

Listen To The Chorus - Revised

PACIFIC RIM BIBLE STUDIES POLICY

Thank you for entering our site. The notes and any other material that may be on it are supplied to you in grace; there is no charge for them. You may download the notes from the site to your own computer; you may make copies of them for your personal use, and you may distribute them to other people, as long as it is done without charge and the entire study is kept intact. They are not for sale at any price. And, as long as you do so with the web site address on them: www.pacificrimbible.com. This is also a notice of intent to copyright.

GRACE GIVING POLICY

There is no charge for the Pacific Rim Bible Studies on line studies, or for any other doctrinal material that Pastor Phillips teaches. Grace is not for sale at any price! Bible Doctrine, whether in its taped, printed, or on line form will be supplied to the Believer-Priest who is positive to the Word of God as long as the Lord supplies. Believers are free to give in grace toward the Tapes and Publications ministry of Pastor Phillips, as the Lord leads them, and may send their grace gifts to:

BEREAN BIBLE CHURCH
1725 EAST STREET
REDDING, CA 96001
USA

SALVATION

If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, or aren't sure and would like to become one, then you need to believe that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God, that he was God who became a man, that he lived a sinless and perfect life, keeping the Law of God perfect in every way, that he kept faith perfectly, and that he was crucified on that cruel cross for your sins, mine and the entire world- he died for our sins! His death on the cross paid the penalty fully, one time for all sins that we have ever committed and that we will ever commit. He died; he went down into the bowels of the earth, even into Hell, and was raised from the dead on the third day in a resurrected, eternal body. He ascended back into heaven, was seated at the right hand of God, and is now Lord over heaven and earth. He is coming again to judge the world, to raise the dead, where he will give an eternal, resurrected, glorified body to everyone that has believed on him as their Lord and Savior, and to establish his kingdom one earth.

You come become a Christian right now as you read this, by personally placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; believing that he is God's only begotten Son, that he died on the cross for you and that he was raised from the dead and is now seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.."* Acts 16:31a And when you do trust Christ, and Christ alone, as your Lord and Savior, then go to God the Father in heaven in prayer and tell him so. Tell him that you have believed on his Son, thank him for his Son, and thank him for forgiving your sins and saving you! *"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."* Romans 10:9,10 *"For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* Romans 10:13 *"Therefore, being justified by faith (declared righteous), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Romans 5:1

February 2009

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” 2 Peter 1:5-7

Intro:

Throughout the NT metaphors are used to help us in our understanding of a spiritual concept. But not only to just help us understand it, but to give us a greater dimension and depth in our **understanding** of a spiritual concept and our **application** of it to our lives! There are military metaphors used in the NT, agricultural metaphors, metaphors of astronomy, the metaphor of the Greek mystery religion, and the one that the Apostle Peter uses here in 2 Peter 1:1-11, actually verses 3-11, is Greek drama. So the Greek stage is the back drop of this passage that we have to use to fully understand and appreciate this passage, especially in all its nuances.

For it is the stage of the Greek drama that creates the ambiance for the greatest play that you will ever go to see, for it is the one where **you are the key actor on the stage of your life on earth**. The lights are turned down low, the curtain is opened, and now you, the believer in Jesus Christ, walk out on stage. But to understand this, we will need to have a little understanding of Greek drama. So here's where I put my disclaimer in. I did not major in drama in school and I'm sure there are many students of the arts who are more familiar with the stage and especially Greek drama, but I do know enough of the terms to help us understand them and how they relate to the spiritual dynamics going on in the Christian life, and especially toward our application of them in our own life's drama.

There is a relationship between the Greek drama and the Christian's spiritual life. The story of the drama that took place on stage covered a certain day in the life of a hero who died, tragically, who could have lived victoriously and successfully, but didn't because he had a tragic flaw. It spoke of the hero who had so much going for him in life, who had such a great potential, but died suddenly, tragically, because of his own actions. It speaks of what could have been, and what should have been, and what would have been, if only he didn't have a tragic flaw.

The tragedy was used for religious purposes in the mystery cult of Dionysus, much like we find in some of the European classics of today. It was also used for a katharsis of the soul; the cleansing of the emotions from the soul, sort of like purifying, or cleansing, the heart. The story develops, the plot thickens, the hero is suddenly and tragically murdered, the heart bursts forth with tears and emotions, and the hearers are cleansed.

But there is another use for this Greek tragedy and that is for Christians in staying on course, dealing with and overcoming their soul sins, communion with God and going on to spiritual maturity. Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, not only uses Greek terms for the stage in his letter, he sets this entire passage in the context of the Greek tragedy! He's paralleling for us what he saw unfold on stage centuries ago to instruct us in the spiritual life dynamic!

The word tragedy comes from *tragodia*, the goat song. A goat was used in the performance of the drama where it was walked off stage. Apparently in ancient times human sacrifice was first used, but later on was replaced by a goat who was the hero.

A **tragic flaw** is a defect in the character of the hero that brings about his own downfall. Where the hero's death, or demise, is caused, not by things happening to him, but by his own actions! All of which could have been avoided, but because of the hero's flaw, or series of flaws, which he couldn't see in himself, (or wouldn't see), he became responsible for his own death or demise. Interestingly enough, the Greek word for the tragic flaw was *hamartia*, our word for **sin!**

The Greek tragedy was played out on stage where there was the main actor portraying the hero, such as Agamemnon, and several minor actors who composed the **chorus**. During the play the chorus would be warning the hero of the tragedy that lay in wait for him. But, because of the hero's tragic flaw, he did not listen to them, and because he didn't listen he died tragically. The hero's tragic flaw, or series of flaws, was error in judgment, sin, and overwhelming pride. And his death was as the result of his own actions, or failure to act, not on anyone else.

And so we have the drama of the Christian's life, our life, being played out before our eyes. Will it end in death? Will it end in tragic loss or failure? Or will we overcome these flaws that we all have and go on to victory, spiritual completion and fulfill the plan of God for our lives? **That is to be seen and it all depends upon whether we *listen to the chorus* and apply what they are trying to tell us!**

One of the plays centered around Agamemnon, who not only was a king, but the commanding general of the Greek army. In the course of time they went to war against Troy, and as they set sail the winds died down making it impossible. To keep the story short, he was advised by his soothsayer to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, to the Olympian goddess Artemis. The winds then picked up and he went on to Troy. While he was gone for ten years word of this had reached his wife, Clytemnestra, who burned in seething rage against her husband seeking revenge.

While Agamemnon was off fighting the Trojans for these ten years his wife had taken a lover. And then one evening a watchman on the roof of Agamemnon's palace sees the night sky reddened with the signal of a burning fire on a mountaintop signaling Agamemnon's victory over Troy. Which meant that he would be home soon. And so the plot thickens with his wife and her lover.

When Agamemnon arrives he comes with a captive, a prophetess named Cassandra, who is also his concubine, further enraging his wife Clytemnestra. When Agamemnon shows up, his wife pretends to be joyful at his arrival, and that all is well, and how much she has missed him all those years. But in her heart she hates him and is planning his death.

Well the gist of the story is that his bath is made ready for him, and while he is bathing unsuspectingly his wife comes in and plunges a knife into him and avenges her daughter's death. Saying that his blood spurting forth was as sweet as the rain falling from the heavens to the fields of corn.

Now what is the chorus doing all this time? The chorus of elders is suspicious that the Queen is plotting her husband's death and so they keep trying to warn Agamemnon. Saying, "*At home there tarries like a lurking snake, [snake: Clytemnestra]; Biding its time, a wrath unreconciled; A wily watcher, passionate to slake; In blood, resentment for a murdered child.*"

Even though Agamemnon had done a terrible wrong in his life, and even though he had many tragic flaws (sin), if he had listened to the chorus, he would not have died. But it was his arrogance that downplayed the seriousness of his act, its impact on his wife and any actions she might take, and his pride disregarded the advice that the chorus was trying to give him!

A. Equal Privilege v.1

“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:” 2 Peter 1:1 *σιμων πετρος δουλος και αποστολος ιησου χριστου τοις ισοτιμον ημιν λαχουσιν πιστιν εν δικαιοσυνη του θεου ημων και σωτηρος ιησου χριστου*

Peter first states his position as a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, then he begins with the matter of our faith in Christ and how it is that we obtained it.

The word used for **precious** is *isotimos* and it meant of equal value, or held in equal honor, equal in the sense of the same kind. It was used in secular Greek to denote having the same status and rank in civic life. The idea being that men are equal to each other only under the law. Only equals can enter into legal relationships, so that in civic life, where all men are governed by law, they become equals.

In Greek or Roman society every citizen had certain rights and privileges under the law. By being a citizen, or by becoming a citizen, each individual now had equal access to all the rights, privileges and protections of the law.

This underlines the fact that every Christian has equal access to God as his Judge, Ruler and Father. So the idea here is not so much upon the preciousness of our faith, although it is precious, but **the privilege and right of access to God that all Christians equally hold**, regardless of race or sex.

Now it says that we have **received** a faith, but is this faith objective faith as in the body of doctrine, or the doctrine that we have believed? Or is this to be taken in the subjective sense of the ability to trust Christ as our Savior?

Usually when faith is to be taken in the objective sense it will have the definite article with it - the faith, for when the meaning of faith is clearly objective, the definite article is used. But it is omitted here, leading us to conclude, which the context also bears out by the subjective use of faith in v.5, that it is subjective faith being discussed, that is, **our faith in Jesus Christ**. Which reveals that our ability to trust Christ as our Savior was given to us by God.

God deals with us on the basis of grace. Only faith can appropriate the grace of God. Therefore God gives man the faith needed to believe on Christ as his Savior, and he gives believers the faith which is necessary to appropriate his grace in their post salvation experience.

This is what so many mean when they say we are saved by God's grace. What they are saying is that God, in his grace, gave us the faith to believe on Christ! *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that (the ability to believe on Christ) not of yourselves: it (the ability to believe on Christ) is the gift of God: Not of works (human activity), lest any man should boast (brag about what he has or what he has done).”* Ephesians 2:8,9

Now the passage tells us that we have **received** this faith, and if we have received it, then it says that we did not possess it ourselves. Now the word for to **receive** is the aoist active participle of *lanchano*, which meant to obtain by lot, to draw lots, to receive by lot, to get something by drawing lots. It's the root idea for the lottery. Now before anyone thinks that one draws lots to see who gets the faith, which is a wrong interpretation, we need to see what it meant back then.

It was used for a variety of ideas back then, one of them was to draw a lot to see who could bring their suit into court. But the idea behind getting something by drawing a lot was like getting something “out of the blue”. It denoted the idea that something happened more by luck or chance, rather by one's desire or effort, along with the idea of being unexpected.

It came to mean, and this is how it was regarded, as divine appointment. One's lot in life was what he drew, that is, it had been allotted to him by God. We have a similar expression today in, “that's the hand I drew”, or, “we have to play the cards we're dealt”. Men drew lots as a means of trying to determine divine will and appointment. Whoever received the lot was the one that God had chose. So when they said that a man *drew his lot*, it was an idiom which meant that he was appointed by God apart from any desire or effort of his own.

It's significant that the Holy Spirit uses *lanchano*, to draw a lot, to explain how we receive faith. It's significant in itself that we receive the faith necessary to believe on Christ as our Savior, because that tells us **that saving faith is not and cannot be generated by the person, but is received from God**. And it's significant, because out of the nineteen words used to define *receive* he uses the word for the drawing of lots.

Men in those times would look at this phenomenon of *lanchano* from the standpoint of luck, or chance, or fate, maybe out of the blue, or the luck of the draw. **It was their way of expressing something out of the ordinary, such as, cause and effect, decisions and consequences, hard work and reward. So when something happened to them out of the ordinary**, especially if it was good or involved money, they would say that it happened by way of *lanchano*, “that he got lucky”!

But *lanchano* takes a different spin when it comes into the world of God and men and our receiving of faith to believe on Christ. Here we have the ideas that it happened suddenly, or unexpectedly, out of the blue. One of your buddies or coworkers, who always was going out drinking and carousing, comes in after the weekend and now he's saved! He's believed on Christ and is a changed man.

There's something else about the using of this word and that is the drawing of lots is a great equalizer. For here it does not matter how rich, poor, tall, short, smart, dumb, good or bad you are, because all human merit, will and efforts are set aside. One simply has drawn his lot, that is, it happened to him out of the blue and not because of anything he had done.

And this faith we received to believe on Christ comes to us “*through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*”. There are those who believe that man initiates in his faith toward God compelling God to respond in his grace. Rather it is God who initiates toward man in his grace giving man the faith needed to trust his Son as their Savior.

