

**Text: 2 Pt 1.4**

Last week I mentioned the unusual construction of vv. 3-4 of 2 Pt 1. Neither of these verses have a main verb, and there is some discussion of what these verses are connected to. Do they connect to v. 2, or do they connect to vv. 5-8?

Our translators tend to put v. 3 with verse 2 and verse 4 stands on its own (notice the period at the end). Young's Literal Translation connects v. 4 with v. 3 and sets it off from vv. 5-8.

... through the acknowledgement of him who did call us through glory and worthiness, <sup>4</sup> through which to us the most great and precious promises have been given, that through these ye may become partakers of a divine nature, having escaped from the corruption in the world in desires.

The commentators I have tend to take both these verses as connected with vv. 5-8.

I think we can safely say that they are a bridge between the greeting of vv. 1-2 and the opening exhortations of the following verses.

The theme of the exhortation is spiritual growth: "in your faith supply...." (NAU) "add to your faith..." (KJV).

And as we look at our text tonight, verse 4, we find that spiritual growth is its theme also.

2 Pt 1.4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

**Proposition:** Salvation in Christ begins and enables our growth in Christlikeness.

**I. The source of the promises**

A. The first phrase points back to v. 3 "through these"

1. "These" = "glory and excellence" (or we could say, "divine nature")

## 2. From last week:

- a. Glory: the “splendor and majesty”<sup>1</sup> of his divine being
- b. Excellence (KJV “virtue”): “goodness magnified”

## 3. So, it is by his own divine nature that the promises come to us

“Peter thinks of these promises as additional gifts made through the life and character of the incarnate Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

## B. The divine promises: “precious” and “magnificent”

## 1. What are the promises

- a. The resurrection (1 Pt 1.3-5)
- b. The Lord’s return (1 Pt 1.9, 13)
- c. Among others (the prophetic word, v. 19; the Lord’s return 3.4)

2. Precious “because of the great worth of the spiritual riches”<sup>3</sup>3. Magnificent “because they are intrinsically excellent”<sup>4</sup>

## C. The value is especially “to us”

## 1. The promises could simply be given to us (indirect object)

## 2. But word order!

Lit. “the precious and great to us promises”

a. In grammar, the “to us” describes the promises (attributive position)

b. The promises are great and precious *to us*

No hope of resurrection, in ourselves.

No joy at the Lord’s return, in ourselves.

But, through his divinely bestowed gift, both hope and joy!

<sup>1</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 292.

<sup>2</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude: An Expositional Commentary* (Greenville, S.C: Bob Jones University Press, 1989), 46.

<sup>3</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 2 Pt 1.4.

<sup>4</sup> Constable, 2 Pt 1.4.

## II. The result of the promises

### A. The promises enable partaking of the divine nature

1. What this does not mean: not that we will become “as gods” or “like God”
2. What it means is spiritual growth (towards moral perfection)
3. Key word: Partakers = *koinonos*, “fellowshipping in”

### B. The present relationship to the promises

1. No believer presently displays fully the divine nature
2. Every believer necessarily participates (to some extent) in the divine nature

“Christians are not waiting for this experience, but became partakers of the divine nature at conversion.”<sup>5</sup>

- a. Each believer has the Holy Spirit
- b. God gave us gifts (Eph 4.11, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors to equip us) to develop the promises in us

### C. The clinching phrase: “you may become”

1. Peter has a process in view
2. The process will end with the promises fully realized: *i.e.*, when Jesus comes
3. But the process is already begun
4. Compare Paul:
  - a. Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col 1.27)
  - b. We have put on “the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him” (Col 3.10)

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<sup>5</sup> Robert E. Picirilli, “Commentary on the Books of 1 and 2 Peter,” in *James, 1, 2 Peter, & Jude*, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, The Randall House Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Randall House, 1992), 236.

Compare also. (John 1.12–13; Gal. 2.20; Eph. 4.23–24; Heb. 3.14; 12.10; 1 Peter 1.23)

5. “Christians become partakers of God’s very nature by faith in His promises.”<sup>6</sup>
  - a. Not by connecting to some mystery religion
  - b. Not by Eastern mysticism or new age spirituality
  - c. But by faith in Christ

### III. The sphere in which the promises are active

#### A. The escape is a past event

1. Seeing this partly from the eternal perspective, the escape is already complete
2. But also seeing a real change brought about in our desires and new impulses in our spirit (born again)

“‘Having escaped’ conveys the picture of a successful flight from danger. It implies effort on their part, but it was the result of God’s gracious action.”<sup>7</sup>

#### B. The sphere of our escape is the corruption in the world

1. That reflects our present reality (surrounded by corruption)

“The noun ‘corruption’ (*phthoras*) contains a root idea of decomposition and implies the loathsomeness of decaying organisms.”<sup>8</sup>

2. We are in this world, but (as it is said) we are not of this world

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<sup>6</sup> Constable, *Expository Notes*, 2 Pt 1.4.

<sup>7</sup> Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude*, 49.

<sup>8</sup> Hiebert, 49.

C. There is a temptation to be overwhelmed by the corruption of the world

1. We are constantly bombarded by the world's point of view and its "self-promotion"
  - a. In ourselves, we retain our human nature and human desires to which the world appeals (lust)
  - b. In weariness, we may find the temptation to "give in" or to "go along to get along"
2. But we are already on the other side of that temptation
  - a. We have already escaped that corruption
  - b. To participate in that corruption violates the new nature we already participate in
  - c. So, this will become a powerful impulse to grow in grace to overcome all that is in the world, and around us

2 Pt 1.5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge,

## Conclusion:

"Godliness, goodness (lit. virtue), divine nature, and corruption are all concepts that fascinated the philosophical false teachers of Peter's day. Peter reminded his readers of God's provisions for them that made them adequate and in need of nothing that the false teachers, to whom he would refer later, said that they could provide."<sup>9</sup>

In Christ, a great work is begun; through Christ, a great victory is obtained.

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<sup>9</sup> Constable, *Expository Notes*, 2 Pt 1.4.