

## **All the Power and Promises You'll Ever Need**

2 Peter 1:3-4 (05/11/14)

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If a Bugatti Veyron Super Sport came roaring into our parking lot after service today, you can bet a bunch of us guys would go out there to check out this 2.4 million dollar piece of equipment. After giving it a good look over from the exterior to the interior, what are we going to do? This baby's got an 8 liter, 1200 horse engine sitting under that hood, capable of zero to 60 in under 3 seconds and 268 mph top speed, so let's lift the hood and look at that amazing power plant propelling this thing down the highway.

Welcome to 2 Peter 1:3 and 4, where God lifts the hood of your salvation to show you exactly what He has done to make your Christian life the most amazing design and creation in all the universe. And the performance God guarantees here will take you infinitely further than human creation. In these two verses we are looking at two massive spiritual pistons that drive your Christian life, namely DIVINE POWER and PRECIOUS AND MAGNIFICENT PROMISES. I don't know of a more compressed description of what God does when He reaches down into the gutters and sin-pools of this world and transforms guilty and rebellious sinners and transforms us into children of the most high God!

*2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*

*2 Peter 1:4 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.*

Several observations on these two verses: First, everything here comes from God, His power, His promises, His glory, His calling. Salvation is of the Lord. Then, God "grants us" gifts in both verses. The word means something like a royal gift, as if you were going to see the Queen and took a special gift for her. God has granted to us, totally of His own grace, these spiritual blessings. The verbs "has granted" are both in the perfect tense, which means He granted them to us in the past and the blessings continue forever. And then just that little phrase "to us." Not "to them" but "to us." In Greek that's called the dative of advantage. Here we are, deserving nothing but God's judgment for our self-centered, God-rejecting ways, and God has granted us these two gifts, POWER and PROMISES, to our eternal advantage! Believers, we are an incredibly blessed people! And all God does in us is driven by these massive spiritual pistons, His power and His promises!

### **What God's DIVINE POWER accomplished for us – v. 3**

We love power. Power is the capacity to get something done. What is the most powerful thing man has ever created? Back in the cold war of the 50s Khrushchev was threatening us and banging his shoe on the table at the United Nations. Both Russia and the US were setting off nuclear bombs, trying to outdo each other. So to show us what the Russians could do, on October 30, 1961, Russia dropped the biggest, most powerful nuclear weapon ever detonated on a large land mass north of Russia. It was called the Tsar Bomba, the mother of all bombs. It was 1500 times the combined power of the two bombs we dropped on Japan in WW 2. That's incredible power.

But when God saves a sinner, you are looking at His divine power no where else seen, and a power that changes humans for all eternity! Salvation is not a human power. Everything the gospel accomplishes in a human heart is traced back to the power of God. The gospel is the power of God to save! God planned to save and then He has this unique and awesome power to reach into a human heart and forever

change its direction and nature. The only power you had was to run away from God. God's power through the gospel message came after you and overcame every obstacle to you bowing to Christ. God's power bulldozed into your heart, crushing your pride, self-righteousness, ignorance, superstition, carelessness, lusting for pleasure and everything else and set up His kingdom in there! That's God's divine power in action.

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED** - And when His power invaded your life, He brought to you everything you would ever need to live for Him now and forever! He has given us all things! Nothing is missing. When you came to Christ, you got all you need. Like an infant born with all the parts attached and everything needed to function for life. Amazingly, she's even equipped with all she needs for future reproduction! Awesome God! And when God gives you spiritual birth He tells you, "I'm giving you all you need in Christ, all you will ever need to live your life to His glory." You don't need Jesus plus law, or visions, or speaking in tongues, or mystical experiences, or Jesus plus humanistic psychology. You may be dealing with some real issues in your life, but get to know your Lord better because He has given you all you need for all your issues and struggles in the gospel.