We have received this faith through the righteousness of God, because it is his righteousness that condemns all of man's works, efforts, or merits. So if God condemns everything that man could do, then he had to provide the means of saving man in his grace. This is why God gives us the faith to trust Christ as our Savior. Which reveals that man in himself does not possess saving faith.

One only needs to look at the apostle Paul to see this matter of faith and salvation. He was on the road to Damascus to persecute more Christians because of his hatred of Jesus Christ, when the Lord suddenly and unexpectedly appeared to him, “out of the blue”, and saved him. In a moment of time Paul received the faith to believe on Christ as his Savior and became a changed man.

B. Multiplication of grace and peace. v.2

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,”
2 Peter 1:2 χάρις υμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθεῖη ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν

The first part of Peter's greeting begins with, as in the other NT letters, of grace and peace to the people of God. But he adds that they would be ours in abundance, or that they would be multiplied to us. Grace is that characteristic of God that wants to bless his people, to do things for them, to do things to them that are beneficial in nature.

Grace is that attribute of God that is based upon his character and integrity, not ours. If it was based upon our character and works, and what we deserve, then we would receive nothing but his judgment. But basing what he does for us on the concept of grace and not justice opens the door for God to do all sorts of wonderful things for us.

The second thing we see here is that Peter wishes that God's peace would be multiplied to us. Peace is that tranquility of soul that is beyond comprehension and true definition. It is the very state of soul that God has existed in for all eternity. The peace that he gives us is his very own peace! He doesn't give us a sort of separate peace for human beings, but he gives to us his peace!

But our attention must be brought to the word used for *grace and peace being ours in abundance or being multiplied to us*, and it's the aorist passive optative of *plethuno*. The optative mood is the real qualifier in this, for if it was in the indicative mood it would mean that grace and peace **would** be the reality in our lives. But in the optative mood it means it **could** be!

The optative mood is used to express a wish or desire that something would be, but it's no guarantee that it will be! Peter is simply expressing to them, and all believers in Christ, that God's grace and peace would be the reality in our lives, and that it would be ever expanding. But is not a guaranteed reality, because it is conditioned on something else taking place. There is the use of the optative mood to express the desire that something will happen, but it's doubtful that it will. But here it's used to express the apostle's genuine desire for them.

The means by which this happens is through the *epignosis* knowledge of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. What this tells us is that the apostle's desire for grace and peace to be an expanding reality in our lives is **directly related to having an *epignosis* knowledge of God through his Word**.

To look at the words for knowledge in a simple overview we have: ***gnosis*** - the factual knowledge taught to us, or Bible Doctrine, ***ginosko*** – the process of learning doctrine, ***oida*** – having a full and complete understanding of a doctrine, ***sophia*** – the doctrine that we have learned, understood, believed and applied to a situation, which we call wisdom.

Epignosis is different in that it is the doctrine that we have learned, understood and believed! For when we combine our faith to the Word of God, then it is converted into spiritual phenomena, where it edifies, enlightens, strengthens and renews the inner man. We begin the Christian life by believing the gospel and placing our faith in Christ. And we walk in the spiritual life by placing our faith in the promises and teachings of God's Word! And there in the center of faith in the Word of God we find ourselves living in the sphere of peace. So **grace and peace are multiplied to us as we exercise faith in the Word of God**. The three legs of the Christian life: grace, faith and truth.

C. Life and godliness with *epignosis*. v.3

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:” 2 Peter 1:3 ως παντα ημιν της θειας δυναμεως αυτου τα προς ζωην και ευσεβειαν δεδωρημενης δια της επιγνωσεως του καλεσαντος ημας δια δοξης και αρετης

And because *dia* is used *doxes* and *aretas*, glory and virtue, it's **by** his own glory and virtue. “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us **by** his own glory and goodness.”

What we need for physical life and our very own spiritual life has already been provided to all believers by the **divine power** of God. *Theias* is the word for deity, or that which pertains to deity, telling us that this power, *dunameos*, originates from God himself, the all powerful one.

The word for to *give* is *doreomai*; *doron* would be a gift. It meant to grant or give something to someone as a gift. It carried the regal sense of large handed generosity giving to someone way more than they needed or asked for, and was used in an extra biblical sense by Homer of a complementary gift of the gods.

God gave us his only Son to pay the penalty for our sins on the cross. He gave us to his Son to be our Savior. He gave us the faith to believe on Christ. He has given us everything we need for our physical lives here on earth. He has given us everything that we need to live our very own personal spiritual life. He will give us a resurrection body, a home with him forever, an eternal inheritance and countless blessings throughout eternity.

It's also significant that the perfect passive participle of to *give* is used here to stress the permanence of this gift! The perfect tense describes completed action in the past with results that continue on into the future. And the passive voice, the voice of grace, tells us that we merely received the action of the verb; God did it for us.

This shows that, as a permanent gift from the hand of God, **our spiritual life is ours forever!** God won't take it back from us; we can't lose it or forfeit it due to sin or anything else. It is ours and only ours. But we can fail to live within its dynamic. **But failure to live within the spiritual dynamic given to us does not mean loss of the spiritual life!**

The word for *life* is *zoen* and it denotes every single thing that every single one of us needs for our physical lives here on earth. If you were to sum up human beings, other than their obvious sinfulness, it would be that we're **needy!** We need food, water, clothing, shelter, love, help, goals, purposes, hope, friends, social life, health needs, diet needs, medical needs, and all sorts of other needs as we go through life here on earth. **And so, *zoe* sums that all up and tells us that God, out of the largeness of his generosity, and because of his great love for us, has given to us, as a permanent gift, everything that we will ever need in this life! (And we need to note, it's need, not want).**

And we can avoid worry in our lives by realizing that God provided everything that we will ever need in this life at the time when he created the universe. “For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world, καταβολης κόσμου.” Hebrews 4:3

The next thing that we see that God has given to every believer in Christ is everything they need for *godliness*, ευσεβειαν, *eusebeian*. But the word *godliness* is a terrible translation for *eusebeia*. The English word *godliness* means that one possesses the quality or state of being like God. Which flies in the face of everything that the Bible teaches that, who can be like God? No one!

As *zoe* refers to the believer's physical life, *eusebeia* refers to the believer's spiritual life, but *eusebeia* means so much more than that.

First of all, it does refer to the **spiritual life** that God created in each believer at the moment of salvation, when we were regenerated by the Holy Spirit, which is what being born again is all about, this made us a new man, or a new species of humanity.

Second, this **spiritual life is eternal**. That which God created in us he took from himself. And this spiritual side of our nature, because it is from God, is eternal. Which is another one of the many reasons why believers cannot lose their salvation. The new nature is spiritual, made of spirit and truth, and because it is spiritual it is eternal in nature.

The third thing is that **our spiritual life is unique to us!** There are no two spiritual lives alike. We may be all spiritual in substance, and we are, but our spiritual life is our very own unique to only us. It is what makes you, you, and makes you different than every other believer in Christ!

The fourth thing is that we will be living in this spiritual life; **we will be living in our very own spiritual life for all eternity!** What is in you now, that is, your spiritual life that God created in you and only for you, is **what you will be living in forever!**

The fifth thing is that Jesus Christ is the prototype for this new man. Adam was unique in all of God's creation because he was the first of a new species, the species of humanity. And Jesus Christ is unique in God's new species of humanity, because he is the prototype after which all Church Age believers are patterned, with each one of us having our own uniqueness. The new man, the new nature, **the spiritual man and life in us is patterned after Jesus Christ!**

The sixth thing is that **this spiritual life in us needs the metabolization of Bible Doctrine by faith and the filling of the Holy Spirit**. This is what strengthens us, edifies us, renews us, gives us faith, hope, love, joy, peace, creates spiritual growth inside us and conforms us to the image of Christ.

The seventh thing is that *eusebeia* takes all these things into account and then applies it to life. *Eusebeia* is the intake and metabolization of Bible Doctrine by faith, under the filling and power of the Holy Spirit, and then being applied to life's experiences! **So *eusebeia* refers to the believer in Christ living life in their very own spiritual life while here on the earth**. Which will be followed by them living in their own spiritual life for all eternity in a resurrection body.

God has provided for us our salvation, the indwelling Holy Spirit, a new nature, the provision of confessing our sins to him, the filling of the Holy Spirit, the local church ministry, the spiritual gift of Pastor-teacher, the teaching of Bible Doctrine, the Word of God, the faith to believe his Word, access to his throne through prayer, a life that has been planned out for us and so many other things that give us the opportunity to walk in our spiritual life and glorify him. He has provided for us everything that we need for our physical lives and everything that we need for our spiritual life. And all this is through the omnipotence of his power.

This next statement now tells us how God's grace and peace are multiplied to us, “*through the knowledge of him that hath called us*”, that is, “*through the (epignosis) knowledge of the one who called us*”, δια της επιγνωσεως του καλεσαντος ημας.

As we have seen, ***gnosis*** - is the factual knowledge taught to us, or Bible Doctrine, or the knowledge of the Word of God, ***ginosko*** – is the process of learning doctrine in one category or another, ***oida*** – is having a full and complete understanding of a doctrine, and ***sophia*** – is the doctrine that we have learned, understood, believed and applied to a situation, which we call wisdom. The wise man or woman is the one who applies the teaching of God's Word to their life.

Epignosis is different in that it is the doctrine that we have learned, understood and believed! It is when we combine our faith with the Word of God, that it is converted into spiritual phenomena, where it edifies, enlightens, strengthens and renews the inner man.

It is similar to the process of metabolizing food. We place the food in our mouth, which is analogous to coming to church and taking in the Word of God, then we chew the food, which has the idea of breaking it down into smaller pieces, which is analogous to understanding the doctrine we are being taught, next we swallow the food, which is analogous to believing the doctrine that we have just learned, and then the body automatically takes over, where the food is then digested and the nutrients that were in the food, now through the process of metabolization, are released and distributed throughout the body by the circulatory system. And so it is in the new nature, for when faith is brought into the equation, through the process of spiritual metabolization, the spiritual energy (nutrients) that is in the Word is released throughout the new man where it now can be edified, grow, strengthened and renewed. **There must be both – the Word of God and the believer's faith for this to take place!**

We begin the Christian life by believing the gospel and placing our faith in Christ. And it was the teaching about Christ that gave us the faith to believe on him! “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Romans 10:17 And afterward we are to walk in the spiritual life by placing our faith in the promises and teachings of God's Word! “*This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*” Galatians 3:2,3 And there in the sphere of faith in the Word of God we find ourselves living in the sphere of peace. “*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace **in believing**, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*” Romans 15:13 **So grace and peace are multiplied to us as we exercise faith in the Word of God!**
The three legs of the Christian life: grace, faith and truth.

Metabolized Bible Doctrine is the means by which God's grace and peace are multiplied to believers in Christ, but that means that the pulpits of America are to be teaching it! But what if they aren't? What if they are instead giving them programs, music, entertainment, keeping them busy, steering them into legalism and the rest? Then that means that those believers are being deprived of, robbed of, what they need to live in God's peace and appropriate God's grace! It is the Pastor's job, his function, his **duty** to accurately and faithfully teach the Word of God to the people to give them what their souls need.

But such is the state of affairs in the churches in America that this is a rarity. What we do find are men, (males), leading them into emotionalism, entertaining them, babysitting the kids, crusaderism, steering them down the path of Laodicea after the promise of prosperity, all things of the flesh. Anything and everything other than faithfully and accurately teaching them the things of the Word of God, about God's grace, the need for faith and the rest.

March 2009

Listen To The Chorus – continued

D. Participating in the divine nature. v.4

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”
2 Peter 1:4 δι' ὧν τὰ μέγιστα ἡμῖν καὶ τίμια ἐπαγγέλματα δεδωρηται ἵνα διὰ τούτων γενήσθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως ἀποφυγοντες τῆς ἐν κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθοράς

The problem we have is in understanding what is meant by the term *divine nature*, *theias phuseos*, θείας ... φύσεως. If the English word nature is used, then what we're referring to is the particular qualities belonging to a person. If the word essence is used then that refers to the basic, intrinsic and unchanging nature of something denoting one's existence.

We do know that *theias* refers to that which pertains to God, or that which has its origin in God. But what is it that we are partakers in then? We know that something has been created in us and we know that it is from God. We also know that we are able to experience many spiritual phenomena. But where do these spiritual phenomena come from, if not from God himself!

