



LESSON ONE

Allotted Equally Precious Faith

Scripture Reading:

2 Peter 1:1 – 8

- 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:
- 1:2** Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;
- 1:3** Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,
- 1:4** Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- 1:5** And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;
- 1:6** And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;
- 1:7** And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.
- 1:8** For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS:

Section 1:

1. What is the basic thought in Peter's writing?
2. What has the New Testament believers been allotted with? How can we enjoy and experience this God given inheritance?

Section 2:

1. What is the difference between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of our Savior?
2. How does it differ from our own righteousness and the righteousness of the law?

Section 3:

1. What is faith? Please use an illustration to explain it.
2. Why do we need to exercise our faith?
3. How does the divine truth become subjective to us? Please share some of your own experiences.

Section 4:

1. What is apostasy and how do we overcome it?
2. What does it mean to partake of the divine nature? How do we know that we will continue to partake of the divine nature in eternity?

-----[INTRODUCTION]-----

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.

-----[SECTION 1]-----

SIMON PETER, A SLAVE AND AN APOSTLE

Second Peter 1:1 and 2 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. This Epistle 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 1:1 Peter refers to himself as "a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ." In the first Epistle he mentions only that he is an apostle; he does not

say anything about being a slave. But here Peter says that he is both a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ. The word "slave" indicates Peter's submission to the Lord, and the word "apostle," the Lord's commission to him. Submission and commission imply a two-way traffic between us and the Lord. When we submit ourselves to Him, He will commit something to us. With a slave there is submission, but with an apostle there is the Lord's commission.

THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN ALLOTTED EQUALLY PRECIOUS FAITH

The word "those" in 1:1 refers to the Jewish believers in dispersion in the Gentile world. In 1 Peter 1:1, Peter refers to them as "the chosen pilgrims of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

In 2 Peter 1:1, Peter speaks of those "who have been allotted faith equally." As the children of Israel were allotted a piece of the good land (Josh. 14:1-5), we have been allotted precious faith equally. This implies that all the things which relate to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), including the divine nature (v. 4) partaken of by the believers through the precious faith equally according to the precious and exceedingly great promises, are the real inheritance given to the believers by God in the New Testament.

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. This was done through the Urim and the Thummim, which were on the breastplate worn by the high priest. By means of the breastplate with the Urim and the Thummim, God could speak to His people. God used the Urim and the Thummim to reveal His will. It was through the Urim and the Thummim that Joshua came to know God's instructions concerning which lot should go to each tribe. Once again, Peter uses an Old Testament term to describe a New Testament reality.

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 qualified you for a share of the 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 faith equally precious” 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 faith equally precious. 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.

In 1:1 Peter speaks of the allotment of precious faith equally. The Greek word literally means of equal value or honor; hence, equally precious. It does not mean equal in measure, but equal in value and honor to all the receivers. All the portions of the precious faith are equal not in measure, quantity, but equal in quality. For example, the portion of the good land allotted to each of the twelve tribes differed in size. Judah received a larger portion than Benjamin did. But although the allotments were different in size, they were equal in quality. The quality of the land was the same for each tribe. For this reason, each allotment was equally precious. The principle is the same with the precious faith.

We have seen that our portion today includes all things which relate to life and godliness. This includes the divine nature, of which the believers partake through the precious faith according to the precious and exceedingly great promises. All these elements put together make up our portion. Please remember that our allotment comprises all things relating to life and godliness, including the divine nature partaken of by us. All this is the inheritance given by God to those who believe in Christ.

What is our real inheritance? Our inheritance is all 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 different items— faith, divine

nature, precious and exceedingly great promises, life, and godliness—we have the totality of our allotted inheritance.

Peter also says that the believers have been allotted precious faith “with us.” The pronoun “us” refers to the apostle Peter and all the other believers in the Jewish land. All the believers in the Gentile world share the same precious faith to substantiate the blessing of life of the New Testament with all those in the Jewish land as their common portion allotted to them by God.

