



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Peter 1:1-4

2 Peter

"An All Sufficient Salvation"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're going to start this evening a series on 2 Peter. Well, let's begin with a word of prayer, and then we'll look at our text, which is going to be 2 Peter 1:1-4.

[Prayer] Father we thank you for this time together this evening, and we pray you bless it. It's a great privilege for us to gather together with the saints at any time and to have fellowship. And true fellowship is always in connection with you. It's as we consider who you are. It's as we open your Word and we study it.

That's genuine fellowship. And I pray that you would bless us as we do that this evening. We pray that the Spirit of God's ministry would go unhindered, that He would illuminate our minds, He would give us clarity of thought, we would understand the things that we will look at in this Book of your apostle, and we pray that you would guide us, and apply it to us, and build us up in the faith.

So may our time together be profitable. May it be interesting and helpful. I pray that you would teach us. We thank you for the time together, and we pray that you bless other classes that are meeting this evening, and we pray that you bless us as well as we conclude the hour by again turning to the Throne of Grace. Bless our time together now, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Second Peter is the last extent or existing book that the apostle wrote. He wrote it to Christians. That's clear from the first verse, but where those Christians were located is not stated. He does call this

his Second Letter in 2 Peter 3:1. If the first letter is 1 Peter, then the recipients, of course, are the same.

And that means, these would be written to Christians who are, as Peter put it in his first Epistle, "scattered throughout scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," in other words, throughout Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey. He wrote this letter with a sense of urgency. He was facing death for the faith, and we know that because in 2 Peter 1:14, he says, "knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent."

So, he's facing death and, according to tradition, he died a martyr's death. Tradition has it that he died in Rome. And if you've been to Rome, you may have visited the Mamertine Prison there, near the Forum. Tradition has it that's where Peter was kept before his execution. It's not at all clear that he was in Rome or that any of that tradition is true. But we know from the end of the Gospel of John that Peter would die a martyr's death. And so he's facing that, and that would suggest, very clearly, that he wrote this letter with a sense of urgency.

And he wrote it to instruct believers in churches that were threatened within from influences from false teachers. False teachers are described in 2 Peter 2:1. We read of false prophets in the history of Israel that arose among the people. And then he says, "Also false teachers will be among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves."

They raised doubts, later on we read, in 2 Peter 3 about the Second Coming. They raised the question, "where is the promise of His coming?" They said, "You can look around and see. Everything continues today just as it has in the past as it has from the beginning. There is no indication that He's coming." And what they were doing was they were casting doubt upon those who preached the Second Coming, and in doing that, casting doubt on the Gospel that they

preached, casting doubt on the things they preached about the First Coming.

They taught a false christ, and they tried to undermine the teaching of the apostles. So they came with a new kind of knowledge, with a different Gospel, preaching a different christ. They were false in their teaching, and they were predatory in their actions. Peter describes them as lustful men in 2 Peter 2:2. They draw people into their sensual path. They are greedy. They are interested in other people's money. They exploit people. They seduce women.

2 Peter 2:14, "Having eyes full of adultery, and that never cease from sin; enticing unstable souls. Having a heart trained in greed, accursed children." Well that's the people that Peter is writing this letter against and to protect the church from this threat of false teachers, this threat from sexual predators. It's a threat, assuming these are the same as those that he wrote the first letter to, are scattered throughout Asia Minor, people that faced this threat. But it's a threat that we face as well. The church is always going to face this kind of threat and so, as you begin the Book, we can see that; although, it's two millennia old, it is very relevant for us today.

Everything Peter has to say here applies to us. The letter opens in the style of ancient letter writing. We sign our names at the end of the letter. They began the letter with their names. And so this letter begins with his name, Simon Peter. And then he identifies himself as "a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ." He's first of all a bondservant, and then he is an apostle. A bondservant is literally a slave. It's the Greek word, "doulos," which always means "slave."

Ancient Rome was full of slaves. They were the largest class of men at the bottom of Roman society. If you were here Sunday night, you heard, Ken Steinbach speak on Mark 10:45. And he spoke about slavery. He spoke about the word, "redemption" and how that's a word that applies to slaves, and they were bought out of the slave market. Money was paid. They became the possession of another. And he spoke briefly but clearly on the fact that slavery was very, very common in the ancient world.

