

## The First Epistle of John

*...so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (1John 1:3)*

### 1John 3:1 - 3

#### Review

Where is John writing from?

What heresy was he addressing?

What flavor of Gnosticism was John specifically dealing with?

What did the heretics teach?

How does John deal with this false teaching?

1John 1:6-10

Someone read 1John 2, v28 – 29

Someone else read 1John 3:1 - 3

Let's return to our identification of "Him" in v29 for a moment. There are several arguments of it referring to God the Father:

1. It is normal for John to refer to Christians being "born of God"
  - a. Eg., 1John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1; 4, 18
2. Indeed, it would be the only time in the NT where we are said to be "born of Christ"
  - a. According to the commentator Law, "it is against the tenor of the NT to speak of Christians as "begotten of Christ."
    - i. The literal translation from the Greek (**γεννάω**) is "to be begotten by a father," but can be used metaphorically, as it is here (we are not literally begotten physically by God; contra Mormonism), for regeneration, rebirth, being born by a mother, engender.
3. The majority of Evangelical commentators agree the John intends the meaning to be "born of God" (of the commentators I looked at, only John Gill and Matthew Henry thought it should be "born of Christ."
4. It was probably so self-evident to John that spiritual birth comes from the Father, he was not bothered by slipping from one "antecedent" (His Coming referring to Jesus) to another.
  - a. The "rule" in Greek grammar that the nearest antecedent is the intended referent is only applies when the author does not have another referent foremost in his mind. (see, for example, Jn 5:20).

Let's move on to chapter 3. Somebody read Jn 3:1 - 2

Translators have tried to render the opening of the 1<sup>st</sup> verse in a number of ways, none I think quite get the appropriate nuance in the Greek.

Behold what manner of love...(KJV, NKJV)

See what sort of love...(NET)  
See how great a love...(NASB)  
How great is the Father's love ... (NIV)

The expression "what manner/sort of love" originally meant 'of what country.' It is as if the Father's love is so unearthly, so foreign to this world, that John wonders from what country it originates.

The word implies astonishment. And this love has not merely been shown to us, it has been *lavished* on us (so the NIV)!

"That we should be called children of God..."

God is actually pleased to call us by this phrase. How remarkable it is that He love us so much that He would call us His Children! We who were once his enemies!

If, as a Father, we call somebody our child, what are we telling the world?  
We are claiming that this child is ours, the he is indeed OUR child.

We are children of adoption and grace, not by nature. But this is by no means to reduce it to a mere title. When God calls, it is effectual: people ARE what He calls them.

What does the phrase "and such we are" signify?

Confirmation of our legitimacy.

Interestingly, this phrase is omitted in the KJV. Why is that?

"For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."

What does this remind you of?

John 1:10-12

Note that here, the reference is clearly to Christ. It is ambiguous in the epistle. It probably refers to the Father (so most commentators), but it could refer to Jesus (so John Stott, Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes).

Our sonship, though real, is not yet apparent (Rom 8:19). The world stands opposed to the children of God, just as it stands opposed to Jesus, because both represent the antithesis of the world.

This very fact is further proof that the readers are God's children. And because they are God's children, they need never "shrink back in fear" (2:27). John is very concerned to assure his readers about their salvation.

Christians who are persecuted sometimes feel cut off from God because they are in difficult and unpleasant circumstances, and they may be tempted to give up;

on the contrary, the very fact that they are being persecuted should strengthen their faith since it is an indication that the evil world recognizes that they have been born of God.

Eg. Ro 8:35 – 39; 1Pet 1:6-7

Let's take a look at the next verse:

“Beloved...”

Why does John address his readers this way?

Because he truly cares for them

Because those who are loved by the Father are loved by the apostle also

John 16:27

Because he wants to follow Jesus' New Commandment

Jn 13:34 – 35

“it has not appeared, yet, what we will be...” What is John referring to, here?

Second Coming (1 Th 4:17).

Doesn't this contradict what he writes in 2:27?

The two revelations – of Christ and our final state – will happen simultaneously. We shall be glorified together (Col 3:4).

“We will be like him...”

Like = Gk ὅμοιοι ('similar to', resembling)

This process is called what?

Glorification

“..because we will see Him just as He is.”

Greek *hoti*, gives the reason or cause for something.

So, what causes our resemblance to Christ?

Seeing Him!

1 Cor 2:9

We shall be both with Christ and like Him; for a fuller explanation, we are content to wait.

V3 “this hope ...” What hope?

In or rather *on* Christ

“Fixed on” (NASB) “focused on” (NET)

“purifies himself ... pure”

Free from moral stain

How is gold made pure? Similarly, we are purified when everything not

like Christ is removed from our souls by fiery trials.

John has already emphasized that, since Christ is righteous, we must practice righteousness if we do not want to be ashamed at His coming.

1 Jn 2:28, 29

Similarly, since He is pure, we must begin the process of purifying ourselves and continues until the day we die (or until the Second Coming!) Only Christ's blood can ultimately make us clean from the guilt and stain of sin, but if we truly love Jesus, we will want to participate in our own purification through the process of sanctification.

We need to be warned against being complacent in our faith, as though we need to nothing after we come to Christ. To become complacent is to abandon hope. It suggests that God has already done all He can do, and He has no more moves open to Him.

Worse still, "is to acquiesce in the present sorry state of the world and of ourselves, the situation in which the true light shines, but only in the midst of darkness, We have to be constantly reminded of the hope of a future consummation and encouraged to live in the light of that great event."