

Excerpts from Life-study of 2 Peter, Message 1

THE DIVINE PROVISION (1)

Bible Verses

- 2 Pet. 1:1** Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:
- 2** Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

The subject of 1 Peter is the Christian life under the government of God. The book of 2 Peter is a continuation of 1 Peter, and it also emphasizes God's government. However, in this Epistle we also see God's provision. Therefore, we may say that the subject of 2 Peter is the divine provision and the divine government.

With God's government there is God's provision. God grants us His provision so that we may cooperate with His government. In other words, if we would carry out God's government, we need God's provision;

that is, we need the divine supply. In 2 Peter the writer first presents the divine supply. We see how God's power provides all the supply for our need. This is the main significance of this book. Furthermore, the Epistle of 2 Peter shows us a continuation of the picture of God's government unveiled in 1 Peter. Therefore, what we have in 2 Peter is the divine provision and the divine government.

Second Peter 1:1 and are the introduction to this Epistle. Verse 1 says, "Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ." Simon is Peter's old name, and Peter is his new name given by the Lord (John 1:41-42). Simon refers to his old man by birth; Peter, to his new man by regeneration. The two names are combined here as one to signify that the old man, Simon, has now become the new man, Peter.

The name Simon Peter may be an allusion to the old universe and the new universe. Second Peter indicates that under God's government the old universe will be changed into the new universe (3:10-13). We may say that the new heaven and new earth are represented by Peter and that the old universe is

represented by Simon. In the four Gospels we see Simon as the old man representing the old creation. Now in Peter's Epistles we see a new man, a new person, representing the new universe.

In 2 Peter 1:1, Peter speaks of those "who have been allotted faith equally precious." As the children of Israel were allotted a piece of the good land (Josh. 14:1-5), we have been allotted equally precious faith. The children of Israel with their twelve tribes were to possess the good land. The Lord told Joshua to make an allotment of land to each of the twelve tribes. We know that the good land, the portion of the children of Israel in Old Testament times, typifies the all-inclusive Christ. Now, according to the New Testament, our portion is Christ. Colossians 1:12 refers to Christ as our portion: "Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light." As the good land was the portion of the Old Testament saints, so Christ is the portion of the New Testament believers. Furthermore, in the Old Testament the good land was allotted to the twelve tribes, and in the New Testament precious faith is allotted to us.

The phrase allotted equally precious faith causes a difficult problem for translation and exposition. How can faith be our allotted portion? According to the Bible, Christ is our portion. This means that it is Christ who has been allotted to us. But here Peter says that we have been allotted equally precious faith. How are we to understand this? To speak of Christ being our portion may be somewhat doctrinal. It is more experiential to say that faith is our portion. If Christ is merely Christ to us and not also faith, we would not be able to participate in Him or share in Him. In order for us to partake of Christ, He must become our faith.

Notice that here Peter speaks of the righteousness not only of our God but also of our Savior. From what Paul says in Romans, we can see that the righteousness of God is one thing and that the righteousness of Christ is another. But here Peter combines these two kinds of righteousness when he speaks of the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Greek word for righteousness in 2 Peter 1:1 may also be rendered “justice.” Our God is righteous. Through His righteousness He has allotted the precious faith as a divine portion equally to all believers in Christ, both Jewish and Gentile, without respect of

persons. And now He is not only our God but also our Savior. Thus, His righteousness now is not the righteousness only of God nor only of Christ, but the righteousness of both our God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. In that the Lord is our Savior, His righteousness is His righteous act, His death on the cross in absolute obedience (Phil. 2:8), by which He accomplished redemption for us (Heb. 9:12), enabling us to be justified by God (Rom. 5:18). In that the Lord is our God, His righteousness is His justice, since, based on the righteous act, the redemption of our Savior Jesus Christ (3:24-25), He justifies all the believers in Christ (v. 26), both Jewish and Gentile (v. 30). In and by such a twofold righteousness, the righteousness of both our God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, the precious faith, the precious substantiation of the New Testament blessing, has been allotted equally to all believers among all nations.

