

December 18 Su Reading 352 — 2 Timothy 3:14-17 — Breathed Out by God

<sup>14</sup> *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom<sup>[fn]</sup> you learned it* <sup>15</sup> *and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* <sup>16</sup> *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,* <sup>17</sup> *that the man of God<sup>[fn]</sup> may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

#### ESV Footnotes

(3:14) The Greek *for whom* is plural

(3:17) That is, a messenger of God (the phrase echoes a common Old Testament expression)

**Scripture's Source and Purpose** — The Bible is the Word of God. It is “*Scripture ... breathed out by God*” (v. 16). Its Source is divine perfection. When Jesus said to the Father, “*your word is truth*” (John 17:17), He prefaced that with one purpose of Scripture, praying, “*Sanctify them in the truth,*” i.e., set them apart in holiness. Immersion in God’s Word develops holiness in us. Paul gives other purposes of Scripture in today’s reading. He said that “*the sacred writings ... are able to make you wise for salvation*” (2 Tim. 3:15). Wisdom and salvation come from the application of Scripture. In the next verse, Paul provides the first purpose: it is “*profitable for teaching.*” It teaches us and it gives us the content for teaching others. It is also profitable “*for reproof, for correction,*” telling us when we are wrong and helping us get back on the right path. Finally, it is profitable “*for training in righteousness.*” God changed our hearts at conversion, but we were spiritual infants at that point. We need training through spiritual workouts, direction and encouragement from other believers, and knowledge of the Word of God. Then, Paul added another purpose in the form of a result: that we “*may be complete, equipped for every good work*” (v. 17). The Perfect Source leads us toward His perfection and empowers us to do His work.

#### [How Precious is the Book Divine - YouTube](#)

How precious is the Book Divine,  
By inspiration giv'n!  
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine  
To guide our souls to heav'n.

— John Fawcett (1782)

\*\*\*\*\*

December 19 M Reading 353 — 2 Peter 1:3-7; 16-21 — His Very Great Promises

<sup>3</sup> *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to<sup>[fn]</sup> his own glory and excellence,<sup>[fn]</sup>* <sup>4</sup> *by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.* <sup>5</sup> *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue,<sup>[fn]</sup> and virtue with knowledge,* <sup>6</sup> *and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,* <sup>7</sup> *and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.*

<sup>16</sup> *For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.* <sup>17</sup> *For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved*

Son,<sup>[fn]</sup> *with whom I am well pleased,*" <sup>18</sup> *we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.* <sup>19</sup> *And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,* <sup>20</sup> *knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.* <sup>21</sup> *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

#### ESV Footnotes

(1:3) Or *by*

(1:3) Or *virtue*

(1:5) Or *excellence*; twice in this verse

(1:17) Or *my Son, my (or the) Beloved*

**Granted Godliness** — Again, we see the Trinity mentioned in this passage, with the Father announcing the Son (v. 17), and the writers of Scripture being "*carried along by the Holy Spirit*" (v. 21). We also see two things that God "*has granted.*" One is that God "*has granted to us his precious and very great promises*" (v. 4a), referring to the Scripture, which is the main emphasis in this chapter. Notice, however, that the purpose of the Scripture promises is that "*through them you may become partakers of the divine nature*" (v. 4b). Being able to enter into the spiritual realm is also part of the second thing being granted, that God "*has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness*" (v. 3). God's power gives us all we need to live godly lives, and God's Scripture gives us all we need to become more like Him. This is why it is so important for us to expose ourselves to what God has said in His Word. It provides truth and power.

Here is a Martin Luther hymn about God's Word and the involvement of the Trinity.

#### [Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word - YouTube](#)

Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;  
Curb those who by deceit or sword,  
Would seek to overthrow Your Son  
And to destroy what He has done.

