

Our Heavenly Calling

THE BELIEVER'S HEAVENLY CALLING

*Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a **heavenly calling**,
consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.
-- Hebrews 3:1+*

The profound truth of our **heavenly calling** is found only in Hebrews 3:1+. In light of the truth that every believer is blessed by possession of a **heavenly calling**, we do well to obey Paul's two commands calling for Vertical (heavenly) Vision -

"Therefore if (1st class condition = "since") you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking** ([present imperative](#) -- see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **the things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **on the things above**, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, Who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory ([GLORIFICATION](#))." (Colossians 3:1-4+)

These two commands beg two simple questions - Dear alien and stranger (1Pe 2:11+), citizen of heaven (Phil 3:20-21+), **what** are you seeking and **where** are you setting your mind today (and also this past week and this coming week)?

Are you eagerly, anxiously, expectantly looking ([prosdexomai](#) - present tense = continually, daily) for your "blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." (Titus 2:13+)? If not, **ask the Spirit to renew your mind** (Eph 4:23+) **and supernaturally transform your thinking** (Ro 12:2+, cf 2Co 3:18+). That is a prayer the Spirit will answer! And remember that there is an eternal reward for all who live today looking for tomorrow, Paul assuring us that "in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2Ti 4:8+) How do we "love His appearing?" We are daily looking for His appearing which is sure to motivate us to be living in the light of His imminent appearing!

And one other thought to ponder to encourage your burdened soul, **"in heavenly places"** is in some manner (which I do not fully comprehend cf 1Co 13:12+) true of these Hebrew believers and also true of us (today), beloved, for Paul writes that believers in Christ have been raised up **"with Him, and seated...with Him in the heavenly places** ([epouranios](#)) **in Christ Jesus"** (Eph. 2:6+) Amazing grace indeed! Hallelujah! Amen!

Let me suggest a great prayer to pray regarding our **heavenly calling**...

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that **you will know** ([eido](#) = KNOW BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT) what is the **hope** (HOPE SURE, NOT HOPE SO!) **of His calling**, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might (Ephesians 1:18-19+)

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON OUR HEAVENLY CALLING

Octavius Winslow lamented -

Alas! we live so below our high and **heavenly calling**, our glorious and eternal destiny!

William MacDonald - Their **heavenly calling** is in contrast to the earthly call of Israel. Old Testament saints were called to material blessings in the land of promise (though they did have a heavenly hope as well). In the Church Age, believers are called to spiritual blessings in the heavenlies now and to a heavenly inheritance in the future. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary page 2164](#))

John Piper on **heavenly calling** - We Need a Word from God and a Way to God - Christians are people who have heard and believed a **heavenly calling**, and are therefore **partakers** of it, sharers in it—“**holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling**.” It is a **heavenly calling** because it comes from heaven—from God. And it is a **heavenly calling** because it invites us and leads us to heaven—to God.

In other words this “**heavenly calling**” relates to the two great needs that we have: a word from God and a way to God. It’s a **heavenly calling**, which means it is a word from heaven, a word from God. And it’s a calling, which means it is meant to show us the way home to God. Christians are people who have been gripped by this calling. The word of God broke through our resistance, and took hold of us with the truth and love of Christ, and reconciled us to God and is now leading us home to heaven. This means that Christians are people of great hope. God has spoken from heaven, and made a way to heaven, and we have believed and our hope and confidence are firm.

And the reason our hope and confidence are firm is not because of ourselves. There are sinners of every kind in this room this morning—sexual sinners, lying sinners, stealing sinners, killing sinners, parent-disobeying sinners. The hope of a **heavenly calling** does not hang on our righteousness. If it did we would be hopeless. Our hope and confidence hang on Jesus. This is why verse 1 continues: “**Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus.**” This is what we are doing this morning. This is what preaching is about. It is what Sunday School is about. It is what small groups are about. Considering Jesus. (full sermon [Jesus: Worthy of More Glory than Moses](#))

***In the Old Testament everything had to do with a place;
in the New Testament everything has to do with a Person....
For the Hebrew of old it was a matter of being in Canaan;
for us today it is a matter of being in Christ.***

