

1 John 3

The Father's Great Love

3:1-2

1JO 3:1 **See how great a love the Father has bestowed [showered] upon us, that we should be called children of God; and {such} we are [right now]. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him [God, Christ].**

1. "See how great a love" describes the immense, indescribable love God has for humanity. (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:10). Gr. "potapos" - "of what sort, what kind, how great, how glorious"
 - a. God's love is so great and wonderful that it defies comparison with anything in this world.
 - b. Words just cannot fully comprehend or express the awesome, marvelous, matchless love of God.
 - c. He gave His precious Son to die on the cross for us.
 - d. He sent His Son to die a horrible, shameful, painful death for those steeped in sin.
2. "That we should be called children of God" presents the purpose of God's great love for us.
 - a. This is a present condition - not something future.
 - b. We are God's children now in spite of the non-recognition of the world.
 - c. Our sonship is the aim of God's love.
 - d. God's love prompts and motivates our love. (1 Jn. 4:19).
3. "And such we are" shows that we do not have to be dubious about being God's children.
 - "such" is in italics showing it has been supplied by the translators. Lit. "And we are"
 - a. We can have great confidence that we are **now** God's children.
 - b. We became God's spiritual children when we were born again through faith and baptism. (Gal. 3:26, 27). See 1 John 3:1-5; Tit. 3:5.
4. The world does not know (recognize, understand) us because it did not know (recognize, understand) God or His Son Jesus. (Jn. 15:18, 19).

JOHN 15:18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before {it hated} you.

JOHN 15:19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

- a. Darkness does not understand light.

- b. In fact it hates light because light exposes its abominations.
- c. The light reveals just how bad and ugly the darkness is.
- d. It was so horrible that it required the death of Jesus to atone for it.

1JO 3:2 **Beloved, [right] now we are children of God, and it has not appeared [manifested] as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He [Jesus] appears [is manifested], we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him [Jesus] just as He is.**

1. John affirms that we God’s children “now.”
2. Even though we do not have a full knowledge of the next life, we are still God’s children now.
3. The words “when He appears” have reference to the second coming of Christ. (1 Jn. 2:28). See Acts 1:11; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 1:7.
4. John gives us the glorious promise that “we shall be like Him.”
 - a. This does not mean that we will sit at the right hand of God or be God or be worshiped.
 - b. We shall not become Deity, but will be servants. (Rev. 22:3).

REV 22:3 And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His **bond-servants** [servants, slaves] **shall serve Him**; Gr. here is plural of “dou’los.” meaning “slave.”

- c. Paul explains the idea in Philippians 3:20, 21.
- d. We will have a glorious spiritual body, and we will no longer be subject to death and corruption. (1 Cor. 15:49-53).

4. “We shall see Him just as He is.”
 - a. Most or perhaps even all of John’s readers had never seen Jesus in the flesh. Jesus was in the flesh for a very short time - 32 or 33 years. A number of years had elapsed since Christ’s death in Jerusalem.
 - 1) Jesus is God (Deity). (Jn.1:1-2; Heb. 1:3, 8; Jn.14:9).
 - 2) He is Spirit. (Jn. 1:1; 1 Cor. 15:45). Lit. He is a life giving Spirit. “Became” is in italics. Christ did not become “a life giving spirit,” but “He is a life giving Spirit.”

<p>Christ was “Spirit” before His incarnation and He is “Spirit” after His ascension into heaven.</p>	<p>He did not enter heaven with a fleshly body. (1 Cor. 15:50).</p>	<p>He will not return with a fleshly body. Flesh was limited to His incarnation. He will never again empty Himself (Phil. 2:5-7), nor ever again be lower than the angels. (Heb. 2:7).</p>
---	---	--

b. When Christ comes, “we shall see Him as He is.”

