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Holiness and Godliness

“ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,” 2 Peter 3: 10, 11

It seems that most Christians living in America are consumed with making money, getting ahead, purchasing material things, becoming financially secure, recreation, travel, fun, buying homes, raising their families and a myriad of other things. Perhaps they have forgotten, perhaps they never knew, that there are some things that are infinitely more important than what they occupy their time with.

The reason for this, or one of the reasons for this, is the increase of “me-centered” people and “me-centered” churches. It all centers around me, what I want, my will, my desires, my goals and the like. It's a new form of Christianity that caters to the wants and whims of believers who are childish and self-centered. It's a form of “Christianity” that is centered around people, **but not God and his Word!**

It may come as a shock to many believers, but the universe does not center around them! It centers around God the Father and his son, Jesus Christ. And the day that we begin to realize that will be the day that we start getting out of our self-absorption and self-centeredness and begin to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as we study Bible Doctrine.

Although there are many things in the Christian life that we need to learn as we grow in the Lord, there are some things that are vitally important to us. These doctrines will create a mind shift in our thinking that will adjust us to the realities that exist in the universe concerning ourselves, our salvation, our relationship to God, and to our future eternal destiny with God and his Son in the new universe.

It begins with Romans 8:29 where Paul wrote, *“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.”* This verse explains the reason for our salvation and existence as believers in Christ. **It tells us that back in eternity past that God not only chose us to salvation, but also predetermined us to something.**

The word for *predetermine* is, *προωρισεν*, *proorizo*, which meant to determine something beforehand. What God determined for every believer in Christ in eternity past is that we would **be conformed to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ!** This is the main issue with God the Father.

It matters not what ideas we have had for ourselves; it matters not what we want to do, or what we would like to become, what matters is that God has already determined that we will be like his Son! The word for *conform* is *summorphos*, *συμμορφους*.

The concept of “free will” is so entrenched in many Christians minds, that it affects how they run their churches, live their lives, raise their families, and every other aspect of their existence, including their relationship to God. **Well here's a shocker. It's not our will that's the important thing in the universe- but God's!** Assuming that you didn't pass out so far, or have recovered from the shock, we'll resume our study.

The *morphe* of Christ is his inner essence. It is spiritual, it is doctrinal, it is truth metabolized inside of him. And what the Father has ordained is that believers in Christ will be conformed on the inside, in their inner *morphe*, to become like Christ is inside. This concept alone explains discipline, setbacks, disappointments, suffering and many of the other adverse things that happen to us in life. Adversity, or suffering, when combined with the Word of God metabolized by faith in the filling of the Holy Spirit changes our *morphe* to become like the *morphe* of Christ.

Concerning the will of God we need to clarify some things. There is the **permissive will** of God, where he allows us to do things, or allows things to be done to us. There is the **direct will** of God, where there are those things he wants us to do, or to be done to us. Then there is the **decretive will** of God; his will that has been decreed and it will be done no matter what any other creature has to say about it.

When God determined beforehand that we will be conformed to the image of his Son, that decretive will supersedes any other concept in existence. As he said in the Old Testament, that which I have decreed, that I will do. Just like when he said, “*Be holy, for I am holy.*” That was not a request; it was not his suggestion; what he said was, “*You will be holy, for I am holy.*”

So this is one of the things that believers need to get fixed in their minds and the sooner the better. And it also gives form, structure and purpose for our existence. We can say of ourselves, God is working in my life through internal and external circumstances, combined with metabolized Bible Doctrine, to make me conform to the image of his Son. You see, the universe doesn't center around us! It centers around Jesus Christ and what is happening to us is centered around that purpose to conform us to Christ's image.

This concept fits in with the other concepts we are going to study, and all of them come under the concept of, “**living our lives in the light of eternity future.**” The Word tells us that not only the earth, but the entire universe is going to be burned up at the end of all things. This will happen conjointly with the final judgment of God.

The loudest noise ever recorded, a roar that defies imagination is the sound that will be made when all things are consumed in the fire. Every molecule, every atom, even the smallest particle of matter that exists will be loosed releasing an amount of energy that will boggle the mind. The result will be a heat so intense that all matter in the entire

universe will be so completely consumed that not a single particle of it will be left.

The pollution of man's corruption, not only of the earth, but the universe as well, will be completely gone forever. Toxic chemicals, radiation, sin, RF energy, even the sounds of man's voices transmitted on radio waves that echo out into the universe will be gone.

