

The Purifying Hope, Part 2

1 John 2:28-3:1

62-23

We are returning to our study of 1 John and we're having a wonderful time in this book. I confess that I'm not moving at any particularly high rate of speed, and that is by design. I want to draw out of this book all that is here for us and I want you to understand the wonderful and glorious that are herein contained.

We are looking at a section that does belong together even though there's a chapter interruption in it. It really does go together. It's chapter 2 verse 28, running down through verse 3 of chapter 3. That is one paragraph and this would be our third message in this particular paragraph or section. Let me start reading at verse 28 with what is clearly a point of demarcation. The words "and now" which means he's turning to another matter, "And now, little children, abide in Him so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who also who practices righteousness is born of Him. See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears we shall be like Him because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself just as He is pure."

We've entitled this little study here, "The Purifying Hope." This hope refers to everything that's been said about the appearing of Jesus. You will notice that "when He appears" is stated in verse 28, "when He appears" is repeated again in verse 2. Twice we are told that Jesus will appear. And this is our hope. We live in the hope that Jesus will appear. Now the question is, to what does that refer? What is this appearing? Well it is further described for us in verse 28 with the phrase "at His coming." His appearing is His coming.

It is further described for us in verse 2, it is when He appears at His coming and when we see Him, end of verse 2, just as He is and further described, "When we shall be like Him." It's very clear then what our hope is. Our hope is that Jesus will come and at His coming He will appear and when He appears we will see Him. And when we see Him, we will be like Him. The appearing comes from the Greek word *phaneroo*. *Phaneroo*, the appearing, the arrival is used of the incarnation, the birth of Christ. It's used of the resurrection as well in the New Testament. But here it clearly refers to the return of Jesus Christ in the future when He comes to reveal Himself to His people who then will see Him as He is and become like Him. This is clearly a reference to the return of Jesus Christ. We then live in the light of Christ's return. This is, of course, a great theme in Scripture. Colossians 3:4, "When Christ who is our life is revealed," same word, "is manifest, when He does appear, then you also will appear with Him in glory." He is coming, at His coming He will appear, we will see Him, we will become like Him, we will be with Him in glory. In 1 Timothy 6 and verse 14, Paul says, "Keep the commandment...referring to all that is in Scripture...without stain or reproach until the appearing of

our Lord Jesus Christ." And there Paul is looking forward again to the Second Coming, the appearing of Jesus when He comes back for His people. In 2 Timothy 4:8 Paul says, "There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Those three texts, Colossians 3:4, 1 Timothy 6:14, 2 Timothy 4:8, all refer to the same appearing, the future coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a future event which will culminate all of human history, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, manifestly, visibly to reveal Himself to His people, make His people like Him and to bring His people into eternity glory.

Now there are four elements to His appearing and I just want to kind of spread those out before you for a little bit so you'll understand them. First of all, He will come for His saints, He will come for His saints. This is what is called in Scripture "the catching away," or the Rapture of the church. Jesus initially made the promise of this coming for His saints, for His people in the upper room that night which He was betrayed, when He said this in John 14:1, "Let not your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many rooms, if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself that where I am there you may be also." Jesus says I'm going to come for you, I'm going to come to take you away with Me. Then again in the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians there is a similar promise. Verse 51, "I tell you a mystery, we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed." That is to say the dead are raised into an imperishable body, already described in the chapter, and those that are alive are instantly transformed and the perishable puts on imperishability and the mortal puts on immortality. That is the same event. When the Lord comes for His saints.

Perhaps the most definitive description of this event is 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 where in verse 14 we read, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again...and we do...even so, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." Here's how it's going to happen. "We who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede those who have fallen asleep for the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel, with the trumpet of God the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and thus we will always be with the Lord." That's the same event. I'm coming for you, I'm coming to reveal Myself to you, I'm going to catch you away. The dead in Christ rise first, the alive are transformed into imperishability and immortality and we are taken up to heaven to the place that He's been preparing for us. He will appear then for His saints.