Peter's word regarding the righteousness of our God and Savior indicates that the dispensation has changed. In the Old Testament the basis upon which people were blessed was their righteousness according to the law. This means that they were blessed according to man's righteousness, which is also the righteousness

of the law. But now, in the New Testament, God gives us a wonderful portion not because of our own righteousness according to the law but because of His righteousness according to Christ's redemption. Here Peter seems to be saying, "Jewish brothers, you must know that the dispensation has changed. Don't go back to the law. God has allotted our New Testament inheritance to us not according to the righteousness we may have by keeping the law but according to His own righteousness fulfilled by the death of Christ. Christ's righteousness fulfills God's righteousness. It is by this kind of righteousness that God gives the New Testament blessing. Therefore, the age has changed. Don't go back to the law or to Moses—come to Christ. What we have is not our righteousness according to the Mosaic law. It is God's righteousness fulfilled by the righteous act of Christ on the cross. It is in this righteousness and by this righteousness that God has allotted us equally our New Testament inheritance." I hope that we all will have a clear understanding concerning this twofold righteousness.

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Note: This version is not intended to be printed as material for pursuit during the small group gathering. Instead, it is to be used as additional reference for brothers and sisters who want to prepare in advance for fellowship on the message. We include here notes from the commentaries of the brothers in the life-study radio program. The points from these commentaries can help enrich our understanding and, eventually, our fellowship with the saints on the selected portions of the life-study message. We still recommend that, if possible, the saints still listen to the [audio message](#) in addition to reading the [life-study message](#) for personal pursuit and for preparation for small group gatherings. We also wish to point out that these notes have not been fully polished.

[Commentary]:

Introduction:

[CW:] It's very interesting how Peter begins his two epistles. The first one begins, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ", whereas he begins the second book, "Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ". Simon, of course, was Peter's old name, his name before he came to the Lord Jesus. Peter is his new name, given to him directly by the Lord himself. In putting these two together, Peter is indicating something very marvelous about the entire book of 2 Peter, for this is a book showing us that under God's ruling and under his government, we see the old creation changed into the new creation. Simon fit perfectly in the old creation, but he had to become Peter to make it in the new creation. Matt Miller has joined us today on our first program, Matt, in this life study of 2 Peter, and oh, this is a marvelous portion, isn't it?

[MM:] It really is, Chris. I'm looking forward to today's program.

[CW:] Let's talk about this concept just for a moment. We will hear Witness Lee develop this thought in the first section today, and actually, we're covering a lot of ground today in this initial message, but I like this point particularly because it does kind of set the tone for this book. We saw in 1 Peter that we just concluded all these matters related to God's government, God's dealing, God's judgment. Somewhat this continues in 2 Peter, but we really bring in a new element, don't we?

[MM:] Well, we do, Chris, and that's what I like about this life study of 2 Peter is the title of the first eight messages of Peter. There's a total of 13 life studies in 2 Peter. The first eight of them are entitled The Divine Provision, and then we get to the last five, which are The Divine Government, and we talked about God's government in the first epistle of Peter. Now we're going to see not only God's government, but God's provision, and that's a big thing to see that there's not only a government. There's a supply. God has provided a supply for the believers, and that's what we're going to see in 2 Peter and particularly in today's program.

[CW:] And even this point we just alluded to that we'll hear in the first section about Simon becoming Peter and this progression from the old creation to the new totally incorporates the thought conveyed in this matter of God's divine provision, doesn't it?

[MM:] It does, Chris, and Peter gets right into it right away in these first few verses, so maybe we could...

[CW:] Yeah, we'll just go and let Witness Lee say it better than we can, then we'll come back and at least talk about it a bit. I want to read a verse from a little later on near the end of 2 Peter because this, I think, is a good backdrop for what we're about to hear. But according to his promise, we are expecting new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. So Peter, his new name for the new creation and the new heaven and a new earth. There's a lot of newness in the book of 2 Peter. Let's join Witness Lee.

Part 1

[CW:] Matt, the New Testament presents to us, of course, the old creation, the new creation, the old man, the new man. We have Simon and Peter, the two names. And as we've touched this matter in previous programs and throughout the ministry of Witness Lee, the key significance between the old creation and the new creation is not so much that God was doing something new, but by virtue of the element that is added to produce the new creation. Pick up this thought.

[MM:] Yeah, Chris, this matter of a new element coming in, we talked about it in a previous radio program with the matter of petrification. Petros, this word even comes from petrification. Petrification is a great picture because it washes away the old element of the wood and brings in the new element, the minerals that are in the water. Eventually, it looks like a piece of wood, but it really is a rock. It's a stone. That's exactly what happened with Peter. Here's Peter, his old name, Simon in the old creation, yet now in the new creation, he's a stone. He's a stone for God's building. He's transformed something, changed, but the change isn't through his effort. The change is through a new element being added in. That's the simplest picture of the Christian life, receiving another element over a long period of time and through transformation, we become something suitable for God's building.

