

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study of the Second Epistle of Peter – Part 2

I. Exposition of Chapter One (Continued).

A. Verses 2-3 – “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,”

1. “Grace and peace be multiplied to you...” - This part of Peter’s greeting is similar to I Peter 1:2b and Jude 2. Paul used similar openings in his letter which could be where Peter drew from. Peter may have been acquainted with Paul’s letters of Romans and Ephesians at this time. (Compare II Peter 3:14-16). The word “grace” means; “a favorable attitude toward someone or something”¹ and “good-will, loving-kindness, favor.”² The word “peace” means; “a state of freedom from anxiety and inner turmoil—‘peace, freedom from worry’.”³ The word “multiply” means; “to increase greatly in number or extent—‘to grow, to increase greatly.’”⁴ Even though this was a common greeting for both Greeks and Jews, this is something the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to write which, therefore, indicates the Lord wants this for His children.
2. “...in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord...” – In spite of the fact that this was a common greeting amongst Greeks and Jews, Peter points out that the only path to experience God’s grace and peace is through a knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus. The word “knowledge” here means; precise and correct knowledge.⁵ It also carries with it the idea of “full knowledge.”⁶ Dr. Thomas Constable writes:

“The Greeks, and especially the Gnostics, prided themselves on their knowledge, but Peter noted that the knowledge of God and of Jesus was the key to grace and peace (cf. 3:18). These blessings become ours as we get to know God intimately—by reading His Word and abiding in Him. The false teachers could offer nothing better than this.”⁷

3. “...as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,”
 - a. Regarding verse 3, Dr. Robert Utley writes: “Verse three is basically a refutation of the gnostic false teachers’ theological separation of salvation through secret knowledge and daily godly living. Deity provides for eternal life (i.e. *zoe*) and daily Christlikeness (i.e. *eusebeia*). True knowledge is faith in Jesus Christ that impacts daily living”⁸
 - b. “...as His divine power...” – “Divine” means; “pertaining to having the nature of God”.⁹ The word “power” here means; “inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth”.¹⁰ So, we could say that this speaks of God’s inherent power, which is part of His very nature.
 - c. “...has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...” – By God’s power, He has already given us everything that pertains to life and godliness. The word “given” is defined as; “grant, give, confer, bestow”.¹¹ Notice the word “has” which indicates that this is already accomplished. This provision was accomplished by the redemptive work of Christ. The word “life” is the common Greek word, “*zoe*” and here it refers to: “life real and genuine,...a life active and vigorous, devoted to God, blessed, the portion even in this world of those who put their trust in Christ, but after the resurrection to be consummated by new accessions

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 298.

² Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 666.

³ Louw and Nida, 314.

⁴ Ibid, 601.

⁵ Thayer, 237.

⁶ *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, William D. Mounce, Gen. ed. (Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, 2006.), 386.

⁷ Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 2 Peter* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2024), 12.

⁸ Robert James Dr. Utley, *The Gospel according to Peter: Mark and I & II Peter*, vol. Volume 2, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 276.

⁹ Louw and Nida, 139.

¹⁰ Thayer, 159.

¹¹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

(among them a more perfect body”¹² The word “godliness” means; “the devout practice and appropriate beliefs of God”.¹³ In other words, it’s the living out of the life that is given by God.

- d. “...through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,” – Peter emphasizes, again, that this Christian life is accomplished by increased intimate knowledge of Christ. This is possibly another refutation to the false teaching of gnosticism. Kenneth Gangel writes:

“All that believers need for spiritual vitality (life) and godly living (*eusebeian*, “godliness,” “piety”);...is attainable through our knowledge of Him (Christ). An intimate ‘full knowledge’ (*epignōseōs*; cf. 1:2) of Christ is the source of spiritual power and growth (cf. Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9–10; 2:2).”¹⁴

- 1) “...who called us by glory and virtue.” – The word “glory” means; “splendor, brightness, shining, radiance”¹⁵ The word “virtue” means; “the quality of moral excellence—‘outstanding goodness, virtue.’”¹⁶ (cf. verse 5). Scholars seem to disagree as to whether we’re called “by” His glory and virtue or called “to” His glory and virtue. For example, Robert C. Cunningham writes:

“The Lord has ‘called’...believers to His own ‘glory’(doxes, honor, radiant splendor) and ‘virtue’ (aretas, manliness holy excellence), thereby to manifest the divine character of Christ in their daily lives.”¹⁷

- 2) It could be that both are true – See II Corinthians 3:17-18.

B. Verse 4 – “...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.”

1. “...by which...” is referring to His “...own glory and excellence”.

2. “...have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises...”

a) “...exceedingly great...” – Is one word in the Greek and means; “pertaining to being extremely important—‘very important’”¹⁸

b) “...precious” – “pertaining to being of considerable value or worth”¹⁹ Peter used the word “precious” quite often. In addition to here, he mentions “precious faith” (II Peter 1:1; cf. I Peter 1:7), the “precious blood” (I Peter 1:19), the precious stone (I Peter 2:4, 6), and the precious Savior (I Peter 2:7).

3. Dr. Thomas Constable writes:

“The Lord’s ‘promises’ come to us by way of Christ’s divine power and the true knowledge of Him (v. 3). We learn to benefit from these promises as we get to know Him better. And the God-supplied divine power for fulfilling what He has promised comes from Him. The word ‘granted’ translates a Greek word (*doreomai*), also found in verse 3, that stresses the great worth of what God has given. The promises in view are biblical promises (including God’s covenant promises) that all believers can know about; they are not secret promises. They are in the Scriptures. The promises that Peter referred to in his first epistle deal with the believer’s inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3-5) and the Lord’s return (1 Pet. 1:9, 13).”²⁰

4. “...that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature,...” – In this context, it seems that the “promises” primarily referred to, would be the promise of the New Birth through faith in Christ. When we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we received the “divine nature” on the inside. We became a “new man” (Ephesians 4:24) and a “new creation” (II Corinthians 5:17).

5. “...having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.” – The word “corruption” is found four other times (cf. 2:12 twice; 2:19) in this letter and means; “a state of moral corruption and depravity.”²¹ In Christ, we have been set free from the power of sin – Romans 6:1-23.

¹² Thayer, 273.

¹³ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*

¹⁴ Kenneth O. Gangel, “2 Peter,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 864.

¹⁵ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*.

¹⁶ Louw and Nida, 743.

¹⁷ *The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 1121.

¹⁸ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 626.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 619.

²⁰ Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 2 Peter* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2024), 15-16.

²¹ Louw and Nida, 770.