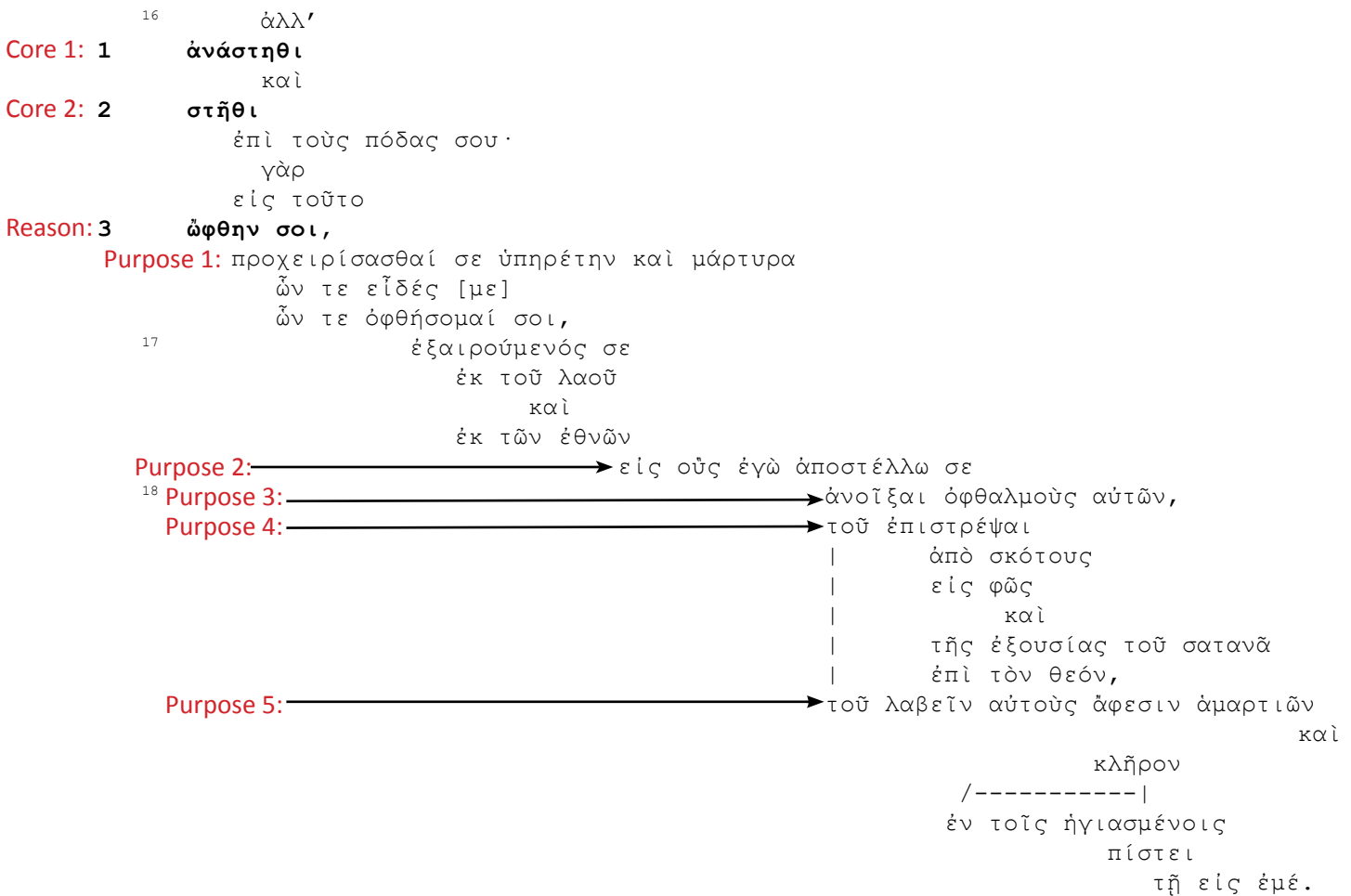


**Sermon: Acts 26:16-18**  
**Title: Called to Serve**  
**Lorin L. Cranford**

This material functions as a commentary background for the presentation in chapel of the sermon with the emphasis on the calling of God to service in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the power point presentation materials, as well as an online copy of this file, see *Sermon, Called to Serve*, at <http://cranfordville.com/Cranfordville/Sermons.htm>

**Commentary Background:<sup>1</sup>**

By collapsing the subsequent instructions coming through Ananias in Damascus from Christ into direct communication the same essential message is presented regarding Paul's calling to ministry (compare [9:15](#); [22:14-15](#); [26:16-18](#)). The best summation of this is given by Paul in Gal. 1:16, ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, *that I might preach Him among the Gentiles*. The more detailed account is given here in 26:16-18, in one rather complex sentence, which the block diagram below illustrates.



The first core affirmation is ἀλλ' ἀνάστηθι καὶ στῆθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου, *but get up and stand on your feet*. Paul had been struck down by the bright light connected to Christ's appearance. Now that Paul had been properly overwhelmed into humbling himself before Christ, he was ready to receive the Lord's instructions.

These are based upon (γὰρ) the stated purpose of the appearance: εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ὤφθην σοι, *for with this purpose I appeared to you*. This compares to the Galatians statement ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν but with greater detail. Through a series of purpose infinitives, the assignment given to Paul is put forward: προχειρίσασθαί σε (*to assign you*); ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν (*to open their eyes*); τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι (*to turn them*

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from chapter eight, pages 613-620, of [THE APOSTLE PAUL: SERVANT OF CHRIST](#), by Lorin L. Cranford. Page 1

around); τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοῦς (so that they may receive...). Note the conceptual progression implicit in this series of objectives.