The second phase of it is He will appear with His saints. We believe that the Bible tells us that after He has come for His saints and taken us out of the world, all who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will leave in that wonderful event. On the earth after we're gone, there will be a time of Tribulation, a time of Great Tribulation. That is described very, very carefully and clearly in Matthew chapter 24 and in Revelation chapter 6 all the way through chapter 19. It is also the time of Jacob's trouble from the Old Testament. It is the final week of Daniel's 70 weeks when a covenant is made with the Antichrist and you know those kinds of details. But the end of that period called Tribulation, the Lord will return this time with His saints. The saints that He already came for, He comes back with. Matthew 24 describes that feature of His appearing, Matthew 24:21, "There will be Great Tribulation, such as not occurred since the beginning of the world until now. Unless those days should have been cut short, no life would have been saved. For the sake of the elect, those days will

be cut short. If anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or, 'There He is,' do not believe him, for false christs and false prophets will arise, will show great signs and wonders so as to mislead if possible even the elect." So you have a time of Tribulation, proliferating false christs and false prophets. Don't believe any of them. Verse 25, "Behold, I've told you in advance, if therefore they say to you, 'Behold, he's in the wilderness,' don't go forth. 'Behold, he's in the inner rooms,' do not believe them for as the lightning comes from the east and it flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather," indicating that when He comes with His saints He comes in judgment. Vultures there to consume the flesh, a picture described, by the way, in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation.

When it happens, verse 29, it will happen immediately after the Tribulation. Immediately after the Tribulation is over, this event takes place. "The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light. The stars will fall from the sky. The powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And when He comes then He will send forth His angels with a great triumph and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." He comes with His saints.

This is reiterated in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, verses 31 and 32. "When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne, all the nations will be gathered before Him and He will separate them from one another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." So the Lord Jesus is coming for His saints, then there's a Tribulation, after the Tribulation He comes with His saints both holy angels and glorified saints, gathers the rest of the saints, that is those who have been saved during the time of Tribulation and draws them into His Kingdom. The very description of that coming is in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation. I draw your attention to it. Just by way really of background to what we're going to say. But in Revelation chapter 19 we have a very specific description of this event. Revelation chapter 19 and we can pick it up in verse 11. "I saw heaven open and behold, a white horse and He who sat upon it called Faithful and True," that's our Lord Jesus, "and in righteousness He judges and wages war and His eyes are as a flame of fire and on His head are many diadems, or crowns. He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood. His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses."

I believe this refers to the redeemed.

So here He is coming with His saints. "Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword so that with it He may smite the nations. He'll rule them with a rod of iron, treads the winepress with a fierce wrath of God the Almighty on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And He wreaks havoc on the earth in judgment." And after that, verse 20, He binds Satan and then establishes the thousand-year Kingdom in verse 3. Verse 4 says He establishes thrones. So that's the third phase. He comes for His saints. He comes with His saints. He comes to reign through His saints. He's establishing thrones. They sat upon them, judgement was given to them. "I saw the souls of those who were beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, because of the Word of God, those who would not worship the beast or his image, did not receive the mark on their forehead and upon their hand, they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." We know that He promised that the apostles would reign over the twelve tribes of Israel. We are told by the apostle Paul that we should never sue others, that the church would sit in judgment on those things since some day in the future we're going to have the position of ruling and reigning even over the angels.

We who are faithful to Christ will rule with Christ. So first He comes for us. After the Tribulation He comes with us. And then He establishes His Kingdom on earth and reigns through us dispensing, as it were, His glorious reign across the earth through the saints that have been saved out of the Tribulation because they believed, and the glorified saints who have come back with Jesus Christ in their glorified form. Through both the glorified and the living believers, Jesus Christ will reign. It is at that point that the curse is reversed, as Romans 8 says, that the creation in verse 21 is set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. It is then that there is the glorious manifestation of God's children, a revealing of the children of God. For the first time the world will see who believers really are. They'll see them in millennial power. They'll see them in heavenly glory as they come back to reign with Christ.

