-11 against the background of Acts, see R. W. Wall, "Israel and the Gentile Mission in Acts and Paul: A Canonical Approach," 452-57.

⁶ BDAG, s.v. ἰδ; italics removed.

⁷ Moo, 575, appears to miss this point when he claims that κληθήσεται "could here mean *no more than* 'shall be'" and cites BDAG; emphasis mine. But he is correct to call BDAG's translation a paraphrase.

⁸ BDAG, s.v. καλέω, ἰδ.

contemplated character of the resulting state of existence. Second, Romans 9:8, which interprets 9:7b/Gen 21:12, uses the term λογίζομαι (“to reckon/regard”) in place of καλέω. Therefore, we have solid contextual evidence that Paul took 9:7’s κληθήσεται in the sense “be named/regarded.”

Some commentators would retain the more theological sense of call as a creative summons of God to become part of his people.⁹ Schreiner points to Romans 4:17 where καλέω appears to mean “call/summon into existence.”¹⁰ But upon closer examination, it is rather the naming sense which stands behind the verb in this instance. The phrase in question literally reads: “. . . before whom he believed, God who gives life to the dead and calls the things not existing as existing” (κατέναντι οὗ ἐπίστευσεν θεοῦ τοῦ ζωοποιούντος τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα). Rather than the idea of God summoning things into existence per se, the thought is of a designation which effects the new existence, as at the original creation. The ὡς and participle support such an interpretation,¹¹ as does the fact that a summoning sense requires us to imagine the divine word as addressed to things which do not exist.¹² Even if a summoning sense be maintained, the OT background and the immediate context are of even greater weight for determining the meaning of καλέω in 9:7 than is the possible echo of 4:17. But if we are correct, then the echo of 4:17 becomes even more significant, for in the context of Paul’s

⁹ Moo, 575-76; Schreiner, 495-96; cf. Dunn, 540-41.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Cranfield, 244, admits the difficulty of ὡς for the common translation, but suggests it expresses consequence, a rare meaning in the NT. But there is no need to appeal to such an uncommon meaning. ὡς can introduce a characteristic quality of a thing and bear the meaning “to be”: “calling the things not existing as/to be existing” (see BDAG, s.v. 3, and the UBS Greek-English dictionary).

¹² This is not impossible, just less likely than a meaning which does not require such an awkward metaphor. Philo’s phraseology in *Spec. Leg.* 4.187 (τὰ γὰρ μὴ ὄντα ἐκάλεσεν εἰς τὸ εἶναι) could be adduced in support of this idea. But notice that his construction lacks ὡς and a participle. The construction, εἰς τὸ + infinitive is best seen as denoting result here so that the phrase refers to God’s declaration (not summons) which results in existence. I am not really quibbling with the translation “call into being” as much as the perceived idea which lies behind it, in my view, a declaration/designation rather than a summons. Both views discern a creative/effectual call. Byrne, ‘Sons of God’-‘Seed of Abraham,’ 131ff., makes much of “καλεῖν as the exercise of a power virtually synonymous with creation itself” and assigns it a basic meaning of “call into being” throughout Rom 9:6-29. But his approach founders on a fact he acknowledges—Paul’s explicit interpretation of καλεῖν in terms of recognition. This, together with the fact that the verb carries a naming sense in its OT context, militates against Byrne’s apparent suggestion that Paul interprets it in Gen 21:12 to mean “call into being.”

argument there, the call of God which creates refers not only to the promised birth of Isaac,¹³ but even more directly to Abraham's seed/heirs who will inherit his divine promise, both Jew and Gentile, 4:17 supporting 4:16. The designating call of God establishes its multi-ethnic objects as his (Abrahamic) covenant people.

This naming sense has considerable import for understanding Paul's argument in Romans 9.¹⁴ A problem with many readings of Romans 9 is that the crucial concept of calling is understood as a creative summons rather than a creative naming. When we understand that a creative naming is at issue, we can see more clearly that Paul's argument does concern who is truly elect of God, i.e., who bears the name/status of God's covenant people who are heir to the covenant promises.¹⁵ So when Paul takes up God's justice in how he has fulfilled his promises, he is defending God's right to designate the Church as his covenant people, based not on ethnicity but on faith (hence, 9:12, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος), rather than God's right to choose some to summon to become part of his people. The latter lends to a Calvinistic predestinarian emphasis in the passage, while the former finds such an emphasis foreign to the text.¹⁶

¹³ Schreiner, 495.