We know that we do not have the attributes of deity; we know that we are not all-seeing, all-knowing and all-powerful. But when we experience peace in our souls, are we not experiencing the very peace of God and of Jesus Christ! For Christ has given us **his** peace! When we experience the spiritual phenomenon of joy, are we not experiencing the very joy of God. And we can say the same thing about *agape* love, hope, etc.. That which we have in us is from the divine nature of God, but that doesn't make us deity, or sharers in the deity of God!

We are in God, we are in Christ, we have the third person of the trinity, the very Spirit of God, not only indwelling us, but one with us, but that doesn't mean that we have encroached on the deity of God in anyway! We are in an inseparable, eternal union with Jesus Christ, where he is our brother and his Father is our Father, but that doesn't mean that we are partaking in deity!

We have something in us, though, that is from God. It is in essence spiritual and eternal, not just everlasting, but eternal because the very nature of our new natures is from God and is eternal. It is this new nature residing in every Christian that is the *divine nature*. And *partaking* in it is experientially living in the dynamic of the new nature, as versus living in the flesh nature from Adam.

Perhaps we can understand this better by looking at all this from the standpoint of the *spiritual seed* due to our union with Jesus Christ. Our union with Christ is our bond with him and his bond with us. We are bound together ***in Christ*** for all eternity! This union has three aspects to it: it is a **legal** bond, it is a **spiritual** bond and it is a **genetic** bond, if you will.

Our **legal** bond to Christ is a legal union because of our covenant relationship with him. We are eternally bound to Christ by the blood of the new covenant. This covenant cannot and will not be broken. It is in effect forever and is by nature eternal. We are *in Christ*, that is, legally identified with Christ. *En Christo* was a legal t.t. for being identified legally with someone. When we were born physically, we were *in Adam*, identified with Adam, but now that we're born again, we are *in Christ*.

We are bound to Christ **spiritually** through the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in Christ; he is in the Father, and he is in us. We are in Christ with him being the head of the body and he is in us. And, as he will never leave the Father, nor the Son, neither will he ever leave us. When our bodies die, and our souls depart from them launching us out into eternity, the Holy Spirit will be with us because **he is in complete union with our souls.**

The third way we are bound to Christ is dynamically, or in a spiritually **genetic** concept. What we are made of now in the “DNA” of our new nature is the same *material*, if you will, along the same lines genetically, that we see in Christ. Christ was the first fruit, the prototype of a new species of humanity, and we were made in fashion from him and after him.

The Bible teaches that we have died with Christ, been crucified with Christ, raised with Christ and ascended into heaven with Christ. Many explain that as being retroactive positional truth, where at the moment of salvation and our being baptized into Christ, we now share everything that Christ had gone through. But there's something they're missing and that's the concept of the **spiritual seed!** And remember, it is the seed wherein is contained the *genetics*.

This concept brings out the idea, first of all, that the new birth that occurs in people, when they believe on Christ as their Savior, is as the result of the spiritual seed that was planted in us. “*Being born again, not of corruptible **seed**, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*” 1 Peter 1:23 “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for **his seed** remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*” 1 John 3:9

Abraham and Levi can help us understand how this works. Levi was born many centuries after Abraham existed, yet **Levi existed in Abraham!** How did that work? It was because Levi's existence was in the physical seed that was still in Abraham's loins. “*And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. **For he was yet in the loins of his father**, when Melchisedec met him.*” Hebrews 7:9,10

So we have Levi **in Abraham** before Levi came into existence physically! And how this was so was because the physical man, that was to later on to become Levi, was in the seed. All the physical genetic information that was to later on to be born and become Levi was still in Abraham, in the seed!

And so it is with believers in Christ. We are born again with a spiritual seed from God, and this spiritual seed has its own *genetic* imprint. And this spiritual seed was in Christ when he was alive here on earth and is alive in him today. And this spiritual seed is what gave us the new birth when it combined with faith on the part of the believer in Christ, thus creating the new man inside of us, which is now being formed into the image of Christ. “*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until **Christ be formed in you**,*” Galatians 4:19 Like a child being formed in its mother.

So when we are talking about the new nature as being the divine nature that God wants us all to be partakers of, we have to understand what it is, where it comes from and what consists of. It is the seed of God; it comes from God; it was in Christ in his humanity on earth; it is the basis for sharing in all that he went through here on earth; it is a spiritual seed, it has its own *genetic information*, if you will, in it; it is based upon Jesus Christ who is its prototype; it is righteous; it is holy; it is pure; it is eternal; it is spiritual; it has the capacity to fellowship or commune with God; it has the capacity to exercise love, patience, etc.; it has the capacity to enjoy the very peace and joy of God, which is what the idea of partaking in the *divine nature* is all about.

Now Peter says that God has given us great and precious promises. “*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature*”. Now we note that he brings up the idea of promises, not commands that we had under the Law, but promises. So it begs the question, why promises? What do promises have to do with us becoming partakers of the divine nature? With us experientially living in the dynamic of the new nature created in us?

The reason why is that something happens, a change takes place, when we mix our faith with the Word of God. You can have two separate concepts, A and B, but when you combine them you no longer have A plus B, nor do you have AB, you end up with C! A different compound altogether.

Hebrews 4:2 brings this idea out as well, “*For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*” The word used for mix is συγκεκρασμενους, *sunkerranumi*. It meant to add two things together so that they blend and form a new compound altogether.

The two things in the passage, and all the way through the Bible, are the Word of God on one hand and faith on the other. Now the Word of God by itself is one thing, and faith by itself is another thing. But when we combine our faith to the Word of God, we don't end up with faith-Word; we end up with a spiritual phenomenon that takes place inside of us – *pneumatika!*

When an unbeliever hears the Gospel message, there's the Word, but no change takes place inside of him. But when he or she believes the Word, the Gospel message, when faith is added to the Word, then new life begins; they are created anew by the power of God!

All the way through the Bible we see believers being overcome by their fears, or worries, or doubts, or discouragement, or depression, or guilt, or anger, and they don't get out of it! Now the Word is still there; they may be even reading the Word! But nothing happens until they start **believing** the Word! And when they add their faith to the promises of God their entire internal dynamic changes. They go from fear and worry to peace, from doubts to confidence, from despair to hope! What happened? **The addition of faith to the promises of God created a new spiritual dynamic in them!**

It was Paul's desire that believers would be filled with God's joy and peace, so that they would abound in hope. All through the power of the Holy Spirit. “*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*” Romans 15:13 But he tells us that this spiritual dynamic comes in the sphere of faith, en to pisteuein, in the sphere of believing, or as we exercise faith in the promises of God!

Pressure plus the Word of God and no faith ends up with misery in the soul. But pressure plus faith in the Word of God ends up with peace in the soul! Can we not see how the addition of our faith to the promises and doctrines that we have learned completely changes our soul's experience?

It is our faith, when combined with the promises of God, that changes the dynamic going on in our souls. Where we can go from the soul sins, such as, fear, worry, anxiety, dread, apprehension, bitterness, anger, malice, abnormal grief, guilt, shame, envy, jealousy, garbage in the soul, etc., to a state of pure love, joy, peace and hope. This is the spiritual dynamic! This is partaking in the divine nature. This is what this passage is all about. And it is through exercising faith, (which God has given us), in the promises that God has given to us, that enables us to partake in this spiritual state. And by faith in his promises we now are living in our very own spiritual life.

Hina plus the subjunctive mood introduces a purpose clause, that is, something is being done for a purpose. God has given us his promises for the purpose that we might become partakers of the divine nature. Which tells us that when we exercise our faith in the promises of God, something changes inside of us whereby we enter into and enjoy the spiritual life dynamic. It's very similar to the process of metabolization, where the body is able to extract the energy in the food we eat by the process of digestion and metabolization.

Ginomai is also used in the passage indicating a change of condition or state, to become something that we were not before. Which tells us that we were not sharers in the divine nature that God has given to all of us, but now, through faith in the promises, we can be!

Now some have referred to the *divine nature*, *θειας ... φυσεως, theias phuseos*, as the divine endowment. The problem I have with this is that the word to endow, or endowment, is the word that is generally used, first of all, in matters dealing with property, funding, income, or having a permanent source of income.

The Greek word used for *nature* is *phusis*, (also transliterated as physis), with the Roman equivalent as *Natura* from which we derive *Nature*, but to be able to better understand what it meant we should go to the background of poetry and the Greek stage to try to understand what it meant in those days, and if there was a different use for it in poetry.

Phusis was the word used in the mystery religion circles to denote the mother goddess. They regarded her as the life giving force, not only on the earth, but throughout the universe as well. They believed that she created the golden crop of man out of earth, wind, fire and water by commingling water with the fiery mud and air.

One can look at *phusis* from the standpoint of its various component parts, or one can look at it from the standpoint of its creation, but the way it was viewed was objectively in the whole process of growth from its birth to its maturity. It was the completed realization of its becoming, or the process by which a thing is becoming what it is, with the idea of hiddenness of all its properties. Along with that is the idea of divine origin that is either implied or stated.

There are three ideas that stand out in *phusis*: **one**, the origin of the thing, where did it come from, how did it come into being, who created it; **two**, the process entailing its development; **three**, the end result, what will it be when it matures. So in *phusis* there is one, the aspect of what is its very essence or nature, that which distinguishes it from all other things. Two, where did it come from, its origin, who created it. And three, what will it be like when it fully matures.

And because *phusis* is found here in the passage with *theias*, it tells us that its origin is from God making it divine in nature. Now the devotees of the mystery religion believed that *phusis* was the mother goddess and that whatever she created was from her. But Peter says that *phusis* is from God.

Which brings out something different about the essence of what is being talked about here and that is just exactly what is its nature? When we look at the creation of Adam we see that his body was manufactured out of the basic chemical elements of the earth. Adam was a carbon based life form and his DNA was wrapped up in that. But that which God has created in us, the *phusis*, was not made from the earth – it came from above. So, is its *DNA* something that God made up on the spot? Or did its spiritual “*DNA*” come from him?

So what we see is that the *divine nature*, *theias...phuseos*, is a poetic reference to the new nature that all believers in Christ have in them. It is from God as its origin. Its ultimate end is to become completed being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Its DNA, its spiritual seed, is divine in nature due to it coming from God. Although there may be some question or debate as to what properties constitutes its true nature, but certainly it does not possess the elements of deity.

Then the passage goes on to say, “*having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*” - *αποφυγοντες της εν κοσμω εν επιθυμια φθορας*. The aorist active participle of *apopheugo* is used here, and with its grammatical use of the action of the aorist participle preceding the action of the main verb, tells us that our *escaping the corruption that is in the world* precedes our entering into and partaking of the blessings found in the *divine nature* through faith in the promises.

Although lusts will always be a problem for believers in Christ, as long as we are in these bodies, “*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*” 1 Peter 2:11, what this passage is referring to, with the use of the aorist participle, is our pre-salvation state before we believed on Christ as our Savior, and what awaits us in the potential of our post salvation experience of *partaking in the divine nature* after we become Christians!

To *escape* is *apopheugo* and comes from to flee, to escape, or to be put to flight, to be a fugitive. To flee - *pheugo*, and away from something or someone – *apo*, and with the accusative it denotes that from which one is fleeing from or escaping from, and in our passage it's the world system.

But *apopheugo* can have other ideas contained in it when in the context of the law, or one's country. In regards to one's **country**, one may have escaped from something and be classified as a fugitive, *pheuge*, or one may have been banished and termed an exile *pheuge*. In **law**, the *pheugon* was the defendant at trial, (the *diokon* the prosecutor), and to escape the prosecutors, (*apopheugon ton diokon*), meant that one had been acquitted.

Having escaped the world system has the idea of our escaping the Domain of Darkness that Satan rules over, not that of one who is guilty, but that of one that is innocent. This would be similar to the idea of one who goes to court and is found guilty, but who is truly innocent, so he leaves the country. There are two kinds of fugitives at law: those who are guilty and have been found guilty and are fleeing prosecution; and those who are innocent, but have been found guilty and are fleeing persecution.

Before we were Christians we were under the *legal* system of Satan's rule over the world, and as sinners, we had no defense – we were guilty sinners. But when we believed on Christ as our Savior, the righteousness of Christ was imputed to us, God declared us to be righteous in his court in heaven, and we are righteous. We escaped from Satan's world system, when we were transferred out of it by God and brought into the light of Christ's kingdom and his authority over us.

