

**I John**  
**The Christian's DNA (Part 4)**  
**I John 2:28-3:3**  
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Well, it's my joy to take you back this morning to the book of 1 John. I feel like we're saying hello again to an old friend. It's been several months now since we've continued our study verse by verse through this letter, but we'll do so this morning. So, turn to 1 John; 1 John, chapter 3.

I think you understand that this week, the entire world has been watching the events that have unfolded in Great Britain. We have been saddened by the death of Queen Elizabeth; and at the same time, captivated by the transition of power. My past is British, with the name like Pennington in this profile, you understand that. In fact, there's a Pennington castle that dates to the 1200's. The Penningtons are listed in the Domesday Book, predates William the Conqueror. So, there's a lot of interests that I have and what goes on there.

But I'm fascinated by the fact that the British monarchy has lasted for 1200 years. In fact, for the last 900 years, the next king or queen of England has been installed in the same place, Westminster Abbey. And it's fascinating to know that Queen Elizabeth reigned for 70 years, the longest of any English monarch in those 1200 years.

Think about what it's like today to be Charles. As the oldest son of Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles was born to be king. But today, he's 73, and throughout his entire life, he has known that one day he would become the King of England. He was always destined to be king, but what he would eventually become, wasn't in fact, manifest until his mother died. He has become now what he spent his whole life anticipating.

As I thought about that, I couldn't help but think of the analogy to us as believers; this same thing is true of every genuine believer. From the moment of our new birth, we have been children of the king. And that relationship has come, just as it did for Charles, with a certain destiny. But none of us are yet what we will eventually become. What we were meant to be, from the moment of our spiritual birth, will only be fully realized when our Lord returns. That's

the heart of what John the Apostle wants us to discover in the passage that we come to this morning, as we return after our break for the summer, to our verse-by-verse study of John's first letter.

Again, turn with me to 1 John. Now, it's been several months since we've studied this wonderful book together, so let me briefly review and bring us back into this section of Scripture. Some of you are new and perhaps weren't here when we were studying 1 John, so let me give you some context.

First of all, the theme of this book, 1 John, is "The Tests of Eternal Life," the tests of eternal life. This is clear in chapter 5, verse 13. John writes, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life." Think about that, Christ our Lord designed this book, the Spirit inspired it, and John the Apostle wrote it in order to help you gain a personal assurance of your salvation.

Now, this letter is not structured like Paul's epistles; Paul's epistles are very logically ordered and structured and flow from beginning to end in a clear flow. John's not like that. But there are two images that help us understand his structure. I've compared it to the musical themes in a symphony. You know, when a composer writes a symphony, he returns again and again to the same theme; he repeats that theme, but each time he does so, he does so with a distinct variation. That's like the book of 1 John.

Another image that will help you understand its structure is to think in terms of a spiral staircase. And hanging down the center of that spiral staircase are three great themes, three great tests of eternal life. And as the letter unfolds, it's as if John walks around that spiral staircase, examining the same three tests but looking at them from different vantage points, giving us a different insight.

Now there are three movements to this symphony that is 1 John, or we could say there are three cycles around the spiral staircase that John takes. We have finished the first movement of the first cycle. Let me just remind you that the book begins, chapter 1, verses 1 to 4, with a

prologue. And then you have cycle one, the first set of tests of eternal life; it begins in chapter 1, verse 5, and runs to chapter 2, verse 27. There are three tests; there is “The Test of Obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word; there is “The Test of Love for God and His People;” and the third test is “The Test of Faith in the Biblical Jesus and in the Biblical Gospel.” So, we’ve looked at that first cycle, and we’ve worked our way through that entirely.

We are now studying the second cycle, or the second movement. The second cycle begins in chapter 2, verse 28, and runs through chapter 4, verse 6. John begins this second movement or second cycle by returning to “The Test of Obedience” that began the first movement as well. So, here's an overview of chapter 2, verse 28, through chapter 3, verse 10, the paragraph we find ourselves in. In this paragraph, we learned that our relationship to sin and righteousness, or we could say, our obedience to Christ and His word shows, first of all, “Our Real Birth,” our real birth. Are we still dead in sin as we were born, or have we, in fact, experienced the new birth, have we been born of God? Our obedience also shows “Our Real Master.” Are we still a slave of self and sin, or have we, in fact, become a slave of Christ? And our obedience shows “Our Real Father,” our real Father. Are we still a child of the devil, as all people are born into this world, or are we now children of God?