We shall see His glorious spiritual body.	We shall see His majesty, His beauty, His power, His love, His purity, His fury.
---	--

- 1) Christ has a spiritual body. (Phil. 3:20,21).
- 2) He sits at the right hand of God.
- 3) The fact He is Spirit does not mean He does not have a form or body.
- 4) We will not have a physical body in heaven, but we will have a body.
- 5) The Bible also tells us that men will see Him at His coming. (Rev. 1:7).

“Purifies himself”

3:3

1JO 3:3 **And everyone who has this hope {fixed} on Him [Jesus] purifies himself, just as He is pure.**

- Gr. “hagnos” - “pure, holy, innocent, chase.”
1. “Hope” is so important.
 - a. It must be fixed on Jesus. (Acts 23:6; 24:15; 26:6, 27; Col. 1:27).
 - b. The believers hopes [fully expects] to be with Christ and be like Him.
 - c. This is not “pie in the sky,” but is based on full assurance of faith. (Heb. 11:1).
 2. The child of God takes advantage of the cleansing available by the blood of Christ. (1 Jn. 1:7, 9; 2:1).
 3. “Purifies” is a continuous act denoting we must “keep on purifying” ourselves to have hope or assurance.
 - a. Gr. “hagni’zo” - “I purity, cleanse.”
 - b. We do not earn our cleansing, but when we seek to walk in the light the blood of Jesus cleanses us of all sin. (1 Jn.1:7).
 - c. We purify ourselves by coming to Christ and depending on His blood.
 - d. We purify ourselves by walking in the light, confessing our sins, keeping the commandments, and bathing in the grace of God.
 4. We must diligently continuously seek to be like God now if we hope to be with Him and like Him in the life to come.

Children Of God and Children of the Devil

3:4-10

1JO 3:4 Everyone who practices [the] sin also practices [the] lawlessness; and [the] sin is [the] lawlessness.

1. The theme of this section was set forth in 1 John 2:29.
 - a. The Christian hungers and thirsts for righteousness and practices righteousness.
 - b. He loves good and abhors evil. (Rom. 12:9).
2. The Christian cannot completely avoid sin. (1 Jn. 1:8, 10), but sin should be hated by the Christian and he should have the attitude of repentance when he sins.
 - a. “Sin” comes from the Greek “hamarti’a” and means “to miss the mark”, that is, to veer away from what is right.
 - b. Sin is falling short or going beyond what God teaches.
 - c. “Sin” is called “lawlessness” (anomi’a).
 - 1) It is disregard for God’s law.
 - 2) It is not a mere shortcoming or weakness.
 - 3) “Lawlessness” is the equivalent of iniquity. (Psa. 51:3,5).

PSA 51:3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.

PSA 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

- 4) Sin is an action contrary to God’s law. It is God who determines what is right and wrong.
- 5) This is not the decision or judgment of man.
- c. It is interesting that in the Greek text that both “sin” and “lawlessness” have the definite article before them.
 - 1) Lit. “he [the] hamarti’a [sin] estin [is] he [the] anomi’a [lawlessness]”
 - 2) The words are interchangeable.
 - 3) Sin is lawlessness, and lawlessness is sin.

1JO 3:5 And you know that He [Jesus] appeared [became incarnate] in order to take away sins; and in Him [Jesus] there is no sin [at all].

1. The “He” is Jesus Christ. (1 Jn. 3:8).
2. Jesus did not come for selfish reasons, but He came to die for our sins. (Matt. 1:21;20:27, 28; Lk. 19:10; Jn 10:14-18).
 - a. In John 1:29 the singular “sin” is used in the abstract for all the sins of humanity.

- b. Here it is used for its separate manifestations.
 - c. Jesus died for all sins.
3. Jesus was sinless. (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; Jn. 8:46; 7:18; 14:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 9:13).
 4. Jesus was accused of many sins, but all of the accusations were false.
 - a. Some charged that He **violated the Sabbath**. (Matt. 12:1-14).
 - b. Some accused Him of **blasphemy**. (Jn. 10:30-36).
 - c. Some accused Him of **being a gluttonous man and a drunkard**. (Lk. 7:34).
 - d. Some accused Him of sin because He **associated with sinners** and **had mercy on them**. (Matt. 9:11-13).