And so they would have known, as he pointed out, what that word meant, what it referred to, all of the implications of it, and so too here when Peter uses this word "doulos," "bondservant," or "slave," everyone who was reading the letter would have known what he was referring and the significance of the description that he gives to

himself as being a slave. William Barkley, in his *Commentary*, explains what it meant to be a slave in the ancient world. The slave had no rights. He had no days off. He had no time to himself. He couldn't disown his master. The master had the power of life and death over his slave.

He owned the slave in the same way that he possessed a tool, and that's really what a slave was and what a slave was considered to be – just a human tool. A slave was at the unqualified disposal of its master, and all of that has bearing on the Christian's relationship to God. We're all slaves to Him. We have no rights, no independent rights from Our Lord. We have no time off from the faith. You can't say, "Well I'm a Christian on Sundays, not during the rest of the week, or I'm a Christian on Sunday and Wednesday."

It's all day, every day of the week, 24/7. That's our relationship to The Lord and our slavery to Him. No time off from that. Our lives are in His hands completely. He has the power of life and death over us, and we are to do his will alone. There is a good parallel here between being a slave in the Roman Empire and being a slave to Christ. Fortunately, our Master is good. He's the best, and everything we ought to do for Him is right. He never requires anything improper of us.

In fact, Jesus tells us that the yoke He calls to wear is light and easy. Everything we do is for Him is for our good. And, in fact, real freedom is only found in our relationship to Him. So Christians are a true oxymoron. We are free slaves. That's what all Christians are and that, Peter says, is what he was. First and foremost, he is a slave. He's a slave to Christ. He is a slave or a servant to everyone. So he puts that first. He's there to serve these people, not to lord it over them, but he is one with authority, as he goes on to state that he's an apostle.

He states that to state his authority in writing this letter. The things that he says have weight. He is the representative of Christ. He has the authority of Christ, who chose him, and commissioned him, and sent him out into the world. He represents the Lord God. Still, even though he is an apostle, the people to whom Peter writes are his equals. That's what he goes on to say. He says that they have the same kind of faith as he has, he and the rest of us, meaning, the same kind of faith is ours, he says. Well, who are the "ours?"

The "ours" are the apostles – he and the other apostles. They are of the same kind of faith as they do. That's quite a statement. It speaks of the equality that we

have, that we are of the same kind of person as he is before God. The lowliest believer is equal in the eyes of God to the greatest of the apostles. And he's speaking here, when he speaks of faith, of the act of faith, of believing, rather than the object or the doctrine of faith.

If it were the object of faith, if it were the body of doctrine, then we would expect the definite article before the word, faith. You have that for example, in the Book of Jude 1:3, you have an example of the doctrine referred to as "the faith" because there he says that he is writing that letter so that they would content earnestly for the faith. And I think that's important here because Jude is almost a parallel to 2 Peter.

They're very similar. They've got the same subjects. One, it seems, was dependent upon the other in writing his letter. But there is very clearly the doctrine of the Christian faith. Here it doesn't have the article. And what Peter is saying is, as I pointed out, there's no distinction between believers. We all have the same kind of faith. We are all sinners who owe everything we have to the Grace of God. Now that's made clear throughout this introduction, in his first part of the letter. It's made clear by the fact that our faith is a gift, first of all.

He says that they received it. That word "receive" is a word that's used of obtaining something by lot. Casting lots to determine what someone has. It's used, for example in Luke 1:9 of the priests being chosen to serve in the temple by lot. The priests didn't earn that privilege. The priests didn't choose it. They didn't say, "Well, it's my turn next month. I'll do it next week" or somebody like that. It was chosen for them, and it was chosen for them by the casting of lots. That's the idea here. No one has faith by his or her own efforts. You didn't choose to have faith. I don't mean to say you didn't choose Christ, but the reason you did so wasn't in and of yourself. We don't make those choices. We do not earn the things that we have from God.