There are three significant interconnecting words in this passage: **corruption**, *phthora*, *φθορας*, the **world**, *en kosmo*, *εν κοσμω* and **lust**, *epithumia*, *επιθυμια*. They all go hand in hand and they all find fertile soil in the flesh nature. *Phthora*, corruption, signifies being brought into a worse condition. Imperceptibly wood rots, metal rusts, teeth decay, food spoils, and so it is with the effect that the sin nature has on the soul. Gradually, little by little everyday, the soul is being brought into a worsened condition because of the indwelling sin nature in the flesh and it is the world system that promotes and encourages that idea, all under the control of Satan. But God took us out of that when he brought us to Jesus Christ and gave us new natures whereby we can operate outside the control of the flesh.

E. Enters The Chorus. v. 5-7

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” 2 Peter 1:5-7 και αυτο τουτο δε σπουδην πασαν παρεισενεγκαντες επιχορηγησατε εν τη πιστει υμων την αρετην εν δε τη αρετη την γνωσιν εν δε τη γνωσει την εγκρατειαν εν δε τη εγκρατεια την υπομονην εν δε τη υπομονη την ευσεβειαν εν δε τη ευσεβεια την φιλαδελφιαν εν δε τη φιλαδελφια την αγαπην.

“And beside this, KJV, or, “For this very reason”, NIV, goes back to the idea of our escaping from the world system run by the devil when we believed on Christ as our Savior. A somewhat similar analogy to the old Sci-Fi movie, “Logan's Run”, where the hero escapes from the craziness and control of an evil city in the future to normal life in the country.

What Peter is bringing in here is that God has designed a perfect plan for our lives as believers in Christ; one that we not only all can go on to greatness in our various fields, but actually enter into communing with him in the sphere of the spiritual life dynamic he created in us. Our faith in Christ has brought us into this arena, or onto this stage, but now Peter tells us that we're going to have to add these seven virtues, that have also been supplied by God, to make this an experiential reality.

As we had seen with Agamemnon, who was the hero of the Greek tragedy, he had a tragic flaw that ended up costing him his life. Now it's important to note that we all have flaws, every single believer in Christ has their own flaws, but they only become **tragic flaws** when we are defeated by them. That is, if we allow our flaws hold us back from partaking in the divine nature. But by listening to the chorus we can overcome our flaws and go on to be the heroes that God wants us to be!

“Giving all diligence”, KJV, or, “Make every effort”, is παρεισενεγκαντες σπουδην πασαν, spouden pasan. Spoude meant to hasten to do something, to be diligent in a matter, to make every effort, to put yourself out to accomplish something. It spoke of the expenditure of great effort to accomplish a goal. With all, pasan, it shows how much effort we need to put out and that's **every effort!**

Too many people today want to do as little as possible in their lives, work and home. But if you want to accomplish something in life, you're going to have to really put yourself out. The farmer who wants a good crop is going to have to work at it. The student who wants to get passing grades to graduate is going to have to really apply himself. The salesman who wants sales is going to have to make every effort to prospect, demonstrate and close his customers. And if a Christian wants to go onto greatness, serve the Lord, and commune with God on a daily basis in the filling of the Holy Spirit in the new nature God has created in him, then he's going to have to put himself out to do that.

Our jobs, the details of life, work around the house, the kids, repairs, TV, entertainment, leisure time, tending to our pets, gratifying our lusts...there are so many things vying for our attention. We turn on TV, instead of listening to a doctrinal tape. We read a novel, instead of reading our Bibles. We call friends on the phone, instead of talking to God in prayer. We hang around the house, instead of going to church to study Bible Doctrine.

So many things that are pleasurable to us, so many things that our flesh wants to do. But, if we are going to partake in the divine nature, then **we are going to have to really put ourselves out and set these things aside**. This is what *spoude* is all about.

“Giving all diligence, add to your faith” is *spouden pasan pareisenenkantes epichoregesate en te pistei humon*, *παρεισενεγκαντες* is the aojist active participle of *pareisphero* and *επιχορηγησατε εν τη πιστει υμων* is the aojist active imperative of *epichoregeo*.

We want to begin with the term “*your faith*”. As we have seen, we received our faith from God who gave it to us. “*To them that have obtained like precious faith with us*”, 2 Peter 1:1, “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Romans 10:17. And once God gave us faith, then it now becomes ours. So now what are we going to do with it? Are we going to exercise it?

Now that we have entered into this life of grace, through the faith, (faith in Christ), that God gave to us, we must remember that **we are adding these seven concepts to our faith**. Make no mistake about it, **faith will always be there in our Christian walk**. We believed on Christ in the beginning, and in our post salvation experience it's still faith, faith in the promises of God, faith in the teachings of the Word of God and faith in the Father, his plan, his power and his provisions.

Giving all diligence, or making every effort, uses *spoude* combined with the aojist participle of *pareisphero*. Now as we have seen, *spoude* refers to the concept concerning the expenditure of great effort to accomplish a goal. It meant to be highly motivated and letting nothing stand in the way toward accomplishing something. And *pareisphero* meant to bring something in, or to add something. It says that we're to bring in something, these seven virtues, in addition to our faith after we're saved. Next we come down to the next word the aojist imperative of *epichoregeo*, which meant to supply.

To understand this better we need to begin with the noun *epichoregia*. In those days the Greek stage played a very large role in the social and religious life of the Greek citizen. So much so, that the **state** provided the theater and stage at its own expense. But to put on a production took more than that. It took the props, the set, the play and the actors who performed.

And this is where the **epichoregia**, the patron, came in. Even today we have the term patron of the arts. A **patron** today is one who supports the arts with money, gifts, endorsement, or work. The patron in those days, the **epichoregia**, was one who provided the funding for the stage, the set, the props and even providing the salary for the actors to live on.

So we have the **Greek state** providing the theater and stage, the setting. And the **Epichoregia**, the patron, providing everything that was needed, setting, actors, money, etc., for the Greek drama or tragedy to be performed. And we have the same thing going on for all Christians here on earth. We have the state, **the kingdom of heaven**, providing the setting - the earth, we have the stage, which is our own life. And we have **God** as our **Epichoregia**, our patron, who is providing everything that we need, spiritual and otherwise, for us to perform in the play of our lives with us being the **Hero**.

And here's what we're to bring in addition to our faith that our Patron, our **Epichoregia**, has provided for us: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity. The aojist active imperative of *epichoregeo* is used here to denote that we are the ones that must do this, no one else can do it for us, and that we're commanded to do it.

God has provided for us the spiritual concepts of faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity to overcome our pride and soul sins problem, but now we must of our own volition utilize them in our lives here on earth. **If we do, then we'll be a true hero. But if we don't, then our life will be nothing more than a Greek tragedy unfolding on stage.**

1. Virtue - ἀρετήν, *arete*.

Now the command to have this in our lives is directed at all believers in Christ in the Church Age. It also had the idea that they weren't doing it and were to start it. It meant to have mastery in a given field, with the idea that one needed mastery so they could reach a certain goal. It was also used of mastery in a field in order to have excellence of achievement.

Discipline, denial, sacrifice are all a part of it. So is making the decision to go on toward a certain goal, but being so resolved that you will not stop is also a part of it. But it also has the idea that there is a protocol, a plan, or procedure that you must follow in order to attain that goal, so there is the mastery of what is entailed so you can.

It's like having a desire to play a musical instrument, and to be able to play it well. It begins with a decision to do so, but there is also the resolve to stick with it year after year, even when you would rather be doing something else. It also has the idea that one must take lessons, from a qualified teacher, and you must follow the teacher's lesson structure year after year, until you have mastered your instrument, or have reached a level of mastery.

But for us it refers to mastering the concepts found in the spiritual life! And it begins with mastering the details of life. Life has its problems, its details, its responsibilities and its distractions. And anyone of them can and will keep us from living in the spiritual life. So we need to prioritize our lives.

If you're the **man**, then you need to have the Word of God as your first priority, then your wife, if married, then the children, then your job. Hobbies, recreation, sports, fun all take a distant last place, not first or second place as we see in so many men today.

If you're the **woman**, then you need to have the Word of God as your first priority in life, then your husband, if married, then your children, then your home. I know many believe differently, but working outside the home is not in the plan of God for wives; they are to be workers at home at their husband's side, (whatever his vocation may be), not at the side of another man in corporate Babylon!

In this mastery of things associated with the spiritual life is putting the teaching of God Word first in your life and that means that every time the door of your church is opened for the Word of God, then you are to be there! And if anything conflicts with that, then you put the Word first. We have to master the details of life if we are going to go for the Word of God. *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”* Hebrews 10:25 (A timely warning for Christians in America today.)

And along this line of the believer learning, implementing and mastering the things he or she are to be doing as believer-priests, they are to be utilizing the following as their daily practice: confessing their sins biblically, 1 John 1:9, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*, praying, being filled with the Holy Spirit, living in the new nature, living by faith, claiming the promises, trusting the Father, etc..

So Peter begins his chorus of the things that we are to add to our faith in Christ and he begins with the concept of having a disciplined life in the things connected to Christ and the spiritual life. And not only that, but getting to the place of mastering the basics so we can go on in the Lord. Will we ever be perfect in them? Probably not, but our mastery of them will keep us on track.

2. Knowledge – την γνώσιν – *gnosis*.

And “*the knowledge*” Peter is referring to is the knowledge of the Word of God. It all begins with the Word, and without the teaching of the Word of God, then the believer has nothing. It's only as we know the truth will we be conformed to the image of Christ and Bible Doctrine is the truth! The knowledge of God's Word is vital to our spiritual life.

Knowledge here has *the definite article, the knowledge*, telling us that ***the*** knowledge in consideration is not what we learn at colleges and public schools, but the knowledge of the Word of God! Christ told us that ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set us free. We are not going to be able to have: *faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity* without having a knowledge of the Word of God first!

And for Christians to acquire the teaching of the Word of God they must avail ourselves of where it's being taught and that brings in the concept of the local church and the doctrinal teaching ministry of **men who have the spiritual gift of Pastor-Teacher.** “*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*” 1 Timothy 3:15

Martin Luther once said that the Spirit of God comes riding in the coach of the Word of God, which was his way of expressing the ministry of the Holy Spirit's connection to the Word of God. There is a false phenomenon going on today where church gatherings are exhibiting all sorts of bizarre behavior saying that this is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Of course completely ignoring the true manifestation of the Holy Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22,23 “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*”

Christ stated that the Holy Spirit is **the Spirit of truth** and that when he came to earth he would **lead the people of God into all the truth!** “*Howbeit when he, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, he will **guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” John 16:13*

Can we not see how completely connected the Holy Spirit is to the truth of God's Word? The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Jesus Christ is the incarnate truth. And God the Father is the God of truth! Everything centers around the knowledge of the truth of God's Word. So how is it that so many churches today have neglected, or even rejected, the teaching of God's Word from their pulpits??

Remember in our study that Agamemnon was the hero of the play, but he had a tragic flaw that kept him from listening to the warning, to the advice of the chorus. His tragic flaw, well actually he had several tragic flaws, but his main flaw was **arrogance!** He thought he was above all that. And that's what pride does to all of us, Christians included. It makes us think that we are above all that.

Pride concerning the matter of *arete*, the mastering of the details of life and the things pertaining to the spiritual life, says, I don't need to apply myself in these matters I'm OK like I am! **Pride** concerning the matter of *gnosis*, knowledge, says, I don't need to sit under Bible Doctrine, I already know enough; I'm fine like I am! **Pride** doesn't listen to the chorus that God, our true *Epichoregia*, has supplied, it listens to other choruses, who say, “It's time to stop getting all that knowledge and get out there and get busy for the Lord”. Or, “All that head knowledge isn't good for you, you need heart knowledge.”

3. Temperance - εγκρατειαν – *enkratein*

Enkratein has the ideas of self control, inward strength, self discipline and abstaining from certain things in it. It is having an inward dominion or lordship over oneself. It was used in regards to food, drink, sex, or the tongue, and of the athlete who had to exercise rigorous self control if he wished to compete in the games.

Temperance deals with having control over the sin nature that is resident in these flesh bodies, so that it doesn't control us. Now by not doing these things does not mean that you are in the spiritual life dynamic, but you can't be doing these things and be in it. The Apostle Paul gives us a list of some of the things that the flesh nature produces in us. *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21*

And how we stay away from the influence and control of the old sin nature, and live our lives in the spiritual life dynamic, is done through by living life in the new nature, with faith in the Word of God, under the filling of the Holy Spirit. If we do sin in one area or another, then God has made a provision for us through our acknowledging that sin to God. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9*

Remember, the issue for believers is partaking in the divine nature, of living our lives within the sphere of the new nature which God has created in us, which occurs as we place our faith in the promises of God. The seven members of the chorus is our reminder of what needs to be addressed and implemented so we can! If we listen to them, then we will. But if we don't, then our lives will end up tragically because we have missed out on what God has so wonderfully provided for us.