The first stated objective of Christ is προχειρίσασθαι σε ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα ὧν τε εἶδές [με] ὧν τε ὀφθήσομαί σοι, to assign you the role of servant and witness concerning the things you have seen in me and concerning the things I will put before you. Christ gave Paul a job that could be best characterized in terms of servanthood and witness: ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα. Christ defines His actions toward Paul as προχειρίσασθαι σε, to appoint you for Myself. See [Acts 3:20](#) and [22:14](#) for the two other instances in which the Messiah is appointed ([3:20](#)) and Paul is appointed ([22:14](#)). This rather rare Geek verb in this context underscores the idea of being appointed or handed a task that the individual needs to carry out.<sup>2</sup> Two complementary functions are given to Paul in the divine appointment: ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα, minister and witness. The ὑπηρέτης is literally the helper, normally functioning in a subordinate role of some kind. Often it is translated as either helper or assistant. Here the sense is similar to [1 Cor. 4:1](#) where Paul serves as an assistant of Christ. The emphasis in the term is upon subordination to Christ and also upon service rendered for Him. The μάρτυς is literally the individual who provides affirmation in witness about someone and/or something. Giving faithful testimony to Christ was an important assignment that Paul received from Christ, and one that he sought to fulfill even as he spoke these words to Agrippa and the assembled guests that day.

What follows has puzzled interpreters for a long time, simply because most later languages could not express what Paul said here.<sup>3</sup> The compound ὧν τε ... ὧν τε relative clauses are not found anywhere else in the New Testament, and represents an eloquent classical Greek expression. Using two verbs connected with seeing, εἶδές and ὀφθήσομαι, adds to the complexity of the two relative clauses. Both clauses are linked back to both previous terms ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα. In carrying out these two functions there will be certain things ὧν (neuter plural genitive of reference usage) that will come from Christ to Paul for these tasks.

First, ὧν τε εἶδές με is the Aorist past time reference: you have seen me in regard to certain things. Probably here is an allusion to Paul's conversion experience in which leading up to that point Christ had attempted in several ways to reveal himself to Saul the Pharisee but that he had not chosen to either accept these things or to acknowledge them. Thus when Christ appeared to Paul outside Damascus this was not the first time the Lord had sought to communicate with Paul. His earlier experience of persecuting Christians in Jerusalem provided numerous opportunities to encounter Christ through the lives of these followers of Christ. If Paul had been willing he could have easily 'seen' Christ in these people.

Second, ὧν τε ὀφθήσομαί σοι is the future tense passive verb: in regard to certain things I will appear to you in visions. The literal sense of this passive voice verb ὀφθήσομαι from ὀράω is "I will be made 'seeable' to you." The passive voice here underscores that God is the One who makes this happen. The Damascus road experience was the beginning of such revelations of Christ to Paul (Ἰησοῦς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἣ ἦρχου, [Acts 9:17](#)), but would not be the last time at all. The Acts narrative provides a few instances of Christ coming to Paul in visions and dreams: in Jerusalem in the temple after returning from Damascus ([Acts 22:17](#), προσευχομένου μου ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γενέσθαι με ἐν ἑκστάσει, while praying in the temple I fell into a trance); in his sermon to the Ephesian leaders at Melitus ([Acts 20:23](#), πλὴν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κατὰ πόλιν διαμαρτύρεται μοι λέγον ὅτι δεσμά καὶ θλίψεις με μένουσιν, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city repeatedly that chains and afflictions await me);<sup>4</sup> while in Antonia's Barracks in Jerusalem ([Acts 23:11](#), Τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ νυκτὶ ἐπιστάς αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος εἶπεν, That night the

<sup>2</sup>The use of προχειρίζεσθαι for appointment to a military function in the examples from 2 Macc. (→ 862, 24 ff.) and the pap. (→ n. 3) is not so different from the ordinary use as to affect the employment of the term in Ac. 22:14; 26:16, esp. as the words μάρτυς (→ IV, 493, 24 ff.) and → ὑπηρέτης show clearly enough what is the point of the ordination and for their part bear no affinity to the concept of the *militia Christi*. The idea that once a decision has been made it is binding may be very much to the fore in military appointments but it is also present in other fields. Hence the desire to express the binding nature of the decision made about Paul may have influenced the choice of προχειρίζεσθαι. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 6:863.]

<sup>3</sup>Even some copyists of this text were puzzled and thus reworked the statement to make it simpler: "Paul's testimony will not be confined to a resurrection appearance (this seems to be the primary sense of ὧν τε εἶδές με—με is omitted by P<sup>74</sup> & A C<sup>2</sup> E Ψ 096 M latt bo, perhaps rightly); it extends to ὧν ὀφθήσομαι σοι. This may refer to visions such as 18:9; 23:11." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 1159.]

<sup>4</sup>Related to this are other references:

**Acts 21:4**, οἵτινες τῷ Παύλῳ ἔλεγον διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα. who through the Spirit were saying to Paul to not go to Jerusalem.

**Acts 21:10-17** describes the experience of Agabus discouraging Paul from going on to Jerusalem from Caesarea. He begins his words to Paul with τάδε λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, these things says the Holy Spirit.

Lord said to him standing next to him....).