So, this morning, I want us to return to our study of the first section, and that is our relationship to sin and righteousness, or our obedience to Christ and His word shows ‘Our Real Birth.’ It shows whether we are still dead in sin or whether we've truly been born of God. Let's read it together, 1 John, chapter 2, and I'll begin reading in verse 28, and read down to chapter 3, verse 3:

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 also who practices righteousness is born of Him. See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would 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 will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see

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

Now, the key expression in this text comes at the end of verse 29, and that is we're talking about identifying those who were born of God. If I were to summarize what we just read together, I would put it like this, "A true Christian has been born of God and will, therefore, be like his Father in character and conduct, like Father, like child." If we've been born of God, we have His spiritual DNA, and if we have His DNA, then our character and our conduct will reflect that of our Father.

Now in this passage, John gives us several crucial insights into what it means to be born of God. That's what we're looking at together. First of all, we discovered in our study previously that if we have truly been born of God, if we've experienced what Jesus calls, "The New Birth," then the reality of that new birth will be "Certified, eventually, at Jesus' Resurrection." That's the theme of verse 28 of chapter 2, "Now, little children, abide in Him," that is, continue to believe in Him, continue to believe the biblical gospel; that's the theme of the previous paragraph. Abide in Him like that, "...so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

All true believers will have confidence when He comes, but false believers, those who are not truly His, will shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. So, whether or not we've experienced the new birth will be certified eventually, when He comes. Either we will have confidence because we continue to abide in Him, to believe in the biblical Jesus, the biblical gospel, or we will shrink away from Him in shame and be shown never to have experienced the new birth.

Secondly, we learned that the new birth is "Confirmed Now, by our Actions." You don't have to wait till Jesus comes, you can look at your actions today. Chapter 2, verse 29, "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him." Do you practice righteousness? Is your life marked, not by sin as a pattern, but by righteousness as a pattern?

Thirdly, we learned that the new birth is “Followed by our Adoption.” Regeneration, or as Jesus calls it, “being born again,” the new birth is followed by our adoption. Now we looked at this in detail; let me just remind you, we first considered “The Reason for our Adoption.” Why is it that God would adopt us? Verse 1 of chapter 3, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called the children of God.” The reason for our adoption is there in that it's because of the love the Father has bestowed on us. In eternity past, He decided to love us, He decided to adopt us as His own children. Ephesians, chapter 1, “In love, He chose us to adoption.”

Then we examined “The Reality of our Adoption.” Verse 1 goes on to say, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God.” Called by whom? Called by God Himself; God calls us “His children.” That's the reality. Listen, if you're a Christian, you once were a child of the devil. According to John 8, every unbeliever is a child of the devil, that's what Jesus said. At that time, your only relationship to the God of the universe was as your Creator, your Sustainer, your Rightful King, and eventually, your Judge; that was your only relationship to Him. But in Christ, that same God has adopted you, just as was true with Jesus, God is now your Abba, Father. You really are His son; you really are His daughter. In fact, look at verse 1, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called the children of God; (And God doesn't just call us that.) but such we are,” it's the reality.

Now today, I want us, first of all, to finish verse 1 and this whole issue of adoption. And we've seen, “The Reason for our Adoption,” “The Reality of our Adoption;” let's consider briefly “One Result of our Adoption,” one result of our adoption. The end of verse 1, “...For this reason the world does not know us,” for this reason the world does not know us. By the way, “for this reason” is a little unclear. It could refer to the previous phrase, in which case this is what John is saying, “Because we are the children of God, the world does not know us.” Or, it could be referring to the last phrase in verse 1, in which case John would be saying this, “Because the world didn't know Jesus, the world doesn't know us.” It could be either one of those, but frankly, it doesn't really matter because either way, the point is essentially the same.