We also need to remember that all of the action of the Greek tragedy took place in one day. And so it is with our lives. Each day that we wake up is like the curtain coming up on the stage of our lives for that day. And each new day will bring with it new things that will have to be dealt with, if we are to continue to partake in the divine nature. The question is will we? Or will our arrogance, our tragic flaws, keep us from applying what the chorus tells us?

Now the flesh produces mental sins, emotional sins, verbal sins and physical sins. Most are familiar with physical sins, but what they need to recognize that the flesh also produces soul sins, which are the source of most of our problems. There are seven emotional complexes beginning with fear and anger that cause us so many problems. Then there are twenty five categories of lusts which drive us down the wrong path in life. Not to mention garbage in the soul from childhood repressed emotions to every other form of soul problems that affect us.

But here's the secret. Peter's letter using the Greek tragedy metaphor gives us structure, continuity and a framework in which we can live our spiritual lives! Remember, that the play took place in only one day! And so do our lives! **All we have to do is listen to the chorus that God has provided and get back to the place of exercising faith in the promises of God each day and we will be OK!** If we live life in the flesh nature, if we are always in one or more of our emotions, if we are always controlled by one or more of the flesh's lust patterns, then we will always be outside the dynamic of the divine nature. But if we listen to the chorus, then we will truly be heroes. Continued

April 2009

Listen To The Chorus – Continued

4. Patience - υπομονη, *hupomone*

Hupomone has been translated as patience, endurance and perseverance. Basically it is abiding under a trial. Human nature, as it is, has a natural aversion to having to go through things that are unpleasant, unwanted, or downright painful. But life has these sorts of things that all of us have to go through.

The virtue of *hupomone* is being able to abide under the trial. It differs from *makrothumia*, which is also translated as patience, (*makrothumia* comes from the idea of long-temperedness), in that *makrothumia* generally is that attitude of patience when dealing with people, while *hupomone* is patience when dealing with things or situations.

No one likes to suffer; no one likes to hurt or be under pressure. And the natural reaction is to remove oneself from these sorts of situations. Even David expressed that sentiment when he said that he wished he had wings so he could fly away and be at rest. “*And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.*” Psalm 55:6-8

And Satan knows that. That's why he puts so much pressure on the people of God to keep them from moving forward in the will of God for their life! But God has provided a spiritual provision whereby we might remain in the trial, growing in his Word and grace, while we continue to do the will of God for our lives and maintain forward momentum.

But staying under the trial, while continuing to move forward in life, cannot be done in the flesh. If we are in the flesh we will be ground down by the angelic conflict, as many believers can attest to. Because our warfare is spiritual and not carnal, **the endurance we are to have must be spiritual in nature**. And that's what *hupomone* is about.

But endurance is not just abiding under the trial, but abiding under the trial while one continues to function in the Father's plan for your life and still keep moving forward at the same time! So the idea behind *hupomone* is actually one of **perseverance**. It's a “keep on keeping on”, or “stick-to-itiveness”. The Lord manifested perseverance completely and perfectly in his life here on earth. “*For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have **I set my face like a flint**, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.*” Isaiah 50:7

How we develop perseverance, and it is developed over time, is by being filled with the Holy Spirit, living by faith, prayer of course, making the right decisions, having the desire to do the will of God in our lives no matter what, holding our ground in the angelic conflict, claiming the promises of God by faith and being in the Word of God every day of our lives. **It is developed by living a life of faith**, not one of works in the flesh, as Paul could so easily attest to. “*For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that **we despaired even of life**: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that **we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead**.” 2 Corinthians 1:8,9*

5. Godliness – ευσεβειαν, *eusebeian*

First of all, it does refer to the **spiritual life** that God created in each believer at the moment of salvation, when we were regenerated by the Holy Spirit, which is what being born again is all about, this made us a new man, or a new species of humanity.

Second, this **spiritual life is eternal**. That which God created in us he took from himself. And this spiritual side of our nature, because it is from God, is **eternal**. Which is another one of the many reasons why believers cannot lose their salvation. The new nature is spiritual, made of spirit and truth, and because it is spiritual it is eternal in nature.

The third thing is that **our spiritual life is unique to us!** There are no two spiritual lives alike. We may be all spiritual in substance, and we are, but our spiritual life is our very own unique to only us. It is what makes you, you, and makes you different than every other believer in Christ!

The fourth thing is that **we will be living in our very own spiritual life for all eternity!** What is in you now, that is, your spiritual life that God created in you and only for you, is **what you will be living in forever!** It will be clothed with an eternal body at the resurrection.

The fifth thing is that **Jesus Christ is the prototype for this new man**. Adam was unique in all of God's creation because he was the first of a new species, the species of humanity. And Jesus Christ is unique in God's new species of humanity, because he is the prototype after which all Church Age believers are patterned, with each one of us having our own uniqueness. The new man, the new nature, **the spiritual man and life in us is patterned after Jesus Christ!**

The sixth thing is that **this spiritual life in us needs the metabolization of Bible Doctrine by faith and the filling of the Holy Spirit**. This is what strengthens us, edifies us, renews us, gives us faith, hope, love, joy, peace, creates spiritual growth inside us and conforms us to the image of Christ.

The seventh thing is that ***eusebeia* takes all these things into account and then applies it to life**. *Eusebeia* is the intake and metabolization of Bible Doctrine by faith, under the filling and power of the Holy Spirit, and then being applied to life's experiences! **So *eusebeia* refers to the believer in Christ living life in their very own spiritual life while here on the earth**. Which will be followed by them living in their own spiritual life for all eternity in a resurrection body.

If we remember at the beginning of our study, we saw that a **tragic flaw** is a defect in the character of the hero that brings about his own downfall. Where the hero's death, or demise, is caused, not by things happening to him, but by his own actions! All of which could have been avoided, but because of the hero's flaw, or series of flaws, which he couldn't see in himself, (or wouldn't see), he became responsible for his own death or demise. Interestingly enough, the Greek word for the **tragic flaw** was ***hamartia*, our word for sin!**

Now with the introduction of the fifth member of the chorus, *eusebeia*, or living in our own spiritual life, we see another provision from God to keep us from sinning, our tragic flaw, and missing out on partaking in the divine nature. For if we live our lives in the filling of the Holy Spirit, in the new natures that God has created in us, which will keep us away from living in the flesh nature where the problem of sin comes from, then we will be able to avoid sin in our lives. At least to the degree that we continue to live in the new nature.

6. Brotherly kindness – φιλαδελφίαν, *philadelphia*

Philadelphia is a compound of two words, *philos* - to love and *adelphos* - a brother. But when the two words come together to form another word, it changes the meaning altogether. Now some have called this brotherly kindness, brotherly love, Christian fellowship, etc.. But to understand it better we need to compare the *philos* word group with *agape*, which we will get into next.

Agape is a spiritual, non emotional attitude toward all people and is created by the filling of the Holy Spirit in the believer in Christ. It is directed toward all mankind; it has no need of reciprocation by another party and is based upon the character and virtue of the one possessing it, not its object. We can refer to it as an impersonal love, or virtue love.

While the *philos* word group also has in it the character, virtue and integrity of the person possessing it. But it is a reciprocating virtue love where the believer has *philos* toward another believer, and that believer in turn receives that love and reciprocates it back. It is dependent upon the virtue and character of both parties, and if either one loses their doctrinal integrity, then their *philos* disappears with it.

Philos then becomes the basis for capacity love, based upon virtue, between Christian brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, etc.. Expressions used to denote it are: Christian friends, loved in the Lord, lifelong Christian friend, etc..

It is beyond fellowship, because one can have fellowship with any believer in Christ, as long as two believers are filled with the Holy Spirit, and where Christ and His Word are the focus of the conversation. If Christ and His Word aren't the center of the conversation, then there isn't fellowship, that is socializing. Much of what passes today as fellowshiping is nothing more than emotions and/or Christian socializing.

Philos love is a capacity love based upon growth and the Word of God in one's life; it is a virtue love based upon personal integrity, and both parties have to have virtue and doctrinal capacity. It is also based upon some sort of compatibility between the two parties, where they share the same interests, have meshing personalities, or there is a deep respect for each other's love for the Lord and his Word.

But when we combine the two words *philos* and *adelphos* together we end up with a different idea altogether. We do not have a personal love concept for all believers in Christ, we end up having a non emotional, virtue love for all believers in Christ. It now becomes like *agape*, where in *agape* we have an impersonal love for all nonbelievers, and in *philadelphia* we now have an impersonal love for all believers in Christ!

Now virtue love for other believers in Christ, *philadelphia*, will become an extremely important member of the chorus that will keep us on track partaking in the divine nature; one that we will have to listen to over and over in our walk in this life.

And the reason why is that having Christian friends can be one of the greatest blessings we can ever have in this life. But being hurt, rejected, abandoned, despised, or betrayed can become one of the greatest hurts a believer will ever have to go through. So how does one handle the loss of a Christian friend, or a Christian spouse, without ending up bitter and depressed? The answer lies in listening to the chorus member about having virtue love for all Christians. We have to recover the filling of the Holy Spirit, forgive and forget the offense, let bygones be bygones and keep moving forward.

7. Love – ἀγαπῆν, *agape*

Agape love is patient, kind, not envious, doesn't brag, isn't proud, isn't rude, not self-seeking, isn't easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs, it doesn't delight in evil, it rejoices with the truth, it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, never ends and it inspires us toward faith and having faith ideas!

Agape cannot be produced by the flesh nature. The flesh is able to produce human love, love for family, love for a husband or wife, love for one's children, which are all genetic imprints that Adam had originally, but have been corrupted by his fall into sin and the subsequent passing on of sin from generation to generation. But the flesh nature is absolutely unable to produce *agape* love.

The **origin** of *agape* love is from God himself. It comes to us through the filling of the Holy Spirit in the new nature of born again believers in Christ. The problem many have is they equate the passage in the Bible that says, “*God is love*”, from their perspective of the loves that they, at times, are able to manifest, which have nothing to do with the concept of *agape* love.

Agape love is a spiritual, not emotional, love. That's one of the things that sets it apart from human love that Adam's race is able to produce at times. **It is not a feeling.** It is not one of the seven emotions that all mankind possesses in the soul. Even some Christians have a problem in making this major distinction between Christian love and emotional love.

Emotional phenomena are not spiritual phenomena, and vice versa. Many Christians think that because they are experiencing an emotion that they are having a spiritual experience! Which is not the case. In fact, it's just the opposite! The seven emotional complexes of fear, anger, guilt, envy, grief, human love and human happiness, are a part of the flesh nature.

When God saved us, through our faith in Jesus Christ, he didn't retain the old flesh nature to operate in it, instead, **he created an entirely new nature inside of us**, one that is new in time and different altogether, (it is a new species of humanity), and it is in this new nature that he operates in, through the filling of the indwelling Holy Spirit, that produces spiritual love, spiritual joy and spiritual peace!

There is a “love” that the world is able to have, but it is not a spiritual love. There is a “happiness” that the world is able to have, (and do they run after it), but it is not spiritual joy. There is a “peace” that the world is able to have, but it is not the spiritual peace of Christ!

Agape love is not dependent upon the integrity or reciprocation of object. It is based upon the integrity of the one exercising it. It is like the rays of the sun. The sun is always shining, regardless if it's a cloudy day, or if it is night on our side of the earth, and regardless if anyone is standing outside to enjoy it; it just keeps on shining. The light it produces comes from within it.

And so it is with the *agape* love that Christians are able to produce, due to our new natures and the indwelling Holy Spirit, *agape* love is generated from within us and radiates out to everyone around us regardless of their character, or lack of it, regardless of whether they are good or bad, mean or pleasant, rich or poor, humble or arrogant, smart or stupid. **Agape love is the seventh member of the chorus that God has provided us that will prevent us from being caught up in soul sins.** And it is because of this kind of love that we are able to love the unsaved of the world, not because they deserve it, not because they are nice, not because of some emotion, but because of who and what we are!

F. Applying The Doctrines Of The Chorus.

Now that we've seen the various members of the chorus and the doctrines that they represent, we must start applying their counsel to us, so as to avoid the soul sins of the arrogance complex, the emotion complex, the lust complex, the manifestation of old sin nature activity in our actions, speech, emotions, or thought, and such matters as childhood survival defense mechanism, repressed emotions, which we simply lump together as garbage in the soul.

