

The Epistles of John

Week 32: 1 John 2:28-3:3

God has not just shown his love to humans, but he has given it to them in such a way that it becomes a part of them. He lavishes, or imparts, permanent and abiding love to his children.

1 John 2:28–3:3

1 John 2:28–29 (ESV)

And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

1 John 2:28-3:3

John states that the motivation behind this faithful abiding is eschatological in nature. The apostle wants his readers to remain true because of the certainty of Christ's return.

The second coming of Christ will not be a process, but an instantaneous occurrence.

Parousia, meaning "a coming" or "an arrival," anticipates the personal return of Christ. This is the only time he uses the word. This word was something of a technical term and marked the arrival of a king, ruler, or official with open splendor, dignity, and respect.

1 John 2:28-3:3

The verb translated “be ashamed” (aischunthōmen) appears only here in John’s writings. It carries the idea of shrinking back or being separated from God through guilt or shame.

Western culture today is largely not an honor and shame culture, but in the hierarchy of ethical values in the ancient Near East and in the Jewish world, honor and shame were right at the top of the value hierarchy, as high up there as even ‘truth’ as opposed to ‘error’ was.

1 John 2:28-3:3

Ancient Near Eastern people would rather die than be publicly shamed, and indeed they were prepared to die for the honor of their kin group or their tribe or their people or their faith. It's an honor and shame culture.

Life and death were not the most important values in the ancient Near Eastern or Graeco-Roman world. They just weren't. The concept of honor and shame was more important.

Think of the Japanese, the Kingons, and of Islamic Terrorists as examples.

1 John 2:28-3:3

Concerning vs 29, what John is trying to stress is that doing what is right is the consequence of spiritual birth; hence if a person does what is right, this is a sign of spiritual birth. Naturally, this does not mean that any morally upright person is a child of God, even though he makes no religious profession.

John is quite clear that being a Christian is dependent on believing in Jesus Christ and loving one another (3:23), and his other remarks must be understood in this context.

John's use of the articular participle, "he who does," does not imply "slightly" or "sometimes." It indicates "is characterized by" and so describes a life characterized by righteousness.

1 John 2:28-3:3

1 John 3:1a (NIV)

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 3:1b (ESV)

The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1 John 2:28-3:3

The adjective *potapēn* translated “how great” (NIV) or “what manner” (KJV), which occurs only seven times in the New Testament, always implies astonishment.

God has not just shown his love to humans, but he has given it to them in such a way that it becomes a part of them. He lavishes, or imparts, permanent and abiding love to his children.

God’s love transforms those who exercise saving faith into his children. They are now “called,” or bear the name, “children of God.”

1 John 2:28-3:3

1 John 3:2 (NKJV)

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

1 John 2:28-3:3

In vs 3:2 is the Johannine way of talking about what Paul talks about when he talks about us being continually, by inward sanctification, conformed to the image of Christ. Both the Pauline and the Johannine writers think of this process that's called "progressive sanctification," and the goal is full conformity to the image of Christ, which does not fully happen until we reach the resurrection and are even conformed to the physical image of the resurrected Jesus, in the future.

1 John 2:28-3:3

The writer's use of nun ("now") and oupō ("not yet") uncovers a stark contrast between the present and the future, the known and the unknown. On the one hand, John wants to accentuate the fact that we are the children of God here and now. At the same time, the full extent of what we will be has yet to be revealed.

Although the exact nature of the "not yet" has not been disclosed to John, he can affirm with certainty (1) the reality of Christ's appearance and (2) that when he appears we will be like him. The verb "know" (oidamen) carries an assurance, a certain knowledge concerning this particular aspect of the parousia.

1 John 2:28-3:3

1 John 3:3 (NKJV)

*And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself,
just as He is pure.*

Application for This Week

John's first thought for this week is that when Jesus returns, we will be confident and not ashamed

He then tells us that we who know that Jesus is righteous will strive to consistently live righteously ourselves

Finally, John overwhelms us by saying that we have become the children of God, and that this is just the beginning of what we will become when Jesus returns and we become like him.

Homework

My blog with past lessons is:

www.UnapologeticallyJohn.com

Thank you for coming!

See you back next week