— Martin Luther (1542)

\*\*\*\*\*

December 20 Tu Reading 354 — 2 Peter 2:4-10a — God Rescues the Godly

<sup>4</sup> *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell<sup>[fn]</sup> and committed them to chains<sup>[fn]</sup> of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;* <sup>5</sup> *if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;* <sup>6</sup> *if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;* <sup>[fn]</sup> <sup>7</sup> *and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked* <sup>8</sup> *(for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard);* <sup>9</sup> *then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials,* <sup>[fn]</sup> *and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,* <sup>10</sup> *and especially those who indulge<sup>[fn]</sup> in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.*

#### ESV Footnotes

(2:4) Greek *Tartarus*

(2:4) Some manuscripts *pits*

(2:6) Some manuscripts *an example to those who were to be ungodly*

(2:9) Or *temptations*

(2:10) Greek *who go after the flesh*

**Fire and Flood** — This paragraph features God's rescue of two key OT people out of a sphere of ungodliness. In Noah's case, God rescued him and his family from the widespread wickedness in the early history of mankind. The means of rescue was the ark, which Noah and his three sons had to build. The rest of human and animal life on earth was destroyed through a flood in judgment for their sins. The destruction in Lot's time was more local—Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by God with fire from heaven while Lot and his two daughters fled to the hills. God demonstrated that He punishes the wicked and rescues the righteous. Notice that, although God provided the rescue, in both cases, the people involved had to do something. Noah had to build the ark and Lot had to flee the city. The main conclusion of this passage is that "*the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials*" (v. 9). That is a lesson for the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well. The same Greek word for "*trials*" here is translated as "*temptation*" when Paul wrote, "*No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it*" (1 Cor. 10:13, emphasis added). Whether we face trials or temptations, God provides rescue for us. We may not have to build an ark or flee a city, but we need to look to God for the way out that He provides.

#### [Eternal Father, Strong to Save - YouTube](#)

Eternal Father, strong to save,  
Whose arm does bind the restless wave,  
Who bids the mighty ocean deep,  
Its own appointed limits keep;  
O hear us when we cry to Thee  
For those in peril on the sea.

— William Whiting (1860)

\*\*\*\*\*

December 21 W Reading 355 — 2 Peter 3:1-10 — Patient in Judgment

<sup>1</sup> *This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,* <sup>2</sup> *that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,* <sup>3</sup> *knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.* <sup>4</sup> *They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."* <sup>5</sup> *For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God,* <sup>6</sup> *and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.* <sup>7</sup> *But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*

<sup>8</sup> *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* <sup>9</sup> *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,*<sup>[fn]</sup> *not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* <sup>10</sup> *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies<sup>[fn]</sup> will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*<sup>[fn]</sup>

#### **ESV Footnotes**

(3:9) Some manuscripts *on your account*

(3:10) Or *elements*; also verse 12

(3:10) Greek *found*; some manuscripts *will be burned up*

**Not Slow, But Patient** — Whereas in our previous reading God rescued Noah and Lot from partial judgment on the earth because of man’s sin, in this chapter, Peter pointed ahead to the final and complete judgment. It has been a long time since that prophecy was made, but the predicted scoffers are abundant today, ridiculing the idea of a real judgment by God. It has yet to come for at least two reasons. The first is that God’s perspective of time is much different than ours: “... *with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*” (v. 8). God really operates outside our realm of time. It hasn’t been long for Him. The second reason judgment has not yet arrived is because “*The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise ... but is patient toward you*” (v. 9a). He is populating heaven for eternity with people who “*should reach repentance*” (v. 9b). God does not delight in punishment, but He delights in reward. There is an apparent quota of saints that God is waiting for. Jesus said that “*this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world ... and then the end will come*” (Matt. 24:14). Our reward is coming.

### [O Zion, Haste - YouTube](#)

O Zion, haste, your mission high fulfilling,  
to tell to all the world that God is light,  
That He who made all nations is not willing  
one soul should perish, lost in shades of night.  
  
Publish glad tidings, tidings of peace,  
tidings of Jesus, redemption and release.  
  
— Mary Ann Thomson (1868)

\*\*\*\*\*

December 22 Th Reading 356 — Jude 1:24-25 — The Only God

<sup>24</sup> *Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,* <sup>25</sup> *to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time<sup>[fn]</sup> and now and forever. Amen.*