John Phillips on **heavenly calling** - The believer in Christ is also given a **heavenly calling**, in contrast to the calling of the Hebrew people, which was essentially earthly. In the Old Testament everything had to do with a place; in the New Testament everything has to do with a Person. In the Old Testament, to be in the sphere of blessing, the Jew had to be in the land, so much so that any time we see the Jew outside the land, he is in the place of punishment and correction and cut off from the blessing associated with the land. In the New Testament, to be in the sphere of blessing we must be “[in the Lord](#).” For the Hebrew of old it was a matter of being in Canaan; for us today it is a matter of being in Christ. Thus Paul reminds us repeatedly that our sphere is “in the heavens” in Christ. (Borrow [Exploring Hebrews](#) page 48)

Spurgeon (Daily Help) - IS, then, your calling a high calling? Has it ennobled your heart, and set it upon heavenly things? Has it elevated your hopes, your tastes, your desires? If man alone call thee, thou art uncalled. Is thy calling of God? Is it a call to heaven as well as from heaven? Unless thou art a stranger here, and heaven thy home, thou hast not been called with a heavenly calling; for those who have been so called, declare that they look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Is thy calling thus holy, high, heavenly? Then, beloved, thou hast been called of God, for such is the calling wherewith God doth call his people.

Sam Storms - from [Are You the Recipient of a "Heavenly Calling"?](#)

I was recently captivated (and still am!) with something I saw in Hebrews 3:1. It’s one of those statements that we rarely pause to consider, but this time was different. What caught my attention was the way in which the author of this letter describes those who by God’s grace have considered Jesus and put their faith in him. They (we!) are among those “**who share in a heavenly calling**” (v. 1a).

To be among those who share in a “heavenly calling” has to do with our **identity**, and there is nothing more central or crucial to our lives as Christians than understanding who we are. I can’t begin to tell you how many times during the course of an average week I hear from people whose primary struggle in life has to do with their mistaken identity. Or perhaps it is a child who simply doesn’t know who he or she is or even why they exist. Or on occasion it is someone whose sense of personal identity has been so warped and damaged by abuse or neglect or some other sin that they’ve simply given up hope of ever finding personal value and purpose in life. They live under the false guise of someone that isn’t them; they’ve been told who they are or what they should be and it has nothing to do with what God created them for.

That is why this opening statement in Hebrews 3:1 is so important. Christian, listen to me. You cannot afford to turn a deaf ear to this question. Do you know what it means to be the recipient of a “**heavenly calling**”? Do you?

Let me mention three things.

First, you are a man or a woman whose existence and identity cannot be explained merely by pointing to something in this world. In other words, you can't stop by saying: "Well, I'm a child of my mother and father. You ask who I am, and the answer is: I am what they've said I am. I am whoever their sins have shaped me to be." Or again, you can't stop by saying: "O.K., I am nothing more than a broken and helpless sinner, a sexually warped and intellectually stunted and physically unattractive blip on the screen of this vast universe."

No! If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, if he is Lord over your life, your identity (your value, meaning, purpose) is shaped and determined by the call placed on you from heaven by God. This isn't a guidance counselor at school who has administered certain personality profiles or skills tests to see what you are best at in life. This isn't an employer who informs you that you've advanced about as far as you'll ever go in your job, so just settle in for the duration and be content with your title, your position, and your salary.

Listen again to the words of God: you are one who shares in a "heavenly calling"! God, the God of the universe, has summoned you to himself. He has called you, has drawn you, has redeemed you, has placed his stamp of ownership on you, has beckoned you to himself, and has established with you a relationship of love and intimacy and joy that will last forever. This is what it means to be called from heaven.

Second, this "calling" doesn't simply come **from** heaven; it leads **to** heaven as well. In other words, this is as much about your ultimate destiny as it is about your initial origin. He isn't telling us merely where our hope comes from, namely, from heaven, but where our hope is taking us, namely, to heaven. Your life is far more than what you amass in your few years on this earth. Don't ever let your identity be shaped or limited merely by what you accomplish or accumulate now. Your identity is as a man or woman who is destined to live eternally in heavenly bliss and glory, which is to say, in the presence and in the enjoyment of God himself.

Let me say one more thing about this facet of being "called" not only from heaven but to heaven. In [Ephesians 1:15ff](#). Paul prays that "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you" (vv. 17-18a). Did you see that? He's talking about the "hope" to which we have been "called". This is our "heavenly calling" and Paul's prayer is that the Spirit would enable us to spiritually "see" and grasp and find strength in the reality of all that is entailed by it.