We can begin with **pride**, not that it is mentioned by name, but because it is always there and manifests itself by not submitting oneself to the authority of God in obeying his Word and applying his doctrines. Pride lifts itself above all these things. It is that mental attitude of the believer that says I'm above all these things, that I don't need to sit under Bible Doctrine, or live by it in my life.

Pride sees himself as above others. There is the pride that all have, *hyperphroneo*, the mental attitude that views oneself above everybody else. Then there is the mental attitude of pride that views oneself even higher than that, *hupselophroneo*. And then there is the heights of pride, *hupsitos*, where one views himself as superior to everybody on the earth.

There are many aspects of pride, many manifestations. There are those who always want to be in the limelight, to have the spotlight on them, to be the center of attention. There are those who have inflated egos. There are those who think that they are superior to other people, who have developed this mental attitude due to their abilities, their intellect, their accomplishments, their education, their good looks, their money, their position in the community, their position at work, their morality, their height, their strength, their family lineage, the list is endless.

Now if one was to draw a line that would represent who and what we really are, then pride would elevate that person above that line. The first line being *hyperphroneo*, then above that would be the next line of *hupselophroneo*, and at the top of the mountain, the heights, would be *hupsitos*. As one can see, though, the base line represents who and what we truly are – that's the reality! **So to the degree that one is lifted up in pride in their own thinking concerning themselves, then to that degree that individual is divorced from reality!**

But there's another word and that's *sophroneo*, which is translated as sober minded. Now *sophroneo* means to save the mind, *sozo* and *phroneo*, which is another way of referring to **sanity!** To the degree that one is lifted up in pride to that degree he has lost his mind! But by believing on Jesus Christ and then submitting yourself to the doctrinal teaching of God's Word, then you will start becoming **sane!**

Pride is the mental attitude that Satan acquired and he started to view himself above what he truly was. So much so, **he started to view himself as being above God!** It was this mental attitude, then, that motivated himself to depose God from his throne. His thinking was, "If I'm superior to God on high, then I need to elevate myself above him". Which meant that he would have to depose God from his throne of rule and take over the ruling of the universe himself! Thus the war in heaven.

Pride will keep us from applying the instructions of the chorus, but we can avoid pride by submitting ourselves in humility to God's rule over us in every area. "*Likewise, ye younger, **submit** yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. **Humble** yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*" 1 Peter 5:5,6

The first member of the chorus that we are to incorporate into our lives is **virtue**. As we have seen, virtue, *arete*, is mastery in a given field, or excellence in achievement. Which tells us that **we're going to have to master the details of life so we can start going to church to get the doctrinal teaching of the Word of God on a regular basis**.

When God took us out of the world system and gave us to his Son, Jesus Christ, for salvation, we became his children, acquired a new nature, were indwelt by the Holy Spirit and so many other wonderful things. But we still possess a sin nature, which is resident in the flesh, and we still live here in a world ruled by the devil.

Which all boils down to the fact that there are many distractions, allurements, temptations and hindrances that will all work to prevent us from going on in the Christian life, prevent us from finding a good local church to attend, and even attend it on a regular basis.

So what that means is that we are going to have to learn to master the details of life just to sit under the teaching of the Word on a regular basis. Duties, responsibilities, commitments all scream for our attention. Raising children, family, friends also add to the din. Then we have the problem of our flesh nature which wants to have fun, or to take life easy, or to indulge some desire, which may or may not be sinful in itself, with the result that Bible Doctrine gets pushed to the back of the line.

What we need is discipline, organization, resolve, making the right choices, commitment to the ideal of putting the Word first, a love for Christ, all to the place that we put the teaching of the Word of God over our jobs, our homes, our families, our friends, our commitments, our community involvements, our leisure time, our recreation time, our fun time, over everything and everyone!

Now that the believer has mastered the details of life so they can regularly sit under the teaching of the Word of God from a Pastor-Teacher, then they are going to have to start mastering the various aspects of the Christian life and apply them to their own life: being truly filled with the Holy Spirit on a daily basis, the need for praying to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ under the filling of the Holy Spirit, living by faith, claiming the promises of God by faith, how to biblically have their sins forgiven by acknowledging them to God, 1 John 1:9, dealing with emotions, how to deal with worry, and so many other concepts.

Because the majority of Christians today have this problem they will never go on to maturity in the Christian life. Their priorities are all wrong. For the men, they usually put their jobs first, then their fun, then wives and kids, and Bible Doctrine has the last place, or no place at all. For the women, it's their career first, then shopping, then their homes, kids and husband. And once again, Doctrine has the last place or no place at all.

When the Bible tells us to deny our lusts; it's telling us to deny the over twenty-five categories of lusts that we all have so we can put the Christian life first! But sadly shopping, recreation, having fun, sports, entertainment, hunting, fishing, hobbies, and everything else comes first for most Christians. Even in their churches the Word of God isn't the star attraction, but music, entertainment, the "dog and pony show", all of which add up to religiosity, but not biblical Christianity.

Arete is the doctrine of the chorus that is needed for these types of Christians to "get their acts together" concerning living the Christian life. Not the religious life of their particular religious group, but true spiritual Christianity based upon the Word of God!

The next member of the chorus that we are going to have to listen to is **knowledge!** Now the passage has it as *the knowledge*, την γνώσιν, which brings our attention to the fact that this is not talking about just any kind of knowledge that we might find here on the earth, **but the knowledge of the Word of God.** Christ tells us that *we shall know the truth and the truth shall set us free, but the truth* that he is referring to is the truth of the Word of God as found in the Scriptures.

Someone wrote a long time ago, that everybody stumbles over the truth at some time in their lives, most just pick themselves up and continue along as if nothing had happened. The Bible tells us that wisdom is the most desirable of all things to have and one must seek it more than anything else in life. *“For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.”* Proverbs 8:35,36

We can trace all our problems we have in life back to the simple concept that we did not have, nor apply, the truth of God's Word. So the solution for us is to gain knowledge in our lives. But where are we to get it? Where can we find the Truth? The answer to that is the local church! Or it should be the local church, where you have a man with the spiritual gift of Pastor-Teacher teaching Bible Doctrine. *“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the **church** of the living God, **the pillar and ground of the truth.**”* 1 Timothy 3:15

Many Christians are floundering in this life. They go from church to church, from following one fad after another, they get caught up in legalism, the dog and pony show extravaganza, and many give up and quit going to church altogether. They are subject to everything that comes down the road and haven't got a clue as to what the real Christian life is all about.

And the reason why is because they lack knowledge! In America today we are losing our families, losing our economic prosperity, we've lost our currency, we've lost the distinctiveness of what made our country such a great country, and we're under the judgment of God! And the reason why is due to lack of knowledge! *“My people are destroyed for **lack of knowledge**: because thou hast rejected knowledge. I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”* Hosea 4:6

The Apostle Paul wrote that in the last days there would be a phenomenon arise among the people of God where they would not want the whole counsel teaching of the Word of God. Oh, give them programs, committee meetings, entertainment, religiosity, music (preferably *contemporary*), give them anything that appeals to their flesh nature, to their vanity, their egos, their self-righteousness, but not the doctrinal teaching of God's Word. *“For the time will come when **they will not endure sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”* 2 Timothy 4:3,4

The Bible tells us that without faith, it is impossible to please God. *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* Hebrews 11:6 If we are to live by faith, then our faith has to have something to believe! And for the people of God it must be the knowledge of His Word.

So if we want to be the Hero in our play, then we're going to have to get under the teaching of the Word of God and stay with it each day of our lives. This will always keep us on track, and be our point of reference for living in the devil's world and partaking in the divine nature. But if we don't heed this member of the chorus, then our live will be just another tragedy.

The next virtue that we'll have to apply in our lives is **temperance**, *εγκρατειαν*. Temperance deals with self control, and for the believer in Christ, it refers to not being under the control of the sin nature resident in the flesh. The sin nature produces human good as well as human sin, and we can categorize human sin in four categories: mental sins, emotional sins, verbal sinning and overt activity sinning.

There are three enemies of the spiritual life that hinder us from partaking of the divine nature; the world system, the flesh nature and the devil. Self control to all of them, and especially to the flesh nature. Paul tells us that the flesh is at war against the spirit and vice versa. *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”* Galatians 5:16,17

If the Christian is going to partake in the *divine nature* that God has created in every believer in Christ, then he or she is going to have to have control over their flesh! And we will have the victory in this area, for God has provided a solution for this by living in the filling of the Holy Spirit, confessing our sins to God if necessary, and occupying ourselves with Christ through his Word.

But to do this, we are going to have to humble our pride and submit to God. *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:”* 1 Peter 5:6 Remember, Agamemnon's tragic flaw was pride! It was his pride that got him where he was, and it was his pride that refused to listen to the voices of the chorus. And it will be our pride that keeps us from doing what God wants us to do!

The word for *submit* in this passage is *tapeinoo*, which had the idea of looking around for who the authority is and then submitting to them in obedience to what they say! The word for *mighty* is *krataian*, which had the idea of might or power in the area of rule. So what this is bringing out is God's rule over us as our God and our king.

Together what all this is telling us is that God, our *Epichoregia*, has provided us what we need to have control over the flesh nature, if we listen to what he has to say. Which means that we are to stop pursuing after the lusts of the flesh, we are going to have to stop living in our emotions, we might have to deal with garbage in the soul, and anything else the flesh might throw at us.

So how this works out in application is that we are going to have to realize that our life is being lived in one or more of the emotions, and one or more of the lust complex, or verbal sinning, or overt activity sinning and come to the conclusion that this is not living in the sphere of the spiritual life dynamic God has provided for us.

Next we are going to have to come to a decision that we are going to have to get out of living in the flesh and start living our lives in the spiritual life. Now in the flesh we won't be able to do that. We might become self righteous and even more arrogant, we might turn into another legalist, if we try to correct a flesh problem using the flesh to do so.

What we are going to have to do is submit ourselves in humility to God by appropriating the various grace provisions that he has supplied, all spiritual, to have victory over the flesh. Just like in resisting the devil we are to submit ourselves to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from us. *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* James 4:7 Both dynamics must be there; resisting the devil, yes, but also submitting to God's authority by obeying his Word!

May Newsletter 2009

Listen To The Chorus

G. Possessing And Developing The Seven Virtues. v.8

“For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:8 ταυτα γαρ υμιν υπαρχοντα και πλεοναζοντα ουκ αργους ουδε ακαρπους καθιστησιν εις την του κυριου ημων ιησου χριστου επιγνωσιν

“For if these things be in you”, *tauta, these*, refers back to the seven virtues of the chorus that God supplies to every believer in Christ in addition to their faith in Christ: goodness, knowledge, self control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.

Huparcho refers to what is at one's disposal, or to their possessions or property. What this tells us is that they are! God has supplied everything we need for our physical life here on earth and the operation of our spiritual life, *eusebeia*. But we must utilize, or apply to the situation, the various seven members of the chorus, if we are to keep away from soul sins and fail to partake of the divine nature.

The word for abound is *pleonazo* and it meant to be greater in quantity, to have more and more of something, such as, to have more money, or more children, more cars, property, etc.. Here it's to have these virtues in greater usage and influence on our lives. Which tells us that the believer never arrives at the place in their Christian growth where they can stop. There will always be that aspect of continuing to grow in grace, in knowledge, and in the utilization of the virtues God has given to us.

The present active participle of *huparcho* tells us that this is about our volitional responsibility to start utilizing what God has given to us and that it's to become a way of life for us. We are not to revert back to our old ways of living in the flesh and following the ways of the world, but to keep on advancing and living in the spiritual life dynamic.

God has given us these seven concepts that he not only wants us to live by, but to keep developing them where they **become** our lives:

One, mastery, the spiritual ability to master the details of life and go on to master the various concepts of the spiritual life dynamic, if we will live in the new man and not the flesh nature.

Two, knowledge, to sit under the teaching of his Word, and make it our priority in life. But we will need to make the decision to go for it and have the follow through.

Three, self control, the ability to control ourselves so that we will live life in the Holy Spirit and the new nature and not live according to the sins and human good of the flesh nature.

Four, perseverance, is having that inner trait developed by the Word of God, where one utilizes the spiritual life to endure the trials of life and keep moving forward in the plan of God.

Five, godliness, is metabolizing the Word of God by faith, under the filling of the Holy Spirit, so that you can live life in your own spiritual life created in you by God.

Six, is having an impersonal love for all believers in Christ based upon your own virtue, not theirs.