What Paul shares with Agrippa is that in his encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road, Christ commissioned him to service and witness with the promise that He would stand with the apostle and supply him with the understanding he needed in order to carry out this assignment.

The second objective is set up in another relative clause εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε, [unto whom I am sending you](#). It is attached to ὡφθην σοι, [I have appeared to you](#), via the modal participle clause ἐξαιρούμενός σε ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν, [rescuing you from the people and from the Gentiles](#). Accompanying this revelation of Christ to Paul on the Damascus road will be the need of repeated rescues of Paul from both the Jewish people and the Gentiles. The accounts of Paul's missionary travels in Acts 13 through 25 validate these need on numerous occasions where others passionately sought to kill the apostle simply because of the message and ministry he was giving at the instruction of the Lord. One should not imply from the term ἐξαιρούμενός that Paul would be exempt from abuse, suffering, torture, and almost execution. The lengthy list provided by Paul to the Corinthians in [2 Cor. 11:23-29](#) outlining just those things that had happened to him up to a couple or so years before this appearance in front of Agrippa dramatically affirm that in no way was he exempted from suffering. But what this list does also affirm is Paul's statement here of the repeated rescuing of him from the clutches of both Jews and Gentiles trying to kill him.

This appearance of Christ to Paul on the Damascus road is then defined as εἰς οὓς ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω σε, [unto whom I am sending you](#). Conversion and commissioning<sup>5</sup> happened at the same time for Paul. Christ authorized Paul to go to these very people that Christ would have to rescue Paul from repeatedly over the coming decades.<sup>6</sup> This was no easy job assignment! I'm not sure how many of us today would willingly take on such a task as did Paul.

This sending is subsequently defined from a purpose standpoint by three infinitives: ἀνοίξαι, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι, and τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτούς. These are closely connected to one another in a progression of objectives. Also [Isaiah 42:7](#) most likely stands in the background as well providing a conceptual backdrop to Paul's words:

6 ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐκάλεσά σε ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ κρατήσω τῆς χειρός σου καὶ ἐνισχύσω σε καὶ ἔδωκά σε εἰς διαθήκην γένους, εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν† 7 ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμούς τυφλῶν, ἐξαγαγεῖν ἐκ δεσμῶν δεδεμένους καὶ ἐξ οἴκου φυλακῆς καθημένους ἐν σκότει. †

6 I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, 7 to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

These words in 42:1-7 were addressed to the Servant of the Lord (v. 1) and thus took on deep messianic tones both in Judaism and early Christianity.<sup>7</sup>

**First**, Christ is sending Paul in the world of Jews and Gentiles ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμούς αὐτῶν, to open their eyes. Implicit here is the assumption of spiritual blindness by both Jew and Gentile. Humanity's spiritual depravity has left all in a state of not being able to see the things of God and the way to God. Paul's task as a ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα was to open their eyes. Although the preaching of the Gospel was central, the living it out before them played an important role as well.

**Second**, this ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμούς αὐτῶν moves toward the deeper objective of τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτῆος εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, [to turn them from darkness into light and from the power of Satan](#)

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<sup>5</sup>Note the emphatic expression ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω with the stated pronoun subject ἐγὼ. The expression ἀποστέλλω is the language of divine commissioning. The governmental and military non-religious background of ἀποστέλλω for a commander giving orders to a soldier of lesser rank would have resonated clearly to Paul's Gentile audience, and especially to the many Roman tribunes in the audience that day.

<sup>6</sup>Remember that Paul's encounter with Christ on the Damascus road happened approximately 33 AD and he is addressing Agrippa in late 59 or 60 AD.

<sup>7</sup>"The commission itself echoes the commission of the Servant of the Lord in Isa. 42:1-7, and very properly so, for the commission of Paul and of all Christian witnesses is the perpetuation of the Servant's commission, as has been made very plain already in Acts (cf. 13:47). As the Servant was to open the eyes of the blind and turn their darkness into light, so Paul was summoned to continue this healing ministry.<sup>29</sup> The terms of his commission remained in his mind ever after; they are echoed in the words in which he reminds the Christians of Colossae how God the Father 'has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light, ... has delivered us from the domination of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins' (Col. 1:12-14). For these words sum up the blessing which, in the heavenly vision, he was charged to communicate to all who placed their faith in Christ, not only Jews, but Gentiles as well." [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 467.]

to God.<sup>8</sup> The infinitive action in ἐπιστρέψαι is the center of the conversion emphasis in these statements. Coming from ἐπιστρέφω and expressed here in Aorist form, the point is to lead both Jews and Gentiles to repent and turn their lives around. The reversal of directions is defined clearly by the two pairs of prepositional phrases standing in synonymously parallelism with one another:

|                         |               |                         |          |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|----------|
| ἀπὸ σκότους             | εἰς φῶς       | from darkness           | to light |
| καὶ                     |               | and                     |          |
| τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ | ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, | from the power of Satan | to God   |

Both Jews and Gentiles were living in darkness which is in the power of Satan. Paul's assignment was to help them reverse the direction of their lives to move into light which is to move to God in their commitment. A huge stack of theological truth is packed into this infinitive phrase.<sup>9</sup>

The two metaphors of darkness and light are then defined as the power of Satan and God. Quite common in the ancient world were the images of darkness and light as symbols of good and evil. [First Peter 2:9](#) affirms these light/darkness symbols with clarity in the relative clause ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς, *so that you might proclaim the great actions of the One who called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light*. The non-Jewish and non-Christian orientation of Paul's audience that day would have understood clearly the darkness / light symbols, although probably in a different way than Paul meant. In their Greek and Roman philosophical heritage darkness signified ignorance and light intelligence. Morality would not usually play a major role in the meaning of these two symbols except in some isolated instances of ancient moral philosophy.<sup>10</sup> The key to transition from darkness to light in this framework was through education of the kind advocated by the Greeks and Romans.

