



Desperate Assurance: Proving the Fallacy by Bad Exegesis; Faith, the Choral Director, 2 Peter 1:1-5a

III. Proving the Fallacy by Bad Exegesis:

- 1) According to Bèza and his followers a person can prove he has had an *effectual* calling and acquire confidence that his faith was *saving* by conducting an experiment. This is the conclusion drawn from:

2 Peter 1:10 - (KJV) Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.
- 2) “These things” refer back to the spiritual attributes Peter lists in verses 5-7. Peter mandates that the believer supply these attributes with his faith which comes first in the list. The attributes are to be supplied with faith by means of spiritual growth.
- 3) Nowhere in the context can it be rationalized that Peter suggests the reason for this spiritual growth is to *determine* one’s election but rather it is to occur *because* of one’s election. The first nine verses establish without question that the context refers to believers both spiritual and carnal.
- 4) Since this is a favorite verse of the hyper-Calvinists we must take a look at it in detail. In so doing we will confirm the biblical accuracy of the doctrine of unlimited atonement while developing an outline of the Christian way of life all the way to spiritual maturity. On the other hand we will learn from our exegesis that those who claim proof of limited atonement from this passage are not only erroneous but their assumptions are also heretical.
- 5) Before we begin it is important to note some of the opinions of the hyper-Calvinists regarding this passage:

Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism*, p. 63:

[Perkins] looks to Bèza who connects 2 Peter 1:10 to **providing saving faith to ourselves via a good conscience**. Justifying faith is that ‘whereby a man is persuaded in his conscience’. The will to believe in and of itself cannot deliver the immediate assurance but the conscience can do it, by reflecting upon itself. The ‘will to regenerate’ is the ‘testimony of regeneration begun’, but it is the conscience which assures that regeneration in fact took place; for the conscience works *by* the practical syllogism.

Dillow, Joseph C. *The Reign of the Servant Kings*. 2d ed. (Hayesville: Schoettle Publishing Co., 1993), 247:

For the Puritans and their modern followers **assurance of salvation** is their **magnificent obsession**, 2 Pet. 1:10 their **life verse**, and the **practical syllogism** their **chief practice**. When Peter wrote, “Be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure,” he unwittingly gave them a basis for four hundred years of introspection. Indeed, this verse could aptly be used to summarize the roughly one hundred years between the Reformation and the Westminster Confession.

- 6) We start now with an analysis of 2 Peter 1:1-11:

2 Peter 1:1 - (ETL) Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have attained a faith equal to ours by the virtue of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.



This establishes that Peter is addressing believers only.

v. 2 - (ETL) May grace and prosperity be multiplied unto you in the sphere of the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Peter's salutation contains a wish for the grace and prosperity that is possessed by these believers to be multiplied through spiritual growth. They are not told to multiply these things by experimentation. They are to do it by acquiring knowledge of both God and Christ. The assets required to move toward that objective are mentioned next in:

v. 3 - Since His divine power has given to us all things unto life [**physical logistics] and godliness [**the spiritual logistics**], through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and virtue.**

The spiritual life of the Church Age is the operational version of the prototype system proved effective by Christ in the Incarnation. The power that energizes both is the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit. He indwelt and filled the true humanity of our Lord beginning with the Virgin Birth. He indwells the believer at salvation and fills all who are current on rebound.

Utilization of the two power options—the filling of the Spirit and the Grace Apparatus for Perception—enables the believer to grow in grace and execute the spiritual life of the Church Age. In order for the believer to fight the good fight, the justice of God supplies to our imputed divine righteousness all the logistical support necessary.

These logistics are the subject of the phrase “has given to us all things unto life and godliness.” “Life” supply has to do with those things necessary to sustain the body. “Godliness” supply has to do with those things necessary to sustain spiritual growth.

A look at the Greek word for “godliness” will amplify our position that only the believer who is certain of his salvation can develop the proper mental attitude to serve God and have the proper motivation for the production of divine good. “Godliness” is the accusative singular of the noun:

εὐσέβεια, eusebeia - “piousness”

This seems to be the best single English word to gather up the complex meaning of this Greek noun. I am tempted to translate it “the double-column advance” for reasons that you will see as we consult:

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “pious”:

Showing reverence for deity and devotion to divine worship. Showing loyal reverence. Virtuous. Fidelity to natural obligations. Dutifulness in religion.

These definitions provide a summary of the word's etymology found in:

Friedrich, Gerhard (ed.). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol. 7. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 176-77:

In the Greek World. It is plain that in the New Testament period εὐσέβεια, eusebeia expresses in a general sense a proper attitude to the gods, “piety.”