**LIFE** - He has given you all the spiritual life you'll ever need. When the Holy Spirit comes into your heart through the gospel message, He makes you alive spiritually, and you'll never be more alive. You have eternal life, you have fellowship with God, and it will only get better and better. That life depends on God's divine power, something no human philosophy or psychology or therapy can ever produce! Look at Jesus outside Lazarus' tomb. He's the embodiment of divine power. He speaks in His power and what happens? Life! Lazarus comes forth! That's a picture of the gospel. We're dead in our sins, God speaks in His power, raises us from the dead, and we come forth to new life!

**GODLINESS** - With that spiritual life, God has given you everything you need for godliness. God's power here doesn't destroy. It creates life from the dead and that life produces one thing – godliness. That's how you know His power has created life in you – you have a completely new desire to please your God. Godliness has the idea of worship or worthiness in it. Nothing in human experience can bring about a man or woman who was completely running away from God to now running after God, desiring to walk worthy of God! Godliness is living for the worthiness of God!

**TRUE KNOWLEDGE** - But how does this come to me? How does this divine power find me? From your side, God works in your life through bringing you to know Christ. And I want you to see, its "full knowledge," the same as in verse 2. It's an intensive form of knowing. This is not just a natural knowledge of some facts about Jesus. Many people have this knowledge. No, this is a God-given knowledge that comes into your mind and grips your heart and moves your will and desires to submit to Christ as your Savior and follow Him as your Lord. You sense your sin and guilt and that you are in trouble, or as Martyn Lloyd-Jones puts it, you realize you are being dealt with. You heard sermons many times before, but now something unusual is happening, and God is giving you this heart-gripping knowledge that stirs you up to do something about it.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones married Bethan in January, 1927, and shortly afterwards as she was listening to her husband preaching the gospel week after week, God actually did this very thing in her heart. She had been in church all her life. Here's what she wrote: "I was for two years under Martyn's ministry before I really understood what the gospel was. I used to listen to him on Sunday morning and I used to feel, 'Well if this is Christianity, I don't really know anything about it.'" Martyn gave her an evangelistic book entitled "The Anxious Enquirer Directed" by John Angell James, which she read and came to the assurance of her own salvation through the death of Christ for her sins.

True knowledge isn't natural knowledge. Believers come to this full knowledge in one way, and that is through the effectual or effective call of God to your heart. "The One having called us." This is God's divine power at work in conversion. God calls you in your heart. Perhaps you are like Bethan. There are many people who come into a church like this one where the gospel is faithfully preached week after week thinking they are Christians, but then God begins to press the gospel into their hearts. There are people here who could stand up and share they heard the gospel for ten or even twenty years right here and then God worked with His mighty divine power in calling them. Ah, the massive, life-changing power of God, giving us all we need for life and godliness.

One more thing in verse 3. Notice it says "to His own glory and excellence." God has given you all you need in life and godliness to live for His glory and display His excellence. This is the great work of God on earth today. And God is more glorified in saving a sinner than He is in creating a sun or designing and creating an ear or a kidney or a dancing frog. Just like Jesus was God's glory and excellence on earth, every sinner saved by God's divine power is a walking, breathing testimony to God's great glory and excellence.

When that prostitute came to Jesus in Luke 7 weeping over Christ's rich forgiveness of her sins, she was a living testimony to God's glory and excellence. God brought the full knowledge of the gospel into her heart, she saw Christ as her only hope for her guilt, she believed in him, God transformed her from the inside out, she came with a crushed heart of love for her Savior, and to this day her life is a display of divine glory and excellence! God would say to us, "This is my divine power at work in a sinner's life." Humans can't do this. Psychology can't do this. Liberalism and atheism can't do this. Government programs certainly can't do this. God's DIVINE POWER can do this and still does to this day! Are you there with this forgiven, loving sinner at the feet of Jesus, worshiping Him with everything in you?