*You have been called by God to live now, on earth, a heavenly life,
which is to say, a life that reflects the morality and beauty and power and glory of heaven itself.*

Third, the word "heavenly" doesn't merely talk about where our calling originated or where our calling is taking us. It also describes the **quality** of our existence; the kind of person we are designed to be. Our lives now and forevermore are to be characterized by the values of heaven; energized by the power of heaven; shaped by the beauty of heaven. We are to live now, on earth, heavenly lives. Do you get that? You have been called by God to live now, on earth, a heavenly life, which is to say, a life that reflects the morality and beauty and power and glory of heaven itself.

Why, then, would you listen to anyone who would tell you otherwise? Why, then, would you ever consider giving yourself over to merely earthly pleasures and earthly activities? There lives within you a heavenly power, the Holy Spirit, Who is calling you to consider who you are in Christ. And if you do that, nothing will ever be the same.

- Things you used to love, but all the while knew you shouldn't, you'll gradually grow to hate.
- Things you used to believe as true, but all the while knew were false, you'll gradually grow to reject.
- Things you used to do and say because you believed they alone could make life fun and worth living, you'll gradually come to recognize as empty and delusional and destructive. (For Sam Storms full note see from [Are You the Recipient of a "Heavenly Calling"?](#))

Henry Morris - [Heavenly Calling](#)

"As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." (1 Corinthians 15:48+)

In a wonderful sense, Christians are just passing through this world on their way to the permanent home awaiting them in heaven. "For our conversation [or 'our citizenship'] is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20+). Christ has prepared a "place" for us there (John 14:2+), and it is there that we have "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4+).

In view of such a glorious future, we ought to live not as those who are "earthly" but, as our verse says, as "they also that are

heavenly." We have, indeed, been made "partakers of the heavenly calling," and so should always, in all we do, "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1), for He represents us even now in the heavenly places. He has gone "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24), and we have, in effect, already been made to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

We may not appear to be very heavenly now, in these poor bodies made of Earth's dust, but "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Corinthians 15:49+). As Paul vividly expresses it, the Lord Jesus Christ "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21+). "The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:52+).

Christians, indeed, constitute a heavenly people with a heavenly calling, even while still on Earth. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3+).

"Partakers of the heavenly calling." Heb. 3:1 - Octavius Winslow

WHAT are some of the attributes of this calling? It is holy. "Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling." They who are the subjects of this call desire to be holy. Their direst evil is sin. It is, in their experience, not a silken chain, but a galling fetter, beneath whose weight they mourn, and from whose bondage they sigh to be delivered. It is a high and heavenly calling. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "Partakers of the heavenly calling." How does this calling elevate a man—his principles, his character, his aims, his hopes! It is emphatically a "high vocation." So heavenly is it, too, it brings something of heaven into the soul. It imparts heavenly affections, heavenly joys, and heavenly aspirations. It leads to heaven. Could he look within the veil, each called saint would see a prepared mansion, a vacant throne, a jeweled crown, a robe, and a palm, all ready for the wearing and the waving, awaiting him in glory. Thus it is a call from heaven, and to heaven. It is an irrevocable calling. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God has never for a moment repented that He chose, nor has the Savior repented that He redeemed, nor has the Spirit repented that He called any of His people. Not all their wanderings, nor failures, nor unfruitfulness have ever awakened one regret in the heart of God that He has called them to be saints. "I knew that You would deal very treacherously." "Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him; nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." "Faithful is He that calls you."

Nor must we overlook the Divine sovereignty, which appears so illustrious in this especial calling. All ground of human boasting is removed, and God has secured to Himself, from eternity, the entire glory of His people's salvation. So conspicuously appears the sovereignty of God in this effectual calling, that all foundation of creature-glory is annihilated. And if it be asked by the disputers of this truth, why one is called and another is left?—why Jacob, and not Esau?—why David, and not Saul?—why Cornelius the Gentile, and not Tertullus the Jew?—why the poor beggars in the highway, and not the bidden guests? why the woman who washed with her tears the Savior's feet, and not Simon, in whose house the grateful act was performed?—the answer is, "He will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy." To this acquiescence in the sovereignty of the Divine will our Lord was brought, when He beheld the mysteries of the Gospel veiled from the wise of this world: "I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Your sight." To this precious truth let us bow; and if the efficacious grace of God has reached our hearts, let us ascribe its discriminating choice to the sovereign pleasure of that Divine and supreme will, which rules over the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth, and to which no creature dare say, "What do you?"

