

Acts 9:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

Analysis

The Greek phrase 'skeuos eklogēs' (chosen vessel/instrument) emphasizes Paul's election by divine sovereignty for a specific purpose. God outlines three spheres of Paul's ministry: Gentiles (ethnē), kings (basileis), and Israel (huioi Israel) - a mission Paul fulfilled through his missionary journeys, appearances before rulers like Agrippa and Caesar, and ministry in synagogues. The term 'vessel' suggests both honor and usefulness, reflecting Paul's later teaching about vessels prepared for noble purposes (2 Timothy 2:20-21). This calling demonstrates God's grace in choosing His greatest persecutor to become His greatest missionary.

Historical Context

Spoken to Ananias in Damascus circa AD 34-35, shortly after Saul's conversion on the Damascus road. Saul had been persecuting Christians with letters of authority from the high priest. God's choice of Saul - a Pharisee, Roman citizen, and trained under Gamaliel - uniquely equipped him to reach both Jews and Gentiles, fulfilling the commission to take the gospel 'to the uttermost part of the earth' (Acts 1:8).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's calling as a 'chosen vessel' encourage you to trust God's sovereign purposes even in your past failures?
2. What unique combination of background, gifts, and experiences has God given you for His specific purposes?

Interlinear Text

εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος Πορεύου ὅτι σκεῦος
said But unto him the Lord Go thy way for vessel
G2036 G1161 G4314 G846 G3588 G2962 G4198 G3754 G4632

ἐκλογῆς μοι ἐστίν οὗτος τοῦ βαστάσαι τὸ ὄνομά
a chosen unto me is he to bear name
G1589 G3427 G2076 G3778 G3588 G941 G3588 G3686

μου ἐνώπιον ἐθνῶν καὶ βασιλέων υἱῶν τε
my before the Gentiles and kings the children and
G3450 G1799 G1484 G2532 G935 G5207 G5037

Ἰσραήλ.

of Israel

G2474

Additional Cross-References

Romans 11:13 (Parallel theme): For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Romans 1:5 (Parallel theme): By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Jeremiah 1:5 (Parallel theme): Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

1 Timothy 2:7 (Parallel theme): Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

2 Timothy 2:4 (Parallel theme): No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

Acts 13:2 (References Lord): As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Acts 22:21 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

1 Corinthians 15:10 (Parallel theme): But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Matthew 10:18 (Kingdom): And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

John 15:16 (Parallel theme): Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.