We didn't earn our faith. It was allotted to us by God. It is the free gift of God's Sovereign Grace. Of course, I say, you did choose and you did make a decision, and that's true. We are all responsible to believe. Everyone is responsible to believe. It's the right thing to do for the preacher to bow in submission to the Creator. The only way we can do that, the only way we can respond is by the Grace of God.

And by the Grace of God, we do respond. I think that some people err when they misconstrue this idea of faith being a gift. When we say that, we don't mean that

we're robots, or that we just are made to believe, or we don't really exercise our own faith, it's just that faith sort of comes into us some way, and there it is. No. It's an act of the will. It's an act of the intellect.

A person believes knowingly, willingly, trusting in Christ, but the question is, why does that happen? What is the initial cause of that? And the reason is found in Our Lord. Faith is ultimately the Work of God. He enlightens our minds. He enlightens our souls. He gives the dead life to respond. That's certainly the implication here when he says that you have received the faith that's the same as ours.

But you find that all through the scriptures. You find that in Ephesians 2:8,9 very clearly, but if you were to go there to look, you would really want to begin with verse one and go all the way through verse 10, because there it makes it very clear that you were dead, but God made you alive, for by grace you have been saved, he says. And he repeats that in verses 8 and 9.

In Philippians 1:29, Paul says it was granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. It was granted to believe in him. There's so many other texts. You might note, Acts 11:21 and Acts 16:14. Acts 16:14 is where Paul and Silas come to Philippi and they're down by the river and they're preaching the Gospel to this small group of women. They didn't have enough in the City of Philippi, enough Jews to form a quorum and establish a synagogue, so there were just a few women that were there. And they met by the riverside. Paul found them, and they began preaching, and one of those women was Lydia. And Luke writes in that verse that, "as Paul was preaching or teaching, God opened her heart to respond to the things that he said."

That's how it happens. That's another way of saying, "Faith is a gift." And saying, "faith is a gift" is another way of saying, "You received it." It's all Grace, and Christ is the source of that Grace. Peter writes that, "It is by the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ." Now that statement is somewhat disputed, I would say by, pretty much of an evenly divided group of commentators, on how we are to interpret that statement, "by the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ," because it can be translated, "in the righteousness" so that if we put the whole sentence together, "who have received a faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

In which case, that makes the righteousness of Christ the object of faith, meaning the gospel. You were given a faith to believe in the gospel. And, if that's the case, then righteousness would be used here, in the same sense that Paul uses it, in the Book of Romans. That's one of the key words of the Book of Romans 1:17. He speaks of "the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel. The gospel is the power of God onto salvation."

The righteousness that Paul speaks of there, the righteousness that he speaks of throughout the Book of Romans is what he calls in Romans 3:21, "the righteousness of God which is apart from the Law." That it is the gift of righteousness. It's the righteousness that one receives through faith in Christ. It's the righteousness of Christ that one has in justification, imputed righteousness. That, of course, is true. That's what the gospel gives us. When we believe in Christ, his righteousness is imputed to us.

Faith is a gift. The righteousness of the justification that we have by faith is a gift, but having said that, it's not at all clear that Peter uses righteousness in the same way that Paul did. So it may be better as translated in the *New American Standard Bible* and the *New International Version* as "by or through the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ." And in that case, what Peter is saying is that "this privilege of all believers having this equal faith, from the smallest saint to the greatest apostle, this gift of faith, is by or through the righteousness of our God. It's through the righteousness of Christ."

Righteousness used there, in the sense of justice or fairness. The fairness of Christ, the equanimity of Christ. "It is by His Grace that we share equally in our position as children of God." And I think that's probably the sense in which Peter wrote that statement. Well it's important I think to notice here and one of the main things we want to notice, is the description that he gives of Christ. "He is our God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

If you have a King James Version, I think that its translation here is weak, and possibly confusing, because it translates it, "Through the righteousness of God and our Savior, Jesus Christ." That suggests that there are two persons here. That's not necessarily the suggestion, but it does suggest that this is the Father and the Son, "the righteousness of God," meaning the Father, "and our Savior, Jesus Christ."

But the Greek text doesn't really support that translation. The pronoun our is connected very clearly to God, so it reads naturally, "our God and Savior, Jesus Christ." And if you're to look carefully at the grammar, there is one definite article in the construction, one "the" at the beginning of the phrase, and that word "the" governs the whole construction, the whole phrase.

