

OUR GLORIOUS DESTINY

1 John 3:1-3

Intro: In these three verses the Apostle John mixed together the past, the present, and the future.

He begins by speaking of the past and the present in verse 1. The Father bestowed His love upon us in both the past and the present. And so we are at the present moment his children. There is good support in the Greek text for the words, “and we are,” following the statement “that we should be called the children of God.” So that definitely is the present. And what he added about the world is also definitely present tense.

Verse 2 begins with the present, and then the Apostle John moved quickly to the future. So the major part of verse 2 has to do with the future with the admission that there are things about the future that we do not know as well as what we do know.

Verse 3 deals with our present responsibility in the light of the future.

As far as we know, when the Apostle John wrote his epistles, he was the last remaining apostle, and he was in his late eighties or early nineties. He had walked with God many years, and we have in his epistles his mature understanding of the simple and yet glorious truths which he has given us in his epistles. He was still marveling in the love of God and the fact that he was in the Father’s family. These truth had not gotten old to him, and they should not get old to us. It always ought to bring fresh blessing to us to think about His love for us. And that is behind his use of the word, “Behold.” He considered it nothing short of amazing, not only that God loved us, and loves us, but what He has done for us because of His love for us. It is not amazing that we should love God. In fact, it is most amazing that the whole world in every generation of people and every nation does not love the Lord. But it is most amazing that the Father would love us, as unlovely as we are. Cf. Paul’s expression of the same idea in Rom. 5:8, “But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

But I have said that at the beginning of this verse the Apostle John combined the past and the present. He gave us His love before the foundation of the world, but that love remained the same, unchanged and unchanging love, as John was writing about it that it was before the

foundation of the world. One possible translation of the words, “what manner of love,” could be, *of what possible sort is this love!* Think of how long He has loved us, and how He has shown His love to us. The coming of Christ and His sacrificial death for us on the Cross, is the way in which He has expressed is love for us. It would have been wonderful enough for Him to save us, but God was not satisfied until He had made us members of His family. *We are born ones. We have His life in us. His love for us never changes, and it will never stop.* Now all of this is present. And it is an eternal present. I have said before that when I was born, my folks had to take what they got – and that wasn’t very much. But when you and I were saved and born into the family of the Father, God as taking what He wanted. Isn’t that amazing!

But there is another fact that becomes evident, and always present, for those of us who know the Lord. Notice the word “therefore” in verse 1? The Father knows us and loves us and provides for us and guides us and keeps us, but because we belong to the Father, “the world does not know us.” The world can’t figure us out. The world has no room for us because it doesn’t like us. And the Devil uses all of his energy (and it is great) to get us to try to get the world to accept us and to make a place for us. That is where much of our temptation comes from. The world is not going to change, but the world wants us to change. But the solemn fact remains that because we are children of the heavenly Father, the world really prefers to act like we don’t exist. The world doesn’t even take us into account.

Look back in chapter 2 at verses 15-17. See also Rom. 12:1and 2.

As we come to verse 2 John emphasizes again what he has stated in verse 1. This is to drive this truth into our hearts and minds. We are right now the children of God. Note the word “now.” We are, and we are right now. And we must not forget this.

But from this point, the Apostle John took a big jump. And he declares here that while we are always going to be the children of God, yet we are not always going to be like we are now. The Lord did not pray that the Father would take us out of the world, but that we would be kept from the Evil One and the designs that he has upon us. We live in a world where we are surrounded with temptation. And sometimes we fail the Lord. It bothers us, and we come to the Lord confessing our sins, praying that the Lord will keep us from dishonoring Him with our sins. But the important

point that John made here is that we are not always going to be like we are now. Notice that John did not say it doth not yet appear *where we shall be*. The Lord cleared that up before He left this world. And we find that information in John 14:1-3 and John 17:24. Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 5 that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. But the change that will take place in each one of us is going to be so wonderful that it is not possible for us to comprehend it if the Lord had told us all about what is to come. Even the Apostle Paul in that great love chapter of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13 said,

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

However, while we don't know everything and are not capable of knowing everything even if it had been revealed, we are told the most wonderful part about it. It is not just that we will be in heaven, as wonderful as that will be. Nor is it that we will be reunited with our loved ones who have preceded us to heaven. But it is that we are going to be with the Lord. He wants us where He is. And yet even that is not all. And here we come to the word that puts these verses into our series: the word "know"! Listen to what John wrote: "But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

It is not that you and I are going to find our way to where He is, but that He is coming to get us. *We know this. We can be absolutely certain about this.*

We saw in Philippians 2 this morning that the Lord's glory was veiled by His humanity most of the time while He was here on earth. But John says here that "we shall see Him as He is." This means that we will see Him in His unveiled glory, see Him like only a few who were on earth got a glimpse of Him while He was here on earth. And the result is going to be that "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

And all of this is headed by the words "we know."

Now during this series I have not been able to cover all of the verses which give us "Truths We Know." But I hope I have made you conscious, or more conscious, of that little verb than you have ever been before. Paul was one who was continually asking the Lord's people, "Don't you know," or "Know ye not." All of us can know more than we

do know because we still haven't exhausted the Word of God! But we never will. That is the reason that we need to keep learning. As long as we live we need to keep learning what our Bibles tell us, but not everything that we some day will know has been written in our Bibles.

What a prospect this is! We are going to become totally like God, but more like Him than than we are capable of becoming now.

But let me move on to the last verse in our text for tonight: 1 John 3:3.

Again notice what it does not say. It does not say that every man, or every person, that hath this hope in Him *ought to* purify himself even as He is pure. I think we are all guilty of reading it that way. No, that is not what it says. It say that every man that hath this hope in Him, in Christ, *does* purify himself even as He is pure.

We have watered down in so many ways what the Bible teaches about a person who truly is a child of God, that we have treated the Bible the same way. The Apostle John wrote this epistle that we might know that we have eternal life. And so we can say that the person who is not interested in living a holy life, and is not actively pursuing such a life, is not saved!

Look back to verse 19 in chapter 2 of 1 John.

Turn also to Hebrews 5 beginning with verse 11, noting how the writer led up to verse 11.

What was Peter's parting word in the last verse of 2 Peter – verse 18.

How do we purify ourselves? See Psa. 119:9, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? See also Psa. 119:11. Also John 15:3, "Now ye are clean . . ."

We need to read the Word. We need to understand the Word. We need to obey the Word.

Coupled with the Word is prayer. The Word prepares us to pray. And then there needs to be faithful attendance with the Lord's people as they meet together for prayer and the ministry of the Word. Make sure of your salvation by purifying yourself.