You see, a holy God is going to live on a new earth with his people forever and ever. This means that **not one thing** left over from the past order of things will be allowed in it. This is why he is not only going to create a new earth, but a new universe for us to inhabit as well. There is only one thing that will come from this earth into the new order and that is **new natures of those who have believed on Jesus Christ!**

The human bodies of this world will be gone forever, so will the animals, trees, plants, dirt, everything from this planet will be burned up in the fire that will consume all things! The only thing from this earth, that will escape this earth and not be consumed by the consuming fire is the new nature that only believers in Jesus Christ have!

You say, what about our rewards, our new bodies, etc.? They are all in heaven with God. Our resurrection bodies, our inheritance, our rewards, our eternal city, all of these things that God has promised us are in heaven waiting for us as we speak. **But the only thing that will survive this planet and go on into the eternal state will be our new natures.**

Now, in light of all that, Peter writes, "*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*". What Peter is challenging us to do is to live our lives in the light of eternity future. We need to live our lives today in light of what God is going to do in the future.

But he uses the word *ought, dei, δεῖ*. This word is a very strong word for it tells us what we have to do, what we must do. It's the word that every soldier understands when it comes to doing his duty. It carries with it the full thrust of command, obligation and inescapable duty that bind men to a course of action. So what it's doing is putting on us the mandate of living our lives in a certain manner because of what God is going to be doing in eternity future, namely, that he is going to destroy the entire material universe, the earth included, and create a new heaven and a new earth.

When he says what manner of persons ought ye *to be* he uses the word *huparcho*, *υπαρχειν*. The word *ginomai* is often used to denote a change of condition, state, or place, and can be translated as *to become, to become something different than you are*. But *huparcho* is used to denote **becoming what you are!** It is used of Jesus Christ to denote his pre-existing deity before his incarnation.

So what this tells us is that **believers are to become what they already are**, what God has already made them to be. We are righteous beings, we are holy, we are spiritual in the new nature and we have been created in the image of Jesus Christ. **So we are to start becoming, acting, behaving what we really are.**

There used to be a saying that the older folks would use of boys and girls who were growing up into being young men and ladies, but who were still acting like children. They would say to them, “**Act your age!**” What they were saying is not to act something, but to conduct themselves in the manner that the reality of their age demanded. (Which is good advice for around 90% of Americans today, who act like children.)

We are sons and daughters of the Most High God; we are members of the royal family of God; we are kings and priests; we are righteous and holy; we are eternal beings that are going to rule with Jesus Christ forever. So, in light of all that, **we must conduct ourselves in a manner befitting that!**

Which brings us down to the next statement of “*holy conversation*”, *αγιας αναστροφαις*, *hagiais anastrophais*. The word *anastrophe* does not mean conversation, what it refers to is the manner in which one lives their life. Today we would say that it's our lifestyle. The concept of lifestyle encompasses every aspect of our lives in how we live them. At work on the job, around our friends and families, in our churches, with our neighbors, the way we conduct business, to how we talk, dress and the rest.

Many people live two lives. There is the life they live before the public, then there is how they are at home. There is how they appear to be in church, then how they really are outside of the church. Lifestyles need to be consistent, and they need to be lived in a certain way. *Anastrophe* refers to the manner in which we conduct our lives in the home, in the church, in public, when people are watching us and when they aren't.

Now Peter says that they are to be *holy*, *hagios*. *Hagios* has been translated as: holy, holiness, to dedicate, sanctification and to sanctify. The main ingredient of holiness is the concept of separation. One thing has been separated from another thing. In this idea of separation there is the concept of being separated from one thing to another thing, and a purpose behind that separation. **From, to and for** will help us understand it.

In the area of our salvation God has separated us **from** Satan and the World system, **unto** himself, **for** service, worship and fellowship. There is the concept of **passive separation** and **active separation**. Passive separation occurs for all believers in Christ and it is **something that God does** to us and for us at the moment of our salvation. Active separation is where **we**, of our own free will in obedience to God, **effect the concept of separating ourselves from** certain people and things, so we can fellowship with God, serve him and worship him.

There are three aspects of sanctification in the believer's life. **Phase one sanctification** takes place when we believe on Christ where God separates us unto himself at the moment of our salvation. **Phase two sanctification** takes place over our entire lives and refers to our growth in the Word of God. And **phase three sanctification** comes at the end of our lives when God takes us out of the world completely unto himself in heaven.

Dedication to God is a good rendering, for it comes from the Latin *dedicatus*, which means to give oneself entirely to a specific person, activity or cause, to devote oneself to a duty or service, to devote, to set apart. It was used of the soldier who was dedicated to his

service in the military.