¹⁴ J.-N. Aletti, *Israël et la loi dans la lettre aux romains*, 173 n. 2, considers the divine call concept to be the thread which ties the different arguments of Rom 9 together, and thus more important to the argument than the concept of election.

¹⁵ Howard Clark Kee's (*Knowing the Truth: A Sociological Approach to New Testament Interpretation*, 5, 63, 70-102) conclusion (following Alan Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* and numerous works by Jacob Neusner) that community identity was the central issue between early Christianity and Judaism in the first century strengthens our conclusions concerning the nature of calling and the concern of Paul's argument in Rom 9-11. Indeed, recall Kee's statement quoted earlier: "It is now evident that the major issue in Judaism from the time of the return of the Israelites from captivity in Babylon—especially in the two centuries before and after the birth of Jesus—was: What are the criteria for participation in the covenant people?" (idem, 5). See also James C. Walters, *Ethnic Issues in Paul's Letter to the Romans: Changing Self-Definitions in Earliest Roman Christianity*, 20: "Judaism was no unified entity, but rather a cluster of movements engaged in self-definition."

¹⁶ Cf. the classic Arminian approach to Rom 9 which argues that Paul defends God's right to fix the terms of salvation as based on faith rather than works-righteousness (see James Arminius, "Analysis of the Ninth Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans"). Although steeped in a Reformation understanding of Paul and the Law, which was not privy to the refinements of later centuries, Arminius' approach is insightful and suggestive, and deserving of far more attention than it has received in modern discussion. Cf. L. Cerfaux, "Le privilège d'Israël selon Saint Paul," 11, who finds that *καλεῖν* can indicate election, though rarely, citing Isa 41:9 and 51:2; we would question his judgment as to its rarity. Contrast C. Müller's (*Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 78f.) treatment of *καλεῖν* as a term of predestination in Rom 9-11, referring to a call which creates faith in the individual. Berger, "Abraham," 83, supports our understanding of Paul's argument as having to do with defending God's right to elect based on faith. He rightly argues that Paul's

This conception sees that corporate election and heirship are at issue, not individual salvation per se, though the former directly impinges on the latter; the individual's salvation depends on whether or not he is part of the elect people. For Paul, calling and election are virtually synonymous. Calling is the application and appellation of election, the act of designating a group as God's elect people. This should inform our understanding of calling in 9:12 and finds confirmation near the end of the chapter in the Hosea quotations which bear the same naming sense (9:24-26).

Excursus: The Implications of Calling in Genesis 21:12 and Romans 9 for Understanding
the Concept in the Rest of the New Testament

The naming sense of the call concept evident in Genesis 21:12 and Romans 9 is suggestive for our understanding of the idea in the rest of the New Testament. The concept has two basic senses in the NT, exemplified by the two basic senses of the key term, the verb καλέω: (1) to name/identify/designate; (2) to invite/summon.¹⁷ It is typically assumed that the figurative/theological concept of calling developed from the summoning sense of the terminology.¹⁸ The Christian calling vis-à-vis salvation or service is generally understood to be a divine summons or invitation to that salvation or service, a call which many take to be effectual or creative. But, since Paul regards God's call as a naming in Romans 9, the opportunity arises to reassess the figurative concept of calling in the Pauline corpus and the rest of the NT. I would submit that the figurative Christian calling did not develop from the summoning denotation, but from the naming sense, and refers to God's designation of the Christian community as the elect people of

use of Abraham in Rom 9 does not differ at its core from his usage of Abraham in Rom 4.

¹⁷ As my use of multiple terms shows, there are various nuances within these two basic meanings. But they all fit under the basic rubrics of naming or summoning, and we will use these broad designations for the sake of simplicity.

¹⁸ See e.g. BDAG, s.v. καλέω, 4. Cf. treatments of the concept in the standard dictionaries: e.g., K. L. Schmidt, *TDNT*, 3.487-96; L. Coenen, *NIDNTT*, 1.271-76; Colin G. Kruse, *DPL*, 84-85; G. W. Bromiley, *ISBE*, 1.580-82. The article of J. Eckert, *EDNT*, 240-44, is notable for showing awareness of the naming sense of calling in relation to salvation, citing Rom 9:25-26 (see p. 241), though he does not explore the ramifications of the observation. For what may be the most extensive treatment of Paul's concept of calling, see now Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church*.

