

Lesson 8 – 1 John 2:28-3:3

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Review/Introduction

John is writing so we might know that we have eternal life (1 John 5:13); so they may see the objective truth (1 John 5:11-13) and subjective evidences (obedience, love, dealing with sin, progressive sanctification, etc.) that give assurance of salvation. Both objective truth and subjective evidence go hand-in-hand.

He is doing this by presenting tests to determine if true saving faith has been exercised or are the readers (and ultimately us) deceived. John is making it very clear that a profession of possessing salvation without the evidences that flow from salvation is self-deception.

However, we must understand that we do not strive in the power of Spirit for sanctification to “prove” that we are children of God, we strive “because” we are children of God. If you are looking to “prove” then you could fall into the trap of legalism.

³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (Galatians 3:3)

John presents his tests in four spirals laying out doctrinal and conduct tests or evidences of true, real, actual regeneration.

III. Evidence of true saving faith – Spiral 2 (2:18-3:24)

A. Doctrine – Hold fast to truth – Don’t Apostatize (2:18-27)

B. Conduct – Christ’s coming is a purifying fixed hope (2:28-3:3)

C. Conduct – Sin/obedience (3:4-10)

D. Conduct – Love (3:11-18)

E. Conduct – A conviction-free walk (3:19-24)

Paul identifies the three great spiritual virtues of love, faith, and hope in multiple passages.

¹³But now **faith, hope, love**, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

³We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴since we heard of your **faith in Christ Jesus** and the **love which you have for all the saints**; ⁵because of the **hope laid up for you in heaven**, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel (Colossians 1:3-5)

²We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers;

³constantly bearing in mind your **work of faith** and **labor of love** and **steadfastness of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3)

True saving faith results in salvation from sin, forgiveness. Love is God’s motivation for redemption and the result in the redeemed-one’s life. Hope is the confident expectancy of eternal life. Today, we look at the first conduct test in the second spiral – a purifying hope because Christ is coming for His saints.

Spiral 2 – Conduct – Christ’s coming is a purifying fixed hope (2:28-3:3)

1. Confidence of Salvation (2:28-29)

²⁸Now, 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. ²⁹If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

²⁸And 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. ²⁹If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. (ESV)

John previously commented on the antichrist and the many antichrists who are revealed by abandoning body life, denying Christ, and being a deceiving influence on the body. In doing so, he approached his readers as a child young in experience and in need of training and discipline. He had a sense of urgency, a sense of strong exhortation or mild rebuke to make sure they do not fall into the naivety of children believing the false teachers.

Now, John goes back to addressing his readers as “little children”, a term of endearment, a plea to his beloved.

John commands his readers (and us) to cause yourself to keep on keeping on abiding in Christ – to persevere. Remember, “abide” means to remain in the same place or position over a period of time. When used in relation to Christ, it implies relationship, fellowship, friendship, dependence, harmony, communion. Remain in Christ! Be connected to the source of perseverance, Christ, who gives you the agent of perseverance, the Holy Spirit.

❖ **Are you moving forward?**

Mentioning the antichrist and “the last hour” moves John to think about the event that initiates the Day of the Lord – the rapture. This is the time when Christ appears to us.

¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For **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. ¹⁷Then 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 we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)

⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound**, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

¹After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, **like *the sound of a trumpet speaking with me***, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” (Revelation 4:1)

❖ **Do you live in anticipation of the rapture?**

After the rapture, there will be a judgment of believers – the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is the time when believers will be judged according to their works (Ephesians 2:8-10) done since the time of salvation (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

¹¹For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵**If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.** (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

This is the time when believers receive their crowns.

¹⁹For who is our hope or joy or **crown of exultation**? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? (1 Thessalonians 2:19 see also Philippians 4:1)

⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸in the future there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

¹²Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the **crown of life** which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:13)

¹⁰Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your **crown**. (Revelation 3:10-11)

²shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive **the unfading crown of glory**. (1 Peter 5:2-4)

⁹And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders **will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne**, saying, ¹¹“Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.” (Revelation 4:9-11)

While it is possible that a true believer will “suffer loss but be saved, yet so as through fire”, (1 Corinthians 3:15) this is not the time that is being talked about here. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, there will not “shrinking away from Him in shame”.

