

The Children of God

1 John 2:28-3:3

By Scott Huckaby

8/9/2026



1 John 2:18-27 Summary: John describes the deceptions of the Church Age and emphasizes the importance of abiding in Christ.

Applications from this passage...

- The Spirit of antichrist is deceptive... the best defense is growing closer to God to know the truth.
- It is important to abide in Christ which means experiencing a relationship with Him.

1 John 2:28-29 – What it means to live in Jesus.

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

Why should we abide in Christ?

So, *that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed*: Abiding in Jesus means that we need not be afraid or **ashamed** when Jesus returns.

- Since we intimately know Him, we can have **confidence** at His coming.

Why do some people fear the return of Jesus?

Because they never knew Jesus at all. But among those who know Him, some will still be *ashamed before Him at His coming* when they realize that they have been living worldly, unfruitful lives.

- In one moment, the understanding will overwhelm them that whatever else they accomplished in life, they did not *abide in Him* as they could have.

Paul the Apostle speaks of those who are “barely saved”: *he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire* (1 Corinthians 3:15).

- There are those who, for at least a moment, the coming of Jesus will be a moment of disappointment rather than glory.

Why is it important to consider the difference between “barely saved” and “almost saved?”

It is difficult to measure the distance between “barely saved” and “almost saved.”

- It is dangerous to contemplate questions such as, “How little can I do and still make it to heaven?” or “How far can I stray from the Shepherd and still be part of the flock?”

Instead, we should be diligent to not be **ashamed before Him at His coming**.

What is the way to prepare for Christ’s coming?

Certainly, by including the study of the prophecy in your getting to know the Lord.

- And in general, abiding in the faith of Him, holding His truth, following His example, and making Him your dwelling-place... And since your Lord may come at any hour, and you will welcome Him.
- When you abide in Him, you are ready for Jesus to come at any time.

Will we ever reach the point where we no longer need to abide in Christ?

We will never grow beyond our need to find confidence in abiding in Jesus.

- Because John used “**we**” instead of “you,” we know that *he* needed this confidence also.

Why is the concept of abiding in Christ so essential?

The idea of living in Jesus is so prominent in Scripture.

Jesus promised in John 14:23: *If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

- Paul expressed this idea in his prayer for the Ephesians in Ephesians 3:17: *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*

There are two Greek words to convey the idea of “to live in”; one has the idea of living in a place as a stranger, and the other has the idea of settling down in a place to make it your permanent home.

- *Dwell* in Ephesians 3:17 uses the Greek word for a permanent home, indicating that Jesus wants to settle down in your heart, not just visit as a stranger.

How do we *abide in Him*?

Or do we just visit Jesus every once in a while?

Abiding in Jesus gives us *confidence* because we know we wouldn't change our lives substantially if we somehow knew Jesus would come back next week.

- We would already be abiding in Him.

What is revealed in *everyone who practices righteousness*?

Abiding in Jesus means that we will practice righteousness in our lives because we are *born of Him*.

- Being born again has changed our lives from a disposition to sin to a disposition to righteousness.
- There is something wrong if someone claims to be *born of Him* and does not *practice righteousness*.

There are three precious claims for each Christian in this chapter. *I know Him* (1 John 2:4), *I abide in Him* (1 John 2:6), and *I am in the light* (1 John 2:9).

Does practicing righteous mean that we do not sin?

We will not *perfect* righteousness until we are glorified with Jesus; but we can *practice* righteousness right now, as we are *born of Him*.

1 John 3:1 – The glory of God's love.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

What is the amazing result of being born of Him?

that we should be called children of God! Having just mentioned being *born of Him*, John speaks in amazement about this *manner of love* that makes us *children of God*.

- He wants us to *behold* it — that is, look at it and study it intently.
- It is of great benefit to the Christian to take a good, intense look at the love of God *bestowed on us*.
- *Behold* means that God wants to see this love and He is not ashamed to show it to us.

What does it mean that God has *bestowed* His love on us?

First, this speaks of the *measure* of God's love to us; it could more literally be translated *lavished on us*.

- Secondly, it speaks of the *manner* of God's giving of love; *bestowed* has the idea of a one-sided giving, instead of a return for something earned.

What is it that makes us slow to believe the love of God?

Sometimes it is *pride*, which demands one prove himself worthy of the love of God before he will receive it.

- Sometimes it is *unbelief*, which cannot trust the love of God when it sees the hurt and pain of life.
- Sometimes it just takes *time* for a person to come to an understanding of the greatness of God's love.

What is the significance of being called a child of God?