God, his beloved children, who, as members of his family, bear the name of God and his Christ.¹⁹ The calling of the individual Christian would refer to her entrance into the Christian community, i.e. her conversion, when she would come to share in the name and attendant blessings of the eschatological messianic community. In terms of speech-act theory, such naming is performative language which transforms the status of its objects as well as their objective and existential reality.²⁰ More specifically, naming is a perlocutionary act which may be identified as a verdictive or declarative utterance, an ontological and institutional action of God which effects a new state of existence and brings about a divinely actuated “world-to-word-fit.”

The verb *καλέω* occurs 148 times in the NT, the noun *κλησικς*, 11 times, and the adjective *κλητικός*, 10 times. The naming sense occurs far more often in the use of the verb than does the summoning sense. I have identified 78 indisputable cases of the former,²¹ 34 instances of the latter,²² and 36 cases which are usually considered instances of divine summoning, but are uncertain in light of the present argument.²³ It is my contention that all or almost all²⁴ of these are instances of the naming of Christians, whether this take the

¹⁹ W. W. Klein has argued this same basic point with respect to Paul’s thought alone in a provocative article which has gone almost completely unrecognized (“Paul’s Use of *KALEIN*: A Proposal”; though Eckert, *ibid*, does list it in his bibliography) and less technically in his *New Chosen People* (199-209). Interestingly, Klein eschews significant attention to Rom 9:7 and takes his cue from Rom 9:25-26 based on the obvious naming sense of *καλέω* in those verses evidenced by the double accusative. By contrast, we begin with Rom 9:7, yet arrive at similar conclusions.

²⁰ On speech-act theory in biblical interpretation, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, especially pp. 16-19, 282-312, 361-67, and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is there a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*.

²¹ Matt 1:21, 23, 25; 2:23; 5:9, 19 (2x); 21:13; 22:43, 45; 23:7, 8, 9, 10; 27:8; Luke 1:13, 31, 32, 35, 36, 59, 60, 61, 62, 76; 2:4, 21 (2x), 23; 6:15, 46; 7:11; 8:2; 9:10; 10:39; 15:19, 21; 19:2, 29; 20:44; 21:37; 22:3; 22:25; 23:33; John 1:42; Acts 1:12, 19, 23; 3:11; 4:18; 7:58; 8:10; 9:11; 10:1; 13:1; 14:12; 15:22; 15:37; 27:8, 14, 16; 28:1; Rom 9:7, 25, 26; 1 Cor 15:9; Heb 2:11; 3:13; 11:18; James 2:23; 1 Pet 3:6; 1 John 3:1; Rev 1:9; 11:8; 12:9; 16:16; 19:11, 13.

²² Matt 2:7, 15; 4:21; 9:13; 20:8; 22:3 (2x), 4, 8, 9; 25:14; Mark 1:20; 2:17; 3:31; 11:17; Luke 5:32; 7:39; 14:7, 8 (2x), 9, 10 (2x), 12, 13, 16, 17, 24; 19:13; John 2:2; Acts 24:2; 1 Cor 10:27; Heb 11:8; Rev 19:9.

²³ Rom 4:17; 8:30 (2x); 9:12, 24; 1 Cor 1:9; 7:15, 17, 18 (2x), 20, 21, 22, 24; Gal 1:6, 15; 5:8, 13; Eph 4:1, 4; Col 3:15; 1 Thes 2:12; 4:7; 5:24; 2 Thes 2:14; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 5:4; 9:15; 1 Pet 1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10; 2 Pet 1:3. It should be noted that the following discussion is limited mostly, but not exclusively, to these disputed cases, precisely because they are disputed.