There's a rule in Greek grammar that describes, and the rule makes the point that when there's one article connecting two nouns that are separated by the word "and," that demands that those two nouns or those two names refer to one in the same person. So the word "the" kind of connects the whole phrase into one person. So this isn't two individuals. This is our God and Savior. The God and Savior. Literally, it would be something like, "the our God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

You might look over at Titus 2:13 because we have the same grammatical construction that makes the same point. And there, Paul writing to Titus, writes about the Blessed Hope. He says in Titus 2:13, "...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." You can see the importance of understanding the description that he is giving of Christ there because what he is saying is, "Jesus Christ is God." That doesn't mean He's the Father. He's the Son, but they are two distinct persons of the one Godhead.

They share equally the Divine Essence. They are co-eternal, co-equal, co-powerful, but sharing the same Essence. They are God. Later on, in verse 3, he speaks of "His Divine Power" and you might ask, well who is the "His?" Who does that pronoun refer to? Well, the nearest person to that statement is in verse 2, Jesus Our Lord. So there he speaks of Christ having Divine Power.

What this sets forth is, very clearly, the Deity of Christ. And all of this in the beginning of his letter in the greeting. So, this is no trite formula. Some of the ancient letters would have formulas with which they began the letter. We have that too. We write, "Dear So and So." It's not that we put a lot of meaning in that word "dear." It's not this great expression of affection. It's just kind of the way we do it.

And that was true in the ancient world as well. But this isn't any trite formula. This is all about grace, and this is a very theological first verse that Peter wrote to these Christians, we assume, scattered throughout Asia Minor. Well that exposition of grace continues in verse 2 where Peter greets the people with a blessing. "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

Grace and peace are the realm in which believers live. We are not only brought to Him by the Grace of God, we continue in our relationship to Him by grace.

And both grace and peace are connected to the knowledge of God. The two cannot be separated. And this is obviously an attack on these heretics, on these false teachers that had come in who had been troubling these Christians. They claimed to have special knowledge. Some had tried to explain the heresy as being a kind of proto-gnosticism. And I won't get into what gnosticism involves. It's very strange, but it was really full blown in the second century.

But this may have had connections with that. The word, "gnostic" is from the word, "gnosis," which means "knowledge." And they claimed to have special knowledge, secret knowledge. And in order to have that secret knowledge to obtain salvation, you had to be with them. You had to be initiated into their little circle.

So what Peter seems to be doing, assuming that, that is the case, but whether that is the nature of the heresy or not, certainly, he is addressing them here with this reference to the knowledge of God. He's saying that while they claim to have special knowledge. They claim to have the right knowledge that will give a blessing to everyone who obtains it, Peter is saying that blessing is only in the knowledge of God that he possesses and what he preaches, and it's only in that knowledge that we will have peace.

He's an apostle. He has authority. He speaks with authority. He has that knowledge. It's what he taught them in the past. It's not anything new. It's not anything secret. It's proclaimed all through the Word of God, and he taught it to them. Assuming these are mainly gentile Christians, they wouldn't have been all that familiar with the Old Testament, but he unveiled all of that and taught that to them.

He says, in verse 12 that he "will always be ready to remind" them "of these things." So, he's taught them these things. He'll go back and teach them these things again, this knowledge of God, and he's always ready to do that, always ready to unfold the knowledge of God to them, and that's what we need continually. We always need to be reminded of the things of God.

We always need to go back to the truth of God's Word, the Doctrines of the Faith. We need to be grounded in the basics of the faith, and not just stay there, but advance on into the greater things of God. We won't do that unless we're well grounded in the basic truths. And so he says, later on in verse 12 that, "I'm always

ready to remind you of these things, these things that I taught you from the beginning" and that he's going to go over again.

And we need that. We need that because that is where we gain real peace, not in these new ideas that may come out but in the ideas, the tried and true Doctrines of the Word of God, and Peter wants this peace and grace that he speaks of, at the beginning of the verse. He wants that multiplied to them. Our experience of grace and our enjoyment of peace increases as we know God increasingly. Peter wants us to have that ever deepening relationship with Christ. He wants us to have an increasing experience of the Grace of God and the Peace of God. In fact, he closes that letter with that exhortation, so we can be assured that that's the thrust of this Book.