As God looked down on lost humanity, He might have merely had a charitable compassion, a pity on our plight, both in this life and in eternity.

- With a mere pity, He might have set forth a plan of salvation where man could be saved from hell.
- But God went far beyond that, to call us the *children of God*.

Who calls us the children of God?

- The Father does (*"I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty,"* 2 Corinthians 6:18).
- The Son does (*He is not ashamed to call them brethren,* Hebrews 2:11).
- The Spirit does (*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,* Romans 8:16).

Who is a child of God?

Everyone is not a child of God in the sense John meant it here. God's love is expressed to all in the giving of Jesus for the sins of the world (John 3:16), but this does not make all of humanity the *children of God*.

- Here he speaks of those who have *received* the love of Jesus in a life of fellowship and trust with Him; *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name* (John 1:12).

How is it *the world does not know us*?

Because of our unique parentage from God, we are strangers to this world (or should be).

- This shows the great danger of a Christianity that works hard to show the world just how much like them we can be.
- Thus, we should not be surprised or offended to find out that *the world does not know us*.
- Ultimately, we should expect the world to treat us as it treated **Him** — rejecting and crucifying Jesus.

1 John 3:2 – The destiny of God’s children.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

How can we know that we are children of God?

We can know that we are indeed among the **children of God**...

Romans 8:16 – *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

If you are a child of God, you have an inward assurance of this.

What does it mean *it has not yet been revealed what we shall be*?

Though our present standing is plain, our future destiny is clouded. We don’t know in the kind of detail we would like to know what we will become in the world beyond. In this sense, we can’t even imagine what we will be like in glory.

What clues do we have about *what we shall be*?

We are not left completely in the dark about our future state. When Jesus is revealed to us by His coming for us, *we shall be like Him*.

Romans 8:29 – *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren*

God’s ultimate goal in our lives is to make us like Jesus, and here, John speaks of the fulfillment of that purpose.

Will we cease to be ourselves when we are made like Jesus?

No, we’ll retain the distinct personality and character God has given us.

- Heaven will not be like the Nirvana of Eastern mysticism, where all personality is dissolved into God like a drop into the ocean.

We will still be ourselves, but our character and nature will be perfected into the image of Jesus’ perfection. We will not be “clones” of Jesus in heaven!

Does God force us to be like Jesus?

The Christian should long to be like Jesus, yet remember that God will never force a person to be like Him if he doesn’t want to.

- That is what hell is for: people who don’t want to be like Jesus.

The sobering, eternal truth is this: God gives man what he really wants...

- If you really want to be like Jesus, it will show in your life now, and it will be a fact in eternity.

- If you don’t really want to be like Jesus, it will also show in your life now, and it will also be a fact in eternity.

What does it tell us that we *shall be like Him*?

This reminds us that even though we grow into the image of Jesus now, we still have a long way to go.

- None of us will be finished until we see Jesus, and only then truly *we shall be like Him*.

How is it a blessing that we *shall see Him as He is*?

This is perhaps the greatest glory of heaven: not to be personally glorified, but to be in the unhindered, unrestricted, presence of our Lord.

1 Corinthians 13:12 – *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known*

In the ancient world, mirrors were made out of polished metal, and the image was always unclear and somewhat distorted.

- We see Jesus now only in a dim, unclear way, but one day we will see Him with perfect clarity.

What is the connection between being like Jesus and seeing Him as He is?

We can say that the same principle is at work right now.

- To the extent that you see Jesus *as He is*, to that same extent, you are like Him in your life.

We can say that this happens by *reflection*...

- When a man looks into a bright mirror, it makes him also bright, for it throws its own light on his face; and, in a much more wonderful fashion, when we look at Christ, who is all brightness, he throws some of His brightness upon us.

1 John 3:3 – Knowing our destiny purifies our lives

And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

What is our hope?

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*.

What does it mean to purify our lives?

To be more like Jesus and seek to please Him in what we think about, say and do.

How may we purify our lives?

By anticipating and looking forward His return for us.

- Knowing our eternal destiny, and living in *this hope* will purify our lives.
- When we know our end is to be more like Jesus, it makes us want to be more like Jesus right now.

How does the expectation of the rapture occurring at any time (immanency) purify our lives?

Knowing that in our next breath we could find ourselves before Jesus is powerful incentive to not do anything that would make us ashamed before Him.

- It makes us want to be ready, to be serving Him now, to be pleasing Him now.

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- Children of God will abide in Christ.
- Abiding in Christ means adopting His biblical worldview and being motivated to please Him.
- Living in constant expectation of His imminent return for us makes us more like Him.