²⁴ See my treatment of possible objections below. The fact that we are dealing with what is widely recognized as technical terminology (Schmidt, *TDNT*, 3.489, asserts that it is “clear that in the NT *καλεῖν* is

form of explicit identification (as in the undisputed 1 John 3:1) or appointment (e.g., Heb. 5:4) or some other nuance. The same holds true for every occurrence of κλησικ and κλητός with the sole exception of Matthew 22:14, where κλητός clearly means “invited.”²⁵ We might even say that naming is the unmarked meaning of καλέω and cognates; when present, any idea of summoning derives from the context rather than the word itself.²⁶

When we posit the naming sense of call for the passages traditionally understood as a summons, we find that it makes even better sense. So in Romans 1:1 and 1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul is a called/designated apostle and his Roman readers are named/designated Christians among the Gentiles (Rom 1:6), that is, they are designated/identified as Christ’s; they are named/identified his holy ones (Rom 1:7; cf. 1 Cor 1:2). For the Corinthians to consider their calling was for them to consider their conversion (1 Cor 1:26), the time they were designated children of God or saints. They were to remain in the life situation they were in when they were called, that is, became Christians/were designated as God’s own (1 Cor 7:15-24). And the addressees of 1 Peter were called/designated (children) by the Holy Father God, and therefore were to be holy as he (1 Pet 1:14-17). While we could multiply examples, these should suffice to make the point.

Intriguingly, name/naming language and familial themes often occur in connection with the call concept. Paul’s identity as a called apostle, received through Jesus Christ, the *Son* of God, had its ultimate purpose in bringing glory to the *name* (τοῦ ὀνόματος) of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:1-5), as did the called status of Paul’s Roman addressees (1:5-6), to

a technical term for the process of salvation. . . . we may and must assume that there is an element of technical usage even in passages where it is not obvious.”) pushes for a uniform meaning throughout the figurative uses of the terms, though it does not absolutely demand it.

²⁵ Κλησικ appears in Rom 11:29; 1 Cor 1:26; 7:20; Eph 1:18; 4:1, 4; Phil 3:14; 2 Thes 1:11; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 3:1; 2 Pet 1:10; and κλητός in Matt 22:14; Rom 1:1, 6, 7; 8:28; 1 Cor 1:1, 2, 24; Jude 1; Rev 17:14. 1 Cor 7:20 is also an exception of sorts, where κλησικ might mean something like “situation in life” (cf. BDAG, s.v. 2). But even if so, the question still remains whether this meaning derives from naming or summoning. I would argue that it relies on naming, an appointment to a life situation rather than a summons to it. Matt 22:14 has puzzled some scholars who assume that it refers to an effectual summons. It then becomes necessary to explain how those who are effectually called can at the same time not be chosen. Recognizing that the term means “invited” just as the cognate verb clearly means “to invite” in the rest of the passage (Matt 22:3, 4, 8, 9) removes the difficulty.

²⁶ However, this may be going too far. On the idea of unmarked meaning, see Mary-Louise Kean, “Markedness.”

whom Paul conveyed grace and peace from God the *Father* (1:7). God's call creates the promised *descendants/family* of Abraham, who is the *father* of all who believe (Rom 4:16-17). Those who are called according to God's purpose are those who have been predestined to conformity to the image of his *Son*, and who are his *brothers* (Rom 8:28-29). Israel is beloved for the sake of the *fathers* (τοὺς πατέρας), "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:28-29). The called saints of Corinth call upon the *name* of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who were called for the purpose of fellowship with the *Son* of God, are exhorted as *brothers* by his *name* (1 Cor 1:9-10). And the Corinthians are exhorted as *brothers* to consider their calling. The author of Ephesians²⁷ grounds his exhortation to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which his readers were called (4:1) with his prayer and doxology addressed to "the *Father* from whom the whole *family* [πατριά] in heaven and on earth is *named* [ὀνομάζεται]" (Eph 3:14-15),²⁸ a calling which is connected to the one God and *Father* (4:4, 6). The Colossians, who were called in one body (3:15; this must be the one body of Christ), were to do everything in the *name* of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the *Father* through him (3:17). Paul encouraged the Thessalonians as a *father* would his own *children* to walk worthy of the God who called them (1 Thes 2:11-12). Perhaps the most striking example comes in 2 Thes 2:11-12, where being worthy of their calling is part of what will result in the *name* of the Lord Jesus being glorified in the Thessalonian believers, and their being glorified in him. Here worthiness of the calling is directly related to bringing glory to the name of the Lord Jesus, most likely because that is the name they bear. Their worthy conduct brings honor to the family name. They are *brothers* who were called with a view toward gaining the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and upon whose behalf God the *Father* was

²⁷ This is not to challenge Pauline authorship of Ephesians, which I hold to, but a recognition that many do argue that he did not author the epistle. Such language generally should not be taken as indicative of my view of authorship on a given NT book.