Thus Paul communicates clearly to this pagan audience that darkness and light are religious terms with huge moral implications when he adds the parallel explanatory phrase τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, *from the power of Satan to God*. The reference to σατανᾶς, *Satan*, by Paul would have been puzzling to his pagan audience. The idea of Satan as referencing -- by name -- some celestial power of evil did not exist in the ancient Greco-Roman culture. The Greek words σατάν and σατανᾶς are loan words with numerous variations of spelling even inside the New Testament.<sup>11</sup> Agrippa and Bernice with their connections to the Jews would likely have been the only ones present that day who knew what Paul was talking about. And their knowledge likely was limited simply because Satan as a cosmic power in opposition to God was not a major theme in first century Judaism. The concept actually originates in Judaism mainly in the intertestamental era, perhaps out of contact with the Persian religious traditions in which well developed conceptualizations exist.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly in Jewish interpretive

<sup>8</sup>“The words repeat in a different formulation the idea of 9:15, about Paul as ‘a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel.’ Now the formulation casts them in a prophetic mode.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 31, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 760.]

<sup>9</sup>“The language of transference from darkness to light fits the context of religious conversion (see Poimandres 28; Joseph and Aseneth 8:10; 15:12; 1 Thess 5:4–7; Col 1:12–13; Eph 5:8; and above all 1 Pet 2:9).” [Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 5, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 437.]

<sup>10</sup>This linkage of intelligence / ignorance to these metaphors is still preserved in western culture. For example, the Dark Ages (Middle Ages) versus the Age of Enlightenment (modern era).

<sup>11</sup>“σατάν, ὁ indecl. and σατανᾶς, ᾧ, ὁ (the former=Hebr. שָׂטָן 3 Km 11:14; Just., D. 103, 5; the latter Sir 21:27, also TestSol 1:1 D al.; TestJob; Test12Patr; ApcMos 17; Just.=Aram. ܫܛܪܫܐ; for σατανος Lk 11:18 P75 read σατανας) literally ‘adversary’, in our lit. only as title or name: (the) Satan, in a very special sense, the enemy of God and all of those who belong to God, simply Satan, the Enemy (on the concept of Satan s. the lit. s.v. διάβολος 2), almost always w. the art. (B-D-F §254, 1), without it only in Mk 3:23; Lk 22:3; 2 Cor 12:7 and in personal address.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 916.]

<sup>12</sup>“To summarize, it is clear that references to šātān, either by that name or by a surrogate, are much more extensive in apocryphal/pseudepigraphical literature than in the OT. More than likely, exposure to Persian religion and its Zoroastrian-based dualism provided some of the stimulus for the more pervasive demonology in these Jewish writings. Rather than viewing the world as the canvas on which one God sketched his unique will for his world, the world was now viewed as a battleground fought over by both benevolent and malevolent deities. It is difficult, of course, to trace exactly how this borrowing or influencing worked, or even why such a concept would have appealed to exiled Jews in Mesopotamia. Are there, for example, other Persian religious emphases to which the exiles were attracted besides Iranian dualism, and if so, what were they? The evidence is slim to nonexistent. Books of the OT that would be expected to show most awareness of Persian religion — Nehemiah, for example — are conspicuously silent about it. It is also debatable whether or not the proliferation of demons and the demonizing of the world represents post-biblical Judaism’s attempt to come to grips with a world so grim and hostile that not all phenomena could no longer be placed under the umbrella of divine sovereignty. Rather, it may be that the

history, the serpent in the Garden of Eden is not identified as Satan until Rabbinical Judaism develops starting in the second century AD.<sup>13</sup> The NT writers use a variety of terms in referencing a supernatural power in conflict with God.<sup>14</sup> The two primary spellings of σατάν, ὁ, and σατανᾶς, ἁ, ὁ, (or σατανος as in Lk. 11:18) reflect origins from the Hebrew שָׂטָן and the Aramaic ܫܬܢܐ. The Hebrew and Aramaic words mean ‘adversary’ and are used with a wide variety of meanings mainly to specify human adversaries,<sup>15</sup> but also to mean a celestial adversary of different types.<sup>16</sup> The Greek adjective διάβολος, -ον is more commonly employed for the Hebrew שָׂטָן. Here the

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demonizing of the cosmos, as reflected in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, represents the emergence of Israel’s quasi-mythology that was widely embraced throughout the OT period. Such ideas, inimical as they were to orthodox monotheism, would have been repressed by the prophets.” [Victor P. Hamilton, “Satan,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 988.]