And the fourth element is...He comes for His saints, He comes with His saints, He comes to reign through His saints and then establishes the new heaven and the new earth and forever dwells among His saints. You come to chapter 21 and you only need to look at the opening three verses. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth," that's the eternal state at the end of the thousand-year millennium. He recreates the whole universe. The first heaven, the first earth passed away, that's the one we're living in now. No longer any sea. The holy city, the New Jerusalem, the capital city of God's heaven comes down out of heaven, takes its place in the center of the new heaven and the new earth. "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men and He shall dwell among them, they shall be His people and God Himself shall be among them.'" Three times it says He will be among us.

So He comes for His saints, with His saints, to reign through His saints. And then forever spends eternity among His saints. Now all of that is the coming or the revealing of Jesus Christ and there are four elements to it, four features, four aspects. The Rapture of the church, the return in judgment, the establishment of the millennial kingdom and the creation of the eternal state, the new heaven and the new earth. We live in the light of this. This is the next event on God's calendar. This is the next event in prophecy. There is no prophecy that needs to come to pass before the Lord comes for His saints. That's why we say His coming is imminent. It could happen at any time. It's the next event. There are no signs leading up to the Rapture of the church. It is a sign-less event. It happens when we don't expect it. We live in the light of it.

And then it initiates and inaugurates all of those features of His glorious revealing. First He's revealed to the saints. Then at the end of the Tribulation He's revealed to the whole world as He comes back riding on that white horse, as it were, with no place to hide and He destroys all the ungodly. Then sets up His Kingdom. And then finally the eternal state. This is how history ends and it matters, folks. It always bothers me that you can talk to people who are very precise about their understanding of the Bible, very precise about their understanding of theology. When you ask them a question about eschatology, that's from *eschatos* which means the end, or the last, when you ask them about the last things and how the story ends, they don't have a clue. They say, "Well I don't know if I'm a-mill, post-mill, pre-mill, pan-mill, whatever mill. I don't...but I don't think it's really important." That's like saying, you know, that a book is written, the most important book that's ever been written in the history of the world, the only book that truly reflects God's purpose for humanity and you don't care how it ends. Of course you care how it ends. And I believe that God has given us the ending with the same precision that He gave us the beginning. We live in the light of this reality. Jesus is going to appear. This world has not seen the last of Jesus.

This is our hope. First Timothy 1:1 calls it "our hope." Titus 2:13 calls it "our blessed hope." Second

Thessalonians 2:16 calls it "our good hope." Romans 15:4 calls it "our comforting hope." Romans 5:2 and Romans 12:12 calls it "our joyous hope." Galatians 5:5 calls it "a righteous hope." Hebrews 7:19, "our better hope." First Peter 1:3, "our living hope." Hebrews 6:19, "our sure and steadfast hope." Romans 5:5 presents it as a non-disappointing hope. First Peter 1:13 says it is "our gracious hope." Titus 3:7, "our eternal hope." Colossians 1:27, "our glorious hope." Hebrews 6:11, "our assured hope." First Peter 3:15, "our defensible hope." This is pretty important. The story is not over until the story's over. And there's no reason to be ambiguous and there's no reason to be confused and vague. Oh, it's hard to understand the specific persons and the specific times but we do understand that. Peter says the prophets of old look to see what person and what time these things were to come to pass. We have a hard time identifying the exact personality of the Antichrist or the beast or the false prophet as they are described in the book of Revelation. We have a hard time with precise timing in these things, certainly. But we basically understand how the story will end if we interpret prophetic literature with the same literal historical grammatical principles with which we interpret everything else. The story is not over until Jesus comes for His people, then returns with His people, then reigns through His people. And then establishes the eternal dwelling place where He lives forever among His people. That's how the story ends.

It's seriously disturbing to me that so many don't care about how the story ends. Why do you think the whole book of Revelation was written? So that you could know how the story ends and so that you can join in the praise that is going on in heaven in Revelation 4 and 5. I'm glad I know how God ends the story and I can praise Him for what is coming.

You know, just to follow up on this a little bit. More and more people who want to call themselves Christians are distancing themselves from any expectation of the Second Coming. People don't talk about it. You don't preach about it. People...they're interested in it as fiction. They're not interested in it as biblical theology. They're interested in the coming of Jesus Christ like they're interested in Harry Potter. And more and more people who call themselves Christians are really disavowing any expectation of the Second Coming. Liberal theologians long ago denied the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and they simply spiritualize all of the prophetic Scriptures and the ones they can't spiritualize they just deny are true. The only Second Coming liberals believe is that the Second Coming of Jesus into somebody's heart. They treat the apostles' hope of future coming as a myth, some false expectation.