²⁸ Most translations translate πᾶσα πατριά as "every family" in accordance with normal Greek grammar, but the construction is best understood as "a Hebraism which has affected Koine usage" (the language is from Lincoln, 156, commenting on Eph 2:21 where he cites LXX 1 Chron 28:8; LXX Amos 3:1; Acts 2:36; 17:26; Rom 3:20; 11:26, and references C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, 94-95; he does not see such influence in 3:15) in light of the prior content of the epistle which emphasizes the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ who have been raised up with Christ into the heavenlies (2:6). I do not mean to suggest that the οὖν of 4:1 does not indicate an inference from the whole of the theology of chapters 1-3, the so called indicative of the first half of the letter which then leads to the imperative of the second half, but to recognize that it is most immediately connected to the prayer and doxology of 3:14-21.

invoked to give them comfort and strength (2 Thes 4:14-17). The author of Hebrews considered Christians to be the *seed* of Abraham, *brothers* of Jesus, and holy *brothers* who partake of a heavenly calling (Heb 2:16-3:1). Indeed, “both the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one; for which reason he is not ashamed to *call* them *brothers*, saying, ‘I will proclaim your *name* to my *brothers* . . .’” (Heb 2:11-12). 1 Pet 3:8-9 encourages the type of *brotherly* love (φιλάδελφοι) which returns a blessing for a curse as the purpose of the Christian calling, with a greater purpose of inheriting a blessing. And Jude 1 regards those who are the called as beloved in God the Father. Familial language in connection to calling may also be found in Eph 1:17-18 (the *Father* of glory), Phil 3:13-14 (brothers), and 1 Thes 4:5-6 (brother).

Why all this appellative and familial language in contexts which speak of calling? I would suggest that mention of the name of Jesus Christ as a name appears as much as it does because those who have been called, those who belong to Christ, have been called by his name as his own people, so that they bear his name and have become his family; being in him who is the Son of God, they have become God’s children as well, brothers and sisters of Jesus and one another. As bearers of the divine name, their behavior will bring honor or disgrace to the family name.²⁹ Therefore, exhortations to holy and righteous living which are often the purpose of calling might appeal to the family name/namer, and familial address is often used as an implicit appeal to the familial relationship effected by the naming of the messianic community.

The fact that the theological concept of calling almost always describes Christians and often refers to Christian conversion or existence also argues strongly for the naming sense in such cases. This does not make the summoning sense impossible, but it does render it less likely than naming. For use of the concept as a designation for Christians and their life adheres more closely to a corresponding sense of designation than to one of summons. Moreover, the summoning sense requires an additional conceptual step to arrive at the intended meaning; it requires adding the idea of response to the call so that call means something like “the summons you heard and responded to,” and calling, “the summons which you responded to,” and called, “having responded to the divine

²⁹ On the importance and significance of, and connections between, honor, family, and name in the socio-cultural milieu of the first century Mediterranean world, see Malina, *New Testament World*, 28-62.

summons.” This seems less likely than an explanation which does not necessitate an additional idea, but simply refers to the effective act of naming.³⁰

One might object to this understanding of calling because the concept is often presented in relation to a goal (e.g. 2 Thes 2:14; 1 Tim 6:12) or to present privilege or responsibility (e.g. Col 3:15; 1 Cor 7:15; Gal 5:13), which makes good sense as a summons *to/toward* the goal, privilege or responsibility. However, these passages make just as good sense, even better in light of the evidence we have reviewed, when they are understood as speaking of the purpose or goal of the naming. It is not a summons to or toward something, but an appointment to³¹ or a naming for/with a view toward some responsibility or blessing. The prepositions used in such cases can bear any of these meanings.³² In some cases, it is clear that purpose is in view, as for example, when the construction εἰς τοῦτο is used (1 Pet 2:21; 3:9).³³

