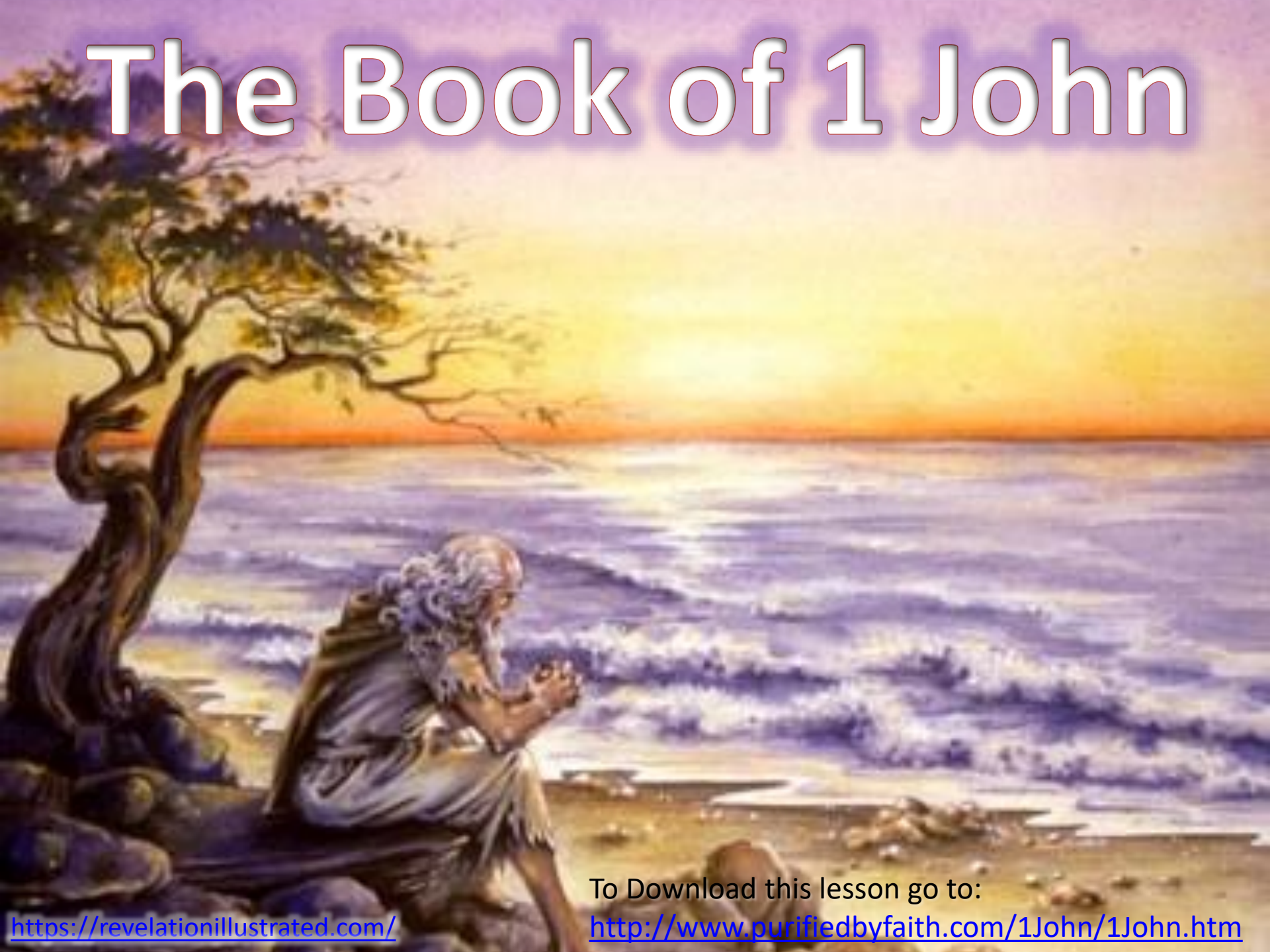


The Book of 1 John



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1 John 2:29 – 4:6

The *Second* Presentation
of the Three Tests of
FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD:
RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE
and **BELIEF** in Jesus

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Outline of 1 John

- 1:1-4 - *Prologue: John Introduces the Major Theme of the Letter - **FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD***
- 1:5-2:28 - *The First Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: **RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF** in Jesus*
- 2:29-4:6 - *The **Second** Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: **RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF** in Jesus*
- 4:7-5:21 - *The Third Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: **RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF** in Jesus*

2:29-4:6

*The **Second** Presentation of the Three Tests of **DIVINE SONSHIP: RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE** and **BELIEF** in Jesus*