[CW:] So the Lord, when he first called Peter, he makes a big point of this change of name. You are Simon Bar-Jonah, but you shall be called Peter, which translated means a stone. So he is somewhat setting the tone for Peter's entire Christian life, isn't he? And even his speaking in Acts there when he stands up on the day of Pentecost and thereafter, he makes reference many times to the fact that the Lord was a stone. Then in his epistles, as we saw in the first epistle, he brings this matter back again and again, doesn't he?

[MM:] Well, it's really important, Chris, for everyone to see this because many believers, when they get saved, they think that they're bringing something of their natural ability to the Lord. I'm a good speaker, so now I'm going to speak for the Lord. Well, Peter had this same concept. As Simon, in his natural strength, he was all the time in his natural strength following the Lord. I'm going to do something for the Lord. Even when the Lord is going to go to the cross and die, he's there cutting off the ear of the ones coming to arrest the Lord, and the Lord has to put the ear back on and tell Peter, no, if you live by the sword, you're going to die by the sword, so don't do something for me in your natural man. This is a picture of many believers.

They want to do something for the Lord in their natural strength, and it becomes a frustration to them. But in resurrection, the Lord came into Peter and through the process of transformation, allowed Peter to become something different and uplifted even his natural abilities by filling them with the Spirit, filling them with Christ. And eventually, I like this description in Peter how he called himself a slave. That was how he describes himself at the beginning of 2 Peter, this last epistle. He says, Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. So the very first thing is he mentions this matter of submission. Are we a slave of Jesus Christ?

[CW:] Matt, as we covered the first book of Peter, with all of the emphasis on God's government and God's judgment, and as I read that verse at the end, Chapter 3 of 2 Peter, the result of God's judgment and being under his ruling, under his government, is the new creation is produced with the new heaven and the new earth, and of course, ultimately, the consummation of the whole Bible, the new Jerusalem. So all of this judgment, all of God's government that, again, will come up later on in the book of 2 Peter, it has an eventual outcome, doesn't it? It has an issue that matches this new element that's being added.

[MM:] I'm glad you said that, Chris, because that's actually the point I was trying to make with him calling himself a slave. Him calling himself a slave is an issue of the Lord's newness working into him. He's becoming an expression of the new Jerusalem by being under submission to Christ, calling him himself a slave. This is the new Jerusalem in a sense.

[CW:] Matt, let's finish. You started to read verse 1, this matter of a slave and an apostle. Let's read this verse as we prepare to join Witness Lee in this next portion, "Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ to those who have been allotted faith, equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." Here's Witness Lee.

Part 2

[CW:] Matt, I think this thought needs some development. In Colossians 1, the portion that's allotted to the saints is clearly Christ in the context there. Here, Peter uses the same word, as Witness Lee pointed out, referring back to the Old Testament allotting of the parcels of the good land to the various tribes. But what's allotted in Peter's language is faith, equally precious as ours. How do these two connect?

[MM:] Well, it's a great connection. And Witness Lee gave us some help to connect the dots, so to speak. But, you know, you have the picture. And a picture, of course, is worth a thousand words. The picture in the Old Testament of the allotment of the land. They inherited the good land, but it was appointed to the 12 tribes. You know, this allot was for this tribe. This lot was for this tribe. All the different tribes received their own allotment. Then Paul comes along in Colossians 1 and says, Christ is the allotted portion of the believers. But then when you look at 2 Peter 1, Peter doesn't say, Christ is the allotment. He says, we've been allotted this like precious faith. So Peter calls faith the allotment. Christ is the allotment by Paul. I think Witness Lee connects it real well when he says, if it's just Christ, it's too objective. It needs to be subjective. It needs to be our experience. To be personal, to become more something substantial and experiential for us, it needs to become our faith. If it's just Christ as your allotment, that's too objective. But is Christ your faith? Is he your appreciation? Is he your believing? Do you have faith? This is much more experiential.

[CW:] Yeah, I like this thought that faith is personified. It makes it a little less ethereal and hard to get a grip on. But Christ really is our portion. He's also our faith by which we lay hold of our portion, isn't he?