A more substantial objection may be made on the basis of three passages in which the preposition εἰς looks like it means “into,” either because of a possible spatial metaphor (in two cases, 1 Pet 2:9 and 1 Thes 2:12) or because of the language of relationship which suggests the idea of entrance (1 Cor 1:9). 1 Pet 2:9 is the most forceful of these because it describes calling as out of (ἐκ) darkness, an obvious spatial metaphor, and εἰς God’s marvelous light. But even here, the meaning of εἰς is more probably “for/with a view toward.” The idea would be that God has named believers so that they are taken out of the darkness of sin and separation from God with a view toward the light of his eternal glory (cf. 1 Pet 5:10, ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν Χριστῷ). This interpretation is supported by two considerations. First, in two of the five

³⁰ Cf. Klein, “KALEIN,” 57 (esp. n. 10).

³¹ Cf. 1 Chr 23:14 LXX where καλέω + εἰς means something like “designate to/name among”; Dan 4:30 LXX: “appointed to/for the purpose of.” Cf. also the use of εἰς with the verb of appointment, τάσσω, to mean “appoint to [eternal life]” in Acts 13:48; “designate/set/devote to” in 1 Cor 16:15; “set/direct to” in Hag 1:5 LXX.

³² The usual preposition in such cases is εἰς. Among the controverted references I have identified, εἰς is used in 1 Cor 1:9; Col 3:15; 1 Thes 2:12; 2 Thes 2:14; 1 Tim 6:12; 1 Pet 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10; ἐν in 1 Cor 7:15, 18, 22; Gal 1:6; Eph 4:4; Col 3:15; ὡς in 1 Cor 7:17; διὰ in Gal 1:15; ἐπί in Gal 5:13; 1 Thes 4:7; and ὑπό in Heb 5:4.

³³ For εἰς τοῦτο as denoting purpose, see BDAG, s.v. εἰς, 4f.

references to calling in 1 Peter, purpose is the certain meaning of attendant responsibility and blessing (2:21; 3:9), while one is not accompanied by a relevant prepositional phrase (1:15), and the other is uncertain as to whether it is a summons or naming to eternal glory (5:10). This slightly favors the idea that the author of 1 Peter would have viewed the positive side of calling in relation to its purpose rather than in relation to a sphere of destination. Secondly, the author continues his sentence with a clear allusion to Hosea 2:1 (Heb./LXX; cf. 2:25), in which *καλέω* clearly has a naming sense. But even if one should still insist on a summoning sense for *καλέω* in this instance, that would not mean it must bear such a sense everywhere else (this also applies to the other individual passages dealt with below). Our case would still stand.

1 Thessalonian 2:12 might also contain a spatial metaphor in the reference to kingdom (*βασιλείαν*). But the kingdom of God is not primarily a spatial reality in the NT, and even if so, it would still make just as good sense for God to call with a view toward that kingdom as to call to it, especially as the call is also for his glory. Moreover, as argued above, the familial language surrounding the passage points toward our view. The situation is much the same with 1 Corinthians 1:9, which states that the Corinthians were called *εἰς* fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. It makes just as good sense to understand fellowship as the purpose of the calling as it does to take it as a reality entered into, especially since the former also implies the latter and Paul immediately goes on to exhort by the *name* of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet another objection might proceed from the fact that calling takes place through (*διὰ*) the gospel (2 Thes 2:14). Must this not mean that the Thessalonians were called through the gospel summons? No, not at all. Rather it probably refers to the bestowal of the Christian name/identity upon placing their faith in the gospel message,³⁴ as the reference to election by faith in the truth immediately preceding suggests.

All of this drives us to call for a reappraisal of the call concept in the New Testament which recognizes that it has to do with naming rather than summoning. If this view be accepted, then the traditional notion of effectual calling would be eliminated, for it is based on the idea of a *summoning* which effectively creates the response of faith and

³⁴ Cf. Klein, "KALEIN," 64.

obedience to the call. While this is not the only possible interpretation of a summoning call—it could simply be used of Christians to emphasize God’s grace in inviting sinful people into his kingdom and glory—the question becomes moot when the summoning background is abandoned. The Christian call is effectual. But it does not create a response; rather it is itself a response to the faith of believers which effectually identifies them as members of the Christian covenant community, bearers of the name of God their Father and of Christ their brother.