

**THE KNOWLEDGE AND HOPE OF THOSE BEGOTTEN OF GOD**  
**1Jno.2:29-3:3**  
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**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. V.29 of Ch.2 is one of John's transition statements. He has a way of going from one point to another so that it is sometimes, perhaps even at all times, difficult to tell exactly when he turns a corner, so to speak.
2. He doesn't often make a sudden logical turn in his thought processes, finishing definitely one point and then passing sharply to another. He rather seems to glide from one point to another and lets one idea blend with another, with no sharp turn in the discussion.
3. John has just referred to the necessity of believers abiding in the Son in order to have confidence without shame before him at his coming.
4. He now turns his attention to the knowledge and the hope those who stand begotten of God have, which is our subject for study in this lesson on 1Jno.2:29-3:3.
5. Here we take notice of who believers in Christ are in relation to the Father, and the hope they possess as a result, as well as the powerful influence that hope has in their lives, along with the responsibility it places upon them.

**II. DISCUSSION**

**A. 1<sup>ST</sup>, WHAT THOSE WHO STAND BEGOTTEN OF GOD, THE FATHER, KNOW.**

1. 1<sup>st</sup>, what they know about God, the Father, 1Jno.2:29a; 3:1a.
  - a. They know (recognize) he is righteous: "If ye know that he is righteous," 1Jno.2:29a.
    - (1) "He" is referring to the Father, not the Son. This must be true because the "he" is the One of whom they are "begotten," v.29b (and it's the Father who begets, not the Son).
    - (2) "Know he is righteous"
      - (a) That God is righteous is a biblical axiom: "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright," Psa.11:7.

- (b) “Righteous or holy...that quality by virtue of which he hates and punishes sin (Thayer, 149); or “the condition of being right, is marked as an essential characteristic of God (Vine, Commentary, 48).”
- (c) “Know” OIDA
  - (1) Thayer, 174: “it is well known, acknowledged,” 1Jno.3:2; 5:20.
  - (2) W.E. Vine, II, 299; “expresses the fact that the object has simply come within the scope of the knower’s perception.”
  - (3) Vine Comm.: “know of a certainty.”
- (3) “If we know” does not suggest doubt; it is “since we know he is righteous.”
- b. They know that through the bestowal of the Father’s love they are children of God, the Father, 1Jno.3:1a.
  - (1) The subject of divine love is here introduced by John following considerable discussion of the subject of light in Chs.1 and 2.
  - (2) “Behold” is a command to all believers, an injunction. They are urged to “behold” – to take notice of, to be impressed with, to fix their attention upon – ‘what manner’ – “of what sort or quality” (Thayer, 533) – of love the Father hath bestowed upon us (freely given us),” 3:1a; cf. Jno.3:16; Rom.5:8; 1Jno.4:9,10.
  - (3) “That” – i.e., the purpose and consequent result of his love’s bestowal – “we should be called the sons of God (KJV). [“called children of God; and such we are,” ASV], 3:1b.
    - (a) “And such we are” is a positive affirmation of that which had just been said.
    - (b) The fact that the Father by his love makes us what we are, to be called his children by him is to be such, and to sustain this relation to him in all the affairs of life.
  - (4) For us to be the children of the Father is a matter of love – a matter of his love bestowed upon us. Of course, it’s through Jesus Christ by means of the gospel of Christ revealed by the Holy Spirit through the apostles of Christ that it is bestowed.
  - (5) The word is TEKNA (children), not HURIOI, sons.

- (a) John in his writings never speaks of believers as sons of God, the Father, but always of children.
  - (b) With him the title “Son” is reserved for Jesus as the Son of God, the Only Begotten Son of God.
  - (c) However, Paul speaks of believers in both respects, specially stressing their adoption; while John stresses the thought of generation.
- (6) “Behold what measure of love the Father hath bestowed upon us”: It’s a love of immeasurable condescension.
- (a) This does not refer to the love God bestowed upon man when he created him in his own likeness, making man capable of fellowship with God himself, and pronouncing him “very good,” Gen.1:26-31.
  - (b) This speaks of the love God bestowed upon man who:
    - (1) Had become sinful, unholy, unrighteous.
    - (2) Had become deeply degraded in sinful practices
    - (3) Was in active rebellion against him. Cf. Rom.5:8.
    - (4) Was then redeemed and reconciled to God in spite of this, Rom.5:8-11; Col.1:19-22.
  - (c) His love to us, the, was not:
    - (1) An act of complacency, but of compassion.
    - (2) That of admiration, but of benevolence and pity.
    - (3) Love seeking its own, but our well-being.
    - (4) Love rejoicing over the good and beautiful, but seeking with deepest solicitude for the salvation of the unworthy and sinful.
- (7) Indeed, “Behold, what measure of love the Father hath bestowed upon us”: It’s a love which exalts and dignifies its objects; a love “Bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God, and such we are.”
- (a) God himself calls us his children.
  - (b) But in what sense does he call us his children in 1Jno.3:1?