He says in 2 Peter 3:18, "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Advance in the knowledge of Him, and as you do that, you'll advance in your experience of grace and peace, and that will be your life. Now, verse 3 can be interpreted as being a new paragraph and it's explaining the content of this knowledge of God that he's just spoken of.

That's how the New International Version translates it. I don't know if any of you have that or what most of you are reading. But if that's what you have, the New International Version, that's the way it sets this out. This is a new paragraph. And that's certainly a possible way of taking it. But I think that there's a closer link here between verses 2 and 3, so that verse 3 explains how it is that we have received peace. That's the way the New American Standard Bible translates it.

"We have grace and peace, seeing that or because His Divine Power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us." Knowledge gives grace and peace because it's the means through which we obtain eternal life and true godliness, real piety. The evidence that a person has true knowledge is not seen in the information that he can write. And I'm sure these false teachers were very intelligent men.

Very effective false teachers are slick. They speak well. They know things. They're impressive. I'm sure it was no different in that day. They could recite facts, and figures, and things – and even within orthodoxy. It's very important to know the truth and be able to speak it, to be able to recount it, and to explain it, but that's not all

that's necessary. We see the reality that a person genuinely possesses the knowledge of God by their behavior as well.

If they are not godly, if they show no piety, then there's no reason to think that they possess it, that they possess the knowledge of God. True knowledge of God is transforming. The Gospel is transforming. It is knowledge of the person and the work of Christ. That's the Gospel. And those who receive it and those who believe it, have life and godliness. If they have life, they'll have the evidence of that life. You cannot separate knowledge and godliness. So if we have life, if we're born again, if we're children of God, who really believe in the knowledge of God, if we've really embraced the Gospel, then there will be evidence of it.

There will be fruit in a person's life. It doesn't mean there'll be lots of fruit and there'll be lots of fruit all of the time, but there will be fruit, and that should motivate us to exhibit it, to bear fruit, to go before the Lord, to pray about these things, to ask him to produce that in us. Let me develop that for just a moment, because I don't want you to misunderstand what I'm saying. It doesn't mean that we won't stumble along the way, certainly we will.

Godliness doesn't mean that our lives are flawless. We all fail. Peter, who wrote this, failed miserably, grossly. He denied Christ three times. He failed in Antioch when Paul was up there. He failed all the time. We all do.

But goodness, godliness, and faithfulness will be clearly manifested as well. It will be a characteristic. And the encouraging thing here is that He, that is, Christ, has granted to us everything pertaining to it. We lack nothing. We have a sufficient salvation.

Christians very often times live as though they've been dealt only half a hand. They don't have everything that they need. No, we have everything that we need. From the moment of the new birth, we have everything that we need. We don't need to be looking for the higher life. We don't need to be seeking a second blessing.

We have all of the Holy Spirit at the moment of faith. At the moment of faith, as Paul teaches in Ephesians 1:13, "we were sealed with the Holy Spirit." We possess the Holy Spirit. And then later on in Ephesians 4:30, he says, "you were sealed" with the Holy Spirit "unto the day of redemption." In other words, He's going to keep you, all through this life, until the day of redemption.

But that also means you have Him all through this life. Don't lose him. He's there permanently. We've been baptized into Christ – every believer has. We're like "branches in a vine." You know, that's how Christ describes our relationship to Him in John 15, and so, as a result of that, we bear fruit because we're continually, constantly, every moment of our existence, drawing life from Him. Whether we sense it or not, that's the case, we're in Him. He supplies us with that every moment. We possess the mind of Christ. Paul tells us that in 1 Corinthians 2:16. If we're a believer in Jesus Christ, "we have the mind of Christ."

That's an amazing position and blessing to have. So what do you think you lack in this life? Do you have problems in this life? You don't think you have the abilities to deal with that? Well, what we're told here is that you do. Trials can be difficult, I know. In fact, the Scriptures make that a very plain.