- **2:29-3:10a** - *Divine Sonship* tested by **RIGHTEOUSNESS**
 - God is righteous therefore everyone who “*does what is right*” is “*born of Him*” (2:29)
 - The present status and future hope of the “*children of God*” (3:1-3)
 - Divine Sonship is utterly contrary to all sin (3:4-10a)
- **3:10b-24a** - *Divine Sonship* tested by **LOVE**
 - Anyone who does not obey the command to “love one another” is not a child of God (3:10b-11)
 - Cain as the model of murder and hate - whose example is followed by the world (3:12-15)
 - Christ as the model of love – whose example we must follow in order to have confidence in our relationship with God (3:16-24a)
- **3:24b-4:6** - *Divine Sonship* tested by **BELIEF** in the Spirit’s Message

1 John 2:29-3:10a

Divine Sonship Tested by Righteousness

- Instead of viewing the Christian life in terms of ***fellowship with God***, as he did in the first cycle, the apostle now describes the Christian life in terms of ***divine Sonship***.
- ***This*** characterization of the Christian life is an ***advance*** beyond the concept of fellowship. The family relationship is a much closer relationship . . . Family members are not merely companions who are united by common interests and experience. They are bound together by ***birth***.

1 John 2:29-3:10a

Divine Sonship Tested by Righteousness

- Just as human children inherit certain characteristics from their parents, so everyone “born of God” (i.e., every true Christian) “inherits” certain divine characteristics from God the Father.
- John teaches us that those who inherit these divine characteristics, will **show it** in their life!
- *The principle running through this section is “Like father, like son.” He who is a child of the devil manifests the devil’s likeness; he who is a child of God manifests the divine likeness.*

2:29-4:6

*The **Second** Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, **LOVE** and **BELIEF** in Jesus*

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1 John 2:29

John's Opening Statement on Divine Sonship

²⁹ If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

When we compare this verse with the first half of the very next verse, we see that “*He*” / “*Him*” refers to God the Father:

- **1 John 3:1a** – *See what kind of love the **Father** has given to us, that we should be called **children of God**...*

²⁹ *If you know that **he** is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of **him**.*

(1 John 2:29)

John says if we know that He (God, the Father) is “*righteous*”...

*29 If you know that he is **righteous**, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.*

(1 John 2:29)

righteous δίκαιος *dikaios*

- The term, *dikaios*, “righteousness”, refers basically to **a standard**.
- In Greek usage, when applied to human beings, it spoke of a person who observes:
 - Customs
 - Legal norms
 - Laws
- In the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) **God** is often described as *dikaios*, meaning:
 - God is infallibly consistent in the normative self-determination of His own nature.
 - God’s actions, His declared standard of right and wrong, and His own nature are ever in perfect harmony
 - God is always self-consistent: “He cannot deny Himself” (2Timothy 2:13).

John then compares the **Father** who “*is righteous*” to the **people** who “*practice(s) righteousness*”. The word translated “*practices*” (present tense participle of *poieo*) is a tense in the Greek that indicates that he is **not** talking about **an occasional act** of righteousness, **but** rather **a habitual practice** of righteousness (Burdick, p. 228; Plummer, p. 69)

²⁹ *If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.*

(1 John 2:29)

John tells us we can be sure that the one who practices righteousness “*has been born of Him*”. This is a reference to **spiritual birth**. The word translated “*born*” (*gennao*) is in the **Greek perfect tense** of which indicates that their spiritual birth is an event that was **completed in the past**, but **with results that continue** to the present. In other words: *The one who is making righteousness the practice of his life has been regenerated in the past, and as a result he is now a child of God who reveals the family trait of righteousness.* (Burdick p.229)

*²⁹ If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been **born** of him.*

(1 John 2:29)

born of him

ἐκ αὐτός γεννάω *ek autos gennao*

- This is the **first** of **ten** uses of the verb “to give birth to” (*gennao*) found in 1 John (2:29; 3:9 [2x]; 4:7; 5:1 [3x], 4, 18 [2x]).
- In **every** case other than 2:29 **God** is **explicitly** mentioned as the one by whom those concerned are brought to birth. Therefore the ambiguous expression ‘**born of him**’ in 2:29 must also be interpreted to mean **born of God**.
- For John, to be “**born of God**” was something quite distinct from natural human procreation, something that **could not be effected by human action or desire, but only by God Himself**:
 - John 1:12-13 - *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- children born **not of natural descent, nor of human decision** or a husband's will, **but born of God**.* (NIV)

born of him

ἐκ αὐτός γεννάω *ek autos gennao*

- There are a number of words used in the New Testament that communicate the idea of ***spiritual birth*** (or, as it is sometimes called, “***regeneration***”):
 - *gennao* – “to give birth to” (John 1:13; 3:3-8; 1John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)
 - *gennao* with *anochen* - “born again” - (John 3:3, 7)
 - *anagennao* - “to bring again to birth” (1 Peter 1:3, 23)
 - *suzoopoieo* – “to make alive with” (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13)
 - *paliggenesia* – “rebirth” (Titus 3:5)
 - *apokueo* – “to bear or bring forth” (James 1:18)