<sup>13</sup>“Although šātān does not appear in Genesis 3, later rabbinic sources identified satan with the serpent in Eden (Soṭa. 9b; Sanh. 29a). He is identified in a more impersonal way with the evil inclination which infects humanity (B. Bat. 16a). In a more personal way, he is the source behind God’s testing of Abraham (Sanh. 89b). Additionally, šātān is responsible for many of the sins mentioned in the OT. For example, it is šātān who was responsible for the Israelites worshipping the golden calf because of his lie that Moses would not return from Mount Sinai (Šabb. 89a). He is the driving force behind David’s sin with Bathsheba (Sanh. 107a), and it is he who provokes the gentiles to ridicule Jewish laws, thus weakening the religious loyalties of the Jews (Yoma 67b). The sounding of the horn on the New Year is to confuse šātān (Roš. Haš. 16b). Only on the Day of Atonement is šātān without power. This is suggested by the numeral value of šātān, 364; i.e., there is one day in the year he is powerless (Yoma 20a).” [Victor P. Hamilton, “Satan,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 988.]

<sup>14</sup>“The NT also makes frequent references to Satan. He is mentioned by name 35 times. The breakdown of these references is: (a) the Synoptics, 14 times; (b) gospel of John, once; (c) Acts, twice; (d) Epistles (all Pauline and half of which are in the correspondence with Corinth), 10 times; and Revelation, 8 times (5 of which [2:9; 2:13; 2:13; 2:24; 3:9] are in the letters to the churches and not in prophetic portions [chaps. 4–22]). As popular as the designation Satan is, the name ho diabolos appears 32 times.

“There are additionally a number of titles given to him. For example, while John uses Satan only once (13:27), the preferred Johannine term for Satan is the “prince of this world” (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). This phrase parallels Matthew’s “the prince of the demons” and Paul’s “the god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4), “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2), and “rulers of the darkness of this age” (Eph 6:12) (but not “rulers of this age” in 1 Cor 2:6–8, which refers to human rulers [Carr 1976]). A Johannine parallel appears in 1 John 5:19 where the claim is made that the whole world is in the power of the Evil One. These references teach at least a modified dualism which is close to the Qumran picture of a titanic struggle between the Angel of Darkness and the Prince of Light.”

[Victor P. Hamilton, “Satan,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 988.]

<sup>15</sup>“There is little doubt that the noun šātān is related to the verb šātan [in the OT]. The verb occurs only six times (Ps 38:21—Eng 38:20; 71:13; 109:4, 20, 29; Zech 3:1). The problem arises when one attempts to select the best English equivalent for Heb šātan, especially since šātan lacks a cognate in any of the Semitic languages. The choice appears to be between ‘accuse,’ ‘slander,’ and ‘be an adversary.’ Thus Ps 38:21—Eng v 20 may be rendered “those who repay me good with evil accuse/slander me when I seek what is good.” (LXX’s rendering of šātan by *endieballon* would suggest slander.) Ps 71:13 reads ‘may my accusers/adversaries/slanderers perish.’ Similarly, in Ps 109:3, 20, 29 the writer speaks to God about his accusers/slanderers and the duress they have brought into his life. And last of all, and the only occurrence of the verb outside of a lament Psalm, is Zech 3:1, in which the prophet sees šātān standing at the right hand of Joshua the high priest to ‘slander/accuse’ him.

“There is a good deal of overlap in meaning between ‘accuse’ and ‘slander,’ but they are not synonyms. To accuse means to find fault and bring charges, falsely or accurately, against another. Thus, an accusation may be valid or inaccurate. By contrast, slander is always false, a statement of claim that is both inaccurate and damaging to the character and reputation of another.

“It is clear from the six passages cited above, and from especially the five from the Psalms, that the enemies of the writer are defaming his character and thus are slanderers. What they are saying about the writer is palpably false, and therefore their mouths must be shut, one way or another. But does the fact that šātan = ‘to slander’ suggest that the noun šātān should always be translated as ‘slanderer’? Not necessarily so. There are some instances where a šātān engages in activities that are patently slanderous (for example, Job 1 and 2). However, there are other places where a šātān engages, or is urged to engage himself, in activities that are clearly non-slanderous (e.g., 2 Sam 19:23 = Eng 19:22 [Abishai’s charge of blasphemy against Shimei is legitimate]; Ps 109:6). On the basis of the actual uses of šātān (see A.2 and A.3), we would suggest that šātān means ‘accuser,’ with the added nuance of either ‘adversary’ or ‘slanderer,’ depending on context.

[Victor P. Hamilton, “Satan,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 985–986.]

<sup>16</sup>“There are four passages in the OT that talk of a celestial šātān. These are Num 22:22, 32; Job 1 and 2; Zech 3:1–2; and 1 Chr 21:1. The noun šātān occurs 26 times in the OT. Seven of these (discussed above) refer to terrestrial satans, thus leaving 19 references to celestial satans. Three of these 19 use šātān without the definite article (Num 22:22, 32; 1 Chr 21:1). The remaining occurrences in Job 1 and 2 (14 times) and Zech 3:1, 2 employ the noun with the article (haššātān), literally ‘the satan.’ Leaving aside Num 22:22, 32, because there the Angel of Yahweh is a šātān, we note that 16 of 17 references to the celestial šātān use the expression ‘the’ šātān. The lone exception is 1 Chr 21:1. This would seem to indicate that only in 1 Chr 21:1 is šātān possibly a proper name. In the remaining passages, with the definite article, it is a common noun, to be translated something like ‘the Accuser.’ GKC, §126e and Joüon 1923, §137m–o cite this as an instance of the definite article prefixed to a noun when a term normally applying to whole classes is restricted to particular individuals. As such, the definite article could be translated ‘a certain one of.’ It is not without significance that consistently the LXX does not transliterate šātān in Job (or elsewhere) as ho Satanas (a term used six times in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs as a synonym for the

idea of slanderer and deceiver stand at the core of meaning of the adjective that is occasionally used as a noun and thus translated as Devil. Coming out of the root verb διαβάλλω, the ideas of hate and enmity are especially prominent based on the root idea of to separate in the secular use of the Greek term and accurately reflect the