1JO 3:6 **No one who abides [remains] in Him [Jesus] sins; no one who sins has seen Him [Jesus] or knows Him [Jesus].**

1. Jesus spoke of abiding in Him. (Jn. 15:4-6).
2. Those abiding in Christ are not habitual sinners, and they despise sin.
 - a. When they do sin, they fall to their knees and repent. They do not boast of sin or think it is a matter of indifference.
 - b. The man of the world could care less about sin.
 - c. He is not penitent. He does not seek to please God and live above sin.
 - d. He abhors everything God loves.
3. The one who practices sin John affirms “has not seen Him or knows Him.”
 - See 3 John 11. “the one who does evil has not seen God.”
 - a. The words “seen Him” or “knows Him” seem to have the same meaning.
 - 1) The one practicing sin does not enjoy God’s fellowship nor can he claim to be God’s child.
 - 2) He does not know Christ nor does he have fellowship with Him.
 - b. The one who practices sin is not God’s child.
 - 1) He is not in fellowship with God.
 - 2) He is walking the darkness. (Jn. 1:5, 6).

3) No one has literally seen God as He is [Spirit]. (1 Jn. 4:12; 1:18; Exod. 33:20; 1 Tim. 6:16).

c. It would seem that some made claims to have seen God and to know God.

d. John flatly exclaims that the one who practices sin “has not seen Him or knows Him.”

Note:

- 1 John 4:12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.
- God is Spirit. (Jn. 4:24).
- A spirit is not fleshly. (Lk. 24:39).
- God is invisible. (Col. 1:15).
- He dwell in unapproachable light. (1 Tim. 6:16).
- Man has never seen God as He is “Spirit.”
- There are theophanies in the Bible - a theophany is a visible manifestation of God. (Gen. 18:1, 22; Exod. 33:21-23).

1JO 3:7 Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He [God, Jesus] is righteous;

1. It is easy to identify the “righteous.”
 - a. The “righteous” practice “righteousness.”
 - b. The fact a Christian may lapse into sin, from time to time , does not mean he is not sincere in his pursuit of righteousness. (1 Jn. 1:5-10).
2. The words “just as He is righteous” refer to God or Christ in this context. (1 Jn. 1:9; 2:1, 29).

The One Practicing Sin

1JO 3:8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning [from his sin and fall]. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. See 1 Jn. 3:5.

1. It is easy to identify the children of the devil.
 - a. They are the ones who practice “sin.”
 - b. They do not care about God and His will especially if it conflicts with their desires and will.
2. “The devil has sinned from the beginning.”

- a. John may mean from the beginning of sin. He has continued to sin from his first transgression.
- b. He was the first sinner.
- c. He was not created evil, but became evil by rebelling [sinning] against God his Creator.
- d. His origin is never discussed.
 - 1) Luke 10:16-17 is a victory passage - not a passage discussing the original fall of Satan. Jesus had sent out “the seventy” and they had cast out demons. This was a defeat for Satan and certainly shows the devil is not omnipotent.
 - 2) Revelation 12:7-11 is not a discussion of his original fall, but is a victory passage. Since the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, Satan cannot successfully lay charge to the brethren. Jesus paid the penalty for their sins and is their “Advocate with the Father.” (1 Jn. 2:1-2).
- e. He is a fallen angel. (Rev. 9:11).

JOHN 8:44 "You are of {your} father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own {nature;} for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

- This points to the fall of Satan which was prior to his tempting Adam and Eve.
- We do not know exactly when he fell. He was presented as the tempter of Adam and Eve. (Gen. 3:1-5).
- Some think the devil is eternal, but there is no evidence that he is eternal or omnipotent or omniscient.
- The devil is not Deity. Only Deity is eternal. Everything else has been created.

