

I John 2:28 – 3:3

Intro. • In review of our study of I John, how would you answer these questions?

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?

- Does your Bible translation/version divide the text differently than we have done?
- Can you observe the tension in these verses between the “already” and the “not yet”?

2:28 • When John addresses his readers as “little children” is he...

- expressing a paternalistic attitude?
- exhibiting a condescending attitude?
- emphasizing that the readers are “children of God”?

- How does the command to “abide in Him” connect with previous verses? (cf. 2:24,27)
- Did John, writing at the end of the first century, still expect Jesus to appear again at a second coming?
- What should be the consequence of our “abiding” in Christ?
 - we become more knowledgeable and spiritual?
 - we are absorbed into Christ?
 - we are confident and unashamed when Jesus returns?

2:29 • Does John presume that his readers know that righteous character is derived only from God?

- What does it mean to “practice righteousness”?
 - practice makes perfect?
 - conformity to acceptable standards of righteousness?
 - allowing the righteous character of Christ to be manifested in our behavior?
- What is required in order to “practice righteousness”?
 - to be born again?
 - to partake of the life and nature of God?
 - to be conscious of the divine spark that is in every man?
 - to have a positive reckoning about your right standing with God?

3:1 • What is the “great love that the Father has bestowed upon us”?

- the historical incarnation of Jesus? (cf. John 3:16)
- the redemptive action of Jesus’ death? (cf. Rom. 5:8)
- the ontological investiture of His own Being? (cf. 2:27,29)

- How does that bestowal of divine love allow us to be “called children of God”?
- Why do you think that John emphasizes that we are not only “called children of God”, but “we are” children of God?
 - because there is more to reality than a name?
 - because this is not just a title that we are trying to live up to?
 - because God only declares what is true in fact?
- What is the “reason the world does not know us”?
 - we are “children of God”?
 - they didn’t recognize Jesus either?
- What/Who is “the world that does not know us”?
 - the physical universe?
 - the fallen and sinful world-order?
 - human beings who are not Christians?

- How does the world's failure to recognize Jesus serve as the basis for its failure to recognize the "children of God"?
- 3:2**
- When John reiterates (cf. 3:1) that "we are children of God," does he mean that we are so...
 - definitely and definitively, in terms of identity?
 - presently, right now, in terms of time?
 - By stating that "it has not appeared as yet what we shall be," is John saying...
 - the future is unknown?
 - our total perfection is yet to be?
 - when we die we will find out what we will become?
 - we will "be all we can be" someday?
 - What will become apparent when Jesus "appears" on earth a second time?
 - What does it mean that "we shall be like Him"?
 - That we shall be essentially equal with God? (cf. John 5:18)
 - Are we already like God? (cf. I John 4:17; II Peter 1:4)
 - Can any creature be like God? (cf. Gen. 3:5)
 - Are we already like Christ?
 - Is to "be like Him" to imitate or reproduce Him?
 - Will we be "like Him" when, in the absence of physical hindrances, we can express the perfection of His character perfectly in our behavior?
 - How would you explain the comment, "we shall see Him just as He is"?
 - that the physical Jesus was not Jesus as He really is?
 - that we will see Jesus in the perfection of His Deity? (cf. Col. 2:9)
 - that we will see God in the perfection and purity of His character?
 - that we will see God "face to face"? (cf. I Cor. 13:12)
 - Doesn't Scripture say that "no man has seen God at any time"? (cf. Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; I John 4:12,20)
- 3:3**
- What is "this hope on Him" that John refers to?
 - Christ in us, the provision for glorifying God? (cf. Col. 1:27)
 - the expectation of Christ's second coming?
 - the confidence of seeing Him as He is and being like Him?
 - Does the one who "purifies himself"...
 - engage in ritual purification from sin?
 - strive to live a pure life?
 - allow the pure character of God to be expressed in his/her behavior?
 - Is this purity the basis for our seeing God? (cf. Matt. 5:8)
 - Is such purity an inevitable result of having "hope" upon Christ?
- Conc.**
- Can you detect how these verses serve as a foundation for the following verses, 3:4-10?
 - Explain how "doing righteousness" and "purifying oneself" fit into John's argument.
 - Are righteousness and purity responsibilities of the Christian life?
 - Are righteousness and purity the logical consequence of being "born of God," "abiding in Him," and "hoping on Him"?
 - Do righteousness and purity prepare us for Christ's second coming?
 - Does the mention of righteousness and purity make you feel inadequate?