born of him

ἐκ αὐτός γεννάω *ek autos gennao*

- Surveying these terms, we notice that they ***all*** indicate a ***drastic change*** which may be likened to birth, rebirth, re-creation, or even resurrection.
- The effects of sin on human nature are considered to be so ***serious*** that, without ***new birth***, the sinner ***cannot see***, let alone enter into, the kingdom of God:
 - John 3:3 - *Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
 - Ephesians 2:5 – *[God,] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved--*

So what does it mean for a person to be “*born of God*”?

- So far we have seen that being born of God:
 - Happens in a ***point of time***, but with ***results*** that ***continue*** afterwards
 - Is something that **God does** (not man)
 - Is ***necessary because of*** the serious effect that sin has had on our human nature
 - ***Results*** in a ***radical change*** that can be likened to new birth or resurrection
 - Means that the child of God will ***manifest characteristics*** of his heavenly Father (such as righteousness)

So what does it mean for a person to be “born of God”?

- ***Before*** the new birth, ***sin controlled*** the man and made him a ***rebel*** against God. (Romans 8:8)
- ***After*** the new birth, ***the Spirit controls*** him and directs him towards God. (Romans 8:9)
- The born again man is ***not perfect***, he has to grow and progress (1Peter 2:2), but in every department of his personality he is directed towards God.
- *We may define regeneration as a drastic act on fallen human nature by the Holy Spirit, leading to a change in the person's whole outlook. He can now be described as a new man who seeks, finds and follows God in Christ (New Bible Dictionary, p. 1015)*

In the Greek, two different words are used for “know” in this text:

- The **first** word translated “*know*” (*eidete*) means to “know as a fact”.
- The **second** word translated “*be sure*” (*ginoskete*) means to “perceive as a logical consequence.”
- *If you know as fact (eidete) that God is righteous, John says, then you will perceive as a logical consequence (ginoskete) that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him. (Stott, p. 117)*

²⁹ *If you **know** that he is righteous, you may **be sure** that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.*

(1 John 2:29)

Pulling together the grammatical analysis of this text, John is saying something like this:

1 John 2:29 - If you know for a fact that all God is and does is in perfect harmony with what is right, then you will correctly conclude that every man who consistently does what is right has been born of God (Expanded Paraphrase)

²⁹ *If you **know** that he is righteous, you may **be sure** that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.*

(1 John 2:29)

2:29-4:6

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1 John 3:1-3

The Present Status and Future Hope of the “Children of God”

¹ 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. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Chicago, showing a dense urban area with green spaces and a large body of water (Lake Michigan) in the background under a cloudy sky.

1 John 3:1-3

***The Present Status and
Future Hope of the
“Children of God”***

High Level Overview

John tells his readers that their Sonship is evidence of God's unspeakable love for them.

¹ 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. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

(1 John 3:1-3)

John then describes:

- The ***future*** effect of Sonship – we will be like Him.

¹ 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. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

(1 John 3:1-3)

John then describes:

- The ***future*** effect of Sonship – we will be like Him.
- The ***present*** effect of Sonship: self-purification

¹ 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. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

(1 John 3:1-3)

John opens with an expression of ***utter amazement*** at the kind of love God has lavished on us.

¹ *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.* ² *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.* ³ *And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

(1 John 3:1-3)

Love ἀγάπη *agape*

- **Friberg Lexicon:**

- An attitude of appreciation resulting from a conscious evaluation and choice, used of divine and human love

- **Burdick (p. 229):**

- A term that describes the attitude of God towards sinful man.
- It is not a strongly emotional word. Instead it describes an **attitude** in which the **intellect** and the **will** are predominant.
- God loves the sinner **not** because He is drawn to him by his loveliness, but because, **in spite of** man's **unloveliness**, God sets His mind and will on seeking man's highest good

- Romans 5:8 - *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

The expression of God's love that John has in mind is this: *that we should be called children of God.*

¹ *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.* ² *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.* ³ *And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

(1 John 3:1-3)

*Not only are believers **called** God's children, they actually **are** His children. (Burdick, p. 231)*

*¹ 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. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

(1 John 3:1-3)

*The reason why the **world** does not know us...*

- *The word **world** occurs 23 times in 1 John, and its meaning varies according to the **context**. Here as in a number of other places, it denotes the **unbelieving world**. (Kruse, p. 115)*
- *“World” here must depict the unregenerate people who belong to the **evil world system** (Burdick, p. 231)*