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diabolical Beliar), but translates with *ho diabolos*, a term used in the LXX for both a celestial being (Zech 3:1–2) and a human adversary (Esth 7:4; 8:1). Even as late as 1 Macc 1:36, around 100–50 B.C., Antiochus IV is referred to as a *diabolon ponēron*, ‘an evil foe.’ This shows that *diabolos* needed the adjective *ponēros* to make it clear that the *diabolos* was wicked. Gammie states (1985:18–19), ‘Instead of having a clear demonic overtone, the choice of translation *ho diabolos* on the contrary probably represents the translator’s desire to utilize a term still relatively neutral and not yet associated in the public mind with a leader of forces in opposition to the divine intentions.’

“The one instance where *śātān* describes a celestial figure who is not in any way hostile to God is Num 22:22, 32. The Angel of Yahweh is sent to be a *satan* to sinning Balaam. The angel performs his task first by blocking the path so that Balaam’s ass may not proceed, then by rebuking Balaam. Only when Balaam’s eyes are opened does the angel *śātān* become visible to Balaam. The angel is both adversary to and accuser of Balaam, and is dispatched on his mission by Yahweh.

“It is in the first two chapters of Job that ‘the *satan*’ (*haśśātān*) is most prominent (but that name is not mentioned again after 2:7). The sons of God, i.e., the divine council, present themselves before Yahweh, and the *satan* is among them. The question arises whether he is with the assembly as a legitimate member or whether he is an intruder. In favor of the latter interpretation is the fact that the *satan* alone is asked ‘from where have you come?’ But possibly he is a heavenly agent whose responsibilities have taken him to earth, and the question comes not from surprise in the deity at an outsider’s presence, but rather from the deity’s questioning of the agent’s faithful expediting of his chore.

“Job 1 and 2 provide the only instance in the OT where God and the *śātān* converse with each other, and twice God initiates the dialogue by asking the *śātān* a question about his whereabouts (1:7; 2:2). The question answered, God proceeds to bring Job and his impeccable spiritual credentials to the *satan*’s attention (1:8; 2:3). The *satan* is not impressed. On the contrary, he suggests that Job’s motives for serving God are selfish ones; i.e., Job serves God to get what he really wants, which is prosperity. Thus the *satan* directly impugns Job’s motives for service to God and indirectly accuses God of divine patronage (Day 1988:76). The *satan*’s question to God is a thoughtful, legitimate, and profound one: ‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’ To disprove or substantiate that question, God grants to the *satan* carefully circumscribed destructive powers (1:12; 2:6). The *satan* may not act independently, but only with divine permission.

“The second reference to an antagonistic celestial *śātān* is found in Zech 3:1–2. In the fourth of eight visions the prophet observes Joshua, the high priest, in front of the Angel of Yahweh, and the *śātān* standing by his right side to accuse him. It is not clear exactly what the nature of the accusation against Joshua is. Unlike Job’s *śātān*, Zechariah’s *śātān* does not talk. But he is rebuked, not by the Angel of Yahweh, but by Yahweh himself. In his rebuke, Yahweh reminds the *satan* that he has chosen Jerusalem. That Yahweh draws attention to his choice of Jerusalem, and not of Joshua, would seem to indicate that Joshua not only represents himself, but in some way also represents the restored postexilic community. Neither the iniquity of Joshua nor the sins of the Judeans are such that they bar the way to the investiture of the high priest or the forgiveness of the community, much to the dismay of the prosecuting *satan*.

“The third and final appearance of a malevolent celestial *śātān* is in the Chronicler’s account of David’s census of Israel. That version informs the reader that it was *śātān* who rose up against Israel and incited David to number his people (1 Chr 21:1). Two items are of special import here. First, this is the only place in the OT where the Hebrew word *śātān*, when referring to a celestial diabolical being, is used without the definite article. This has suggested to most commentators that *śātān* is here a personal name. GKC §125f. refers to this instance of *śātān* (as opposed to *haśśātān*) as an illustration of an original appellative that has assumed the character of a real proper name and is therefore used without the article. The passage, however, might as justifiably be translated ‘and a *śātān* stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel’.

“The second issue focuses on the question of why the account in 2 Samuel 24 attributes the stimulus for David’s census to Yahweh (2 Sam 24:1), while the Chronicler attaches blame to a *śātān*/Satan. There are three possible explanations for this shift. The first is that the Chronicler was bothered by the attribution of morally questionable activities to Yahweh; i.e., he incited David to take a census, then punished David for doing so. To that end the Chronicler deleted Yahweh’s part in the story as a stimulating factor and replaced him with *śātān* (Kluger 1967:159). But if the Chronicler was concerned with saving Yahweh’s image from tarnish, why did he leave unmolested other stories in which Yahweh was responsible for Rehoboam turning his back on the wise counsel of his advisers (2 Chr 10:15), or in which Yahweh sends a deceiving spirit into the mouths of Ahab’s prophets? Closely related to this explanation is the suggestion that the Chronicler downplayed Yahweh’s complicity in this event with his substitution of *śātān*, primarily because he was concerned to paint as beautiful a picture as possible of the relationship between Yahweh and David, Yahweh’s chosen servant (Day 1988:136–37). Accordingly, the Chronicler omitted any reference to Yahweh’s arbitrary anger with his people during David’s reign and told the story simply as a temptation episode. A third possible explanation is that the contrast between 2 Sam 24:1 and 1 Chr 21:1 (Yahweh/*śātān*) illustrates a development in how OT thought explains evil. Most of the earlier literature of the OT explained evil in terms of a primary cause (Yahweh). Later OT literature, such as Chronicles, expanded on this by introducing the concept of a secondary cause in its explanation of evil (*śātān*).

