God's Children

1 John 2:28-3:3

11-11-2026

The new birth is:

1) Not the experience of everyone (John 8:44)
2) Essential for one to see God's Kingdom (John 3:3, 7)
3) A work of God (not man) (John 1:13)
4) Produced by the Spirit (John 3:6)
5) Effective (it takes effect) when a sinner receives Jesus Christ (John 1:12)
6) Resulting in our becoming adopted children of God (Romans 8:15)

**** What should God's children be like? What should we as "born again" children of God be like?***

I. God's Children should REMAIN CLOSE to their Heavenly Father(v.28)

II. God's Children should TAKE AFTER (IMITATE) their Heavenly Father (v.29)

III. God's Children should BE GRATEFUL to their Heavenly Father for adopting them (3:1a)

IV. God's Children will be VIEWED AS STRANGE by the world which does not know our Heavenly Father (3:1b)

V. God's Children will be CHANGED BY CHRIST when He returns (3:2)

VI. God's Children should be MOTIVATED BY THE BLESSED HOPE to live in moral purity (3:3)

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Introduction: One of the happiest times in life is when a mother gives birth to a healthy baby boy or girl. There was a specific time and place when you were born.

At that time, you were given the last name of your father and your parents may have noticed how much you looked like them. Most people even remember their birthday with a time of celebration each year.
Even though the day you were born was an important day, it was not the most important day of your life. The Lord Jesus spoke of a birth more important than even your physical birth. He said that it is not enough for someone to be born once, but they must be born twice.

The new birth is:

1) Not the experience of everyone (most of the world does not have God as their Father – Jn. 8:44a - "Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.")

2) Essential for one to see God's Kingdom (Jn. 3:3, 7 - "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.")

3) A work of <u>God</u> (not man) (Jn. 1:13 - Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.)

4) Produced by the <u>Spirit</u> (Jn. 3:6 - That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.)

5) Effective (it takes effect) when a sinner receives <u>Jesus Christ</u> (Jn. 1:12 - But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:)

6) Resulting in our becoming <u>adopted</u> children of God (Rom. 8:15b -ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.)

The emphasis in 2:28 - 3:3 is on our <u>sonship</u> relationship to our Heavenly Father.

Note the words emphasizing this idea:

1. "Little children" (v. 28)
2. "Born of him" (v. 29)
3. "Sons of God" (3:1)
4. "Sons of God" (3:2)

**** What should God's children be like? What should we as "born again" children of God be like?***

I. God's Children should <u>REMAIN CLOSE</u> to their Heavenly Father(v.28)

"Little children" - a term of endearment; expressing god's heart (through John) for His children (those who have been born again).

"Abide in <u>Him</u>" - none other than Jesus Christ – the One who is "coming."

Note: The concept of abiding in fellowship with believers should be noted from 2:19.

The word "abide" occurs several times in the previous context (v. 24, 27). Not only should the truth "<u>abide</u> in you," (v. 24) and the Spirit's anointing shall "<u>abide</u> in you" (v. 27), now God exhorts us to "<u>abide</u> in Him."

"Abide in Him" - remain in Christ; stay where you are in your closeness to Christ. The believer's faith in Christ and intimacy with Christ is to remain all of our lives (ILLUS: Many Christians, particularly when they first come to Christ for salvation, are very close to Him. They love Christ. However, if we are not alert to the danger of drifting, our close walk with Him may be jeopardized by sin that we may allow to come in between us and Christ. Such sin will sever our fellowship with Christ

(NOTE: the Vine & Branches -- John 15:1-8 -1 ¶ I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.
2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.
3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.
4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.
5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.
6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.
7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Obedience is the key to abiding in Christ (Jn. 15:10 - If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.)

Christ does not want a static or distant relationship with His children; He wants us to "enjoy and deepen a vital personal fellowship with Christ." (Hiebert, p. 126).

In this verse, as in 3:2-3, "John believed that our prophetic (<u>future</u> - eschatological) hope exerts a practical <u>impact</u> upon <u>present</u> Christian living."

“He shall appear” -

--His coming is personal (“he”)
--His coming is certain (“when he shall”)
--His coming is future (“shall”)
--His coming is visible (“appear” - manifested; to be revealed so as to be seen; the Rapture is no secret event - Rev. 1:7 - Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.)

“Confidence” - To have nothing to hide; to boldly be out in the open, with no remorse, guilt or shame.

Unforsaken disobedience will result in shame and regret at Christ’s return.

“Not be ashamed” - middle voice - an emotional feeling of shame (the passive would require believers to “abide in Him” in order for them to not be “put to shame” (rejected) at His return. This view has theological problems)

“Not be ashamed” - to not shrink away from Him in shame.

ILLUS: The children who were naughty when their parents were away; the parents suddenly return, to the surprise of the kids.

ILLUS: The boss who catches the worker goofing off.

The pressure will be intensified to not “abide in Him” as the end draws nearer.

II. God's Children should <u>TAKE AFTER (IMITATE)</u> their Heavenly Father (v.29)

"He is righteous" - Righteousness is a fundamental attribute of God (It's an extension of His holiness)

<u>Righteousness Notes -</u>

If the Father is righteous, the son will also be righteous ("like Father like son" is true of our relationship with God).

"Everyone" - this sign or mark of a believer is true of <u>everyone</u> in God's family (without exception).

Personal righteousness does <u>not</u> produce the new birth, but does manifest it (a visible external fruit of it).

The "righteousness" to which John refers is righteousness as God defines and measures it, not man. Often men may do righteous things (but the motive is defective, making the righteousness "filthy rags" - Is. 64:6).

The "righteousness" he speaks of is not a man-made, legalistic tradition of "don'ts" ("I don't do this, I don't do that..."), but it is a positive <u>doing right</u>.