You read the text like Psalm 42:7, in fact, David speaks of his trials all through this Psalm. But there's a particularly graphic description of his trials. He says that, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." He's being tossed about, as it were, in the surf of the sea. He's just being cast about. He's helpless. And that's sometimes how we feel.

Having said that though, we're fully equipped for the trials of life. We have the Spirit and the Word. We have God as our Heavenly Father, who is our Provider and our Protector. We have the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Great High Priest and our Good Shepherd.

We lack nothing, and, therefore, we can't excuse our failures, and we have failures continually. But, we can't excuse them, or our weaknesses or anything like that as due to some deficiency of God's provision. A number of passages we could look at, 1 Corinthians 10:13 is one of those that tells us that God never leaves us unprotected or in a position where we can't avoid the temptations of life.

1 Corinthians 10:13 : "There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape." He's blessed us in every way. We have all of the resources we need for a godly life, in a world of temptation and trial. We have no excuses.

We have an all sufficient salvation. We're not lacking. The blessings of this are developed further in verse 4. There Peter speaks of the promises that are given, a

description of the promises, or he refers to them, the gift of those promises. He says, "For by these He has granted to us," And there you have it again. You have this word granted, or given, or gifted. By His Grace He has given us these things, and what he's given us is "His precious and magnificent promises." It's a beautiful description of the promises that He has given to us. But we have those promise, he says "these."

Now we might ask, what are these by which He has granted us these glorious promises. Well I think if we look in the previous verse, it's very clear what preceded that statement, what Peter describes at the end of verse 3, Christ's "own glory and excellence." Now what is His "glory and excellence?"

So there are different views on that. I think that what he's saying here is there Cross. That is the place where God's glory, His love, and His grace, as well as His justice – the attributes of God. They were most fully and perfectly manifested at the Cross. That's where he saved us. That's where His power of love, and salvation, and mercy, and grace were most clearly demonstrated.

And throughout the Gospel of John, the Cross is described as glory, and Christ speaks of it as being glorified. The last way one would describe the Cross, because Paul in Philippians 2 talks about the "shame of the Cross" and yet it's also the glory of the Cross. John 12:33, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" meaning crucified. By means of the Cross he called us and He drew us to Himself. John 12:32, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

The Cross has been described as God's magnet. I think it was Spurgeon who said, "It draws all men of the true metal to it." Its effective. The Cross saves. And by means of the Cross, He not only saves us, but by means of it, He obtained every blessing that we possess, and we possess many blessings. Again, it's all a gift of the Grace of God.

Peter calls the promises, "precious and magnificent." That certainly means they're valuable beyond our ability to estimate. It means much more than that, but certainly, that's true of these promises that we have. So, if we want to know what they are, what are all these great promises, these precious and magnificent promises, I think very simply, we could say they're all the promises of redemption, and some of them are mentioned here.

Some of them are mentioned in this chapter and then throughout the Book. Some of them are mentioned in this chapter and then throughout the book. They

would include the promises of forgiveness, as verse 9 suggests, the coming of Christ, the coming of the Kingdom which is our inheritance. He speaks of that in verse 11, and then later he speaks of it in chapter 3, versus 9 and 10.

It's the Word of God which he speaks of at the end of the chapter in versus 19 through 21. It's much more than that, but it's certainly that and other things. But one that's given here, that really catches our eye in verse 4, is that we've become "partakers of the divine nature." Now that's an astonishing statement – "partakers of the divine nature." What does that mean?

I guess we should begin by saying what it doesn't mean. It certainly doesn't mean that we become gods. Now that's what some of the ancient heathen philosophers taught, that it's through their philosophy that we become gods, perhaps what these false teachers were speaking of as well. But we don't have to look for that in ancient times. We can see it in modern times, because that's what the Mormons teach today.

The Mormons, or the LDS, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has what they call, apostles, who speak with authority, just as Peter spoke with authority. And one of them was a man named, James E. Talmadge. He died in 1933, but he was an influential man among them and he wrote books. And one of the books that he wrote was, the "Articles of Faith" and in it, he made the statement, "we believe in a god who is progressive."