Look at verse 1 again, let me read it. “For this reason, (because of our new relationship to the Father and to His Son.) the world does not know us.”

The world here is the Greek word *cosmos*. As you know, it's used in a variety of ways in the New Testament, but here, it has to refer to all unbelievers, to all unregenerate sinners, those who have not been born again, those who have not experienced the new birth, those who love and are controlled by Satan's evil world system.

So, here's what John is saying, “Those who don't know God as Father and who don't know Jesus as Savior and Lord, don't know us either.” Now obviously, they do know certain things about us, but they don't really know us. In fact, let me just point out a couple of ways that they don't really know us. First of all, “They don't really know the people who matter most to us.” Think about this, John 17:3, Jesus is praying and he says to the Father, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” If you're a Christian, that's what matters most to you. It's those relationships with God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of God; those are the relationships that matter most to you in the universe. And the people who are not in Christ, they don't get that, they don't really know you. They don't understand that we love each other. 1 John 3:14, “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.” We love our brothers and sisters in Christ; they don't get that, they don't know that, they don't understand that.

Secondly, “They don't know and can't understand the truths that are most important to us.” You see, there are things in our lives, there are bedrock truths, that motivate us, that drive us. They don't get it. Romans, chapter 8, verse 5, “...those who are according to the flesh (That's all unbelievers.) set their minds on the things of the flesh, (That's everything in the world around us, things connected to this natural life.) but those who are according to the Spirit, (That's every believer, that's all of us.) those who are according to the Spirit, (they set their minds on) the things of the Spirit.” What's that? That's what's between the covers of that book you hold in your hand; it's the things the Spirit has revealed, the things that matter to God. That's what's important to us. This Book is filled with truth about God and us and the world and everything in it. And these truths are profoundly important to us; but the people around us who aren't in

Christ, don't get it. They don't know us. 1 Corinthians 2:14, says, "...a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." The truths that matter the most to you; they don't know them, they don't understand them, they don't get it.

Thirdly, "They don't know and can't understand our deepest and most heartfelt motivations." You know, they see us do what we do, maybe you try to reach out to a neighbor or a co-worker, you try to express love to them and care for them, and they think that we're thinking like they think. In other words, it's like, well, there must be an ulterior motive, they must be trying to get ahead, what are they trying to accomplish, they don't understand that we are driven by a deeper motive than ourselves and our own advancement. 2 Corinthians 5, 14 and 15, "...the love of Christ controls us." That is, my knowledge of His love for me compels me and controls me to do what I do, "so that I no longer live for myself (themselves), but for Him who died and rose again on my (their) behalf." 1 Peter 1:8, "...though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, (but) you believe in Him...." In other words, we live because of our knowledge of His love for us and we are compelled by our love for Him. And the world doesn't get that at all.

Fourthly, "They don't know our real identity." This is really John's main point here in verse 1. The world doesn't know that we are, in fact, the adopted and beloved children of God. They just don't know our real identity. And therefore, they don't understand us; they don't get us. We understand this in one sense. I mean, think about it, just at normal human level. How often have you found yourself saying about somebody in your life, "You know, I just don't understand them, I just don't get them?" Why do you say that? It's because they are so different from you; their motives, what they love, what they hate. The character that marks them is so different that you just don't even know them, you don't recognize them because it doesn't resonate with who you are. That's exactly what John is saying is true for us. The world, they don't know us, they don't understand.

It shouldn't surprise us that the world, that is all those who don't know God, don't really know us. And the reason it shouldn't surprise us is look at the end of verse 1, "because it did not know

Him.” The verb tense, by the way in Greek, points to a definite event in the past, this is talking about Jesus when he came in the Incarnation, they did not know Him. Go back to John, John's gospel, chapter 1, verse 10, “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own (That is the things He made, His own things.) and those who were His own did not receive Him.” They didn't know Him.

