

GOD'S SUPPLY TO THE BELIEVER

2 Peter 1:3-4

INTRODUCTION

- In the beginning, God made man and granted him life, and that life had its source in the communion of man with God, who is the source of all life
- But man's connection to life was severed through sin, pictured most profoundly in the banishment of Adam and Eve from the tree of life
- Ever since, man has been striving to lay hold of what he thinks might be the source of life, not only to prolong this present life, but to give eternal life
- The power-hungry and money-hungry powers that exercise dominion over us manipulate man's desire for life by promising life to those who obey them.
- The Scriptures speak of "the desire of all nations" (Haggai 2:7) which describes the yearning within every man to be freed from his bondage, for true peace, for a better world, for eternal life
- Rather than go to the only one who can grant such a desire, Jesus Christ, the fountain of living waters, men have "hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13)
- Yet there are some who, by the grace of God, do repent and come by faith to Christ and drink of that water of life he gives (John 4:14; 7:37)
- So then, having been reconnected, as it were, to the source of life through Jesus Christ, we now have access to that inexhaustible heavenly treasure house for all the resources we will ever need in order to fulfil the role for which we were created – the glory of God

I. WE HAVE HIS POWER TO RENEW US (3)

- A. Jesus Christ has divine, almighty power

1. “According” (*hos*) – “as, for, since” – the sense seems to be that vv.3-4 set forth what God has given to us, and then from v.5 is our obligation in response: “*Since* this is what God has given us, *then* you must diligently add to your faith, etc.”
 2. It is “divine” (*theias*) power, because Jesus Christ is God (v.1)
 3. This power (*dunamis*) is God’s strength and capability to accomplish his will
 - a. In contrast with *kratos* which is his power to rule
 - b. In contrast with *exousia* which is his power of authority
 - c. *Dunamis* is his power to *do*
 4. There is no limit to his power (Job 42:2; Psalm 62:11)
 5. His power is not only *great* but *good*
 6. The greatest demonstration of Christ’s power is not in his work of creation but in his work of redemption
 - a. To redeem us required the offering of his very life as the substitute for our sins
 - b. The gospel, then, “is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16)
- B. His power gives us all things pertaining to *life*
1. This is spiritual, eternal life (John 3:16; 10:28)
 2. Christ is “the life” (John 11:25; 14:6), “in him is life” (John 1:4; 1 John 5:11); he “giveth life” (John 6:33); and he “is our life” (Colossians 3:4)
 3. There is no life without Jesus Christ
- C. His power gives us all things pertaining to godliness
1. The order here is critical – spiritual life must be imparted *before* we can be godly

2. There are some who presume to be godly without coming to Christ in faith for life
 - a. Such are Pharisees who “outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within...are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matthew 23:28)
 - b. Such are apostates, “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5)
 - c. True religion has the divine power that false religion doesn't

3. There are others who only want eternal life but do not want godliness
 - a. This is antinomianism, which denies repentance and denies the Lordship of Christ over the believer
 - b. True salvation not only bestows eternal life but transforms the sinner into a saint who desires to be holy

CHRIST'S DIVINE POWER	
LIFE	GODLINESS
Regeneration	Sanctification
To be made alive	To be made pure
The new birth	The new walk
Sin's penalty removed	Sin's power removed
Instantaneous	Progressive

4. A Christian is not one who merely affirms a set of propositions, or who subscribes to a statement of doctrines but one upon whom the power of God has profoundly wrought, transforming the heart and life (1 Corinthians 4:20; 2 Timothy 1:7; Philippians 3:10)

5. Such a one has a personal knowledge and experience of God's power in his life, and can testify of it in both words and behaviour

- D. This power comes through the knowledge of Christ

1. As his grace and peace comes through the knowledge of Christ (v.2), so does his power for life and godliness
 2. Of all the knowledge that a man may possess, the greatest is the knowledge of God (Jeremiah 9:23-24)
 3. Yet man rejects God and does not like to retain God in his knowledge (Romans 1:28)
 4. We need God to give us grace and a heart to know him (Jeremiah 24:7)
- E. He has called us to glory and virtue
1. Believers are called unto salvation by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14)
 2. We are called to the “glory” (*doxa*) of Christ’s eternal kingdom which will be fully realised at his coming
 3. Yet even now we spiritually participate in a degree in this glory as the Lord works sanctification in us – we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18)
 4. “Virtue” (*arete*) is moral excellence
 5. Believers, having escaped the corruption and lust of the world (v.4) now live according to the pattern of Christ, in uprightness, righteousness and holiness (Titus 2:11-12)
 6. Note that this may also be read, “called us *by* his glory and virtue” – that it is by Christ’s divine glory and excellence that we are called to salvation and godliness

II. WE HAVE HIS PROMISES TO REVIVE US (4)

- A. These promises are *given* to us
1. Just as in v.3 Christ *gives* all things for life and godliness, so in v.4 he *gives* his promises to us as an act of his grace towards us