Spurgeon's Notes on Hebrews -

Hebrews 3:1. *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." What wonderful titles! "Holy brethren," made brethren in holiness and made holy in our brotherhood, -- "partakers of the heavenly calling" — called of God from among the worlds. Our occupation and our calling henceforth is to serve the Lord. Well, if you be holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Think much of Him. Remember who it is you follow, with whom you are brethren. If you think little of your Leader you will live but poor lives. Consider him, often think of him, try to copy him. With such a Leader what manner of people ought we to be?

Hamilton Smith - Excerpt from [Our Heavenly Calling](#) -

Why are we partakers of the heavenly calling?

These incidents very blessedly tell us that grace comes down to us from on high, meets our deepest need, and lifts us to the height from whence grace came, to be with Christ in heaven. But these passages tell us more; they tell us why we are called to heaven. Does God set us before Him in heaven simply to make us happy? Truly we shall be happy, for in His presence there is fulness of joy. But, if He brings us there it is not simply for the joy of our hearts, but for the gratification of His own heart. When the Shepherd picked up the sheep, it is true that he carried it on his shoulders rejoicing; but His joy was not complete until he had brought the sheep into His own home. Then, He says, "Rejoice with Me". So with the Father; His love and compassion were expressed outside the house; but it is not until we pass within the house that we hear of the Father's joy. Then we read, "They began to be merry". This wonderful story tells us that such is the love of the Father's heart that He actually desires our company. That is why He has called us to heaven and made us partakers of the heavenly calling.

The practical effect of the heavenly calling (Hebrews 11:13-16).

What, we may ask, will be the practical effect on our walk and ways of heartily embracing the great truth that we are partakers of the heavenly calling? Do we not see the practice that flows from faith in this great truth livingly set before us in the history of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as recorded in Hebrews 11:13-16?

In Abraham we see one who was "called to go out into a place which he should after receive". He had the promise of "a better country, that is, an heavenly". Together with Isaac and Jacob, they saw by faith this heavenly country "afar off", and heartily embraced the promise of this country. The result was:

Firstly, they became "strangers and pilgrims on the earth". They saw the King in His beauty and the land that is very far off. And their links with the heavenly city severed their ties with earth.

Secondly, being strangers and pilgrims they became true witnesses for God in this world, as we read. "They that say such things declare plainly". It was not simply what they said with their lips; it was their lives that spoke to the world around.

Thirdly, declaring "plainly", as true witnesses, they escaped the snares of the enemy who sought to draw them back into the world by giving them opportunities to return.

Fourthly, taking the place of strangers and pilgrims, declaring plainly that they seek a country, and refusing every opportunity to turn back to the world, "God is not ashamed to be called their God".

What a wonderful example we have, then, in these Old Testament worthies! In a far more direct way the heavenly calling has been opened to us since Christ has come to tell us of heavenly things. Christ has died to secure heaven for us and to fit us for heaven. We are called to heaven and made partakers of the heavenly calling. But we may well challenge our hearts by asking ourselves, Have we heartily embraced the heavenly calling? Have we confessed, in our words and ways and walk, that we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth"? Have we declared plainly as witnesses for God that we seek a country and that our hopes are in another world? Have we refused every opportunity to return to this present world?

As we look at Christendom we cannot but see how the great profession has entirely failed to enter into the heavenly calling of Christianity. But what of the true people of God in the midst of the profession? And in particular, what of ourselves? What is the truth as to each one individually? Have we not each one to challenge our own hearts and ask ourselves: have we so embraced the heavenly calling, and walked in consistency with it, that at last God will be able to say of us, as He said of the patriarchs of old:—"God is not ashamed to be called their God"?

HEAVENLY CALLING - [Topical Bible](#)

The concept of a "Heavenly Calling" is a profound theme within the Christian faith, reflecting the divine invitation extended to believers to partake in the spiritual and eternal purposes of God. This calling is not merely an earthly vocation but a summons to a higher, spiritual life in Christ, characterized by holiness, service, and eternal hope.