Turn over to John 15. During the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus is preparing the disciples for His crucifixion, and ultimately, His leaving them to return to heaven. And notice what He says in John 15:18, “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, (because) I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.” Look at chapter 16, verse 2, they're going to display that hatred by throwing you out of the synagogues, they're even going to kill you, and say they're doing service to God. Why? Verse 3, “These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.” One result of our adoption is that the world doesn't know us, just as it didn't know our Lord.

Now, let me make this very personal. If you're here this morning, and your spouse is not a Christian, he or she doesn't get you and never really will. Why? Well, you can have a normal human relationship with them; you can love them, care for them, and you should. But they're never going to get you, they're never going to really understand you, they're never really going to know you, because they don't know who you really are, they don't know who you really love, they don't know what are the truths that matter most to you, they don't know what motivates you, what drives you, all the things that are the most important to you in the world, they don't know and will never get. If your parents or your children aren't believers, they don't really know you. Your unbelieving extended family, your coworkers, your fellow students, they don't understand you, they just don't get you. And let me encourage you, the same was absolutely true for our Lord.

Go back to Mark, chapter 3, verse 21. Jesus is ministering in Capernaum, verses 20-21 say when His own people heard what was going on, His ministry and He didn't even have time to eat a meal. “His own people” here is His own kinsmen, specifically His brothers, Jesus' four



brothers, He had four brothers, they're named in Mark's gospel, He had four brothers. His four brothers didn't believe in Him, neither did His sisters until after the resurrection. Not only did they not believe in Him, they didn't get Him at all,” (Paraphrased). Look at verse 21:

When His own people heard *of this*, they went out (from Nazareth to Capernaum.) to take custody of Him; (The word means essentially ‘to grab Him and take Him back to Nazareth by force.’); for they were saying, “He has lost His senses” (He's out of His mind.).

Jesus’ own brothers didn't get it. So, how did Jesus respond to this disconnect? Go down to verse 31, “Then His mother...” and by the way, I think His mother fit in a different category. She knew who He was, but she was concerned as a mother about His health—probably wasn't eating, wasn't sleeping, wasn't getting things He needed; His brothers are in a different category—they think He's out of His mind. When they arrived in Capernaum from Nazareth, they were standing outside the house where Jesus was teaching, it was packed, they sent word to Him and called Him.

A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.” Answering them, He said, “Who are My mother and My brothers?” Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, “Behold, My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

Listen, if you're a believer, the people in your life who don't know Christ, they don't know you, they don't get you, they don't understand you. So, what do you do? You love them, you care for them, you continue to make opportunities to share the gospel with them, but you recognize that these people are your family—those who believe as you believe, who love what you love, who follow the Savior that you have embraced.

The reality of the new birth is, first of all, “Certified at Jesus’ Revelation, it is “Confirmed by our Actions, and it is Followed by our Adoption.” Now that brings us, fourthly, to the fact that what God began in the new birth will be “Completed with our Glorification;” it will be completed with our glorification.

Do you understand Scripture speaks about our salvation in three tenses? First of all, in the past tense, we were saved from the guilt and penalty of sin. Ephesians 2:8 and 9, “By grace, you have been saved...” It's already happened. In the present tense, we are being saved from the power of sin. In 2 Corinthians 2:15, it says that Christians “are being saved.” You're being saved from the power of sin. In the future, we will be saved from the presence and the possibility of sin. That's why Romans 5:9 says, “We (will) be saved,” future tense. And 1 Peter 1:5, it says that “...salvation will be revealed to us in the last time.” The future tense of our salvation is called ‘Glorification.’ It's the great final act in the drama of our redemption. Sinclair Ferguson describes it like this. He says, “There is one last critical event to take place. It takes us to the outer limits of Christian knowledge and leaves us like men standing on the shore, watching a boat disappear over the horizon into an experience at which we can only begin to guess. This event is our glorification.”

Now this reality of future glorification has always been the hope of God's people. There are clear statements of it even with the Old Testament saints. For example, Job in Job 19, verses 25 and 26, he says:

As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. (Now listen to this.) Even after my skin is destroyed. (In other words, Job says, after my body is reduced to ashes in death.) Yet from my flesh I will see God.

