

Partakers of the Divine Nature

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 September 2025

Preacher: Tom Holland

[0 : 00] We're still in 2 Peter chapter 1, the opening verses.

! We used to write letters before the advent of computers.

We'd mail them out with a postage stamp. And you'd read the letter, and sometimes you didn't know who sent it until you got to the end. And it would say, sincerely, or love, or whatever.

And so we had to wait until the end. We're going to see Simon Peter and sometimes Simeon.

Simeon's the Hebrew form and Simon the Greek form.

A very common Jewish name in that day. You may recall even one of the 12 tribes was named after Simon or Simeon.

[1 : 14] Named Peter is a Greek word meaning rock or actually little stone. Cephas was the same word for Peter but in Aramaic.

And that's the three languages of the Bible. Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek and a little Aramaic thrown in. But we don't have any doubt as to the author of this book being Peter, the apostle.

I've been using the Legacy Standard Bible. In the New Testament, I like it they use doulos. Doulos means slave. And that's the more literal reading of that.

In the Old Testament, they also use Yahweh or Yahweh as it's pronounced. When we read about a slave of Jesus Christ, divorce your mind from what went on here in the mid-1800s in America.

Not related to that at all. Well, we see Peter identifying himself as a slave but also as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

[2 : 25] That means that he was sent forth with a divine commission by Christ himself. Those designated as apostles were those who had seen the resurrected Lord and were commissioned with divine authority to proclaim his truth.

And this letter was sent to the same followers of Christ that had received his first letter. These were God's people. They were living in the Gentile regions of Pontus and Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

Scattered among these Gentiles were Christians that had come out of Judaism. The letter itself, we think, was written around 67 or 68 A.D.

There is something contained in this first verse that has a really important theological application. It speaks of those who have received a salvation as a gift.

In the language of that day, it means to gain something by divine will. The salvation based upon faith was not obtained by human effort, not even obtained by human will.

[4 : 00] It was a gift of God's grace, which is consistent with the truth of Ephesians 2, 8 and 9. For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves.

It is a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. I'm on the Voice of the Martyrs board. This is my 26th year and we have a board meeting and conference in Branson.

And I'm bringing the devotion on Friday and I'm going to be quoting that and other scriptures. They gave me 15 minutes. My 15 minutes of fame. When Peter wrote his first letter, he spoke of salvation as a divine choice.

And he talked about election. Sometimes people get nervous about election. Well, it's in the New Testament like 37 times, so we need to deal with it. And all of this is based upon God's sovereignty. But in the second letter, Peter writes about God's sovereignty and man's responsibility to form the essential elements of salvation. Now, let me give you an absolute necessity to saving faith.

[5 : 15] When men and women hear the gospel or read the gospel, the Holy Spirit can awaken that person's dead soul to embrace the saving faith being offered unto salvation.

And only then will a dead sinner embrace redemption. That's the way it works. Every person that is the elect of God, whose names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life, you can read about that in the Book of Revelation, will receive as a gift of faith the salvation being offered.

But there's a great paradox here. We must exercise belief in the great truths of God's gift. If we do not, we bear the responsibility for rejecting the gospel.

And it brings us really to an interesting question. Will all the elect be saved? Well, my response to that is an enthusiastic yes.

Their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life before the universe was created. And they will be saved. Brings up another question. Will any of the non-elect be saved?

[6 : 32] Well, you know what? I don't think so personally, but I'm going to leave that up to God. He's a lot smarter than I am. Our charge, though, is to witness to every creature.

Charles Spurgeon said if God had painted a stripe, he used yellow, but I don't think that was a sign of cowardice in those days. I'll use red.

If he painted a red stripe down the back of every person that was going to be saved, Spurgeon said my ministry would be walking around London lifting shirts.

But he said he didn't do that. So Spurgeon said I preach to every creature that I come across, and when one of them gets saved, I can say, well, there's one of the elect because the Spirit of God led them to salvation.

But we have a charge to witness to every creature. In my Sunday school class Sunday, a question came up, and a person in there said, should I worry if I'm witnessing to someone that's not chosen?

[7 : 37] I said, we don't know who they are. Witness to everybody. Witness to everybody. Let God sort them out. But we don't know who they are. I gave them the true story 200 years ago in Scotland, my wife's ancestral home.

The professor at a seminary, a young man there in the class said, I would never witness to anybody ever in my life. The professor said, why?

He said, what if I end up witnessing to a non-elect person? And that wise professor said, son, if you lead a non-elect person to Christ, God will forgive you.

I love that answer. And you know, I got asked that same question on an airplane one time. A friend of mine was on there from Phillips, and we were talking, and I was just coming back from China, had the privilege to have led a young Chinese 20-year-old to the Lord.

It wasn't anything I did. And he said, man, why would you do that? How did you know he was one of the elect? I said, it doesn't bother me.

[8 : 43] It's up to God. Strange response. Well, I want to talk, first of all, this evening, about the source of salvation.