“To summarize, so far we have seen that (the) *śātān* is a maligner of character (Job 1 and 2), an accuser of God’s servant (Zech 3:1), and a seducer of Israel’s royal leader (1 Chr 21:1). Clearly in the OT *śātān* (and other demons) is not connected with some primordial realm, but with sin. As Kaufmann (KRI, p. 65) has stated, “Biblical religion was unable to reconcile itself with the idea that there was a power in the universe that defied the authority of God and that could serve as an antigod, the symbol and source of evil. Hence, it strove to transfer evil from the metaphysical realm to the moral realm, to the realm of sin.”

[Victor P. Hamilton, “Satan,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 986-987.]

concepts of the Hebrew term מִשְׁחָה.<sup>17</sup>

All of this background illustrates Paul's challenge in communicating his idea of conversion to a pagan audience. Although his use of the term τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ, *from the authority of Satan*, would not have triggered any image of a celestial power, what would have been planted in their minds is a power in opposition to God that can be represented by the image of darkness. Understanding this to be Satan as a celestial power as an adversary to God would have come much later with extensive Christian instruction in the details of the Gospel. Ignorance represented as darkness and as an adversary to enlightenment and God was likely their what they envisioned from these words. But that was a start, that Paul would build on with the third infinitive phrase.

**Third**, this turning to light and God enables the 'turner' to receive some enormously important: τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κληρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ, *so that they would receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in me*. Here the purpose infinitive shades off into what modern grammarians label as 'intended purpose.' The signal of this shift comes with the standard specification of the 'subject' of the infinitive in the accusative case, αὐτοὺς, *they*. No such construction exists in any of the modern western languages, thus forcing an entirely different approach to translation. Two direct objects are received from God here: ἄφεσιν, *forgiveness*, and κληρον, *inheritance*. Now the wheels began to turn in the minds of Paul's pagan audience. Their standard idea of ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, *forgiveness of sins*, would have been forgiveness of being ignorant about many things, since in Greek philosophy ἁμαρτία equaled at its core 'ignorance,' or ἀγνοία, which was to 'miss the mark' of enlightenment, the key to the virtuous life.<sup>18</sup> Again, Paul's working out of his Jewish background for defining these terms pushed his audience into puzzlement over what in the world he was talking about. Especially troubling was Paul's declaration that this risen Christ who spoke to Paul on the Damascus road promised to give ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν to those accepting it. Overcoming ἀγνοία, *ignorance*, came only through disciplined education that led to virtuous living. The idea of divine forgiveness of sins as Paul presented it was indeed a strange thought.

But easier to grasp for his audience was the second promised gift from this risen Christ: καὶ κληρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ, *and an inheritance among those made holy by faith in me*. The term κληρος had multiple meanings in the ancient world,<sup>19</sup> but common to many of these meanings was the idea of a portion or share of something given to an individual for various reasons. The idea of a family estate being passed down from the father to his oldest son, in which other family members would have had a κληρος, would have been readily understandable by these Greeks and Romans. But for Paul, it is his Jewish heritage that defines the term far more profoundly. The giving of a piece of land (κληρος) by God as a part of the Promised Land provided the rich background for the apostle. In intertestamental Judaism with emerging ideas of heaven coming into the picture, a κληρος could then be a portion of heaven given in eternity by God, something even more valuable than real estate in Israel. This then becomes a significant focus of the NT emphasis on κληρος and κληρονομία, as illus-

<sup>17</sup>“The LXX used διαβολή mostly in the sense of ‘calumniation,’<sup>7</sup> though it could denote ‘enmity’ in Sir. 28:9.<sup>8</sup> In Nu. 22:32 (the angel to Balaam): ἐξῆλθον εἰς διαβολήν σου, ‘in order to resist thee.’ Διαβάλλειν is once used for ‘to calumniate,’<sup>9</sup> and once for ‘to accuse.’<sup>10</sup> The compos. ἐνδιαβάλλειν means ‘to attack.’<sup>11</sup> In ᾠ 108:6 διάβολος is the ‘accuser’: διάβολος στήτω ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ. In Est. 7:4; 8:1, Haman is called διάβολος in the sense of ‘opponent’ or ‘enemy’ (Mas. מְצַדִּיק). In 1 Macc. 1:36 the acra is called a διάβολος (par. παγίς and ἔνεδρον) in the sense of ‘obstacle.’

“The LXX also used διάβολος for ἡσῶν ‘devil,’ in the sense of ‘the one who separates,’ ‘the enemy,’ ‘the calumniator,’ ‘the seducer.’<sup>12</sup> Since this is an innovation in the LXX, we can only deduce the meaning from the rendering and from the context. The latter seldom suggests ‘calumniator,’ but rather ‘accuser’ or ‘adversary.’ This is so in 1 Ch. 21:1 and Job 1 and 2, unless we prefer ‘seducer.’ Even in Zech. 3:1 ff., where he is in fact the accuser, the verb ἔστη is rendered ἀντικεῖσθαι: καὶ ὁ διάβολος ἔστη ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀντικεῖσθαι αὐτῷ = עֲלֵי־יְמִינֵי לְשׂוֹנֵאֵי. This seems to force us to the conclusion that ‘accuser’ is not the primary meaning. Since the rendering ‘seducer’ does not fit all the contexts, ‘adversary’ is the required translation. The work of the adversary implies always an attempt on the part of the διάβολος to separate God and man. It is an open question whether the verb διαβάλλειν influenced the usage.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:72–73.]