And what he meant by that is, we believe in a god who grows, and who develops in his knowledge. And the reason they believe in a god who grows and develops that was because, he later wrote, as man is, god once was. As god is, man may be. In other words, the god of the Mormons, was once a man and became a god and had his own universe. And so they give the promise that you can someday, perhaps, become a god.

Now they may call themselves, "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," but they're not a church. They're not of Christ. That's false what they said. It's a pagan idea. It's a non-Christian doctrine of a false religion. It's very similar, no doubt, to what Peter was dealing with in this letter, the kinds of teachers that he was contending with. He doesn't mean that we become gods when he says that we "partake of the divine nature."

The divine nature that we share in is God's communicable attributes. God has communicable and incommunicable attributes. His incommunicable attributes are those which He doesn't share with the creature. He doesn't share those with us – attributes of His Aseity. What Aseity means is His self existence. It's two Latin words, A and sei, from self. From Himself. He comes from Himself. He's self sufficient. Now that is not something that we can claim.

We are dependent. We are creatures. We are dependent for our existence, every moment, from God. God doesn't depend on anything. He's self sufficient, self existent. Other incommunicable attributes are His immutability, His infinity, His invincibility. His communicable attributes are those that He shares with us, and we share those attributes with God because we're created in His image, and so they are attributes like knowledge, wisdom, power, goodness, holiness, love, intellectual, and moral attributes.

These are the properties that we share in. We don't share in His Essence, the Divine Essence. We do share in His Character, by His Grace. That is the end for which these promises were given, so that we might become like Christ, so that we might increase in this Divine Nature in these communicable attributes, and become more and more like Him, and exhibit His character increasingly, which we do through the study of His Words.

Peter ends the introduction here, the greeting, by saying, "having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." Now grammatically, that's in the eros tense. You often times hear teachers or preachers talk about the eros tense. It's just a simple past tense in Greek, but it does have a particular force. And the force of the eros tense is a point in time, meaning, it happened at a point in time, at a definite point in time, when we escaped the world.

And that definite moment that it happened was that regeneration of faith. When we were born again, we were born out of the world and born into a new realm altogether, so we're new creatures. Now that's true of every believer, without exception. We have all escaped the old life completely, which serves to highlight the greatness of the new life that we possess. This is the reason why we must exhibit this new life. This is the reason why we must exhibit this redemption that we have. We have escaped the old life with its lusts.

So if we've escaped, then we shouldn't be a slave to it. We shouldn't be living like we're part of it. We are not part of it. Now I say we've escaped it completely. That doesn't mean that there aren't remnants of it within us, because there certainly are. But we're not a part of that world. We do have the principle of sin within us. Paul talks about that in Romans 7:23. He deals with that conflict that he faced and that every believer faces with the struggle between doing what we know we should do and doing what we know we shouldn't do.

We don't do the things we want to do, and we do the things we don't want to do. That's our constant struggle because there is this principle, this law of sin, within our members. We battle it constantly. But we are new creatures with new abilities. We live in a new realm. A realm of grace and peace. We're not part of the world.

We've been born into the Kingdom of Our Lord. We have a new citizenship, and so we're to live like that, and we're to understand that about ourselves. I think a verse that would apply to what Peter says here, about "having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" would be Romans 6:11, where Paul says, "consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

That's what you are. So realize and live in light of that.

Well, may God give us the desire to do that, to live according to the position that we have, according to the abilities that we have, to exhibit the new life that God has given us that we have in Christ, through His sacrifice for us, and not return to that old life, from which we've escaped. We can do that because Christ has given us the abilities, and we're in Him, and He's the one that empowers us. So we should be looking to Him constantly to do that.

Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for the profound beginning that Peter gives us in this second letter that he wrote. Every beginning of every letter of the New Testament is profound because it's all inspired by you. Every book of the Bible is. Every word of it is. So we give you thanks that we possess it. It is one of the great promises, the magnificent promises that you've given, one of the magnificent blessings that we have to possess this book, and to be able to read it, and understand it, and be influenced by it. We pray that as we do so, in the days and weeks to come, you bless us as we study these things, not only in this hour, but whenever your Word

is taught in this church, may we have ears to hear, and may we listen, and be built up in faith through our time of study, in Christ name we pray. Amen.