❖ Are you striving in the Spirit to glorify God?

All Scripture are from the NASB '95 Update unless noted.

Most word studies are from preceptaustin.org, blueletterbible.org, and biblehub.com

John gives two things that perseverance results in at the rapture. But note that he does not say “you”, but “we”. In pastoral form, he includes himself in the ones that abide and the results of the abiding at Christ’s appearing.

1. “Confidence” has the basic idea of freedom of speech, words flowing freely. So it means confidence and in usage has the idea of free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance. It is the fearless trust with which the faithful soul meets God. Here it is juxtaposed to “shame”.

Perseverance (abiding) as shown by the objective truth and subjective evidences resulting in confidence (assurance, fearless trust) before God, at Christ’s appearing and but also now in this life.

¹¹Therefore **let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.** ¹²For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold fast our confession.** ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶Therefore **let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.** (Hebrews 4:11-16)

2. “Shrink away from Him in shame” is the translation of one word meaning to have shame or fear before Him. This occurs at His coming for us at the rapture. The question is, “what are these people ashamed about?”

Use your sanctified imagination and think about the scene, putting yourself in their place. You think you are an abider, but you are a professor without possession of salvation. The objective truth of salvation is not real for you and neither is there objective evidence. You are self-deceived. God is not making the gospel to remain in you and you are not making the gospel to remain in yourself. Or maybe you are an apostate, you have gone out and denied Christ. But you are not ignorant; you have knowledge without change. You have been around enough to know what the Scriptures teach about His imminent coming for His saints. And one day it happens. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet a percentage of the world is gone and pandemonium breaks out. You are left behind because you were self-deceived. You had the chance, but you were stiff-necked and refused to bow before the King of glory. You are ashamed and afraid before God.

But that is not you, if you have exercised the gift of true saving faith, if you have surrendered your life to Christ, if you know the objective truths and see the subjective evidence. If God’s work in you demonstrates that you have been born of Him; if you “practice righteousness” which is a demonstration of regeneration; if you display the objective evidences of salvation, then you are “not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul” (Hebrews 10:39).

Paul's charge to Timothy is God's charge to us today. In this life, strive in the power of the Spirit to make your experiential sanctification be as close to your positional sanctification as possible when Christ comes for you or you leave this life.

¹³I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴that you **keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ**, ¹⁵which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen. (1 Timothy 6:13-16)

❖ **Are you living before Christ in such a way as to not have shame?**

2. Present reality and future hope of the believer (3:1-2)

¹See 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. ²Beloved, 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.

¹See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

²Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (ESV)

Those that are deceived will have shame and fear before Christ at the rapture. But not the redeemed!

“See” can be translated “behold” and means give immediate, effective, urgent attention to discern clearly something. It could be thought of as “hold the train!”, “stop everything else!”, “look at this!”, “think about it!”, “ponder its significance!”

What must we “behold” – “how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God”?

“How great” implies astonishment and admiration – “how great!”, “how marvelous!”, “how wonderful!”, “how glorious!”.

“Bestowed” means to give, to bestow, to make a present based on a decision of the will of the giver and not on any merit of the recipient.

John is hearkening back to his gospel account to think of the Father's love to make us children and the world not knowing us because it did not know Him.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, **to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name**, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:10-13)

Think of the amazing love that God graciously bestows on us, the objects of His love.

⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

³Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴**But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,** ⁵even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesian 2:3-9)

❖ **Are you brought to your knees in gratitude because of the Father's great love?**

If you are redeemed, the world does not know you, but Christ does and instead of shame when Christ appears, you will be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye.

⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but **we will all be changed,** ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the **dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.** ⁵³**For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.** (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

At this point we will be given glorified bodies, just like Christ has now. Jesus' resurrected body was the same body that died, but glorified. Our resurrected, glorified body will be the same – real, physical, genuinely human, yet perfected and glorified. Some attributes of Jesus' glorified body:

- Jesus looked human (Luke 24:13-18)
- Jesus' wounds from His crucifixion were still visible (John 20:27)
- Jesus could be touched and handled (Luke 24:39)
- Jesus ate food (Luke 24:42-43)
- Jesus could pass through solid walls (John 20:19)
- Jesus could suddenly appear out of nowhere (Luke 24:36)
- Jesus could ascend directly into heaven (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9)

Paul gives a general description of the glorified body.

⁴²So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; ⁴³it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

❖ **Do you contemplate what glory will be like? Do you have your hope fixed on that?**

Not only will we have a glorified body, but we will “see Him just as He is”. We have to be changed, to be like Him, in order to see Him just as He is. We have to be fitted with the glorified body to be fit for His presence in eternity.

¹²Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; ¹³and in the middle of the lampstands *I saw* one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. ¹⁴His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. (Revelation 1:12-16)

❖ Do you long to see Jesus?

3. A purifying hope (3:3)

³And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

³And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. (ESV)

What do you hope for in this life – health, wealth, and ease? Worldly “hope” is “to cherish a desire with anticipation; to want something to happen or be true” (Merriam-Webster).

Yet when the Scriptures speak of “hope” it means something different. Biblical hope is a desire for some future good with the expectation of obtaining it. It is confident expectancy; the absolute certainty of future good. It is confident expectancy based on God’s faithfulness in direct teaching and example as given in the Scriptures.

⁴For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, **so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.** (Romans 15:4)

Biblical hope is “sure and steadfast”. It is an anchor for our soul against the onslaughts of the “affliction”, “persecution”, and “worries of the world” (Mark 4:13-20) and the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life.

¹⁷In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, ¹⁸so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. ¹⁹**This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast** and one which enters within the veil, (Hebrews 6:17-19)

It is possible to set one’s hope on the wrong things for salvation instead of Christ. That is no hope at all.

⁴⁵Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; **the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.** ⁴⁶For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. (John 5:45-46)

¹³But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not **grieve as do the rest who have no hope.** (1 Thessalonians 4:13)

Yet the hope of eternal life only comes through Christ.

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of **Christ Jesus, *who is our hope***, (1 Timothy 1:1)

¹⁹If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:19)

❖ **Is Christ your only hope?**

Similarly, it is possible to set one's hope for sanctification on something other than Christ.

¹³Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, **fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ**. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, ¹⁵but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; ¹⁶because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:13-16)

In context here, the object of our hope should be the results of the rapture – the salvation that Christ brings to fruition at the rapture.

²⁸And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, **He also glorified**. (Romans 8:28-30)

This is the freedom from sin in a glorified body, being like Christ, seeing Him just as He is. The true believer moves forward in sanctification and hopes for the future when we will be free from sin and with Christ. This hope is purifying – it moves us forward in Christ-likeness.

This was Paul's experience too. Paul forsook all to surrender his life to Christ “in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Because he had been made new, Paul strove to be progressively sanctified; he pressed on.

⁷But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹**in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead**. (Philippians 3:7-11)

¹²Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

❖ **Are you striving in the power of the Spirit to press on?**

Conclusion

John is writing to present tests of true saving faith. The purpose is to ensure that his readers know if they have eternal life (actual, true, real regeneration) or not. Today, we looked at the purifying hope of freedom from sin to be brought about at the rapture. May we strive in the power of Christ to make our practical sanctification be close to our positional sanctification at the rapture, for Christ's glory.

Additional Study

1. Each time you come to the Scriptures, pray for the Spirit to give you understanding.
2. Read 1 John once this week a chapter at a time (one chapter a day for five days).
3. Pray that God would show you personal applications from today's passage.
4. Read today's passage noting repeated words/ideas and ask yourself what John means.
5. Re-read the notes from today and contemplate the thought questions.