- (1) Not in the sense of being his by creation, as are all humans, but by regeneration. Cf. Jno.3:3-7; Tit.3:3-7; 1Pet.1:23.
  - (2) The words of 1Jno.2:29 place this beyond dispute: “every one that doeth (practices) righteousness is born (begotten) of him; those who do this stand begotten of God in are in fellowship with him. Cf. 1Jno.1:6.
  - (3) He has created them anew. They are “born from above;” they are “partakers of the Divine nature.”
- (c) Of this fact we are assured: “and such we are”. His call is effectual; people and things are what he calls them.
- (8) “therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not,” 3:1c.
- (a) This is why the world “knows us not,” See Jno.5:16,17; 8:47; 10:17; 12:39.
  - (b) John remembers the world that lies in wickedness (1Jno.5:19), the world believers are not to love, the world that is not of the Father (1Jno.2:15-17), and its hostility to the children of God, and here states the reason why the world does not know them.
  - (c) A failure to know God accounts for the world’s failure to know the children of God.
  - (d) “Know” is used here to mean more – much more – than merely superficial knowledge. It’s the same word he uses for the Christian’s knowing God.
  - (e) The world knows, of course, that Christians are in it; but the world does not approve of the life-style of the Christian, nor accept the doctrine of Christ that governs the Christian.
  - (f) Know here denotes an experimental knowledge, a knowledge that carries with it a sympathetic understanding that grows out of, or is synonymous with, spiritual kinship.
  - (g) There can be no sympathetic understanding between the world and the children of God because the world does not have its source of moral and spiritual understand in God and Christ as the Christian does.

- (h) Lack of spiritual kinship make sympathetic understanding impossible.
  - (i) The world has not even begun to gain by experience a knowledge of the children of God.
2. What they know about those who doeth righteousness: “Ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born (begotten) of him,” 1Jno.2:29b
- a. “Doeth” – POIEW, or “committeth”
    - (1) Berry’s Lit. Interlinear: “practices” or “practice” or “committeth” or “commit,” 1Jno.2:29; 3:4,7,8,9,10.
    - (2) “to do” or habitually practice.
  - b. “Righteousness” – DIKAIOSUNE
    - (1) “The condition acceptable to God,” Thayer, 149.
    - (2) “Of whatever is right or just in itself, whatever conforms to the revealed will of God; whatever had been appointed by God to be acknowledged and obeyed by man; the sum total of the requirements of God (Mt.6:33), “W.E. Vine, III.,299.
    - (3) That is, “everyone that doeth” or habitually practices this.
    - (4) “Doeth” is in the present continuous tense and marks the doing of righteousness as a habit, an habitual practice.
  - c. “Is begotten of him,” i.e., of the Father.
    - (1) “Begotten” – GENNAO – (ghen-nah’-o), means “to beget”
    - (2) “It is used metaphorically:
      - (a) “In the writings of the apostle John, of the gracious act of God in conferring upon those who believe the nature and disposition of ‘children’ imparting to them spiritual life,’ Jno.3:3,5,7; Gal.3:26,27; 1Jno.2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18,” W.E. Vine, I., 109.
      - (b) “Of one who by means of preaching the Gospel becomes the human instrument in the impartation of spiritual life, 1Cor.4:15; Phlm.10,” W.E. Vine, I, 109.
    - (3) The scriptures, properly translated, never refers to one being born or begotten of Christ, but always of God, the Father. Cf. 1Jno.3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18; et al.
    - (4) In 1Jno.2:28 it is Christ who has been manifested. In 1Jno.2:29 the phrase “begotten of him” points to God, the Father.

- (a) Thus, once again, John lays stress on the truth that Jesus Christ and God, the Father, are one, and that Christ is God revealed to man.
  - (b) Hence, he makes the contrast from one to the other almost imperceptible. Cf. 1Jno.1:1-5; 2:22-24.
  - (c) When John writes of God in relation to man, it is never separate and apart from Jesus Christ, and vice versa; such as, that of Jno.1:1-4,14-18; 1Jno.1:1-5; 2:22-24; 5:20.
- (5) When you know that God is righteous, then you know, reason suggests, that every one who habitually practices righteousness as a mode of life is begotten of God and stands begotten of him, or continues in that relationship with the Father acceptable to him, in full fellowship with him.
- d. This inference the members of John's proposition makes clear.
- (1) God is righteous.
  - (2) As such, he is the source of righteousness.
  - (3) When, therefore, one habitually exhibits righteousness as a manner or mode of life, it follows that God is the source thereof.
  - (4) Those who exhibit God's nature (i.e., "are partakers of the divine nature,") must have received it through regeneration, Jno.3:3-6; Tit.3:4-7; 2Pet.1:1-4.
  - (5) Hence, "every one also that practices righteousness is begotten of him."
- e. Though the doctrine of doing righteousness, or by faith keeping the commandments of God in obeying the gospel of Christ, is a condition necessary to salvation from past sins, or alien sins (e.g., Mk.16:15,16; Ac.2:36-41; 10:34,35; 22:16), 1Jno.2:29 is not a passage teaching that.
- (1) The righteousness here practiced is that which one does as a child of God, and not in order to become one.
  - (2) The logical order of the premises leading to John's conclusion shows that it was his design to teach that "doing (practicing) righteousness" is that which gives evidence that one has been begotten of God, and is a child of God.
  - (3) It is not offered as a condition on which one becomes God's child.