But lately there have been some traditionally conservative professedly Bible-believing Christians that have attacked the doctrine of Christ's return, the appearing. This view is gaining tremendous momentum. It is called Pretorism(?) or Hyper-Pretorism(?), or realized eschatology. And I'm amazed to see some of the names of people who are lining up with this. This hyper-pretorism, this realized eschatology bases itself on one verse in the Bible, Matthew 24:34. In Matthew 24:34 Jesus said, "Assuredly I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place." Now Jesus had been talking about future things, He had been talking about prophetic things. And then He said, "This generation will not pass away until all these things take place." They therefore interpret that verse to mean that every last detail of biblical prophecy had to have been completed before the death of the people to whom Jesus spoke. And so they converge all the end time prophetic promises on one event that happened in 70 A.D. and that was the sacking and destruction of Jerusalem. Everything was fulfilled during the turmoil and political upheaval that ensued when Jerusalem was sacked by the Romans and most of its inhabitants were massacred. So that according to this view, this hyper-pretorist view, Christ's Second Coming, the appearing that we've been reading about, the resurrection of the dead and the Great White Throne judgment all happened

around 70 A.D. So that absolutely no prophecy of Scripture remains unfulfilled. There's no future hope for Christ's return, they say. They even claim that we are now living after 70 A.D. in the new heavens and the new earth.

This is a hard sell if you read Revelation 21 and 22, the description doesn't match. This means that the earth we live on now is permanent. It's permanent. And sin and evil will never be eradicated. And Satan has already experienced as much defeat as he will ever experience. There's no tangible reality or physical existence beyond the grave. At death the believer simply becomes a disembodied spirit because there is no future resurrection. You see, the problem is if you're going to fulfill some end time prophecies in 70 A.D., you can't be selective. So if you're going to say the Second Coming of Jesus Christ was fulfilled in 70 A.D., you know that it's around the events of the Second Coming that the resurrection of the dead takes place and the Great White Throne takes place, that's got to have happened there as well. Has got nothing left. So when somebody dies they just become a disembodied spirit, passing into the presence of God on a purely spiritual plane with no hope of any future bodily resurrection and the souls of the wicked are simply cast out of God's presence in some disembodied form.

What do they do with statements in the Bible that the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout? I don't know that anybody saw the Lord coming down or shouting or blowing a trumpet in 70 A.D. And did the dead in Christ rise first in 70 A.D.? Did corruptible people become incorruptible and did mortal people become immortal? And was death swallowed up? And 2 Peter 3:10 says when that event happens the heavens will melt with a great noise and the elements will melt with fervent heat. That's the dissolution of the universe, that didn't happen in 70 A.D., what do they do with all that? Well they just allegorize it away, spiritualize it away, make it mean whatever they want it to mean.

Which is remarkable to me. They demand this wooden, literal interpretation of Matthew 24 and in order to fit everything into that hard and fast and absolute sort of wooden literalism of Matthew 24 that "This generation will not pass away till all these things be fulfilled," they have to allegorize everything else. So we have no hope in the future for the return of Christ. We have no hope in the future for a resurrection. We have no hope in the future for an earthly kingdom. We have no hope in the future for Jesus to come and create a new heaven and a new earth. That's just not true. This is a very increasingly popular view. They renounce the plain meaning of Scripture. They renounce every creed, every doctrinal standard ever affirmed by any significant church council, denomination, theologian in the entire history of the church when they deny that Christ will come back to earth. This position is so bizarre you wonder if it should even be considered. But it has to be considered because this is how people think.

When you come to the return, the appearing of Jesus Christ, the Bible is not ambiguous, absolutely crystal clear. There's one verse that I want you to look at just to kind of nail this down for you. Acts 1...in Acts 1, you can pick it up in verse 9, after Jesus said what He said about receiving the Holy Spirit. It says in verse 9, "After He said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, a cloud received Him out of their sight." That's pretty clear.

