

# March 2009 Newsletter

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## 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

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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 φθορᾶς

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 aoist active participle of *pareisphero* and *επιχορηγησατε εν τη πιστει υμων* is the aoist 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 aoist 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 aoist 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 aoist 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 - ἀρετή, *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 themselves 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