He understood that there was a future glorification. Psalm 73, verses 24 and 25, “With your counsel you will guide me (The point is throughout this life.), and afterward receive me to glory.” Daniel 12:2, “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.” Daniel looked forward to the future glorification of believers.

First Century Jews believed in the reality of glorification. You remember in Jesus' interaction with Martha at the death of Lazarus, Martha said this, “I know that my brother will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” She said, “I have the same expectation as everybody around me.” (Paraphrased.) Paul, in Acts 24:15 said, I have a “hope in God (And then he adds this.), which these men cherish themselves...” In other words, even my opponents, my enemies, the

scribes and Pharisees, they have this same hope they cherish, “that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.” John wants you and me to have that same confidence in our future glorification.

Go back to 1 John, chapter 3, verse 2. He writes, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”

Now, in this amazing text, we learn several truths about our glorification. I have to be honest with you, this is one of those texts that I cannot exhaust, and frankly, I'm tempted to preach a series on, but I'm not going to do that to you. We're going to look at it briefly. But I want you to learn several truths here about our glorification.

First of all, “The Certainty of our Glorification—We are God's beloved children.” You see, our future glorification is certain; it is assured because of what has already happened. It's certain because, first of all, of God's eternal love for us. Notice how verse 2 begins, “Beloved.” John refers to the Christians to whom he writes as those who are beloved. I mean, clearly John means that He loves them, but he means more. Look back at verse 1, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us...”

Brothers and sisters, we are loved by God with an eternal, unchanging love, and that love ensures that He will finish what He has started. Turn to Ephesians, chapter 1; Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 4, one of the great texts in the Scripture on divine election. But notice what Paul says, “Just as He (That is the Father.) chose (The word means ‘to select out from among others;’ it's what the Greek word means. Just as the Father selected from among others.) us (Who's us? All true believers.) in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”

Now, notice the end of verse 4, what motivated that choice? “In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” What

moved God in eternity past to choose you, to adopt you, was His eternal love. And that love will not be complete until you are fully His in every way! Our glorification is certain because of God's eternal love for us.

Secondly, it's certain because of God's legal adoption of us. Notice verse 2, "Beloved, now we are children of God..." That's simply a reaffirmation of what we just saw in verse 1. Think about it this way, if you're a Christian, you will never be more of a child of God than you are right now. You **are** a child of God. And that will never be more true than it is today. You might be a better child of God someday, but you'll never be more of a child of God than you are today. And the fact that God has adopted us as His children, that ensures our future glorification. In fact, Paul attaches the two together. Turn to Romans, chapter 8; Romans chapter 8 and verse 14:

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God (That is, if you have God's Spirit within you.), these are the sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but (if you have the Spirit, if you are a son of God), you have received a spirit of adoption as sons (as daughters) by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.

Now, if in fact, we have been adopted by God, where does that leave us? Verse 17, "... (we are) heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ." and ultimately that means, notice the end of verse 17, "...we (will) be glorified with Him." So, adoption leads inexorably to glorification; it's going to happen. We can have that confidence.

Go down to verse 23, "And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." You say, "Wait a minute, I thought already was adopted." You have been. This is, in Roman Law, this is when someone who's been adopted comes of full age and receives all the benefits and blessings of that adoption. That's going to happen when Christ returns, and our bodies are redeemed.

But notice again, adoption leads, certainly to glorification. Lloyd-Jones puts it this way, "What we are now is a guarantee of what we're going to be. Our sonship is in itself a guarantee of our

glorification because God never starts a work and then gives it up.” Philippians, chapter 1, verse 6 says, “...He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Our glorification is certain!

In fact, if you're still in Romans 8, look down in verse at verse 29, let's start verse 30, we'll look at verse 29 later. Verse 30, “...(those) whom He predestined, (to be like His Son.), He (God) also called; (That's the effectual call, when He called you to the gospel and you believed.); and (those) whom He called, He also justified; (That is, He declared them right with Him through the work of Jesus Christ.); and these whom He justified, He also glorified.” If God chose to set His love on you eternity past, if He called you to the gospel to Himself, if He justified you, (if He declared you right with Him), then He will glorify You. It's certain.