He was there. He was talking with them. He was real, could be touched. He had the scars of His crucifixion. He was recognizable. He was the God-Man. And all of a sudden He was just lifted up and He just kept ascending, this is His Ascension, until He disappeared in a cloud. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold two men in white clothing stood beside them, two angels appeared and they said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky?"

You know, that seems to me at first read a silly question. People say, "Well, what would you be looking at if somebody just took off?" But that's not what they meant. It's why...the verb in the Greek...it's why are you gazing longingly as if He's lost to you? "This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven..." How did He go up, by the way? Physically? Bodily? In full view. "This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you've watched Him go into heaven."

How do you get around that? The way He left is the way He's coming back...clouds and He's visible and He's real and He appears. He ascended in a physical, bodily form, He'll return from heaven in just the same way as you watched Him go into heaven. How do they get around that? They deny that He actually ascended into heaven in bodily form. How can they deny that when the Bible says that? Well they say it doesn't mean that. We'll tell you what it means.

This is just one of many attacks on the Second Coming. I don't need to beg the issue. The Second Coming is a cardinal doctrine, cardinal doctrine. We believe it. Now we also know Jesus said, "Of the day and the hour, no man knows," right? So we live in the imminent aspect of it. Mark 13, you don't know what time it's going to happen. You don't know. There's mysteriousness to it. I don't know when it's going to happen. People say that to me, "Do you think we're living near the return of Christ?" Nearer than yesterday, nearer than this morning. "Well, when do you think it will happen?" "No man knows the day or the hour." You do not know when the time is...Mark 13:33...I don't know when it is. That's like people ask me, Jesus came and He had a name written that no man knew and they ask me, "What is that name?" How am I going to know that name? You're not going to find that name in the footnotes of the MacArthur Study Bible. I don't know that name.

Hal Lindsey wrote a book, *The Late Great Planet Earth* and said Jesus would come in 40 years, after 1947 when Israel was a state. Forty years later Jesus would come. A man named Weisenant(?) wrote a book in 1988, *Eighty-eight Reasons Why Jesus Will Come in 1988*. Remember that? Little red book. Eighty-eight reasons why Jesus will come in 1988, He didn't come. The next year he wrote another book. *Eighty-Nine Reasons Why Jesus Will Come in '89*. That's true. And then he bailed on it, the project didn't work. He couldn't sell the '89 book because people knew by then. Then Harold Kamping(?) of Family Radio came out with an absolute prediction that Jesus was going to come in a specific year. The Bible is pretty clear, we don't know. Much mystery clouds are full understanding of the timing of these things, we have no idea. The Son of Man is coming in an hour you don't expect, Luke 12:40, so just be ready all the time. You don't know when He's coming. It's impactful to live in the light of the coming of Christ.

I always think of the story when I was a kid, crazy story but I did crazy things as a kid. When the teacher left the room when I was a kid, I often felt it was my opportunity to take over the class for no good reason. And I remember one time I happened to be jumping from desk to desk and failed to hear the orthopaedic wedges coming back toward the door, you know. All of a sudden the door is thrown open and she comes in and I'm in mid-flight. Anticipation of the coming of someone who has authority has a marked influence on how we conduct ourselves. Don't you know? Like the way you drive when there isn't a policeman around, and the way you drive when you think there might be one around the next corner. The Lord understands the powerful motivation of living in the light of the imminent revealing and appearing of Jesus Christ. All of that to take us to the text.

Let's go back to 1 John. Now anyone who has this hope, verse 3 says, anyone who has this hope fixed on Him will find that it has immense implications, practical implications. These people who live

as if Jesus already came in the past, they literally are cut off from this marvelous motivation. John is going to show us here the powerful influence of living in the light of Christ's coming. Living in the light of Christ's coming has powerful influence. You know, the Thessalonian church understood that, one of the reasons they were such a wonderful church was that in verse 10 of chapter 1 of 1 Thessalonians, they lived waiting for His Son from heaven. Do you live like that? That's a tremendous impact, how you live and how you plan for the future.