#### **What God's PRECIOUS AND MAGNIFICENT PROMISES accomplish for us – v. 4**

Power and promises go together. A promise is only as good as the ability or power of the one who promises to fulfill it. In Genesis 15 God promised to give Abraham's descendents the promised land in 400 years. Guess what? Four hundred years later God gathered Abraham's descendants out of Egypt, took them powerfully right through the Red Sea, powerfully provided for them for forty years in that wilderness, took them through the Jordan River, smashed the walls of Jericho, defeated the inhabitants of Canaan, and settled Israel into that land He promised Abraham years earlier! Look at Joshua 21:43-45, "So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass."

Years later the man from Nazareth promised his disciples his enemies would murder Him, but three days later he would rise from the dead! Sure enough, they finally killed him. "Finally we got rid of this pest. We can get on with our lives, our religion, our scams and lies and hypocrisy." But what did He promise? Three days later, "Up from the grave He arose, with a mighty triumph o'er His foes!"

So Peter says God has given us these precious and fantastic promises with the divine power to fulfill them. Precious promises because this world has nothing like them. These promises are more precious than all the gold of Solomon's temple. And they are great promises. The Greek word is "magista," not just great, but exceedingly great, magnificent, superlative, unparalleled promises. Why? Because these promises come from a magnificent God through a magnificent Savior to a magnificent salvation that leads us to an unbelievable future with God forever! Precious and magnificent promises that bring you right into God's eternal fellowship. You have an eternal soul and nothing in you or in this world will get you to eternity with God. You're going to live somewhere forever. Ever think of that? Everybody you know will live somewhere forever. And there are only two possibilities. Here's a precious and magnificent promise:

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved!” Is that precious to you? Or do you yawn and wonder what you’re having for lunch?

SHARER IN GOD’S IMAGE - God promises to make every believer a partaker of God’s image! He’s not making us little gods, but what this means is that when God’s power brings you to Christ, your heart is totally changed so that you are renewed to the holy, godly, loving image of God. God didn’t save you just to keep you out of hell or to fill empty places in heaven. He saved you to thoroughly change you from a guilty, dirty sinner into the likeness of His own Son, Jesus Christ. He predestinated you to be conformed to the image of His Son. Your goal every day is to grow more and more into the likeness of Christ.

Here are three simple truths to apply every day:

- My goal in life is to please God.
- I please God by becoming more and more like Christ.
- God knows I won’t be perfect but He does expect me to be growing!

That’s why Peter’s theme is for Christians to grow. If you are a partaker of the divine nature, you have a whole new appetite and desire. You want to grow. You delight in God. Only Christ satisfies your soul. Psalm 63:1 says this world is a desert spiritually. Only Christ slakes the thirst of His people.

RESCUE – God also promises to rescue us from our slavery to selfish desires. “Having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” Lust in this verse refers to everything about a man’s natural heart in sin. We were chained and enslaved to our lust, which means we lived for our own wants and desires, be they good or bad. The world doesn’t make us corrupt. Our lust corrupts us in this world. We lived for this world, for the lusts of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life. Our lust corrupted our lives in this world. Our lust would have taken us straight to hell.

But Christ came and rescued us from ourselves! “Our chains fell off, we’ve been set free.” That’s why these precious and magnificent promises don’t just bring us human happiness, a nice job, marriage, family, vacations, retirements. No, God made us partakers of His nature, and in doing that by the power of the Spirit He snapped the chains of our slavery to lust. We still sin, but we don’t want to. We still have remains of sin, but we long to be freed completely. We have this new appetite for holiness.

What a salvation! A salvation that is driven by these two great truths of DIVINE POWER and PRECIOUS AND MAGNIFICENT PROMISES. It makes that Bugatti out there pale into a worthless piece of dust in comparison to the awesome nature of our salvation.

But let me remind you, none of this is yours if you don’t know Christ. Knowing Christ in that life-gripping way is the only means of participating in these power and promises! Know Him. Paul said, “I want to know Him.” But Paul, you already know Him. “Yes, but I want to know Him better.” Do you know Him in this life-transforming way? Do you know Him personally? Is He real to you? Do you know Him as your only hope of forgiveness and eternal life? And are you continuing to grow in knowing Him? Thank God for His POWER and PROMISES that have brought you to Him forever!