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THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF OUR GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

Verse 1 ends with the phrase “in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” The preposition “in” here may mean in the sphere of or by means of. We have been allotted precious faith in the sphere of or by means of the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our God and Savior are both Jesus Christ. This indicates Jesus Christ is God to be our Savior. He is the very God whom we worship becoming our Savior to save us. At Peter’s time this designated and separated the believers in Christ from the Jews, who did not believe that Jesus Christ was God, and from the Romans, who believed that Caesar, not Jesus Christ, was their God.

The righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, is an important matter that requires a proper understanding. 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. Is this the righteousness of God, or is it the righteousness of Christ? Of course, most of us would say that it is both the righteousness of God and of Christ. But how can the righteousness of Christ become the righteousness of God?

The Greek word for righteousness in 1:1 may also be rendered justice. Our God is righteous, just. In His justice, He has allotted the precious faith as a divine portion equally to all believers in Christ, both Jew 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 merely of God, nor merely of Christ, but the righteousness of both our God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. As our Savior, His righteousness is His righteous act, His death on the cross in absolute obedience (Phil. 2:8), accomplishing propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2), enabling us to be justified by God (Rom. 5:18). As our God, His righteousness is His justice in that, based upon the righteous act, the redemption of our Savior, Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24-25) justifies all the believers in Christ (Rom. 3:26), both Jew and Gentile (Rom. 3:30). In and by means of 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.

Let us consider this matter very carefully. Because of the incarnation, God is not merely our God; He is also our Savior. This is the reason Peter speaks of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Therefore, His righteousness is not only the righteousness of God or the righteousness of Christ; it is the righteousness of both our God and our Savior. As our Savior, Christ's righteousness consists in His righteous act. Romans 5:18 says, "So then, as it was through one offense unto condemnation to all men, so also through one righteous act unto justification of life to all men." This righteous act was Christ's death on the cross in absolute obedience to God. Through His crucifixion, Christ accomplished propitiation for the sins of the whole world and made it possible for us to be justified by God. Now God in His righteousness justifies all believers in Christ. The righteous act of Christ is the basis upon which God now justifies us. Therefore, the righteousness of Christ as our Savior is His death on the cross for the accomplishment of our redemption. As God, His righteousness consists of His justifying all believers based upon Christ's redeeming death.

By this we see that in 1:1 two kinds of righteousness—the righteousness of God and the righteousness of Christ—are put together. The righteousness of Christ accomplished redemption. Now God in His righteousness justifies us. It is in the sphere of this twofold righteousness and by means of this twofold

righteousness that the precious faith has been allotted equally to all believers.

Peter's word concerning the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, is rich in what it indicates and implies. The common thought among the Jews at Peter's time was that God gave them certain blessings for their enjoyment. Those blessings were given according to their own righteousness. The Jews thought that if they lived and acted righteously, they would have their own righteousness before God. That was the righteousness according to the law. Hence, it is called the righteousness of the law. This means that our own righteousness is the righteousness of the law. Paul refers to this in Romans 10:3: "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, did not submit to the righteousness of God." In Philippians 3:9 Paul declared that his desire was to be found in Christ, "not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith." It is not according to this kind of righteousness, the righteousness of the law, that God has allotted us our New Testament portion. The New Testament portion is allotted to us by God in and by the kind of righteousness that is both the righteousness of God and the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of God is versus our own righteousness, and the righteousness of Christ is versus the righteousness of the law.

We have spoken concerning four kinds of righteousness: our righteousness, God's righteousness, the righteousness of the law, and the righteousness of Christ. We have received the allotment of precious faith not by our righteousness or the righteousness of the law, but by the righteousness of God and the righteousness of Christ. This twofold righteousness is the means in which and by which God has allotted to us our New Testament portion. We need to be clear that the portion, the allotment, is one thing and that this twofold righteousness is another thing. The portion is the inheritance God has allotted us, and the righteousness is the means or instrument by which the inheritance has been allotted.

