

Wednesday in the Word

Digging Deeper

January 5, 2022

1 John 3:1-3

Sons of God

1 John 3:1-3 KJVS

[1] Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. [2] Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. [3] And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

[1] You know the feeling. You are in strange surroundings with strange people. Some you know, most you don't. You migrate to the ones you know but somehow you still sense alienation. At some predestined point you enter into conversation with a new face and quickly find connection; fellowship. No time is wasted in realizing you both belong to the family of God; not simply as individual members of all created humanity but because He has newly recreated each of you and specially adopted you into His nuclear family. This new acquaintance is much more than a voice or a face. This is a brother or sister. You are instantly close and want to catch up with one another as if you've always known each other but were separated for a season. You are supernaturally united by the death and resurrection of Christ and are now bound together in an everlasting relationship. A change has taken place in you in that the old you has been crucified with Christ and you are now risen again with Him, created new and joined into Him and His family. Sons and daughters of God are born again into His family and fellowship. John 1:12, Romans 8:14-17, Galatians 4:6, 1 Peter 1:23, Ephesians 1:5, 3:14-19. We belong together, bonded in His Love.

The expression 'sons of God' was used very differently in the Old Testament. See Job 1:6 and 38:7 for example. Angels, as creations of God were the agents of His will and message and were understood as manifestations of His working hands. Elsewhere as in Daniel 3:25 the Son of God was a specific title referring to the appearance of God Himself in the flesh. Jewish understanding of this was confused at best and never fully accepted as their preincarnate Messiah. We now know this to be Christ. He being literal, physical God is therefore His Son. In Jewish thinking a son fully and accurately represents his father and assumes all his responsibilities. A son is not simply an offspring of his father but rather a furtherance and fulfillment of him. Jesus being God's Son has paid the price for our adoption and we are now His brothers and sisters and thereby God's sons and daughters. Also in opposition to Jewish understanding there are multiple references to God's Son. No Jew would dare refer to God as his father. When Jesus did, it was a capital offense. John 5:18. All that said to say this. The world knows Him not and they know us not. Two families strive against each other. The family of God and the family of man. Think it not unusual then when you are hated of men. Like 21:14-19.

[2] We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. Much speculation has gone into this statement. We would all love to think of ourselves disappearing and walking through walls like Jesus did. Or rising off the earth in radiant, glorified bodies. Whatever is coming our way we must be careful not to seek self glory. We know we are headed for an exciting, joyful existence but only in the light of the risen Lord of Glory. We are best to think like John the Baptist did. Mark 1:6-7.

[3] It is better and safer for us to understand the intent of verse 3. Any future hope we have comes not through personal worth or the promise of idle words. Our hope is in the humility of accepting the sacrificial work of Christ on our behalf and in our determination to be pure for His sake. This Word purifieth is hagnizō in the Greek; that is to make clean, to sanctify or set apart. To make pure, purify, cleanse. Only Jesus Himself can fully perform this for us. 1 John 1:9. So what can John mean here by telling us to purify ourselves? Jesus is a gentleman. He does not force Himself or His work upon us. He will not purify us against our will. In fact it must be a desire of our own will to grow in His grace and to conform to His nature. Getting saved is enough to get us to heaven but true fellowship in Christ and with one another is only achieved when we desperately seek to live right and do right for His sake. If we have the will, He performs the work. We must willingly yield to His hand. Romans 6:19.