Biblical Foundation

The term "Heavenly Calling" is explicitly mentioned in the New Testament, particularly in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 3:1 states, "Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, set your focus on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess." This verse underscores the communal aspect of the calling, addressing believers as "holy brothers" who collectively participate in this divine invitation. The focus on Jesus as the apostle and high priest highlights the centrality of Christ in this calling, emphasizing His role as the mediator and exemplar of the faith.

Nature of the Heavenly Calling

1. **Divine Origin:** The heavenly calling originates from God Himself, who, in His grace and sovereignty, calls individuals to salvation

and sanctification. It is a calling that transcends human merit and is rooted in God's eternal purpose and love.

2. Holiness and Sanctification: The calling is inherently linked to holiness. Believers are called to be set apart, living lives that reflect the character and righteousness of God. This is evident in 1 Peter 1:15-16, which exhorts, "But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'"

3. Eternal Perspective: The heavenly calling directs believers' focus beyond the temporal concerns of this world to the eternal realities of God's kingdom. Philippians 3:14 captures this forward-looking aspect: "I press on toward the goal to win the prize of God's heavenly calling in Christ Jesus."

4. Participation in Christ's Mission: Those who respond to the heavenly calling are invited to participate in the mission of Christ, spreading the gospel and serving as His ambassadors on earth. This mission is both a privilege and a responsibility, as believers are called to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13-16).

Response to the Heavenly Calling

The appropriate response to the heavenly calling involves faith, obedience, and perseverance. Believers are encouraged to live worthy of the calling they have received, as stated in Ephesians 4:1: "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling you have received." This entails a life of humility, gentleness, patience, and love, reflecting the character of Christ.

Assurance and Hope

The heavenly calling provides believers with assurance and hope, rooted in the promises of God. Hebrews 6:18-19 speaks of the hope set before us as "an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." This hope is not wishful thinking but a confident expectation based on the faithfulness of God, who has called us into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ.

In summary, the heavenly calling is a divine invitation to a life of holiness, service, and eternal hope, centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is a call to live with an eternal perspective, participating in God's redemptive mission and reflecting His glory in the world.

HEAVENLY CALLING by James Smith - This 44 page book has 62 devotional poems related to Heavenly Calling. Only the first poem is included below.

James Smith (1802-1862) as a young child fell into a well and was remarkably rescued from death. His passion as a preacher of the gospel was to rescue "many poor ungodly sinners from a far deeper well." He pastored several Particular Baptist congregations, including the New Park Street Chapel (1842-1850), where years later Charles Spurgeon took the pastorate. His succinct devotional style is fresh and memorable.

1. The Heavenly Calling Partakers of the heavenly calling.—Hebrews 3:1

Beloved, **God hath called**

His grace and gospel:

into the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ;

into the favour of Jesus Christ;

to partake of the Holy Spirit of the living God.

He has called us:

to enjoy fellowship with Jesus Christ the Lord;

to wear the image of Jesus Christ;

to possess and enjoy His righteousness, strength, wisdom, unsearchable riches, and eternal glory.

This calling is heavenly in its origin, nature, tendency, and consummation.

It is from heaven and to heaven.

All believers partake of the same calling.

They are called:

by the same Voice,

to the same cross and throne,

to possess and enjoy the same title, and

to claim and use the same blessings.

This calling is the greatest honour

that can be conferred upon a sinner.

It is altogether a favour, the fruit of free and everlasting love.

Its enjoyment calls for gratitude and praise.

Are we called with an heavenly calling? **Then we should:**

come out from the world,

walk with God,

imitate the Savior,

set our affections upon things above, and

prepare for, and hasten to, our blessed home, our glorious inheritance

Let us make our calling and our election sure, and then sing—

Speak to us, Lord, Thyself reveal,

while here o'er earth we rove;

Speak to our hearts, and let us feel

the kindling of Thy love.

Thou callest me to seek Thy face;

'tis all I wish to seek;

To tend the whispers of Thy grace,

and hear Thee inly (inwardly) speak.

Let this my every hour employ,

'till I Thy glory see;

Enter into my Master's joy,

and find my heaven in Thee.