Now, go back to 1 John, chapter 3, verse 2. There's a second truth we learn from our text' not only the certainty of our glorification, but secondly, “The Anticipation of our Glorification—We are not yet what we will be.” We are not yet what we will be. Verse 2 says, “...it has not appeared as yet what we will be.” Now unfortunately, many Christians misunderstand what that's saying. If you don't read it carefully, it can sound like it hasn't yet appeared to us what we will be. But that can't be what John means because he explicitly says in the very next phrase that we do know. Notice verse 2, “...it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We **know** that when He appears, we will be like Him.” So, he's not saying, “Well, I don't know what we're going to be.” No! We know what we're going to be. The Greek word translated ‘appeared’ there, literally means ‘manifested.’ It means ‘to make visible, to expose publicly, to openly display.’ In fact, this same word is used back in chapter 2, verse 28, of Jesus’ second coming. We know Jesus is coming back, but it just hasn't yet been manifested; it hasn't been publicly revealed.

That's what he's saying about us. As believers, we know what we will be in the future, but it hasn't yet become visible; it hasn't yet been made known to the world around us in a visible, public, undeniable way that we are, in fact, God's adopted children, and that we are becoming more like our Savior every day. Verse 1, “The world does not know us,” it doesn't know who we are. What we really are hasn't yet been clearly revealed to the world. That's why in

Romans, chapter 8, verse 19, Paul writes, “. . .the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.” Someday we're going to be revealed for who we are. So, we live in this in between state in which we know who we really are in Christ, we are God's own children whom He loves as much as His own Son, and we know what we're eventually going to be. But that reality has not yet been fully publicly manifested to the world., and so we live in anticipation of our glorification.

There's a third truth in our text, and that is John teaches us “The Timing of our Glorification— We will be changed when He appears.” Verse 2 says, “We know that when (Jesus) appears, we will become fully and completely all that God has saved us to be.” (Paraphrase) That's when glorification will happen. Colossians chapter 3, verse 4, “When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” Now, all of us will be fully glorified in the future. But listen carefully. The exact timing of our glorification will be slightly different from others, depending on whether we die before Christ returns, or whether we survive until His coming at the Rapture.

So, let's assume for a moment that the Lord delays His coming, and we die. What happens when you and I die? Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:8, “To be absent from the body is (What?) to be (present) with the Lord.” The moment your heart stops beating in that tent, as Paul calls it there in 2 Corinthians 5, the moment your tent is torn down, at that very moment, you will appear in the presence of God. And at the moment of death, your soul will become perfect. That's stage one, your soul will become perfect. How do I know that? Hebrews, chapter 12, verse 23, in heaven are “the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect,” the spirits of the righteous made perfect. So, at the moment of death, you are present with the Lord. Well, you can't be present with the Lord until your soul is perfected. So, your soul will be perfected at the very moment of death; you will leave this life; and in a moment's time, you'll be in the presence of the Lord, and you will be perfect, your soul will be perfect. You'll leave your body here, that tent will still be here, we'll put it in the ground.

But death only introduces us to what theologians call the intermediate state. In other words, it's not the final state for the Christian; it's better than this life. That's why in Philippians 1, 21-26,

Paul says it's better to depart and be with Christ. But what happens at death is still not the most glorious expression of our salvation. Why is that? Because you and I were created as two-part beings to be eternally two-part beings, body and soul, a material part and an immaterial part. But death separates those two parts; your body stays here; your perfected soul goes to heaven.

Full humanity consists of both body and soul. So, if we die before Jesus returns, our souls are perfected at death and pass into the Lord's presence, but our glorification won't be complete until the rapture. At the rapture, all believers together receive a glorified body. Turn to 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4. 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4, let's start with those who have died in Christ. So, before the rapture, at some point before the rapture, they've died. Verse 14, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." So, he's saying, "Remember, the moment you leave this life you're present with the Lord, you're alive, you're alert, you're aware of where you are. If you want a little picture of what it's like to be a disembodied soul, read Revelation and look at the souls of the tribulation saints; they are interacting with each other and with God. You don't need your body to interact. And so, that will happen. Your body will be here.