*¹ 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. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

(1 John 3:1-3)

*The reason why the **world** does not **know** us...*

*To **know** a person is **not only** to **recognize him**, but to **understand** him, to **appreciate** him, and to be in **friendly relationship** with him. . . . Because of the deep gulf between the children of God and the world, no such relationship is possible.*

(Burdick, p. 231)

*¹ 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. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

(1 John 3:1-3)

When it says the world did not know “*him*”, it’s probably referring to Christ:

- **John 15:18-19** – *[Jesus speaking] “If the world hates you, know that it has **hated me before it hated you**. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”*

*¹ 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**. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

(1 John 3:1-3)

[In verse 2] John confesses that the exact state and condition of the redeemed in heaven had not yet been revealed to him. (Stott, p.119)

¹ 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. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared [= has not yet been made known cf. NIV]; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

(1 John 3:1-3)

In the last part of verse 2, John tells his readers that “*we know that when he appears, we shall be **like him**, for we shall see him **as he is**.*”

¹ *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.* ² *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; **but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*** ³ *And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

(1 John 3:1-3)

What does seeing Jesus “*as He is*” have to do with our being “*like Him*”?

- Many scholars (e.g., Bruce, Plummer, Kruse) believe that what John is saying is that the very sight of Jesus (in that day) will make us pure like He is.
- **Kruse (p. 116)** – *The sight of him, the author says, will be enough to make us pure like Him (cf. 1Cor 13:12; 2Cor 3:18)*
- **Bruce (p. 87)** – *If progressive assimilation to the likeness of their Lord results from the present beholding of Him through a glass darkly, to behold Him face to face, to ‘see Him even as He is’, will result in their being perfectly like Him.*
- **Plummer (p. 74)** – *The sight of God will glorify us*

*And everyone who thus **hopes** in him purifies himself...*

¹ 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. ²

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

(1 John 3:1-3)

hope - ἐλπίς (*elpis*)

- **Strong's Data** -
 - Expectation of good
 - Joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation
- **Burdick (p. 235)** –
 - A clear distinction must be made between the use of “hope” in the New Testament and the common present day use of the term. New Testament hope is confident expectation; it is assurance concerning something yet future. This is far different from the current employment of the term to express a wish or desire that may or may not be realized.

*And everyone who thus hopes in him **purifies** himself...*

¹ 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. ²

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

(1 John 3:1-3)

purifies - ἁγνίζω (*hagnizo*)

- **Kruse** (p. 116) –
 - The verb “to purify” (*hagnizo*) is found only seven times in the NT. It can either have **ceremonial** or **moral** connotations.
 - **Ceremonial** – John 11:55; Acts 21:24, 26; 24:18
 - **Moral** - Jas 4:8; 1Pet 1:22
 - ***Moral purification*** is what it means in the present context where people purify themselves to be pure as Christ is pure.
 - That it is the **moral** purity of Christ which the author has in mind is **confirmed** by what is said in 1 John 3:5 – *You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.*

And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself...

¹ 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. ²

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

(1 John 3:1-3)

And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself...

- *[It is true that] only the blood of Christ can cleanse us from the stain and guilt of sin (1:7), but we have a part to play in purifying **ourselves** from its power (Stott, p. 120)*
 - 2 Corinthians 7:1b - *Let us **cleanse ourselves** from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*
 - 1 Timothy 5:22 - *Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; **keep yourself pure.***
 - James 4:8 - *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and **purify your hearts**, you double-minded.*
 - 1 Peter 1:22a - *Having **purified your souls** by your obedience to the truth...*

- *The hope of being like Christ in the future expresses itself in an effort to purify oneself to be like Him in the present. (Kruse, p.116)*
- *For to have one's hope set on Christ implies that He is a constant object of meditation and contemplation; when that is so, the words of Paul come true, that 'we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another'. (F. F. Bruce, p. 88)*

¹ 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. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

(1 John 3:1-3)

Note John does not say that Christ purifies Himself, for He is, and always has been pure (Burdick, p.235)

*¹ 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. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself **as he is pure.***

(1 John 3:1-3)

2:29-4:6

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Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- Roman Catholics (and others who call themselves as “Christians”) have no concept of being saved at a point of time – they tend to see salvation as a gradual lifetime process. How does the Greek grammar in 1 John 2:29, and the general tenor of much of the New Testament refute this idea?
- R.C. Sproul once said that the phrase that captures the essence of Reformed Theology is the little phrase: *“Regeneration precedes faith”*. Do you agree with that idea? Is there anything in our text today that supports this idea?
- Martin Luther used to say that “Justification is by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone.” Do you agree with him? Is there anything in our text today that would speak to this issue?