

- BUT it was also manifested in the resulting action that they did -- 2:16 *And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.* They were now actively seeking after God, actively seeking the Savior, who is the Christ the Lord.
 - BUT did God persuaded and enabled these shepherds to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to them in the gospel? I believe the answer is YES!
4. Notice the evidence that God persuaded and enabled these shepherds to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to them in the Gospel. Lk.2:17, 18, 20
- a. Evidence #1: what these shepherds did after they had seen Christ the Lord -- 2:17 *“Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.*
- In spite of what these shepherds observed in the stable, that which seemed so contrary to what you might expect to find regarding a person so highly exalted as the Anointed One of God, they still believed what they had been told by the angel of the Lord OVER what they had observed with their human senses.
 - These shepherds enthusiastically and joyfully told others what they had been told concerning Christ.
- b. Evidence #2: the state of heart and mind in which these shepherds returned to their living in the fields watching over their flock. 2:20 *Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told to them.”*
- D. These shepherds left seeing “*Christ the Lord*” that night, wonderfully and forever changed – believing in the Messiah that had come and what He would accomplish, glorifying and praising God for all things that they had heard and seen, and telling others what they had seen and had come to embrace as being true, concerning the Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

V. Applications

- Has God effectually called you to His salvation?
- Let me urge you to make your calling and election sure.
2nd Pet.1:10

The Effectual Calling of the Shepherds

Luke 2:8-20

I. The Necessity of Personally Being “Effectually Called” by God

- Because no sinner can be saved from the eternal wages of their sins against God and forever be favorably accepted by God without being “effectually called” by God.
 - Rom.8:28, 30 *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 8:30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*
- Because of the Biblical Anthropology of Man, which teaches that every aspect of a natural-born person’s being, has been and is thoroughly polluted and permeated by sin.
 - Rom.3:10-12, 3:23; Eph.2:1-3; Jer.17:9; I Cor.2:14; Rom.8:7,8

II. The Meaning of the Phrase “effectual call”

- The word “**call**” is a common word in the N. T. It is used to:
 - 1) To name a person, place or thing, Matt.1:21; 2) To summon, Jn.2:2; 3) To summon to a particular duty, profession, Rom.1:1 and 4) To summon into the particular fellowship of Christ – as used in Rom.1:6 & 7 > “*among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ.” 1:7 “to all who are in Rome beloved of God, called to be saints...”*”
- The word “**effectual**” means “producing the desired effect”
- An “effectual call” is a summons that is able to overcome any and all obstacles, producing, without failure, the desired effect. An effectual call imparts the enablement necessary to answer the call.

III. The Biblical Definition of Being “Effectually Called” (taken from the Shorter Catechism)

- Stated: Biblical Effectual Calling IS the work of God’s Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the Gospel.” (This is what is elsewhere called “being born again” – Jn.3:3-8)

B. Briefly Explained:

1. “of God’s Spirit” – It is the exclusive work of God, particularly, the work of the Holy Spirit, Phil.2:13 > “*for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*”; Jn.3:5
2. “the work” – It is a process over a period of time, that may vary from person to person. It is not an instantaneous act of the Holy Spirit, like justification and adoption. (examples: Nicodemus in Jn.3 vs. the Samaritan women at the well in Jn.4)
3. In this work of “effectual calling”, God does 4 things:
 - a. He convinces the individual’s heart of his or her sin against the God of the Bible and the misery of their sins, both now and hereafter - Rom.6:23a
 - b. He enlightens the individual’s mind in the knowledge of Christ – that there exists a Savior who is able and willing to rescue sinners from the misery of their sins - Rom.6:23b
 - c. He renews the individual’s will – from being naturally at enmity against God to being receptive to God and to God’s revealed will, which is set forth in the Bible. Rom.8:7, 8; Phil.2:13; Rom.5:5
 - d. He persuades and enables that individual to embrace Jesus Christ, as God and as their own personal Savior, who is to be loved and worshipped supremely. Phil.2:13 > “... *for His good pleasure.*” Eph.2:1 “*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*” (Rom.5:5; Ezek.36:26, 27 > a new heart)
4. Notice that the unfailing end result of this work of God’s “effectual calling”, is that the individual, who is so called, is forever made right (accepted) with God, forever becomes an adopted child of God and forever is made a joint-heir with Christ.

IV. A Biblical Illustration of Being Effectually Called by God to Transforming Salvation, Lk.2:8-20

- A. This calling was “of God” – There can be no doubt that what took place that night in the lives of these shepherds, was exclusively the work of God. Though extraordinary in some aspects, some aspects are common.

- One being that it was God who took the initiate in making this effectual calling a reality. God came seeking them.
 - The Second being that this effectual calling was not caused by nor owing to any good works that these shepherds had done. Biblical Salvation, every part of it from being to end, is all owing to the undeserved love and favor of God. It is by grace and grace alone that sinners are saved; it is not of their own works or merit. (Eph.2:8, 9)
- B. This calling was “the work” of God – It was not an instantaneous act of God, but a work of God that was accomplished over a period of time. For these shepherds, it was from the time the angel of the Lord appeared to them till the shepherds returned to their flock glorifying and praising God for the things that they had seen and heard. (possibly sooner)
- C. In this work of “effectual calling”, we observe God doing 4 things:
1. God convinced these shepherds of their sin against God and their inability to avoid God’s deserved eternal judgment.
 - I see the plausible possibility of this in the shepherds’ immediate response to suddenly finding themselves surrounded by the glory of God – (2:19b) “...*they were greatly afraid.*” And in the very first words that the angel of the Lord spoke to them – (2:10a) “*Do not be afraid...*”
 - See further Acts 9:3 and Isa.6:1-5
 2. God enlightened these shepherds in the knowledge of Christ – that Christ was born that day, where He was born and how they could unmistakably recognize Him. Also they heard the praise of heavenly host.
 3. God renewed the wills of these shepherds causing them to desire and want to act upon and verify the knowledge of Christ that had been given to them. See 2:15 & 16
 - Their verbal response clearly manifested that they, not only understood this announcement of Christ’s birth imparted to them, but that it also affected their desires and wills. They were now willing and desiring to seek the Savior, who is Christ the Lord.