So holy conversation is really a holy lifestyle, which really speaks of having a lifestyle dedicated to God. So we can translate this as having **a dedicated to God lifestyle**. Which would mean that all your decisions, where you go, what you do, where you live, how you live, your goals, your plans, your desires, your life's work, how you raise your kids, how you conduct your business, how you conduct yourself with other people, every single aspect of your life must reflect being devoted to doing God's will and serving him!

In **phase one sanctification** God was the one who took the initiative and action in separating us unto himself. In **phase two sanctification** we must take the initiative in obedience to him by separating ourselves unto him. That is where we implement a dedicated to God lifestyle. If we fail to, then God will step in and implement it for us, but we call that divine discipline. When he says, "*You will be holy*" **he means it!** **Phase three sanctification**, is where God takes us to live with him; he also chooses the date, manner and place of our death.

The next thing Peter goes into is our *godliness*. Now the word *godliness* is an extremely poor choice to define the word *eusebeia*, εὐσεβεία. It may even border on blasphemy because godliness says that we are like God, but who can be like God? *Eusebeia* doesn't go into the conduct of the believer, but the unique spiritual life that we possess.

When God saved us he also created in us a new man, a new nature, a spiritual nature; he created in us, he gave to each one of us our very own spiritual life. And even though each spiritual life of the individual believer is the same in essence, **each one is different from all the others**. We all possess our very own unique spiritual life! This spiritual life is eternal **and it is this life that we will take into eternity!** And for the rest of eternity we will live within our very own spiritual life that God has already given to us and enjoy the peace, happiness and tranquility found within it.

This brings us back to some very important concepts. One being the need to develop this spiritual life through the intake and application of Bible Doctrine. The local church, the spiritual gift of Pastor-Teacher, confession of sin to God, the faith-rest life, all go to make up our growth in grace and his Word, which is what the *eusebeia* is all about.

Churches that emphasize programs, entertainment, emotionalism, ritualism, modernism, social crusaderism, legalism, and all the other "isms" miss the mark completely and are not only leading their people astray, but doing them a great disservice! How can these believers develop their very own unique spiritual life that God gave to them if they are not being taught the Bible Doctrines that their new natures need? They can't!

We **have to** live our lives in the light of eternity future. This means that seeing we are going to live forever with God in a newly created heaven and earth, and seeing that this spiritual life that we have within us is the only one that we'll ever get, and seeing that it becomes the basis for capacity in eternity, then we need to really get serious about developing what God has given us through the intake of Bible Doctrine!

Living holy lives is having a lifestyle dedicated to God. “*Godliness*” is living by the unique spiritual life God created in us; they both go hand in hand. One promotes the other, and both need to be developed. That's what *dei* is all about. **We must do these things. The question is are we?**

If we aren't, then we need to go to God in prayer and all sincerity of heart and **make that decision to do so, and then commit the rest of our lives toward that end.** Having then committed ourselves to doing God's will and bringing our lives around to reflect that dedication to God, then we need to start developing our own spiritual life that God gave to us, through the metabolization of Bible Doctrine.

This means that we must turn positive to the doctrinal teaching of the Word of God, then seek with all of our hearts to be under a local church ministry whose pastor is faithful in teaching Bible Doctrine. Once having identified ourselves with a doctrinal ministry then we must make Bible Doctrine our number one priority in life everyday. Whether face to face, tapes, or both, everyday is dedicated to taking in the Word of God.

Our lives, now, are centered around the spiritual dynamic of the faith-rest life, of metabolizing Bible Doctrine by faith, of living by the true filling of the Holy spirit, of living our lives in the new nature, and a turning our backs on the mental involvements in the World System. This is **our eusebeia**.

Living our lives in the light of eternity future means that we need to be reflecting on the fact that at the end of our lives we will have to stand before an holy God and give an account of ourselves. It also means that we need to be thinking about this unique spiritual life, that is within all us and believers in Christ, and that we need to be developing it, as God intended it to be developed, so that we will start being conformed to the image of Christ and no longer to the image of the world!

There are three personal areas that believers in Christ need to address and correct and they are: having a dedicated to God lifestyle, developing and living in their own spiritual life, and having a love for the truth. Not having a love for the truth is one of the characteristics of this age of the Laodicean church. But it is also characteristic of being under the influence of **demons**, 2 Thessalonians 2:11, “*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*”

But if the believer in Christ has dedicated himself completely to serving God and doing his will; and if they have a genuine love for the teaching of Bible Doctrine, and if they are moving forward each day in developing their own spiritual life through the true spiritual dynamics that God has supplied all of us in his grace, their *eusebeia*, then they are not only fulfilling the mandates of Scripture, but can be assured that they are not under his curse and judgment and that they are not being led astray, like the rest, by demons.

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