<sup>18</sup>“Aristotle also defines ἁμαρτία (→ ἀμάρτημα) as a ‘missing of virtue, the desired goal, whether out of weakness, accident or defective knowledge’ (→ ἀγνοία), Eth. Nic., II, 5, p. 1106b, 25 ff. This means ‘wrong without κακία’ (III, 13, p. 1118b, 16ff. etc.). It is thus intellectual deficiency working itself out morally according to the intellectual character of Greek ethics (III, 1, p. 1110b, 18 ff.). On the other hand, at a later period the thought of guilt, which is excluded by Aristotle,<sup>83</sup> is sometimes linked with ἁμαρτία, as in P. Lips., 1119, 3; Ditt. Syll.3, 1042, 15: ὀφείλω ἁμαρτία.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:294.]

<sup>19</sup>Related words in the Greek NT are “κληρος, κληρώ, προσκληρώ, ἀλόκληρος, ὀλοκληρία, κληρονόμος, συγκληρονόμος, κληρονομέω, κατακληρονομέω, κληρονομία.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:758.]

trated by Col. 1:12, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ ἰκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς *εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί*, giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you *to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light*. This Jewish background would have most likely come through to Agrippa and Bernice, much easier than to the rest of the audience.

What Paul affirmed as exceedingly positive news to this pagan audience was that this risen Christ promised a share in heaven to non-Jewish as well as Jews. The key to obtaining this share is being one of τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ, *those made holy by faith in me*. Important to remember is that this share is not earned; rather, it is received as a gift from God. The people of God are described as those who have been set apart by God in dedication to Him, as the perfect passive participle ἡγιασμένοις from ἀγιάζω makes clear. Only when God changes the sinner -- be he or she Jewish or Gentile -- can one become acceptable to stand in God's holy presence. The necessary prerequisite from the individual for this transformation to take place is πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ, *by faith in me*. Here was perhaps the most challenging part. Biblical faith, πίστις, at its core was and remains complete surrender of one's life to Christ. It is not trust in oneself, nor in some set of teachings considered truth. First and foremost, it is the surrendering of oneself over to the complete control of Christ. The inherent action orientation of surrender is why most of the similar constructions in the NT use εἰς ἐμέ, literally 'into me.'<sup>20</sup> Thus being made holy depends upon the individual's willingness to surrender self to Christ; it is not an automatic thing.

Here again, Paul's pagan audience would have had difficulty following exactly the meaning Paul put before them. The concept of ἀγιάζω was unknown in the Greco-Roman culture; instead, this is a LXX coined idea picked up from the Hebrew Bible in its translation of the Hebrew root שׁוּטַף.<sup>21</sup> Only the adjective ἅγιος, holy, was common in first century Greek and referenced a sense of awe mostly connected with parts of pagan temples closed off to everyone but the priests and priestesses. Moral or spiritual purity -- as asserted by these terms in Christian usage growing out of the LXX -- was not connected to these words. The most likely image that the term ἡγιασμένοις created in their minds was that this God of Paul's would qualify people to see the hidden parts of the temple available only to the priests. Yet, that would not be very clear in their minds.

What the apostle then did that day in presenting his conversion to Christ to this group of pagans was to tease them with terms they knew but tended to define differently than he did. This dissonance created in their minds -- by hearing familiar words but with different meanings -- pushed curiosity to higher levels. It challenged them hard to follow along as Paul presented his testimony to them. This most likely was especially the case with Agrippa and Bernice whose presence was largely intended to gain detailed knowledge about both Paul and the religious teaching he was advocating. Their Jewish connections gave them some advantage over the others, but their lack of serious commitment to God left them also with substantial gaps in their understanding, and clearly virtually no Christian understanding.

## IMPLICATIONS

What is it that God has called you to do? Paul's example suggests that two things stand at the heart of that divine calling: servanthood and witness. At the heart of this is God's sending you into the world with the vital ministry of opening the eyes of those outside the Kingdom of God. Implicit in this is their turning away from Satan to God in life changing commitment, which brings forgiveness of sins and a place among the children of God. Additionally, God promises to stand with you in this calling when that darkened world turns on you in hostility and anger.

I can think of not greater calling in life! It won't bring you material riches, but the blessings of Heaven will be opened up to you both now and for all eternity. May God bless you in your service to Him!

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<sup>20</sup>The much less frequent πίστει either with or without the preposition ἐν reflects the more Hebrew oriented expression with the same essential meaning. This is true for both the noun πίστις and the verb πιστεύω. Both are action concepts rather than static ideas of acceptance.

<sup>21</sup>“The verb ἀγιάζω belongs almost exclusively to biblical Greek or Greek influenced by the Bible (Phil. Leg. All., I, 18; Spec. Leg., I, 167), the form -άζειν occurring after τ instead of -ίζειν. We probably have here a denominative of שׁוּטַף, שׁוּטַף == ἅγιος.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 111.]