Notice, He will bring your perfected soul back from Heaven with Him in the air, and then verse 16, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first." In other words, at that moment, at the rapture, they are already perfected souls, perfected at death, dwelling with God in Heaven, come back with him at the rapture, their perfected souls are joined to glorified bodies in that moment.

And then, what about those who live until the rapture? Verse 17, "Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we always be with the Lord." So, for those who live until the rapture, Christ instantly perfects their souls, and then immediately joins their perfected souls to glorified bodies. Here's how Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 15:52, "... the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable..." There's those who died before Christ came. "...and we (That is, those who live until He comes.) will be changed." So, understand this, we will all receive the ultimate

expression of our glorification together at the rapture, perfected souls in heaven if we die before, but then all of us see glorification completed when Jesus returns. That's why John says the timing of our glorification is "When He appears."

There's a fourth truth we learn here in our text, and that is, "The Outcome of our Glorification— We will be like Him." The outcome, we will be like Him. Verse 2, "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him..." Now, it's interesting; there are two Greek words John could have used for 'like.' One of them is *'isos,'* as in isosceles triangle. That Greek word means 'equality.' But John doesn't choose that word because we're not going to be equal with Jesus in every way. We will not share Jesus' divine nature. Unlike the false teachers, Kenneth Copeland and others, we're not going to be little gods. He's going to be God, and we're going to still be Perfected Human Beings. We will not have Jesus' specific personality; He will still be Jesus and I'll still be Tom. We will not look like Jesus' physical twin; we're not going to go around heaven going, "Who's who? They all look alike." So, he doesn't use this word.

The other Greek word and the one he uses is *'homos.'* It's like homo; it means 'equal,' but of the same nature, 'similar.' We will be like Jesus in two very specific ways. First of all, we will have a glorified body with the same qualities as His, but a body that is distinctly and identifiably ours. Philippians 3:21, "(Christ, and I love this.) will transform the body of our humble state." I hate to tell you this, but go home and look in the mirror, that's your humble state. He is going to transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory. You know, a lot of people worry, you know, "Well, what about those people who, you know, their bodies were destroyed; martyrs who were burned, or people who were cremated and their ashes are scattered, or people who died at sea and the fish have eaten their bodies and it's all over?" Well listen to the end of Philippians 3:21, ". . . who (He) will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." Don't worry, He can do it.

Now, what will our glorified bodies be like? I wish I had time to take you to 1 Corinthians 15, verses 42 to 44. But Paul there explains what our glorified bodies will be like; he uses four



words. First of all, they'll be imperishable; they'll never wear out, they'll never grow old. "Thank you, Lord!" They'll never be affected by disease or sickness, they are imperishable. Secondly, he says they are glorious. That is, they will be characterized by beauty or attractiveness. There will be no more shame, no more dishonor to our bodies, because of what we have done in our sin. They will be, thirdly, powerful; there's no weakness, spiritual or physical weakness. In other words, your body, your glorified body will have the strength to do everything God asked you to do. And it will be spiritual, a spiritual body. That doesn't mean it's immaterial; he contrasts it with a natural body.

All he's saying really is that our future body simply won't have the same limitations as our current ones. Again, thank you, Lord! Your glorified body will be like Jesus' glorified body; it will be recognizable, but different. It will be able to eat, touch, see, walk, sit, just like His. It will be able to move through matter but still be touched, as His was in John 20. It will have continuity with your current body, but it will be new. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul compares the relationship between your current body and your future body to be that between a seed and the plant that grows from that seed. When you die, we plant your body in the ground like a seed, and when Jesus comes back, from that seed He'll bring your new body. It'll still be connected to your current body in that one sense, but it'll be new. We will be like Him in that we will have a glorified body with the same qualities as His.