Seven, love, is having an impersonal love for all nonbelievers, once again, based upon your own virtue, not theirs.

Now Peter says that if we do this, then, “*they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” The word used for **barren** is *argos* and it meant to be unemployed, idle, nothing to do, lazy, not doing any good, not producing the desired effect. When God created the divine nature in us, and gave us every spiritual provision to implement it, it was toward the idea of having impact on life and the angelic conflict. But *argos* says that the believer who doesn't listen to the seven virtues won't.

Unfruitful is the word *akarpos* and it looked at fruit trees that aren't producing any fruit. For the believer in Christ it refers to him not producing any divine good in this life. So what we have is a believer who isn't having any impact in this life for God and who isn't bearing any spiritual fruit. The fruit of the Christian life is not produced by the flesh, but by living life in the filling of the Holy Spirit and applying the teachings of God's Word to our everyday life.

The word *kathistemi*, “they make you that”, has the idea of making someone or causing someone to become something, to put or place someone in a certain position or state. The idea here is not being ineffective and unfruitful in the Christian life, so it's saying that the utilizing of the seven virtues, in addition to our faith, will put us in the position where we won't be ineffective or unfruitful.

Both verbs to **possess** and **abound**, which, as we have seen, tells us first of all that we need to have these seven virtues operating in our Christian life and be abounding in them, are in the present participle. They make you that is in the present indicative. Now the action of the present participle occurs at the same time as the action of the main verb, so what we have is the idea of as long as we possess these qualities, (provided to us by God), and are growing in them, then we will never be ineffective in the angelic conflict nor unfruitful in the Christian life.

Mastering of the details of life, extricating yourself from the entanglements of the world system, learning to get your priorities right so that the Word of God becomes first in your life, getting Bible Doctrine from a Pastor-Teacher in a local church, placing yourself and your family under the authority structure of God, curbing one's old sin nature activities, living by faith, walking in the filling of the Holy Spirit, claiming the promises of God by faith, metabolizing the Word of God by faith, applying the teaching of the Word of God to your life, sticking with Bible Doctrine and God's will for your life, keep moving forward by faith in life, having a relaxed spiritual mental attitude toward all believers in Christ, and having a relaxed spiritual mental attitude toward all unbelievers will put us in a place where we will be neither ineffective in the angelic conflict, nor unproductive in our spiritual life.

But that's not the only thing! By possessing these seven virtues and abounding in them, and remember the Lord not only provides our faith but these concepts as well, the result of all that will be having an *epignosis* knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ!

It is the world system, the flesh nature and the devil that keeps us from knowing Jesus Christ and having Christ formed in us. To have the *epignosis* knowledge of Jesus Christ takes the teaching of Bible Doctrine that we have metabolized by faith, that's what makes *epignosis* knowledge different than just factual knowledge.

But it is the flesh, with its reactor factors, its emotions and its lusts that keep us from entering into the spiritual dynamic of the divine nature. But by utilizing the seven virtues that God has supplied, we will be able to rise above all that by avoiding the problems of the flesh, with the result that we can partake in the new nature that God has created in every true believer in Christ.

H. Forgetting One Is Saved. v.9

“But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” 2 Peter 1:9 ω γαρ μη παρεστιν ταυτα τυφλος εστιν μυωπαζων ληθην λαβων του καθαρισμου των παλαι αυτου αμαρτιων

The KJV has translated *pareimi* as he that **lacketh** these things. Now the word *pareimi* meant to be present; it had the idea of being there. *These things* refers back to the seven members of the chorus, or the seven spiritual virtues that God supplies us, so what it's saying is that **if these things are not present in the believer's soul,** then we are blind, etc.

In the original we have the word *blind*, *tuphlos*, first in the passage followed by the word *muopazo*, the word for being near-sighted. The present indicative of *eimi*, the verb of status quo is used with being blind, *he is blind*, followed by the present participle of being near-sighted, or as we sometimes use the expression of being short-sighted.

The **first** expression is for shock, the **second** one is for clarity and accuracy. How we would express this is he's blind, well not actually blind, but near-sighted. Two ideas are in view here, those things that are **afar off**, and those things that are **up close**. The things that are **afar off** are the spiritual things that pertain to eternity and the eternal state. The things that are **up close** are the things that pertain to the flesh and temporal life on this earth.

What it's telling is that the believer in Christ, who does not possess these seven spiritual virtues and is abounding in them, is basically spiritually blind to the things of eternity, because the only things that he is able to see are the things of this life! **He is extremely short-sighted**. We even use this expression when talking about people who make bad decisions in order to have immediate gratification of their lusts, but prove detrimental in the long run. They squander their inheritance, instead of getting an education. They buy an expensive car, instead of investing their money. They're *short-sighted*.

Metaphorically *tuphlos* refers to a dulling of the intellect. He isn't thinking along the lines of divine viewpoint and he's not able to because his mind has been dulled by scar tissue in the soul! When the believer lives outside of the spiritual life dynamic of Bible Doctrine, the faith rest life and the filling of the Holy Spirit, he begins to develop a condition of *porosis* on the soul. *Porosis* being similar to barnacles on the hull of a ship, or tartar on the teeth. It's a layering of calcification on the soul where the believer is no longer tuned into the spiritual life concept. He now is only interested in short term concepts of the world and the flesh and not the things which have eternal values.

The idea that Peter is getting at is qualitative. “But if anyone does not have these qualities, he is blind! ... Near-sighted would be more appropriate, because he can only see the things up close (this life), but not the things afar off, (eternal life)”. Time is put in the metaphor of distance. Something that is going to happen in the future is looked at as way down the road. While something that is going to happen very soon is only a short distance away.

We see Abraham who indeed was far-sighted because he was looking for the city of God. “*For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*” Hebrews 11:9 And for all believers in Christ who have their eyes set on eternity. “*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, **but having seen them afar off**, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*” Hebrews 13:13

Peter says, “*and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*” ληθην λαβων του καθαρισμου των παλαι αυτου αμαρτιων. What's interesting here is that Peter doesn't use the normal word *lanthano* for **to forget**, but uses the older form of *lanthano*, **lethe**, which gets into **the world of the mystery religions centering around the realm of Hades.**

We have *lethen labon*, *labon* being the orist active participle of *lanthano*, which meant to take, to grasp, to receive. Now the KJV translators have rendered it as, *hath forgotten*, but *lethe* actually referred to the *Lethe* river, one of the five rivers down in *Hades* according to Greek mythology. So what we have is, “*Having taken [a drink of water from] the river Lethe, thus forgetting that he was cleansed from his past sins.*”

We notice that Peter continues to borrow from not only the Greek stage and the Greek tragedies, but he now is also using concepts found in the Greek mystery religions as the background for doctrine. By the way, the words *Paradise* and *Hades* are also found, first of all, in the background of the Greek mystery schools. Now this is not an endorsement of their theology, but are used as a means of communicating doctrinal concepts pertaining to the Christian life.

We must remember that the people he was ministering to were well familiar with the mystery religion concepts, having grown up in them as their culture. And they serve not only as a good back drop for understanding, but there is a parallelism that can be used to explain Christian concepts. And by using the word, *Lethe*, they would understand its significance.

The mystery religions taught that in *Hades* there were five rivers, some say six. The river **Styx**, which was the river of hate. The river **Phlegton**, the river of fire. The river **Acheron**, the river of woe. The river **Cocytus**, the river of wailing and lamentation. And the river **Lethe**, the river of forgetting. By drinking from the water of these five rivers, except perhaps Phlegton, that encircled *Hades* one would experience the concept that was associated with them.

It was said that as the departed souls of this life journeyed down to *Hades* at death they had to have a coin, which was to be placed in the mouth, or on the eyes at death, with which to pay the ferryman, **Charon**, who would transport them by boat across the river Styx. If they didn't have the coin, then they had to wander for one hundred years until they could find the pauper's boat to go across.

When they arrived at the river **Lethe** they were to drink from its waters. When they did, that caused them to forget all life that they had experienced on the surface of the earth! So drinking from the waters of the river **Lethe** referred to forgetting what had happened to you before. So what Peter is saying is that “they had drunk from the waters of Lethe” and had forgotten that they had ever been saved!

Now some mystery religions believed that there also was a concept of reincarnation, which the Bible clearly does not teach, but this is also a part of the background of the word *lethe*. Under **their**, (not ours), mystery religion concept, the souls that were going to be reincarnated into this life had to drink once again from the river Lethe so they could forget their past life in Hades.

Another concept connected to **Lethe** is that the Gnostics believed that all souls had come from one universal soul, which they called *god*; having come to earth in a time predating the flood. They describe this epoch of history as wonderfully Edenic in every respect. Those that came to this earth were *gods* from all over the universe and life flourished on earth for them wonderfully so at the beginning. But as time went by these *gods* became so preoccupied with life on this earth that they had forgotten who they were and where they came from.

There was another school of thought on this subject and that is these *gods*, who were a part of the universal soul, were banished to the earth and **their punishment was to have completely forgotten who they were and where they came from.** But through the initiation levels of the mystery religion the devotees would become aware of their life prior to coming to earth.

There were also some mystery schools that taught there was a sixth river, the river Mnemosune, which was the river of remembrance. And that some devotees down in *Hades* were given a choice of either drinking from the river *Lethe* or from the river **Mnemosune**. If they drank from the waters of *Lethe*, then they forgot everything down there. But if they drank from the waters of Mnemosune, then they remembered everything and became omniscient.

So why does Peter use such a word for the idea of forgetting? It's because *lethe* has such a strong background for the concept. For us to use the word forget we might have the connotation of a sketchy memory; one that could be brought back by various means. **But by using the word *lethe* it tells us that they had completely and totally lost all knowledge of their salvation!**

Now what had they forgotten? They had forgotten “*that he was purged from his old sins*”. **By the believer not continuing his life of trust in the Father and faith in his Word, and by not utilizing the seven virtues that God has given to him in grace, the believer can get to the place that he can completely forget that he was ever saved at all!**

An interesting note on the **River Phlegethon** is that it was called the **river of fire**, sometimes the **lake of fire**. It was said to have been a stream of fire that coils around the earth, and eventually ends up in *Tartarus*, where God imprisoned the angels who sinned against him before the flood. It is this river of fire that surrounds Tartarus and prevents the imprisoned chained spirits from leaving.

The Greek mysteries believed that the souls who go to a good life after death will end up in a place called Elysium, a place where soft breezes continually blow, with wonderful things in store for the departed. But before they can cross over into Elysium, they must drink a cup of water from the River *Lethe* which will make them completely forget the earthly life that they had previously lived.

The use of the word *lethe* for forgetting is the stronger word because it brings out and emphasizes the idea of one completely forgetting the life that one had lived before. The parallel is that these were believers in Christ, that is not in question, and they had been living the Christian life, but now, due to their neglecting the seven virtues, they had completely forgotten their past Christian way of life that they had once been living.

They, like the *gods* of some mystery schools, had become so preoccupied with the things of this life found here on earth, and their own earthly fleshly existence, they had neglected the seven concepts of doctrine mentioned in the passage and had come to the place that their memory of their faith in Christ, eternal salvation, and their ultimate destiny of heaven, was wiped from their memories!

Lethe is the root for the word lethargic which denotes the quality or state of being drowsy and dull, listless and non energetic, or indifferent and lazy; apathetic or sluggish inactivity. Which defines the attitude of some believers toward the Word of God, and their preoccupation with the flesh and the world system, resulting in them coming to the place of **forgetting that they had been cleansed of their sins.** But we can avoid this by putting ourselves out to utilize the seven virtues God gave us.

I. Assurance Of Salvation. v.10

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:” 2 Peter 1:10 διο μαλλον αδελφοι σπουδασατε βεβαιαν υμων την κλησιν και εκλογην ποιεισθαι ταυτα γαρ ποιουντες ου μη πταισητε ποτε

By the use of, “Wherefore the rather, brethren,” *διο mallon*, Peter is not only addressing this to believers in Christ, but he's giving us a contrast between success and failure in the Christian life, which becomes an option for all believers, so that we don't end up like Agamemnon or any other character of a Greek tragedy, but to go on and be the heroes that God wants us to be.

He begins this with a command of the same word that we had in verse five, *spoudazo*. *Spoudazo* meant to put oneself out to accomplish a goal or an objective, to be highly motivated. Which tells us that the believer in Christ is to be highly motivated to go on with the things of Christ and to put the Word of God and its application as first priority in their life.