#### **ESV Footnote**

(1:25) Or *before any age*

**Doing and Being** — This well-known doxology is a great summary of the purpose of this year’s “Knowing God” study, i.e., learning about who God is and what He has done. These verses begin with what God is doing, and it emphasizes His action on our behalf. Verse 24 says that He “*is able*,” showing His power that goes far beyond our own. We have a responsibility to keep from stumbling because Scripture is filled with commands for us to obey, but God also helps us to do what He commands. He will continue to do it until we stand before “*his glory with great joy*.” This able God is on our side! Verse 25 concentrates more on who God is: His being. He is unique— “*the only God*.” He is not the greatest of the gods, but is the only real God. The multiple gods worshiped around the world are either inventions of creative and fearful minds or have their source with the fallen angels who rebelled with Satan. God is also “*our Savior*.” He planned our salvation by sending His Son to die for our sins in satisfaction of His perfect justice. His “*glory*” stresses the wonder of who He is, especially when compared to us, His creation. His “*majesty, dominion, and authority*” point to His sovereignty; the Creator is also in charge. He controls what He has created. The doxology closes with God’s infiniteness in terms of time: “*...before all time and now and forever*.” He has always existed and that existence will never end. Amen!

## Face to Face with Christ, My Savior - YouTube

Face to face—Oh, blissful moment!  
Face to face—to see and know;  
Face to face with my Redeemer,  
Jesus Christ who loves me so.

— Carrie E. Breck (1898)

\*\*\*\*\*

December 23 F Reading 357 — 1 John 1:5-10 — God is Light

<sup>5</sup> *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* <sup>6</sup> *If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.* <sup>7</sup> *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.* <sup>8</sup> *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* <sup>9</sup> *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* <sup>10</sup> *If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

**Truth and Purity** — The statements in this passage that “*God is light*” (v. 5) and “*is in the light*” (v. 7), refer to His attributes of truth and purity. As for truth, the “*message we have heard from him*” (v. 5) is in contrast to the three “*If we say...*” statements that some were apparently using to cover up the truth. If we attempt to do that, “*we lie*” (v. 6), “*we deceive ourselves*” (v. 8), and “*we make him a liar*” (v. 10). Our lies are contrasted against His truth. The purity of God is suggested here in contrast to the sin of mankind. We tend to “*walk in darkness*” (v. 6), while we deny it. Our sin is contrasted against His purity. Two other important “if” statements in this paragraph point to the solution to our sin problem. The first one is, “*If we confess our sins...*” (v. 9a). When we humbly admit our sins to God, it allows Him “*to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (v. 9b). This confession of sin begins at the time of our conversion and it should continue throughout our Christian lives whenever we slip into thoughts and acts of sin. The second positive conditional statement is this: “*...if we walk in the light*” (v. 7). That has to do with our daily relationship with God. We “*walk*” in His truth and purity. We are training ourselves to think like He thinks, which is walking in fellowship with Him.

## I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light - YouTube

I want to walk as a child of the light;  
I want to follow Jesus.  
God set the stars to give light to the world;  
The Star of my life is Jesus.  
In Him there is no darkness at all.  
The night and the day are both alike.  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.  
I want to see the brightness of God;  
I want to look at Jesus.

— Kathleen Thomerson (1970)

\*\*\*\*\*

December 24 Sa Reading 358 — 1 John 3:1-3 — Children of God

<sup>1</sup> *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.* <sup>2</sup> *Beloved, we are*

*God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears<sup>[fn]</sup> we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.* <sup>3</sup> *And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

**ESV Footnote**

(3:2) Or *when it appears*

**Spiritual Reality** — All mankind was created by God, but not all people are “*children of God*.” We were created by His knowledge and power, but we became His children by His love, the “*kind of love the Father has given to us*” (v. 1). God’s love has opened the door for Christians to know Him. When we surrender our lives to Christ, God’s Spirit comes to dwell within us, thus changing us into spiritual beings. Before conversion, we were only physical beings, but now we have also become spiritual beings. Paul wrote that “*if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation [or creature]. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come*” (2 Cor. 5:17). There is one more step to come, however: “...we shall be like him” (1 John 3:2). We are “*like him*” now in one sense, but after Christ returns, we will be given resurrection bodies without sin. What will that be like? We don’t quite know yet: “*what we will be has not yet appeared*” (v. 2). The post-resurrection descriptions of Jesus in the NT give us a glimpse, but it is only a taste of what is to come. Without our sinful bodies, we will finally have our eternal spiritual bodies. Only then will we know what true spiritual reality is all about. We are loved by God and we are purified as we think about Him.

[Love Divine, All Loves Excelling - YouTube](#)

Finish, then, Thy new creation;  
true and spotless let us be.  
Let us see Thy great salvation  
perfectly restored in Thee.  
Changed from glory into glory,  
till in heav’n we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,  
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

— Charles Wesley (1747)