Helping a brother in need, spreading God's truth, living a Bible-centered lifestyle, sacrificial giving, conducting ourselves unhypocritically . . . basically, it is living out the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5 - 7).

"Doeth" - One who practices something continually; he speaks of a lifestyle of righteousness not a "once in a blue moon" righteousness.

Righteousness will never be the perfection of our life, but it certainly will be the direction of our life.

"Is born of Him" - perfect, passive, indicative; the new birth is a one-time event (not a process) accomplished by God (not ourselves).

Do you practice righteousness? If you do not, what biblical right do you have calling yourself a born-again son of God?

"The child exhibits the parent's <u>character</u> because he shares the parent's <u>nature</u>" (Stott, cited by Rienecker, p. 789).

III. God's Children should <u>BE GRATEFUL</u> to their Heavenly Father for adopting them (3:1a)

"Behold" - "See" - an attention-grabbing exclamation. "Look at and contemplate this truth!"

Take a heart-moving look at the amazing love which gave you membership in God's family (Hiebert, p. 133).

"What manner" - what type or kind. It's an out-of-this-world kind of love that God extended to us.

"Bestowed" - to give. God's love was "<u>given</u>", not earned; "<u>given</u>", not deserved.

"That we" - the writer, John, includes himself; he did not view himself as more worthy of God's love than the people to whom he writes.

"That we" - we who were enemies of god (Rom. 5:10).

"**Called" -** named or titled.

"Sons of God" - to be the King's kids is the highest privilege.

"The sons" - *tekna* - speaks of our <u>legal</u> relationship as sons (not *huious* "son" which is reserved for Christ as the only begotten Son).

*Note: Roman Adoption Laws.

To be a "Son of God" means we have:

--A <u>relationship</u> which will never end

--A <u>Father</u> who will never leave us nor forsake us

--A <u>fortune</u> of all spiritual blessings

--A <u>favor</u> with God unshared by the unconverted.

Basically, everything Christ has is ours via our marriage to Him.

And to think that we at one point were <u>not</u> children of God; but were under His wrath (aliens and strangers infinitely removed from Him).

But because of our union to Christ, we become "joint heirs" with Christ (Rom. 8:17).

What we <u>were</u>:

Eph. 2:1-3, 12 -
1 ¶ And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

What we <u>are</u>:

Eph. 2:19 - Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

IV. God's Children will be VIEWED AS STRANGE by the world which does not know our Heavenly Father (3:1b)

"Therefore" - because of this relationship with God as a son

"The world knoweth us not" - because they are of another "Father."

That is why their lifestyle is different than ours.
That is why their language is different than ours.
That is why their priorities are different than ours.
That is why their worldview is different than ours.

"Because it knew Him not" -
John 1:10 -He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

If you do not know Him, you will never know those born of Him. God's children will be an enigma to you, because God is foreign to you. To know the Father's love is to know those born of Him; to love Him is to also love His kids (I Jn. 5:1).

--Our dedication to God's Word seems fanatical to the world.

--Our time spent at God's House seems foolish to the world.

--Our loyalty to Christ and His way of living seems archaic to the world.

Expect the world to give you trouble -

> Jn. 16:33 -These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.
>
> II Tim. 3:12 - Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

So when the world troubles you, persecutes you, laughs at you, realize why. It's because they don't know Him!

The world's approval of us should serve as a warning that we are not living right.

Are you blending in to the world so much that your light is dim and no rebuke to their darkness?

Are you willing to be different for the Lord's sake?
Are you willing to be odd for the Lord's sake?

You will not fit in!

Peter said, (I Pet. 4:4 - Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*:)

Why don't you go to the night clubs, drink and party, commit fornication, lie, cheat, steal?

V. God's Children will be CHANGED BY CHRIST when He returns (3:2)

"Now are we the sons of God" - We don't need to die to find out whether or not we are sons of god. Sonship is a present reality to all who believe.

"It doth not yet appear" - A child of God is here and now, indeed, like a diamond that is crystal white within but is still uncut and shows no brilliant flashes from reflecting facets" (Lenski).

"Like a caterpillar that possesses the DNA of a butterfly, we will go through a supernatural metamorphosis that will transform us into what He has made our new nature to be" (David Hocking).

"We know" - How do we know? By faith in His promises.

"When He shall appear" - When He is manifested at His second coming, we shall be changed in every way (both physically and spiritually) (I Cor. 15:51-54 -)

"Like Him" - Similar to Him but not him! We are not Christ, not little gods, as Mormonism and New Age lies are spreading.

"**For we shall see Him" -** our seeing Christ must produce a change in us.

Unless we were changed, we could never stand before His glorified presence (cp. Rev. 1; Exo. 33:20).

Our old nature will disappear at the Rapture.

"As He is" - not as people paint Him to be or portray Him to be.

We shall see Him "face to face" (I Cor. 13:10, 12) at His coming.

Until then, no one living on earth sees Christ face to face! (so much for Oral Roberts seeing an 800 foot Jesus!).

VI. God's Children should be <u>MOTIVATED BY THE BLESSED HOPE</u> to live in moral purity (3:3)

"This hope" - this hope of seeing Him as He is at His coming.

"In him" - lit. on Him; i.e. on Christ.

"Purifieth" - to live a holy (separated from sin) life.

Initial <u>positional</u> purity is a work of god alone; however, when it comes to daily <u>practical</u> purity, you must strive for present, personal purity (James 4:8 - ; cp. Phil. 3:13-14).

Your confidence regarding your future, is what gives you the incentive to live for God in the present.

Sanctification is a life-long day by day <u>process</u>; as we grow in faith, we become more like our Lord Jesus Christ.