Secondly, we will be like Him, in that we will have a perfected soul with the same moral character as His, but a soul that is distinctly and identifiably ours. Romans, chapter 8, verse 29, "For those whom He (God) foreknew," by the way, the word 'foreknow' means 'to determine beforehand to have a relationship with.' I can prove that to you. Go back and listen to the Roman series. But it means 'to predetermine to have a relationship with you.' Those whom God predetermined to have a relationship with, He also predestined (Literally, He predetermined their destiny, and what was that destiny?) to become conformed to the image of His Son". When God decided to have a relationship with you, to set His love on you in eternity past, He also predetermined your destiny, and that is that someday you would be just like His Son! And in body and soul, you would be a replica of Jesus Christ our Lord, and that we would forever reflect His glory and bring Him praise! The outcome of our glorification is that we'll be

like Him. That's amazing, isn't it? You're going to have a glorified body someday, just like, with the same qualities, as Jesus' glorified body. And someday, you're going to be just like Him in your moral character. Read the Gospels and all those ways that He manifested His love for God and His love for others; someday that's going to be you.

A fifth and final truth about our glorification here in our text is, "The Cause of our Glorification—We will see Him." Look at verse 2, "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." That little word 'because' is really unexpected and fascinating; 'because,' we'll be like Him because we will see Him. Now, that really shouldn't surprise us because think about what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18. He says that right now, as you and I look at Christ in Scripture, as we see Christ in Scripture, we are, "...being transformed (changed) by the Spirit into the same image from glory to glory." That is progressively more and more like Jesus Christ as we look at Jesus in the Bible.

So, how much more will the transformation into His image be complete when we see Him face to face, when we see Him, just as He is? Because of that, "We will be like Him." When we see Him with no filters, when we see Him exactly as He is, we will see Him, and then we'll be perfectly like Him. That's our glorification!

Now, very quickly, these great truths really serve four great uses for us. Let me just mention them and you can meditate on four great uses for us. Number one, these truths, the truth of our glorification, serve as, "A Test We Must Take." It's really the context here in 1, John. John's giving us tests of eternal life. So, if you want to know if you have eternal life, if you want to know if you're truly a Christian, then ask yourself this question, and I mean in your heart of hearts, "Is this what you really want, do you want to be like Jesus Christ?" I'm not asking if you want to be rid of some sin that humiliates you, that troubles you? I'm asking, "Do you, body and soul, want to be like Jesus Christ?" If you do, then you pass this test of eternal life; if you don't, you're not a Christian.

Secondly, these truths are, "A Goal We Must Pursue." If you're a Christian, and you know that someday you're going to be exactly like Jesus Christ, then guess what, you want to be more like

Him now, and you will be pursuing this goal. Look at our text, 1 John, chapter 3, verse 3, “And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” You're going to pursue this goal even if you can't get to perfection in this life, you're going to be serious about following Christ and being like Him.

Number three, it's, “A Promise We Must Believe.” I think sometimes we act like this really isn't going to happen. We need to believe God's promise, and it will have life-changing applications.

Listen to Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

Most of the unhappiness that we experience in this life is due to our failure to realize this truth. All our unhappiness is ultimately to be traced back to this, that we are looking at things that are happening to us now instead of looking at this vision that is held there before us. We live too much with the things that are immediately in front of us instead of putting everything into the context (Listen to this.) of our standing, that is our current standing as children having been justified and of our destiny.

Remember, Christian, who you are and what you will become.

Fourthly, these truths are, “A Habit We Must Practice.” Remember 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 18, I mentioned it a moment ago. Listen to it, 2 Corinthians 3:18, “But we all (That is every Christian.), with unveiled face...” In other words, he's saying, “In Christ, the veil of misunderstanding in the Old Testament is gone, we now get it, we see.” “We all (Every believer.) with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord...” It's like we're looking at Christ on the pages of Scripture, and what happens as we look at Him? “We are being transformed (Literally, the Greek text says ‘*metamorphosized*.’) into the same image from one level of glory to another (That is, from one level of Christ's likeness to another.) just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” This is what you need to be doing now; this is a habit you and I must practice now. Someday we're going to be like Christ. Now we need to be pursuing that, how? Look at Him on the pages of the Word of God. Understand who He is, see Him in His glory, and when we see Him, we will be like Him.