Ἐὐσέβεια expresses “respect” for the orders of domestic, national, and also international life. It holds them in high esteem and avoids transgressing them. Since all these orders are under the protection of the gods it is understandable that the term came to refer increasingly to the gods. The development goes to the point where εὐσέβεια as **right conduct** towards the gods is distinguished from right conduct towards one’s neighbor.

Plato in his dialogue on piety makes Euthyphron the spokesman of the common view. The popular view that comes out with increasing clarity in the dialogue is that piety is what is done directly towards the gods. Instead of being a reverent attitude towards the gods, εὐσέβεια consists in the worship paid to the gods. Since one has to **know** how the gods are served, an element of **knowledge** enters into piety. But it should be denoted that εὐσέβεια does not just denote worship as such. An **inner attitude** is always expressed in the outward act.

We can see that the original usage in the Greek stresses not only a right mental attitude toward the gods but also a proper motivation based on knowledge of what the gods required and how to accomplish those duties. Friedrich goes on to state that such an approach to the gods was considered a virtue. He then addresses the use of the word:

In the New Testament. A particular **manner of life**. The **way of life** controlled by εὐσέβεια separates the doctrine of false teachers from “sound” doctrine. There can be a reference to the doctrine corresponding to piety (i.e., reciprocity) or to a **knowledge** of the truth in accordance with εὐσέβεια.

From the etymology of the word εὐσέβεια and its definition in the Koine Greek we can see that the fulfillment of the double-column advance is the intended result of the provision of divine power and logistics.

2 Peter 1:3 - (ETL) Since His divine power [imputations at salvation for the execution of His plan] has given to us all things unto life [physical logistics] and godliness [εὐσέβεια: the spiritual logistics that develop piousness in the double-column advance], through the knowledge of Him [left column] who called us [election] to His own glory [maximum glorification of God] and virtue [from maximum reciprocal love motivation: right column].

The hyper-Calvinists miss this context. Power has been granted, logistics have been supplied, and a plan has been created that requires both knowledge for the advance and motivation for the advance.

Next in the passage comes the motivation supplied by the escrow account imputed to all believers at the moment of salvation. It is the first thing God did for us and it is the means of glorifying Him.

2 Peter 1:4 - (ETL) Through which things [election to privileges and opportunities equally distributed to all believers] He has given [dramatic perfect of δωρέομαι, *dōreomai*: for a completed action in eternity past] His most valuable and fantastic promises [rewards and blessings associated with the advance] in order that through these things [utilization of the logistics and pious devotion to the mechanics of the double column advance] we might become partners [with Christ] in the divine endowment [conveyance of escrow blessings in time and eternity], having escaped from the decadence of *cosmos diabolicus* [by the new birth] and the evil desires of the lust pattern [by means of the new marriage].

Peter now uses an analogy from Greek drama to illustrate how knowledge of the Word of God directs a chorus of spiritual attributes that lead the believer to maturity in the sophisticated spiritual life.



2 Peter 1:5 - (ETL) Now for this very reason, having made every effort, supply by means of your faith humility, and with humility knowledge,

The reason for the spiritual advance is to achieve the stated objective mentioned in verse 4: to be a partner with Christ in the divine endowment, i.e., glorifying God by qualifying for the conveyance of escrow blessings. You accomplish this by “making every effort.” This refers to the believer’s due diligence regarding the three spiritual skills.

When due diligence is forthcoming then the doctrine you learn becomes the director of the chorus in the soul. The word for “faith” is the instrumental of means from:

πίστις, *pistis* - “faith” or the content of what is believed which is doctrine. The believer’s faith thus becomes the source of behavior patterns and character traits that transform his lifestyle to meet the standards of divine integrity and fulfillment of the escrow agreement. The choral director is responsible for supplying the chorus with its necessary assets, indicate by the aorist active imperative of the verb:

ἐπιχορηγέω, *epichorēgeō* - From Classical Greek drama. It refers to the choral director who provided the expenses and the training for the members of the chorus. Bible doctrine inculcated and metabolized into the stream of consciousness is the choral director. It is stored in categories and in the memory center for recall and application. Seven categories of application form this chorus that builds to a climax called occupation with Christ. What follows are the members of the chorus who sing their parts as the believer’s doctrinal advance continues onward toward spiritual maturity. We will call them the Magnificent Seven. The first is:

ἀρετή, *aretē* - “virtue” or “humility”; “to know what is good and what is evil.”