- f. He is an angel created by God who sinned prior to creation.
 - 1) We do not know what he did. We do not know the source of the temptation.
 - 2) The devil could choose between good and evil, and he chose evil.
 - 3) God allows him to tempt man, but one day he will be cast into hell. (Matt. 25:41).
3. Jesus came to “destroy the works of the devil.”
- a. **What are the works of the devil?** Sin, misery, sorrow, suffering, condemnation, death.
 - 1) HEB 2:14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;
 - 2) Through the death of Jesus the devil’s power of death was “render powerless.”
 - 3) Because of Jesus, we can overcome both physical and spiritual death.

- 4) There is no condemnation for those who continue in Christ. (Rom. 8:1, 33,34).
- b. Jesus made atonement for our sins.
- c. Because of Jesus we will be raised from the dead and spend eternity with God rather than hell.
- d. Satan is helpless to overwhelm, defeat us as long as we trust in God and His Son. (1 Cor. 10:13; Jas. 4:7, 8; 1 Jn. 5:4, 15).
- e. Christ has abolished death “and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” (2 Tim. 1:10). See 1 Cor. 15:54, 55; Rev. 21:3, 4.

1JO 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His [God’s] seed abides in him; and he cannot [habitually abide in] sin, because he is born of God.

1. The one “born of God” or “begotten of God” does not practice sin. The word “practices” is from “poie’o” that is most often translated “do.” It is used in the present tense here denoting continuous action. The one born of God does not continuously do or practice sin.
 - a. He may occasionally lapse into sin, but he quickly seeks God’s forgiveness and seeks to please God.
 - b. He hates sin and seeks to walk in the light.
2. He does not practice sin because “His seed abides in Him.” NASB, NIV
 - a. Lit. “because seed of him in him remains.”
 - b. The idea is “God’s seed abides in him.”
3. The word “seed” (sper’ma) can have several ideas.
 - a. The word “seed” can refer to “offspring” or “descendant.” (Gen. 22:17).
 - 1) This interpretation does not seem to fit the context or make good sense.
 - 2) This would have John saying, “His [God’s] seed [offspring, descendant] abides in him.”
 - b. The word “seed” could refer to Jesus.
 - 1) The word “seed” is used in Galatians 3:16 to refer to Christ. See Gen. 22:18.
 - 2) Christ dwells or abides in the Christian. (Jn. 14:20, 23; Col. 1:27; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 13:5).
 - 3) This meaning is not totally out of context since Jesus has been mentioned several times already in this chapter. (1 Jn. 3:2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8).
 - c. The word “seed” can refer to the word of God. (Lk. 8:11; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; Col. 3:16).

1) It is through the seed [the word of God] that one is converted and comes into the family of God through faith, repentance and baptism.

2) The word [the gospel] is the “power of God unto salvation.” (Rom. 1:16).

d. It can be used to refer to God’s nature.

1) The R.S.V. has “nature.”

2) “Seed” may refer to the principle of divine life in the believer.

3) He cannot practice sin because God’s spiritual nature abides in him. See Matt. 7:18

1. He is God’s child.	3. The child acts like the Father. (Matt. 5:48).
2. God’s spiritual nature is in him.	4. He seeks to emulate God’s attributes.

4. The second, third and fourth interpretation agree with the teaching of God’s word.

1JO 3:10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious [clear, apparent, known]: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

• Greek “phaneros” means “manifest, clear, obvious, apparent, known.”

1. To John the distinction between “the children of God and the children of the devil” is quite clear.

2. John affirms two things reveal that one is not a child of God.

a. The one “who does not practice righteousness is not of God.” See 1 John 2:29.

b. “The one who does not love his brother” “is not of God.”

1) Read 1 John 4:7, 8.

1JO 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

2) In lieu of this fact, one cannot overstress the importance of loving our brothers and sisters in Christ.

"Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,
© Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation

Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)

