

Living in the Light of His Coming – John 2:28 – 3:3

Up to this point John has described believers as those, who have fellowship with the Father and His Son, who know God, who are in Christ, who are in the light, who walk in the light, who abide in the Father and in the Son, who have had their sins purified by the blood of Christ, who are defended by Jesus before the Father when they sin, who obey His commands, who walk as Jesus did, who love their brothers and sisters in Christ, who do not love the world, who have been promised eternal life, and who have an anointing from the Spirit. John now offers another description of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Christians are those who experience “spiritual rebirth” and, as a result, are adopted as true children of God with full inheritance rights to his kingdom.

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 decisions or a husband’s will, but born of God.*

2:28-3:3 *“It is best to treat this entire section somewhat as a parenthesis [an aside, addition], a parenthesis that is at the same time a summary of the first presentation of the tests and an introduction to the second. The tie with the preceding is seen in carrying over the word ‘continue,’ in order to give it even more emphasis, and in the introductory phrase ‘and now.’ ... The phrase ‘and now’ might be better translated by ‘since this is so’ or ‘this being the case.’ The link in what follows is in the word ‘righteousness,’ which dominates these verses and chapter 3 as far as verse 10.” Boice*

2:28 As believers, we are to live with the understanding that Jesus could come back at any moment. His return is imminent. We are also to live with the understanding of the temporal nature of our existence here on earth and that at any moment our life could be required of us.

Luke 12:16-20 *And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ 18 And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” 20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”*

- This is the first time in John’s letter that he mentions the return of Christ. John emphasizes Christ’s return to keep us sensitive to it. The world doesn’t live in light of Christ’s return, but we do.

1 Timothy 4:8 *... godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

- His concern is for the kind of attitude we will have when we see Him face to face. We will no doubt be humbled and in awe, but how we’ve been living will determine in many ways our emotional state before Him. Either we will be confident knowing that we were loving Him and obeying His commands, or we will be ashamed knowing that we squandered His grace through spiritual apathy, carnal living and all those things He warned us not to be a part of.

“abide in him” The only way to stay confident and unashamed at His coming is to continue living in righteousness by making every effort to walk in the light, to live as Jesus did, to stay in fellowship with Him, to keep aware of our sin and our need for repentance and to make sure we do not in any way accept and entertain the world and its ways.

“Actually, the doctrine of Christ’s return is prominent throughout the whole of the New Testament. It has been observed by some that in the New Testament one verse in twenty-five deals with the Lord’s return. It is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament. It is mentioned in every one of the New Testament books, with the exception of Galatians, which deals with particular doctrinal problems, and the very short books such as 2 and 3 John and Philemon.” Boice

Mark 8:38 *If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”*

Mark 13:32-33 *32 “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.*

- Jesus’ parable about the ten virgins in Matthew 25 hits home when it comes to being ready.

Matthew 25:1-13 *“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ 12 But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.*

- Jesus makes a distinction between believers and nonbelievers with the oil representing the filling of the Holy Spirit.

In this parable Jesus probably did not intend a separation between “Spirit-filled” and “Non-Spirit-filled” Christians; the distinction is likely between true Christians and false believers. Nevertheless, a key to Christian readiness is to be constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Much of the weakness, defeat and lethargy in our spiritual lives can be explained if we are not constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit. Guzik

- The apostle Paul emphasized the importance of living well for the Lord throughout his writings.

Phil. 3:14 *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

1 Cor. 9:26-27 *Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.*

2 Cor. 5:9-11 *Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive compensation for his deeds done through the body, in accordance with what he has done, whether good or bad.*

2:29 Upon salvation, we entered into a familial union with the triune God. We immediately, upon our profession of faith, became His child. We were taken from the orphanage of the world and its dark ways, with Satan being its father, and were immediately brought into the glorious kingdom of God. Living the way He wants us to live shows the world that we truly are His children.

John 8:44 *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

"In the last words of chapter 2, John says that it is by doing righteousness that the one who is really born of God demonstrates that he is born of him. The idea here is of inherited family traits. God is righteous. Consequently, everyone born of God must show traits of this righteousness." Boice

3:1-3 The relationship between a believer and God is that of a Father to his child. God spends our lifetime teaching us how to be his children. He teaches us how to be holy and Christlike in our behavior. He also instills in us a strong sense of being a part of His spiritual family which gives us a spiritual affinity toward those who are His very own.

3:1 John wants us to be amazed at being God's child. He starts with the phrase "**See how great.**"

- "**See**" is a command. The verb *horaō* means *to see with the mind, to perceive, know*.

"The adjective rendered 'what manner' ['how great'] (potapós) occurs only seven times in the New Testament and implies a reaction of astonishment, and usually of admiration, upon viewing some person or thing. The expression conveys both a qualitative and quantitative force, 'what glorious measureless love?' MacArthur

- We can't fully grasp what God's love means for His children, someday we will.

1 Jn. 4:9-10 *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

- God makes us His children through the legal act of adoption. Consequently, Satan can't in any way claim that we are illegitimate children of God.

Rom 8:15 *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." (Romans 8:12-17)*

Gal 3:26 *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,*

Gal 4:6 *Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

- In the Greek the word for adoption is literally translated as "*the placing of a son.*"
- It has a unique meaning and is very different from our understanding of adoption.

- When a Roman father publicly acknowledged his child as son and heir legally in the forum, he did so at a ceremony called “*The Adoption.*” All born into his family were his children. Only those adopted were recognized as sons and in turn they became eligible to all the inheritance rights. If the father refused to recognize the son, he was deemed ineligible toward any kind of inheritance.

Gal 4:1-7 *What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

Gal 3:26-29 *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

- We are sons and daughters of God by adoption. Upon salvation, He accepted us as his sons and daughters and placed us into his family with all its benefits. A believer’s hope is based on the fact that in love, God chose us to become a son or daughter through Christ. Our status before Him will not waver or go away, it cannot be diminished, it will not deteriorate, and we cannot alter it. We’ll be His children for ever and ever.

Eph 1:4-5 *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.*

Rom 8:16 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*

3:2 *The expectation that being God’s children brings, stems from the fact that we will be fully transformed into Jesus’ likeness when we see him in all his glory. This will happen when we receive our glorified bodies at the rapture.*

1 Cor. 13:12 *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

Rom. 8:29 *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

Phil 3:20-21 *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*

3:3. *“Ultimately, our hope is not in heaven or in our own glory in heaven. Our hope is in Him. We must never set our hope on other things; not on a relationship, on success, on mutual funds, on our health, on our possessions, or simply just on ourselves. Our only real hope is in Him.”* Guzik

Romans 5:5 *And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*