2. These promises are not to all people, but only to those who are called by his grace
3. God's grace not only *justifies* us – making us accepted with God, but *adopts* us – granting us the blessed rights and privileges of the sons of God, which include his promises to us
4. The word for “given” (*dedôrêtai*) is in the perfect tense, indicating the promises were given in the past as a completed action, but with continuing effects
5. The canon of Scripture was completed nearly 2000 years ago, but the promises remain as certain and trustworthy to us today as to those of Peter's day

B. They are exceeding great and precious promises

1. They are “exceeding great” (*megista*) in their Source (God), in their certainty (they never fail), and in their effects (promoting faith, steadfastness and sanctification)
2. They are “precious” (*timia*) for the same reasons – they are of greater value than anything in this world
3. Peter frequently used the word precious in relation to the trial of faith (1 Peter 1:7), the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:9), Christ himself (1 Peter 2:4,6; 2:7) the faith (2 Peter 1:1) and God's promises (2 Peter 1:4)

C. The purpose of the promises

1. A promise is essentially an assurance given by one person to another of some good
2. The strength of a promise relies on the trustworthiness and ability of the promiser, and the trust of the promisee who may choose to accept or reject it
3. God's promises to us are altogether trustworthy, as he cannot lie (Titus 1:2), and he is Almighty, and able to accomplish his promises (cf. Romans 4:20-21)

4. God's promises referred to by Peter have their foundation in the gospel of Christ and encompass all those things relating to our salvation – pardon of sin, acceptance with God, peace of conscience, comfort and strength in trials, grace in death, the resurrection and eternal glory in God's presence
5. There are varying estimates as to the number of promises contained in the Bible, between 3,000 and 30,000, but it is more likely between 7,000-8,000
6. The Christian who searches out God's promises and like Abraham has strong faith in them, will grow spiritually and walk in victory over temptations and trials
7. Many believers, however, live like Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*, imprisoned in Doubting Castle, in bondage to Giant Despair and his wife, Diffidence, not realising they have in their bosom a key called Promise that will open any lock in Doubting Castle
8. *"In such a world as this, where duties perpetually demand our practice, and difficulties and trials are ever surrounding us, what can we do better than to treasure up the promises in our hearts? Here are the true riches of a Christian, and his highest hopes on this side of heaven."* (Isaac Watts)
9. *"I say, when the law curses, when the devil tempts, when hell-fire flames in my conscience, my sins with the guilt of them tearing of me, then is Christ revealed so sweetly to my poor soul through the promises that all is forced to fly and leave off to accuse my soul. So also, when the world frowns, when the enemies rage and threaten to kill me, then also the precious, the exceeding great and precious promises do weigh down all, and comfort the soul against all. This is the effect of believing the Scriptures savingly; for they that do so have by and through the Scriptures good comfort, and also ground of hope, believing those things to be its own which the Scriptures hold forth (Romans 15:4)."* (John Bunyan)

III. WE ARE PARTAKERS OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS (4)

- A. "Partakers of the divine nature"

1. “By these” – our trust in God’s promises has a transforming, sanctifying effect in us
2. To be a partaker of the divine nature must not be misunderstood as the deification of man – that man becomes a god
3. False religions such as Hinduism, Mormonism and some Pentecostals, teach that man can become a god
4. Yet through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and his sanctifying work in us, we are transformed to become more and more like God
 - a. Our nature from Adam is sinful and in the likeness of Satan, rather than God (Ephesians 2:3)
 - b. In salvation we are given a new nature, “the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Colossians 3:10)
5. *“To be a partaker of the divine nature is not, of course, to become God. That cannot be. The essence of Deity is not to be participated in by the creature. Between the creature and the Creator there must be a gulf fixed in respect of essence. But as the first man Adam was made in the image of God, so we, by the renewal of the Holy Spirit, are in a diviner sense made in the image of the Most High and are partakers of the divine nature. We are, by grace, made like God.”* (Spurgeon)
6. God’s intention for every believer is that we be conformed to the image of his Son (Romans 8:29)
7. In the final stage of our salvation, glorification, we will be perfected, with glorified bodies like unto his glorious body (Philippians 3:21), we shall awake with his likeness (Psalm 17:15) and we shall be like him (1 John 3:2)

B. Salvation is to escape the world’s corruption and lust

1. This world is by nature corrupt, under the thrall of Satan, in hostile rebellion against God, energised by lust (cf. Genesis 6:11-12)

2. God in his grace saves us out of this evil world, delivering us from the power of darkness, translating us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1:13)
 - a. In a similar way God saved Noah from the flood and Lot from Sodom
3. Those who fail to escape the world and its corruption will suffer the awful judgment that is ready to be poured out upon it
4. Christians are “not of this world” (John 15:19)
5. Having escaped from this world's evil bondage, we must not ever be conformed to it (Romans 12:2)

CONCLUSION

1. Has there been a point in your life when you realised you were cut off from the source of life, dead in your sins, and in faith humbly come to Christ for life and salvation?
2. Maybe you are like many people in the world *trying* to be a Christian by your own efforts of obedience to God's commands – this is impossible
3. The only way you can be saved is not by what you do for God, but what God does for you in giving you a new heart and making you a new creature (Galatians 6:15)
4. Are you searching the Scriptures daily to find God's great and precious promises to you?
5. And are you living by faith in those promises?