John gives us in this text five features to a life lived in this hope...five elements of it. And sometimes John's not too easy to track. Let me see if I can just kind of cut this passage up and we'll move a little more into it. The first feature related to living in the light of this hope is that the hope in the return of Christ is secured by abiding. Not everybody can have this hope. This hope is limited to people who are abiding. Verse 28, "Now, little children, abide in Him so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." The term "abiding" means to remain, *meno*, to stay, remain faithful to the gospel. We went into this in detail last time. Remain faithful to Christ, don't do what they did back in verse 19, "They went out from us, they were not really of us, if they had been of us they would have remained with us. They went out in order that it might be shown they were not all of us."

You remain. If you want to be sustained in the benefits and blessings of this hope, if you want to enjoy the motivation and the influence of this hope, then abide in Him, remain faithful. This is a call to persevere and not defect, to continue in His Word. This is the very call that you have in the third chapter of Hebrews verse 6, Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, whose house we are if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. The people who have this hope and for whom this hope has power in their lives are the people who hold fast their confidence in Christ, continue to cling to that hope firm to the very end.

Down in verse 12 of Hebrews 3, it says, "Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart in falling away from the living God." And verse 14, "You will become partakers of Christ, we have and it will continue if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance, firm unto the end." Just another way to describe abiding, be faithful. Over in chapter 4 verse 11, comes at it on the negative side, "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience."

We said this last time, Scripture very clearly commands us to abide. John uses the term all through this epistle. We are commanded to abide. We are commanded to be overcomers. Revelation 2 and 3, "Blessed are those who overcome...who sustain." The overcoming is described in 1 John 5:4 as our faith.

So our hope is secured by remaining faithful. That is the means by which God secures us, by means of our preservation. It is by faith as the means that He saves us. It is by faith and obedience as the means that He sanctifies us. It is by perseverance and endurance as the means by which He secures us. And being secure and abiding, we will have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming. Those who abide have a kind of fearless trust. Verse 17 of chapter 4 speaks of the same thing. "By this love is perfected with us that we may have confidence in the day of judgment." When you see in your life the wonderful love of God poured out, shed abroad, when you love God, love Christ and love the people of God, when that love is perfected in you by the work of God, this gives you confidence in the day of judgment. It allows you to fearlessly look forward to the return of Christ. Look at it another way, if you have denied the name of Christ, if you once confessed

Christ and you have fallen away, if you have once endeavored to walk obediently, you no longer care, you're in sin, you will have no right nor will you have any heart to hold to a hope that some day Jesus will appear because when He does you're going to be there in shame and there will be no confidence in His appearing. That belongs to those who abide. Our hope then is secured by abiding.

Secondly, it is manifest by righteousness...it is manifest by righteousness and this is in verse 29. "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him." Now our future hope begins to take on some behavioral impact. The people who really have this hope, the people who abide will not only be blameless at the time of His appearing and stand before Him confidently and not shrink away from Him in shame, but they are here manifesting righteousness because those who have this hope have this hope because they've been born of God. Wonderful, wonderful reality of new birth, regeneration. This, of course, unmasks the phonies again, doesn't it? John does this so well. People who claim to be, "Oh yes, I'm waiting for Jesus to come...Oh yes." And you look at their life and there's no righteousness there, there's no love of righteousness, hatred of sin. So this unmasks the phonies who claim to have Christian hope and have absolutely no right to it. It is a hope that belongs to those who manifest righteousness.

Look at the verse again. "If you know that He is righteous, " if you know, *oida*, if you know absolutely that He is righteous, not by experience so much, but you know it because it's an absolute truth. If you know that, and you do, that He is righteous, you know, different word, *ginosko*, you know consequently or experientially or reasonably that everyone also practices righteousness is born of Him. If you know absolutely that He is righteous, then you can perceive that the one doing righteousness is reflecting His life. Logical. The son will be like his father. A believer will be like His Father. If you know He's righteous, you know that everyone practices, present-indicative pattern, the pattern of their life, not perfection, but direction...pattern of life. If you know that He is righteous, that is He is without sin, without error, He is just, He is free from evil. Psalm 11, "The Lord is righteous. He loves righteous deeds." Great verse. If you know that He is righteous, you know that anyone who has been born of Him, past completed action with present continuing results, anyone who has been born of Him is going to manifest righteousness. And you're back to this same thing again that a believer is known not by what they claim but by how they live.