We have seen that the New Testament inheritance is all things relating to life and godliness, including the divine nature. This

inheritance also involves faith and the precious and exceedingly great promises. When all these items are added together, we have the New Testament inheritance. By what means has God given us this portion? In what sphere has He allotted it to us? We must be impressed with the fact that it is by means of and in the sphere of a twofold righteousness, the righteousness of God and of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is not allotted by the righteousness of man, which is also the righteousness of the law. It is by the righteousness of God, which is the righteousness of Christ.

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 shall have a clear understanding concerning this twofold righteousness.

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FAITH—THE SUBSTANTIATION OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE TRUTH

Faith is the substantiation of the substance of the truth (Heb. 11:1), which is the reality of the contents of God's New Testament economy. The contents of God's New Testament economy are composed of the "all things which relate to life

and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3), that is, the Triune God dispensing Himself into us as life within and godliness without. The precious faith, allotted to us by God through the word of God's New Testament economy and the Spirit, responds to the reality of such contents and ushers us into the reality, making its substance the very element of our Christian life and experience. Such a faith is allotted to all the believers in Christ as their portion, which is equally precious to all who have received it. As such a portion from God, this faith is objective to us in the divine truth. But it brings all the contents of its substantiation into us, thus making them all with itself (faith) subjective to us in our experience. It can be compared to the scenery (truth) and the seeing (faith) that are objective to the camera (us). But when the light (the Spirit) brings the scenery to the film (our spirit) within the camera, both the seeing and the scenery become subjective to it.

We have pointed out that faith is the substantiation of the substance of the truth. Let us take as an illustration the substantiating of the existence of a wooden table by a blind man through his sense of touch. Although the wooden table is substantial, the blind man cannot see it. But by touching the table with his hand, he substantiates that table to himself. In this way the wooden table becomes real to him. Therefore, his touching is the substantiating, and this substantiating makes the substance of the table real to him. This may be used as an illustration of faith being the substantiation of the substance of the truth.

In God's New Testament inheritance there are many riches, many blessings. However, our natural mentality is blind to all these riches and blessings. Therefore, God would say, "Exercise your faith. Let your faith substantiate the substance of all of My New Testament blessings." The reality or substance of God's New Testament blessings is the truth. Faith is actually the substantiation of the reality of the substance of the truth, and the truth itself is the content of God's New Testament economy.

Many of us are familiar with the term "God's economy." The Greek word for economy, *oikonomia*, means household management, arrangement, hence, dispensation, plan. God's economy, God's plan, is to dispense Himself into us. Therefore, God's New

Testament economy is simply for God's dispensing. This economy has a content, this content has a reality, and this reality is the truth revealed in the Bible. The Bible is not merely a book of doctrine; it is a revelation of the truth, which is the reality of the content of God's dispensation. This reality has a substance. Only faith can substantiate this substance. Hence, we see once again that faith is the substantiation of the substance of the reality of the New Testament dispensation.

The content of God's New Testament economy is composed of the "all things which relate to life and godliness" (1:3). We have seen that this is actually the Triune God dispensing Himself into us as our life within and godliness without. In the Life-study of 1 Timothy we pointed out that the faith is the content of the complete gospel according to God's New Testament economy. Hence, the faith is objective, as mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:19; 2:7; 3:9; 4:1, 6; 5:8; 6:10, 12, 21; 2 Timothy 2:18; 3:8; 4:7; and Titus 1:13. The truth is the reality of the content of the faith, as mentioned in 1 Timothy 2:4, 7; 3:15; 4:3; 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:15, 18, 25; 3:7, 8; 4:4; Titus 1:1 and 14. Godliness is a living that is the expression of God, as mentioned in 1 Timothy 2:2, 10; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 5:4; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Timothy 3:5, 12; Titus 1:1; and 2:12. The faith equals the content of God's economy, of His dispensation. The truth is the content, the reality, of the faith according to God's economy. Eternal life is the means and power to carry out the divine realities of the faith, and godliness is a living that expresses the divine reality, an expression of God in all His riches. Subjective faith is the response to the truth of the objective faith; it receives and participates in the divine realities.