In 2 Peter 1, verse 1, Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received the same kind of faith as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So there we have it laid out. And that's not the only passage in the New Testament which talks about the source of salvation.

This is a rather lengthy passage in the book of Acts, chapter 11, starting in verse 4. But Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, an object coming down with a great sheet lowered by the four corners from heaven.

It came right down to me, and when looking closely at it, I was observing it, and saw four-footed animals of the earth and wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the sky.

[10 : 16] And I also heard a voice saying to me, Rise up, Peter, slaughter and eat. But I said, By no means, Lord, for nothing defiled or unclean has ever entered my mouth.

But a voice from heaven answered a second time, What God has cleansed no longer considered defiled. And this happened three times, and everything was drawn back into heaven.

And behold, immediately three men appeared at the house in which we were, having been sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit told me to go with them without taking issue at all.

The six brothers also went with me. That were six guys in his house. And we entered the man's house, and he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house saying, Send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is also called Peter.

And he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household. And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it did upon us at the beginning.

[11 : 36] And I remembered the words of the Lord, how he used to say about John, John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, if God gave to them the same gift as he gave to us also, after believing in the Lord Jesus, who was I that I could prevent God's way?

Here we had Gentiles wanting to be baptized. Jews wouldn't even go into their house. But Peter did boldly. There's no doubt that the source of all salvation is the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Here is one of the many proofs of this truth found in God's Word. This is the story of Peter being summoned to the home of a Gentile.

And that was unthinkable within the ranks of Orthodox Judaism. And later, you'll remember in Acts, Peter appeared before the Jerusalem Council.

[12 : 45] They were considering all these things as the new church was getting its jump start. And he told them how God plays no favorites when it comes to salvation.

The privilege of joining with God through the Lord Jesus is open to both Jews and Gentiles. And once more, listen to Peter here.

And this is how the Jerusalem Council responded. Acts 15, starting in verse 5, But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up saying, It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

Well, if you're depending on keeping the law of Moses, we're in deep trouble. Can't keep it for one second. But anyway, I'll get back to my text.

Both the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe.

[14 : 04] And God, who knows the heart, testified to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us.

He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. And listen to these words. This is just amazing.

Now, therefore, why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in the same way as they are also. And we can see from these passages God does not favor people with election based on ethnicity.

God grants to all His redeemed the same saving faith. That saving faith is made available to all who will believe based upon the righteousness of Christ and His finished work.

[15 : 17] How do Gentiles or Jews receive eternal life? Well, one of my favorite passages, and if you don't have it memorized, memorize it.

2 Corinthians 5.21 That's actually the last verse in the fifth chapter of 2 Corinthians. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. And remember, that doesn't say Jesus ever sinned. He never did. The Father made Him to be sin on our behalf.

And that speaks of the imputed righteousness of Christ being deposited in every true believer. And the sins of every true believer deposited into Jesus.

double imputation. Double imputation. Another great passage is Romans 4. Verse 4 to 8. Now to the one who works, his wage is not counted according to grace, but according to what's due.

[16 : 34] If he works for it, it's due to him. But the one who does not work, but believes upon Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.

Just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God counts righteousness apart from works. Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven and whose sins have been covered.

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account. Imputed righteousness is a powerful doctrine taught in the Word of God.

And in fact, as I said, here we see double imputation. Though Christ never committed any sin, not a single one, God placed all of the sins of everyone who would ever believe on Him.

And He treated, the Father treated the Son as if He'd committed all the sins of all who would ever believe. And God then treats us as we have all the righteousness of Christ.

[17 : 50] I heard Paul Worsher just a couple of weeks ago. Paul Worsher's great minister. He started HeartCry Missions. Spent 20 years in South America.

He'd gone to a large Christian school in Virginia where he lives. This was K-12. Massive school. And he got on the stage behind the curtain with the pastor and he peeked out. And this was a huge auditorium. And the seats were little desks for the kids. And he looked through the curtain and they seated them by kindergarten in the front back all the way to 12th grade. And Paul Worsher really got nervous, which is unlike him. And he got the pastor. He said, I was going to speak on propitiation. You've got some young kids out there. And he said, that won't be a problem here. Not a problem. So he went out on stage and he said, do you all remember when Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane?

[19 : 03] And he prayed to the Father and he said, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done. And then he asked a great question.

It's a devotion I'm going to do one day at VOM. But he said, does anybody in there, there were 800 kids, does anybody here know what was in the cup? And a bunch of hands went up and one of them was a little nine-year-old girl just a few rows up and she raised her little hand. He said, yeah, young lady. And she stood up, very respectful, put her hand on her desk and she said, sir, in that cup was the wrath of Almighty God and it was put there to cover every single sin every believer would ever commit and the Lord Jesus on the cross drank it all down to the dregs at the bottom.

He drank it all. Paul Worsher just teared up. That was such a beautiful answer from a nine-year-old. A nine-year-old girl. Well, let's talk about the substance of salvation.

2 Peter 1, verse 2. Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the full knowledge of God in Jesus our Lord.

[20 : 35] That should be a very familiar salutation. It's in many of the 27 books of the New Testament.