So, our hope in Christ is guaranteed by abiding. It is realized, or manifest in righteousness. If your life is characterized by a practice and pattern of sin, you have no right to this hope. And again John is saying what you did in the past, some prayer you prayed, as we heard again in baptism, some baptism that you had some time in your life isn't how you determine your spiritual condition before God, you look at your life right now and you ask...what is the pattern? What do I long for? What do I love? What do I desire?

I was saying to the young people this week in a conference that what sets a Christian apart, really, is a longing to...to honor Christ. It's a longing to honor Christ. You don't always fulfill it, but that's your longing. And I told them, I said, "You know, I study the Bible a lot but I don't ever study the Bible with the end in mind of understanding doctrine. I don't ever study the Bible with the end in mind of solving an exegetical problem. My understanding of the Bible, my ability to solve a problem in a text, my effort to interpret a passage, my grasp of theology is never an end in itself. The end of all of that is to make Christ and to make God more wondrous in my mind, in my heart. It's always to understand more about God, more about Christ, to make God more glorious and Christ more wondrous so that the compelling cry of my heart is to honor Him."

I think the driving force in living a Christian life is not somebody banging you with rules. It's being lost in wonder, love and praise. And you study the Scripture to understand what it says about God. You study the Scripture to understand what it says about God manifest in the flesh in Jesus Christ so that you're so caught up and swept away by the wonder of God and the glory of Christ that the desire of your heart to please Him and to honor Him increases and increases and increases. And that's how you move away from sin because the things you know that dishonor Him are so repulsive to you. So when you're saying a righteous life, you're talking about the direction, you're not talking about perfection. People who are born of God who possess the life of God pursue righteousness and are interrupted in the pursuit by sin.

Well, we could say more. I can't believe the time has gone so fast. I don't even have time for the next point, but I'll tell you what it is. You can write it down cause it's an important one and it's going to set the foundation for things later in the epistle. We said then that our hope is secured or guaranteed by abiding. It is manifest or realized in righteousness. And here is a wondrous thing. Our hope is established in love...it is established in love.

Chapter 3 verse 1, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God and such we are, for this reason the world doesn't know us because it did not know Him." This is the astounding fact that we have been given this hope, we have been enabled to abide, we have empowered to manifest righteousness because of God's immense love. The reason we're His children is because of His love. And the language here, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us," John is overwhelmed with astonishment as he contemplates the amazing love which conferred on sinners the right to be sons of God and therefore to have this great hope.

Just the first word of chapter 3 "See, look, behold, wonder, adoring astonishment how great a love." I just have to tell you about that word "great," can I? *Potapan(?)*, classical Greek. It poses this question, where did that come from? You would use it when you wanted to express the idea that this was foreign, this was alien. It would be used to describe something that was so abnormal and unnatural that you would say, "What country did that come from? What planet did that drop in from?" Something completely foreign, something that has an origin completely outside of our world. See what a foreign alien unearthly other-worldly love the Father has bestowed upon us that He would give us the privilege of being His sons and then having this great hope.

Well that's a little teaser for next Sunday night. And we will wrap up this section then.

Lord, again we are so blessed to have Your Word. We are so encouraged because the more we know it the more we know You, the more we know You the more there is to love You for. To love You with all our heart, soul, mind and strength requires that we have this ever-increasing understanding of Your glory, what makes You so worthy of all our affection. Help us to always learn the Word of God with a view to better knowing the God we love and the Christ who lives within us so that we would love You more, long to be like Him, pursue those things that honor You. Increase our knowledge of Yourself and of Your Son and of Your Spirit that we might pursue out of surpassing and increasing love that which we know would please the one for whom our love grows and grows. And thank you for loving us in the beginning. We desire to live in the hope of Jesus' appearing. It could be any time. Make us ready. Strengthen us to abide. Power us to manifest righteousness. Fill us with wonder and astonishment at such love that has privileged us to possess this hope as Your children so that we may make the glory of the gospel attractive to those around us. These things we ask in Your Son's name. Amen.

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