The precious faith, allotted to us by God through the word of God's New Testament economy and the Spirit, responds to the reality of such a content and ushers us into this reality. It makes the substance of God's economy the element of our Christian life and experience. Such a faith is allotted to all the believers in Christ as their portion. This faith is objective to us in the divine truth, but it brings all the content of its substantiation into us. The substantiating is the faith, and this faith brings into us whatever it substantiates. In this way, faith causes everything substantiated by it to become subjective to us in our experience.

We may use a camera as an illustration. Suppose you want to photograph a particular scene. The scene corresponds to the truth, and our experience of seeing this scene corresponds to faith. Both the scene and the seeing are objective to the camera, for neither has come into the camera. But light makes it possible for the scene to be impressed on the film. The light corresponds to the Spirit, and the film corresponds to our spirit. In this way both the scene and the seeing enter into the camera and become subjective to it. The camera "clicks," the light gets in, and the scene is brought into the camera and impressed on the film. We are the "camera," and our spirit is the film. Now the scene and the seeing are subjective to us. This is faith.

Faith implies all the items in the "scenery" of the New Testament inheritance according to the New Testament economy. In the New Testament we see a complete picture of this scenery. But this scenery is outside of us. How can it get into us? It comes in through our seeing and through the Spirit's work. This was our experience when we were saved and regenerated. We heard the preaching of the gospel, there was a "click" of the shutter of the "camera," and the light came into us. As a result, the divine scenery was impressed on our spirit.

Sometimes we preach the gospel to others, and they do not experience this "click." As we are preaching, some may say to themselves, "I don't agree with what you are saying." Others may tell us, "I don't care about this." Still others may respond, "This person is crazy. What is he talking about?" There is no positive response. But eventually, by the Lord's mercy, the divine light with the divine scenery may enter into certain ones. The scenery is then impressed on the film and can never be erased. Even if we try to change our minds, we cannot remove the scene that has been impressed on the "film" of our spirit.

Many of us can testify that we came to believe in the Lord for no apparent reason. We heard the preaching of the gospel, and there was a "click" within us. Spontaneously we believed in the Lord. Formerly, we may have argued about God and Christ. We may have said, "Is there really a God? Perhaps there is a God, but how can Jesus of Nazareth be God in the flesh? I don't believe that the man Jesus is God." Nevertheless, when

we experienced a “click,” we automatically began to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Then we could confess, “I don’t know why, but now I believe that Jesus is God. Hallelujah, Jesus Christ is my God! Praise the Lord!”

This faith is the real portion of God’s allotment. It is the reality of the New Testament economy allotted to us in and by the righteousness of God, which is also the righteousness of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This twofold righteousness—the righteousness of God and of Christ—is the sphere in which and the means by which the New Testament portion has been allotted to us.

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THE DIVINE POWER GRANTING US ALL THINGS RELATING TO LIFE AND GODLINESS

In 1:3 Peter says, “As His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us to His own glory and virtue.” Chapter two shows that this Epistle, like 2 Timothy, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude, was written in the time of the church’s degradation and apostasy. Hence, apostasy was the background of this book. The burden of the writer was to inoculate the believers against the poison of apostasy. God’s salvation is to impart Himself in His Trinity into the believers to be their life and life supply. This is God’s economy, God’s dispensation. The apostasy distracted the believers from the economy of God by leading them into the human logic of puzzling philosophies. It was not the exercise of partaking of the tree of life that gives life, but of participating in the tree of knowledge that brings in death (Gen. 2:9, 16-17). Thus the serpent deceived and seduced Eve (Gen. 3:1-6). In order to inoculate against this death-poison in his healing Epistle, Peter first prescribed the divine power as the strongest and most effective antidote. This provides the believers with all things related to the generating and supplying divine life (not the killing knowledge) and the God-expressing godliness (not the show of human wisdom). This rich divine provision, which is covered in detail in the following verses 1:3-11), is more than sufficient for the believers to live a proper Christian life and overcome the satanic apostasy.

In 1:3 the word “divine” denotes the eternal, unlimited, and almighty divinity of God. Hence, divine power is the power of the divine life related to the divine nature.

Here the word “granted” means imparted, infused, planted. All things which relate to life and godliness have been imparted to us, infused into us, by the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, who has regenerated us and who indwells us (2 Cor. 3:6, 17; John 3:6; Rom. 8:11).

PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE

Through the precious and exceedingly great promises, we, the believers in Christ, who is our God and Savior, have become partakers of His divine nature in an organic union with Him. We have entered this union through faith and baptism (John 3:15; Gal. 3:27; Matt. 28:19). The virtue (energy of life) of this divine nature carries us into His glory (godliness becoming the full expression of the Triune God).

Based upon the glory and virtue to which we have been called by God, God gives us promises. Furthermore, through this process, this procedure, God has given us promises. He promises us that He will be responsible to work out this glory and virtue. As we have seen, glory as the expression is the goal, and virtue is the energy of life. Virtue is the excellent attributes of God becoming to us the energy of life. This means that we have the energy and strength to reach glory. By God’s promises we have the energy to express His glory. One of these promises is found in 2 Corinthians 12:9, where the Lord says, “My grace is sufficient for you.” How great and how precious is this promise! Surely this promise is able to work out glory and virtue.

Through these promises we may become partakers of the divine nature. We receive the divine life simply by believing. There was a “click,” and the divine life came into us. The nature is the substance of the life. Although we received the life at the time we believed, the nature must be continually enjoyed by us. This enjoyment requires the grace of God. The more we enjoy the divine nature, the more we have His virtue, and the more we are brought into His glory.

To partake of the divine nature is to enjoy what God is. In order that we may enjoy all that He is, God will do many things for us according to His promises. This will enable us to enjoy His nature, what He is. We have seen that one of His promises is that His grace is sufficient for us. God's sufficient grace will work within us day by day so that we may enjoy the divine nature.

Toward the end of verse 4 Peter speaks of "having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust." In his first Epistle Peter told the believers that Christ had redeemed them from their vain manner of life (1 Pet. 1:18-19), so that they should abstain from fleshly lusts (1 Pet. 2:11) and no longer live in the flesh in the lusts of men (1 Pet. 4:2). Now in his second Epistle he unveils to them the energy, the strength, by which they are enabled to escape the corruption in lust and the result of this escape. The energy is the virtue of the divine life, and the result is the partaking of the divine nature, the enjoying of all the riches of what the Triune God is. In partaking of the divine nature and in the enjoyment of all that God is, all the riches of the divine nature will be fully developed, as described in 1:5-7. Having escaped the corruption of lust in the world, the barriers to the growth of the divine life in us, we are freed to become partakers of the divine nature, enjoying its riches in its development to the fullest extent by the virtue of God unto His glory.

The divine nature refers to the riches of what God is. Whatever God is, is in His nature. Therefore, when we partake of the divine nature, we partake of the divine riches. Having received the divine life at the time of our regeneration, we must go on to enjoy what God is.

The riches of what God is are the content of the living hope mentioned in 1 Peter 1:3. According to His great mercy, God the Father has regenerated us unto a living hope. This living hope is actually a hope of life. Having this hope of life, we expect to enjoy daily the riches of the divine life. Actually, to enjoy the divine life is simply to partake of the divine nature. Therefore, partaking of the divine nature is related to our living hope of enjoying all the riches of the divine life.

When we were regenerated, we were enlivened by God, or we may say that we were "lived" by Him. The divine life came into the center of our

being. From that time onward, we have had a living hope, a hope of life. Our hope is that every part of our being will be enlivened. Regeneration, therefore, has brought in a living hope. Regeneration is unto the enjoyment of the riches of the divine life, and the riches of this life are the divine nature. Hence, to partake of the divine nature is to enjoy the riches of God.

This enjoyment is both for the present and for eternity. For eternity we shall continue to partake of the divine nature. This is illustrated by the tree of life and the river of water of life in Revelation 22:1 and 2. Out from the throne of God and the Lamb, the river of life flows. This signifies God flowing out to be the enjoyment of His redeemed ones. That flowing river will saturate the entire city of New Jerusalem. Furthermore, the tree of life that grows along the river will supply the redeemed ones with God as their life supply. This is a picture of what it means to partake of the divine nature.