

# Galatians 1:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

## Analysis

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**But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,** Paul shifts from his activity to God's sovereignty. "But when it pleased God" (hote de eudokēsen ho theos, ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς) emphasizes divine initiative and good pleasure—God's timing and purpose, not Paul's decision. Eudeokeō (εὐδοκέω) expresses sovereign delight in executing His plan.

"Who separated me from my mother's womb" (ho aphorisas me ek koiliās mētros mou) echoes prophetic calls—Isaiah 49:1, Jeremiah 1:5. Aphorizō (ἀφορίζω) means "set apart, consecrate." Paul's apostleship began not at conversion but before birth through divine predestination. This radically contradicts merit-based thinking—Paul was chosen before he could do anything good or bad (Romans 9:11).

"And called me by his grace" (kai kalesas dia tēs charitos autou) describes effectual calling. Kaleō (καλέω) in Paul means God's irresistible summons bringing salvation. "By his grace" (dia tēs charitos) specifies the means—unmerited favor, not earned selection. Paul's salvation and apostleship both flow from sovereign grace, establishing the theological foundation for justification by faith alone.

## Historical Context

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Paul's prenatal consecration parallels Old Testament prophets called before birth (Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist). This wasn't unique experience but shared

pattern showing God's sovereignty in choosing servants. The Damascus road revelation (Acts 9) was temporal manifestation of eternal decree. Ancient Near Eastern kings often claimed divine election from birth; Paul applies this to demonstrate his apostolic authority equals the Twelve's. First-century Judaism debated free will versus predestination (Qumran scrolls, rabbinic literature). Paul firmly grounds salvation in God's sovereign election, not human decision, works, or merit—the same principle he applies to justification.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. Why does knowing God chose you before birth (not because of anything you would do) transform both assurance and humility?
2. What does Paul's prenatal consecration teach about God's purposes for your life before you knew or chose Him?
3. Can you hold both God's sovereign election and urgent evangelism without compromising either truth?

## Interlinear Text

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ὅτε	δὲ	εὐδόκησεν	τῆς	θεὸς	τῆς	ἀφορίσας	με	ἐκ
when	But	it pleased	who	God	who	separated	me	from
G3753	G1161	G2106	G3588	G2316	G3588	G873	G3165	G1537

κοιλίας	μητρός	μου	καὶ	καλέσας	διὰ	τῆς	χάριτος
womb	mother's	my	and	called	me by	who	grace
G2836	G3384	G3450	G2532	G2564	G1223	G3588	G5485

αὐτοῦ

G846

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.

**Isaiah 49:5** (References God): And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

**Isaiah 49:1** (Parallel theme): Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

**2 Timothy 1:9** (Grace): Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

**Ephesians 1:5** (Parallel theme): Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

**Romans 1:1** (References God): Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

**Acts 13:2** (Parallel theme): 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 9:15** (Parallel theme): 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:

**1 Corinthians 1:9** (References God): God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Romans 8:30** (Parallel theme): Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