[MM:] He is. Let me read a paragraph in the Life Study. It says, "What is our real inheritance? Our real inheritance is all the things relating to life inwardly and godliness outwardly. Our portion includes the divine nature of which we partake through the common faith, which is equally precious. When we put together these items, faith, divine nature, precious and exceeding great promises, life, and godliness, we have the totality of our allotted inheritance. What a wonderful inheritance".

[CW:] Matt, we want to move on. We come to another phrase in this verse. Near the end of the verse, we've now touched the fact that it begins Simon Peter, that he was a slave and an apostle, and that we have been allotted faith equally precious as ours. But the last phrase is the modifier that we want to focus on this third section, "Allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ." Oh, there's so much conveyed in these few words. I'm looking forward to this point, and hopefully we'll save enough time to be able to have a good conversation regarding it at the end.

[MM:] This really is the last point, but it's for sure not the least point of this program.

[CW:] All right, here's Witness Lee. In the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Part 3

[CW:] Matt, in one sense, the two dispensations, and by that I'm talking about the Old Testament dispensation and the New Testament, bear a similarity. They're both based on God's righteousness. In the Old Testament, God had righteous demands that matched His own righteous nature. And if the people of God met those demands, they received a blessing. That element still exists in the New Testament, but there has been a fundamental change, hasn't there?

[MM:] Yeah, and Peter talks about it right here in this verse. He talks about the righteousness of Christ and the righteousness of God. It's no longer according to man's righteousness and the righteousness of the law, but it's according to the righteousness of Christ and the righteousness of God that we receive this inheritance. Last portion, last segment, we talked about the inheritance that we received, which is so wonderful in Christ, all the things that pertain to life and godliness. And yet, how do we get that? Well, we get that based upon Christ's righteousness. This is Christ dying for us a righteous death and the righteousness of God to accept Christ's righteous death. So we have both the righteousness of Christ and the righteousness of God. And there's a great verse in Philippians chapter 3, verse 9 that talks about this, Chris, and I'd like to read that real quick, "To be found in him not having my own righteousness, which is out of the law." So that's the two righteousnesses that Paul lived according to before he was saved. The Old Testament dispensation of the righteousness, which is out of the law. But Paul now says the righteousness, which is out of God and based on faith. So this is the New Testament. It's not based on what you can do. It's based on the faith of Christ. It's the righteousness, which is out of God. It's apart from us. We don't have the ability in ourselves. It's a gift, and we have to thank the Lord for such a wonderful gift.

[CW:] Marvelous how these two aspects are brought together in this verse, Christ's righteousness and the righteousness of God. As you said, and I think it just is worth repeating again, both of these have to come together to be the foundation and the guarantee of our allotted portion. The basis upon which God blesses us with this divine portion. Christ died the righteous death on the cross, and God in his righteousness had to accept that in lieu of his judgment upon us. Therefore, his righteousness now, and I always have loved this point that both Watchman nnee made and Witness Lee made in their ministry, that at one point, God's righteousness to us was the most fearful thing because we knew we were guilty of it. Now that it has been satisfied by Christ's righteousness, it becomes the strongest advocate for us in the universe, doesn't it?

[MM:] It does, and 1 Corinthians 1:30 says he becomes our righteousness. It's our righteousness now. The picture of the garment when the prodigal son comes back, the first thing the father does is put a garment on him, a new garment, and that's a picture of the righteousness of Christ to hide the prodigal son in the righteousness of his son. And I was looking a verse up in Jeremiah, Chris. Jeremiah 23, verses 5 and 6. "The days are coming, declares Jehovah, when I will raise up to David a righteous shoot, and he will reign as king and act prudently, will execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, Israel will dwell securely, and this is his name by which he will be called, Jehovah our righteousness." So Christ comes as this righteous shoot, and his name is Jehovah our righteousness. He becomes our righteousness. It's not that we could be righteous, but He is our righteousness.

[CW:] It's a great old hymn. I believe it was written by Zinzendorf, I might be wrong, "God's Christ who is our righteousness. My beauty is my glorious dress."

[MM:] Christ's righteousness really is our beautiful dress, Chris, and I appreciate this subject, and we're barely scratching the surface. I just really encourage the listeners to get the life study, and the footnotes in the recovery version especially are helpful on this matter. Not just the footnotes, but also the cross-references in the margins related to these words there's a lot of help in the recovery version.

Read the verses and footnotes online: <https://www.lsmradio.com/audio>