Readers of these books should be very familiar with terms such as grace and peace and mercy. The Apostle Paul taught the Roman believers that they had been justified by faith and because of that we have peace.

There's another word. Peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, that makes sense. When you have grace it brings peace.

And Peter goes further and expresses the desire that such be multiplied. the end result is that grace and peace ushers in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

So what does salvation imply? A strong knowledge of the person and work of Jesus Christ. I had a book in my library once by Dr.

[21 : 48] J. Dwight Pentecost from Dallas Theological. He's now passed on called The Words and Works of Jesus Christ. We're to know Jesus.

We need to make sure we go far enough with that to know Him. It is more than knowing some basic facts about Jesus. We need to know Him through the truth imparted by His Word.

Remember, the Christian life is one of spiritual growth. and we'll learn a little bit about that later as Peter closes this letter to us. We first get to know the Lord in the initial stages of salvation.

And we are described as mere babes. We started out as babies. That's just the starting point. The rest of our life is dedicated to pursuing greater knowledge concerning the glory which increases our knowledge of His grace.

This is what the Apostle Paul said about this pursuit in the book of Philippians chapter 3 verse 18 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings being conformed to His death.

[23 : 20] And Paul also spoke about Christ's likeness. 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 18 But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord and we're being transformed into the same image from glory to glory just as from the Lord the Spirit.

We also want to talk this evening to the sufficiency of Scripture or of salvation. 2 Peter 1 verses 3 to 4 seeing that His divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the full knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

This is an amazing portion of Scripture speaking on the topic of sufficiency and Paul also spoke of sufficiency in his writing consider this in 2nd Corinthians 9 8 and God is able to make every grace abound to you so that in everything at every time having every sufficiency you may have an abundance for every good deed.

Even use the word sufficiency there. and the Greek word for that I won't even try to pronounce it but the meaning of that it's spot on.

[25 : 24] It's just spot on. It refers to self sufficiency. It means that we have everything that we need the demands of life can be met with all that the Holy Spirit has deposited within us.

What did he give us? Well things like grace mercy peace love joy faithfulness and a helpful dose of self control almost sounds like a fruit of the Spirit.

God has given us all that we need for justification and sanctification and once you are justified through redemption the process begins of your sanctification being recreated in the image of Christ. I want to look at four essential components of the sufficiency of salvation and the first of these is divine power.

It says in 2 Peter 1 3 the very first part of that verse seeing that his divine power has been granted to us. We do not have any power to achieve spiritual sufficiency that eludes us.

[26 : 51] That has to come from the Lord Jesus Christ from the very spirit of Christ and Paul wrote about this in Ephesians Ephesians 3 20.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or understand according to the power that works within us God's supply of spiritual power never fails.

and may I say it's always on time. Never late never early always on time. And if I knew anything about the Greek language I would be able to explain that this phrase we read earlier which says that God has granted his power if I knew anything about Greek which I don't that is a perfect passive participle meaning it occurred in the past but it has continuing results in the present and on into the future.

It's still in operation. Well we also see in all this divine provision 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 3 the second portion of that verse we have everything pertaining to life and godliness.

That's a bold statement by the Holy Spirit. Everything that we need for life and to live a godly life godliness. And here the Holy Spirit expresses to us the extent of a believer's self-sufficiency.

[28 : 47] God has all power. We know that. He has the power to save us. He has the power to sustain our salvation.

He also has the power to steer us to righteous conduct. Now in my case he didn't have a whole lot to work with but he never gave up on me.

Never gave up. I'm one of these late saved guys about 30 years old and I'm now 77. And then we have divine procurement also in chapter 1 verse 3 through the full knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence.

how can we mere humans experience the triune God to the fullest when we do so through the true knowledge of Christ.

Okay. But how are we drawn to Christ? That is the work of the Spirit of God. He came to share Christ.

[30 : 10] To boldly witness for Christ. I read this many years ago. There were a lot of churches and I saw some on television in those days. Kind of the forerunners of some of the more extreme churches today.

My wife and I watched a whole hour on a late Sunday night, 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock. And for an hour they never mentioned Jesus Christ. Never mentioned it.

How is that possible? But it happens. And then he gives us divine promises. 2 Peter 1 4. Divine promises.

For by these he has granted to us his precious and magnificent promises so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature.

Now think about that. Partakers of the divine nature. Boy that sets the church apart from Old Testament Israel.

[31 : 18] They'd consider that blasphemy. We are partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

lust. It's interesting to use that word lust. That's a big problem. That's a big problem. We'll talk more about that on future lesson.

But that word partakers is very interesting. It's the same word as fellowship. You remember in 1 John the opening words are talking about fellowship. A sharer! or a partner, a partnership if you will. And such we are with the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's close with a word of prayer. And Father we thank you for the grace that has brought us here and we ask for the grace to see us home. And may all that we do and say bring honor and glory to the name of Christ Jesus our Lord and our Savior.
[32 : 29] And we pray in his name. Amen. Amen.