

**Study Notes: 1 John 3:1-3**  
**August 2, 2020: “Children of God”**  
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***See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!***

- To give assurance to believers, John turned again to the love of God and the work that it accomplishes in the life of believers. The verb translated as “lavished” means “to give or bestow like a gift.” The Father’s love has come to us through Jesus Christ and his sacrificial death on the cross. Because of Jesus, we are called children of God. The Pillar New Testament Commentary notes, “To be called children of God is an immense privilege because it means that God himself has chosen us to be in his family.”
  - This verse echoes what John said in the opening of his gospel, “Yet to all who did receive 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 decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” (John 1:12-13)
- John reiterated the fact that this is a true statement for all those who accept the gift of salvation that Jesus offers.

***The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.***

- Just like the world did not accept or receive Jesus, so it will not fully understand or accept believers.
- The Expositor’s Bible Commentary notes, “Jesus came to his own, but the world did not ‘know him’ (Jn 1:10; 1 Jn 3:1) and does not know his disciples either. Because of this ignorance, the world hates God and Jesus and will also hate anyone born of God (Jn 15:18–16:4; 17:14–15). The difficulties this creates for believers are, however, far outweighed by the eschatological benefits of childhood, which John explores in vv. 2–3.”

***Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.***

- As children of God, we have been and will be transformed into a new creation (see Revelation 21, 2 Corinthians 5:17). Though we know this to be true, no one knows exactly what that new creation will look like.
- However, we do know that we will be made like Christ and we will see Christ in the fullness of His glory.
- Paul also discussed the theme of new creation and the new body we will receive, when Christ appeared at great length in 1 Corinthians 15 (see especially verses 50-54).

***All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.***

- Being God's children, and having the hope of eternal life in heaven with Christ, comes with responsibilities and causes believers to take action. All who believe will also seek to purify themselves from unrighteousness and sin, just as Jesus Christ is pure. This same injunction is found in many places in Scripture, sometimes as a call to holiness (for examples, see 2 Corinthians 7:11, 1 Peter 1:15-16, Hebrews 12:14, 2 Timothy 1:9).
- The Faithlife Study Bible states, "John is referring to the active role that a Christian plays in the effort to overcome sin, but his statement also points to ultimate reliance on Christ, the Pure One, to accomplish this effort."
- Biblical scholar, James Boice, also notes about this important statement, "...if we are to be like Christ hereafter, then we must act like Christ now, imitating him now, particularly in the area of our personal morality. Moreover, it is not even a mystical and somehow glorified Christ that we are to imitate, for John admits that he does not yet know what we shall be, having not yet seen Christ face to face in his glory. The Christ we are to imitate is the Christ of history. It is the Christ of the opening pages of the Epistle, the Christ who was seen and heard and touched and indeed proclaimed from the beginning as the heart of the apostolic gospel. That is the Christ who is coming back and to whom we must answer for how we have lived and how we have employed the talents he has entrusted to us."