

“BEHOLD WHAT MANNER OF LOVE!”

I JOHN 2:29-3:3

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

This is an awesome passage! It shows what we believers are right now, what we will be in the future, and what we must now be doing.

IN LIGHT OF ALL THAT WE ARE AND WILL BE IN CHRIST, WE MUST PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PURIFY OURSELVES!

I. WHAT WE ARE RIGHT NOW

A. We are born of God (29)—have been born and continue to be a child of God.

B. We are called children of God (1).

1. Objects of God’s “Love”

- How Great! The term always implies astonishment, and generally admiration.
- “Behold!” The term is a word of exclamation to observe or pay attention to something important. The word bristles with urgency and excitement, and even more with “How great.”
- *Agape* love—not based on feelings—mind and will; a choice of those totally undeserving
- “Beloved”—those who are loved by God and by John.
- “Bestowed/given to us—freely by pure grace
- “Called” such—how honorable and what dignity!

2. Children of God in reality (both in v. 1 and in v. 2—for emphasis.

- “And *such* we are”—v. 1
- “**Now** we are the children of God.”—v. 2
- “Children” comes from a verb related to “give birth”—indicates being born again.

II. WHAT THE WORLD’S ATTITUDE IS TOWARD US (1b)

A. The world does not know us”—acknowledge, understand, appreciate, or have a friendly attitude to us.

B. The world is of their “father”—Jn. 8:44; God is not their father; therefore they cannot relate to or appreciate the true child of God.

C. The “world” is the organized system under satanic control that stands in opposition to God and His truth and righteousness (see at 2:15). Of course persons are involved since the topic here is “knowing.” John here thinks of “unregenerate people”, those not born again.

D. The world did not know Him—Jesus when He was here on earth; they rejected Him because He was of His Father. See this same argument in John 15:18-16:4; also Jn. 1:10-11.

E. Approval by the world is to be feared, not desired. To be hated by the world may be unpleasant, but ultimately it should reassure the members of the community of faith that they are loved by God, which is far more important than the world’s hatred.

III. WHAT WE WILL BE IN THE FUTURE (2)

A. “What we shall be has not yet been made manifest” (2)

- “We shall be” speaks of the future development of the children of God.
- The details—“what”—has not yet been made evident/manifested by God.

B. “If/when he shall be made manifest we shall be like Him” (2)

1. The conditional clause does not place doubt on the reality of His coming—only its timing and the details of what then takes place.
2. Jesus is made manifest by the Father at His Second Coming.
3. We shall be “like Him”—not “equal to” Him (a different word)
4. Changed into His image, inwardly being cleansed of all defilement (true eradication of sin nature) and outwardly receiving a glorified resurrection body.

- Phil. 3:21—“Who will change our vile body/the body of our humble state that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”
 - I Cor. 15:42-44; 51-53
5. The Rom. 8:29 process of being conformed to the image of His Son is then complete.
 6. This “**we know**”—it is not a question, but full confidence.
- C. We will see Him as He is—see Him in His full glory with glorified body.
1. “Just as”—no modifications
 2. In that way we will be restored into His image—the image lost in the Fall.
 3. The process happening now is seen in II Cor. 3:18—“from glory to glory”
 - This happens while “beholding as in a mirror”—not a direct view.
 - Imagine what happens when we see the full manifestation of His glory!
 - Compare Rev. 22:4—“They shall see His face.”

IV. WHAT OUR MANNER OF LIFE MUST BE NOW

A. Righteous (29)

1. You know that God is “Righteous”
 - Totally conformed to the own consistent standards of what is right and just.
 - Righteous in nature and character, and consistently manifesting such in His behavior.
 - His laws are established in order to conform to His own nature.
 - God is always self-consistent: ‘He cannot deny Himself’ (2 Tim. 2:13). He does what is according to His character, because He does what is right.
2. Everyone who is born of God practices righteousness—this you also are knowing by experience.
 - a. “Is born” is perfect tense—a continuing state of having been born.
 - b. The birth is brought about by God—not ourselves (passive)
 - c. We are born “out of/from Him”—therefore we have his character and traits that resemble Him.
 - d. “Does” is present tense—**Practicing/continually doing** is the idea.
 - e. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS—only those who practice righteousness are born again!**

B. “Purifies himself” (3)

1. “**He**—literally “that one”, the Son of God into whose image we are changed—**is Pure**.
 - John does not say that He purifies Himself—He is already totally pure in nature.
 - He has absolutely no impurity; we are turned into His image—must be like Him.
2. The believer continually purifies—present tense; this must be a lifelong sanctification.
3. Sanctification involves the work of God—and the work of the believer (cf. Phil. 2:12-13—“Work out your own salvation...For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure.”
 - Thus, “purify himself” If we put forth no effort, we will not attain full sanctification.
4. This is true of **everyone**—No exceptions!
5. This purification is motivated and empowered by **hope**.
 - a. “Hope” is confident assurance.
 - b. Hope is “on Him”—He is the object of our hope.
Fixed on Him—Christ is the foundation upon which the hope rests. Christ is the object of the believer’s hope, since He is the One who must return, and it is His likeness into which the believer is changed. Such an object of hope is “sure” and “unchanging” since it is based on the Lord’s unchanging character.

CONCLUSION

What great love, what amazing Love! How blessed we are now, how abundantly blessed we will be in the future!
 Yes, the world does not know us, but God is righteous, and we must be like Him and must be progressively sanctified.

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