Because this is found in the aorist imperative, it tells us that they weren't presently doing it, hence the command to start! When one isn't doing the right thing in their life, they need something to get them started and that's where a command comes in. And by obeying the command of the Apostle they start doing the right thing and are now on the right track. And by continuing to do the right thing, then it becomes a practice in their life and they're now staying on the right track.

By possessing and utilizing the seven virtues will make our calling and election sure, *bebaian humon ten klesin kai eklogen*. These seven virtues aren't our salvation. They proceed from our salvation and are to accompany our salvation to serve as an assurance that we have salvation!

The word for **sure** is *bebaias* and has been rendered as sure, confirm, established, steadfast and secure. It had the idea that something was firm and secure because it had been solidly grounded, such as a house that was firmly grounded to a solid foundation. But there was another use of *bebaias* and that was in the world of commerce dealing with buying and selling.

In those days when you sold something to someone, such as a horse or anything else, in the transaction there was an exchange of money to the seller and the horse to the buyer. The buyer walks off happy with his horse and the seller is happy with his money. But what would happen a couple of days later if the seller, or his relatives, or somebody else claimed that you didn't buy the horse, but **stole** it? Now you have a serious problem.

So to avoid that potential problem the buyer would require that the seller give him a *bebaiosis*, a legally valid confirmation of the sale. So now the buyer not only has the property, but a legal document that would stand up in court affirming that it was his property. This document, which is like our Bill of Sale today, was the buyer's guarantee that he was the legal owner of the horse, which made the sale not only legally solid, but also gave him an inner assurance.

So what this is telling us is that if we possess these seven doctrinal qualities, and are abounding in them, then we will not fall in the Christian life, but will have the inner assurance that we are saved and are on our way to heaven! This is certainly a far cry from having no assurance at all concerning one's salvation. The question being is which state of mind do we want to be in, assurance that we're saved or no assurance, when we exit this life at death?

Our *calling and election* looks at two of the aspects of our salvation. The Apostle Paul covers this subject in Romans 8:28-30, “*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the **called** according to his **purpose**. For whom he did **foreknow**, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 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.*”

And it all began with the eternal purpose of the Father to give a people to his Son, “*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*” John 6:37. These people that the Father gives to his Son would be conformed to the image of his Son. These people he *foreknew*, *proginosko*, and he *predestined* or *predetermined*, *proorizo*, which meant to determine something beforehand, that they would be made like his Son. What God knew beforehand and what he determined beforehand is from the result of what he chose beforehand.

Now Peter wrote in verse eight, “*For if these things be **in** you, and **abound**,*” talking about our, **one**, mastering of the details of life, **two**, getting under the teaching of the Word of God from a local church, **three**, curbing our old sin nature activity of the flesh nature, **four**, perseverance in sticking with the will of God for our lives, **five**, living in the sphere of our own spiritual life dynamic by being filled and applying the Word to our life, **six**, having virtue love for unbelievers and **seven**, virtue love for believers, that if we possess these seven qualities in addition to our faith, and are abounding in them, then we will have that inner assurance that we are saved and will be with God forever.

Now we want to note that these qualities aren't our salvation, but give to us the assurance of our salvation! Just like the *bebaiosis* that one got with the purchase of the horse, the *bebaiosis* wasn't the horse, but the guarantee or legal assurance that the horse was his!

“*For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall*”. But the *bebaiosis*, which in our case is the seven virtues brought out by the Apostle Peter, is not just our inner assurance of our salvation, but also the thing that will keep us on track in the Christian life and keep us from falling.

If you do these things is in the present active participle of *poieo*, which tells us that the believer in Christ is responsible, by the use of the active voice, for utilizing these things that God has supplied to us all and that, by the use of the participial form, they are to become a way of life for us all.

What's interesting here, and certainly a great encouragement, is the use of the double negative of *ou me* with the verb to *fall*. The *double negative*, *ou me*, is an emphatic negative, which tells us that if we're doing these things and are abounding in them, then absolutely **we will never fall** in our Christian walk! And with *pote* at the end following a negative it's to be rendered, “not ever”! “**For if you are constantly doing these things as your way of life, you will emphatically never fall, not ever!**”

To *fall*, or to *stumble*, goes back to the metaphor of being blind. One who is blind cannot see what lies before him in the path. Something that he couldn't *see* could cause him to stumble and fall down and hurt himself. Which, in itself, is a metaphor for *falling into sin*. Or, because he was blind, he could go down the wrong path in life. *Going down the wrong path* is also a *metaphor* for wandering away from the Christian life and going off into the world system, as so many Christians have done. But all this can be avoided for the believer in Christ, if they live by the seven concepts that God has supplied to us in his grace, as mentioned here in the passage. **All of which are designed to keep us in that place of harmonious rapport with God.**

J. A Lavish Entrance Into Heaven. v.11

“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:11 “And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (NIV) οὕτως γὰρ πλουσιῶς ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται ὑμῖν ἡ εἰσοδος εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ

We had seen that in so doing, or as it is in verse ten, “if ye do these things”, which referred back to applying and living by the seven virtues, that the believer would be productive in life, that he would have impact for Christ in the angelic conflict, that he would have assurance of his salvation, that he would never fall or stumble in his Christian life, and now we see that he will have a rich welcome into Christ's eternal kingdom!

“An entrance shall be ministered” is the future passive indicative of *epichoregeo*. As we had seen, the *epichoregia*, the **patron**, was the one who supported the stage with money, gifts, endorsement, or work. The patron in those days, the *epichoregia*, was the one who provided the funding for the stage, the set, the props and even providing the salary for the actors to live on. So the verb form looks at the concept of what has been, or will be in this case, supplied to us by the *Epichoregia*, who is God the Father. But now the Father, our *Epichoregia*, after supplying to us all we need in this life to be winners, to be the **heroes** of our own play, will be supplying to us a lavish entrance into heaven.

The stage, the set, the props for the play, the financial support for the actors, everything needed to put on the play was provided, *epichoregeo*, by the *Epichorgia*. But there was, and still is, a vast difference on how lavish a stage production was provided. A “bare bones” production would be provided for the newcomer, the amateur, or the “not so famous”. But for the skilled, the seasoned, the famous actors, a very lavish production would be supplied in keeping with their stature.

For those who had distinguished themselves in the field of drama no expense would be spared. The *Epichoregia* would go all out in providing the finest costumes, the most elaborate props, the best musicians, everything would be done to make it the most lavish production ever to hit the stage. We still do this today in Hollywood and on Broadway.

This is the idea brought out by the word *plousios* used with *epichoregeo*, πλουσιῶς ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται. That something is not only going to be provided for us, but **richly provided!** But what is going to be richly provided? **Our entrance into heaven!**

Now we need to clarify two things right here. One, all believers in Jesus Christ are going to be provided an entrance into heaven. And two, but not all believers in Christ are going to be provided a **lavish entrance** into heaven! One's entrance into heaven is guaranteed due to believing in Jesus Christ as their Savior, regardless of whether they moved forward in the Christian life living by the seven virtues of this passage. But for those believers who possessed these qualities and were abounding in them, so that they lived in harmonious rapport with God in this life, for them a lavish entrance into heaven will be provided for them by God!!

God has provided our salvation, our faith in Christ, everything we need for our physical life and our spiritual life, and he has provided a way for us whereby we can live in that state of sweet communion with him. Some call it fellowship, others refer to it as communion, Peter refers to it as partaking in the divine nature, but it's living in a state of harmonious rapport with God.

The translators have rendered the word *eisodos* as **into**, which is correct, but it doesn't reveal the richness of the idea behind the word. *Eisodos* comes from two words, *eis* – into, and *hodos* – a way, so we have a way into something, hence, an entrance. Found with the definite article, the, it tells us that there is only one way into heaven and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the passage already has the word for into something, *eis*, and is, *he eisodos eis ten aionion basileian tou kuriou hemon kai soteris iesou christou*. So what we have is the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The KJV translates it as, “*an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly*”. And the NIV translates it as, “*you will receive a rich welcome*”. What we actually have is, a lavish entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be provided for you.

Hodos is the word for a way, *eisodos* is a way into, and *exodos* is a way out. But because the passage has been set in the metaphor of the stage, the word *eisodos* now becomes entrance. A phrase we're all familiar with where we would have enter stage left and exit stage right. But for us **our exit is our departure from the stage of this life where we thereupon enter onto the stage of heaven!**

The saying that, “all the world is a stage and we are but actors on it”, certainly has merit in it for we see that the Apostle Peter, when writing to believers in Christ, has put us on the stage of life and we are the actors in our own play. We entered onto this stage, when we believed on Jesus Christ as our Savior, where we now are actors in our own play playing the part, hopefully, of the hero. And at the end of our life, when the final curtain call comes, then we will exit the stage of this life only to enter into heaven and the final phase of our existence of spending eternity with Jesus Christ.

All believers in Christ will enter into the eternal kingdom of the Lord at the end of life, but all will not enter in under the same circumstances. Some will have a lavish entrance, while others will just be just entering. “*If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*” 1 Corinthians 3:15

Picture the Greek stage in those days and you're one of the actors. Would you just want to walk out on stage with no props, no costumes, no music, no setting, stand on a box and say your lines? Or would you rather walk out to a lavish production, beautiful costumes, ornate props and great music? That's the difference for us. I know all believers will be glad to go into Christ's eternal kingdom, but how much better would it be that when you do arrive there you will arrive with pomp and ceremony, lavishness of surroundings and the heralding of your arrival?

Now some believers will say, that's not for me; I'm just a humble person. But wait a minute! What about what God wants? If God has supplied the things that we need so that we can have a lavish entrance into heaven when we arrive there, then that tells us that God wants us to!

In the kingdom believers that have distinguished themselves by doing God's will for their lives, by living in faith and the other things mentioned in the Bible, for these believers there will be fame and commendation, awards and rewards for serving the Lord, “*Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil [booty] with the strong [heroes of the faith]; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*” Isaiah 53:12 People are going to know who you are and what you have done in this life. So having a lavish entrance into the kingdom is quite in keeping with everything else God has for us in his grace.

When we're studying a passage of Scripture we need to look deeply into it to understand the smallest details of what's going on. But we also need to step back from it to see what it's saying. The Apostle Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has used some very interesting terms in his metaphor of the Greek stage and has brought up some very interesting pictures concerning the Christian life. Concepts that give us a framework, an understanding, of what our lives are like here on earth.

But what is he talking about? What is the overall point that he's trying to get across to us? What is he saying that becomes, out of all the things in life that are important, of paramount importance to us? Well basically it's the same thing that the Apostle John was saying, only they use different words to express it. **It's to have fellowship with the Father.** *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”* 1 John 1:3

The things that the Apostle Paul mentioned in 2 Timothy 4 deal with fighting the good fight, keeping the faith, the discharge of his duty, passing down the colors to Timothy, etc.. John and Peter talked about other things as well, but the one thing that was of utmost importance to them, as it also was for the Lord himself, was having that harmonious rapport with the Father everyday of their lives!

Mary and Martha with the Lord is a good example of what is really important in the Christian life. Martha had the Lord over for dinner and fellowship with the Lord, but the two women handled the situation differently. Martha was in the kitchen cooking, which for her was a stressful situation because she wanted to make sure that everything went right for the Lord. So much so, that she began worrying about the whole thing, became stressed out, bothered and really upset. To the place that she came out and **told** the Lord to have Mary come in to help her! To which the Lord replied that Mary had chosen the best thing, which was she wanted to have **fellowship** with him! *“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”* Luke 10:38-42

Now when we look back over this study many concepts are brought out: that we have believed on Christ as our Savior; we received a faith from God giving us equal privilege with all other believers in Christ; that God wants us to have grace and peace multiplied to us; that God has graciously given to us everything that we need for our physical lives on earth and for living our spiritual lives; that we were called to Christ out of God's glory and goodness, not by anything we have done; he has given to us his precious promises so that through faith in him we can partake of the divine nature, which he created in us; we escaped the corruption of the world system, which we should certainly not want to get caught back up in it again; in addition to our faith in Christ he has supplied to us the ability to have mastery over the details of life, Bible Doctrine, the ability to have control over our old sin natures, the ability to move forward in the plan of God for our life, our very own spiritual life to live in now and for all eternity, virtue love for all believers in Christ and virtue love for all unbelievers. He has given us these concepts so that we will be spiritually productive in this life, that we will have impact for God and his Son Jesus Christ with our lives, that we will have the assurance of our eternal salvation, which is certainly important for living life and when one stands at the door of death, and they will ensure that we will have a lavish entrance into heaven. But the thing that stands out the most is **fellowship** with God!

Pastor Mike