- (4) Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount emphasized that the children of the heavenly Father will reproduce His character; it is like Father, like son, Mt.5:44-48; Lk.6:35,36; Cf. Jno.8:39-44.
- (5) Just so, John makes it clear that membership in the family of God is to be recognized by the family likeness; since the Father of the family is righteous, the children of the Father will practice righteousness.
- (6) If anyone claims to belong to his family but does not practice righteousness (such as those of 1Jno.1:6; 1Jno.2:22; 5:10), his claim is denied.
- (7) Anyone who knows God is righteous, and who habitually practices righteousness, can rightfully claim to be what he claims to be and what God say he is – a child of God!

**B. 2<sup>nd</sup>, WHAT THOSE BEGOTTEN OF GOD DO AND DO NOT NOW KNOW ABOUT WHAT THEY SHALL BE, 1Jno.3:2b,c.**

1. What they *do not now know* about what they shall be: “Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be,” 3:2b.
  - a. This resumes and emphasizes the already mentioned fact in v.1: “Now are we the children of God.”
  - b. Though they are now children of God, they do not now possess a full knowledge of matters pertaining to the next life.
  - c. Though there is much we do know now about our future existence in heaven in a general way; there is no doubt much detailed knowledge about it we do not know.
  - d. The “now” is set in contrast to the future.
    - (1) That we are now children of God suggests that, as blessed as that relationship is here and now, this is not the final state.
    - (2) It’s only a foretaste of what we are going to be or experience
  - e. The present state is the guarantee of future glories. A wonderful destiny awaits; but what?
2. What they do know now about what they shall be, 3:2c.

- a. John here turns his thoughts to the future again. While it is even now a wonderful thing to be a child of God, there are still more wonderful things in the future world.
- b. This is one thing we know of a certainty – know without question – at the present time: At his 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming we shall then see him as he is now in heaven in his glorified state; and that we shall then be like him as he is now!
- c. Our future likeness to Christ is the dominant fact here. This directs our attention to the effects of the appearing rather than to the time of it.
- d. To be like him is to be as he is in both spirit and body, Phil.3:20,21. “even as he is” – stresses the fullness of the fact!
- e. Then we shall have complete knowledge and understanding of matters with reference to our future hope for which we now patiently wait. Cf. Tit.1:2; Rom.8:24,25.
- f. Guy N. Woods in his Commentary said: “There is a story often told of a group of heathen converts who when they came to this verse in translating into their language, unable to believe that such could possibly be in store for sinful man, stopped and said, ‘No! It is too much, Let us write that we shall be permitted to kiss his feet!’”

**C. 3<sup>rd</sup>, HOPE’S POWERFUL, PURIFYING, INFLUENTIAL, RESPONSIBILITY, 1Jno.3:3.**

1. All those who stand begotten of God, who maintain that spiritual relationship in good standing, have a distinct and specific hope “this hope in him” or “this hope set on him” (ASV); a hope that rests upon Jesus. See Rom.5:5; 8:24,25; 15:12; 2Th.2:16; 1Tim.4:10; Tit.1:2; 2:13; 1Pet.1:3-5; Heb.6:17-20.
  - a. The preposition “on” (Gr. *epi*) after the noun “hope” in v.3 makes it sufficiently certain that “him” means Christ, or God in Christ, not in oneself. Whereas the pronoun “him” following “on” (Gr. *epi*) must denote the object of the hope.
    - (1) This is the only reason to hope in John’s Epistle. Cf. 1Jno.2:18-25; 1Jno.2:1-6; 5:11,12,20.
    - (2) He it is who is at once the central Object of the hope itself.
    - (3) He it is who has promised to fulfill it. 1cor.15.
    - (4) His death, burial, resurrection and ascension to God’s right hand on David’s throne set the seal to its validity.

- (5) This hope is set on Jesus Christ from beginning to the end, and is the believers' inspiration and motivation to godly living here and now.
  - (6) Here is a motive to the habitual practice of righteousness. It centers on Jesus Christ.
2. V.3 declares the powerful, purifying, influential, responsibility of this hope in the lives of those who possess it.
- a. It leads them to keep themselves pure, this being a condition precedent to its realization.
  - b. He who has it and cherishes it has the instinct of self-preservation within him; he will discipline and train himself in doing, bearing, resisting, and thus will aim to "perfect holiness in the fear of God." Cf. 1Cor.9:27; 2Cor.6:17-7:1; Jas.1:19-25; 1Pet.1:13-15; 2:1,2.
  - c. It places upon the one who possess it the tremendous responsibility of "purifying himself, even as he is pure."
  - d. The pattern as the example of this purity is Jesus Christ himself.
    - (1) He is pure, and a hope that rests "on him" cannot be have a purifying effect in the life of the one who so hopes.
    - (2) For to have one's hope set on Jesus Christ implies that he is a constant object of meditation, contemplation and imitation.
    - (3) It's no wonder the Gnostics and the antichrists are spoken of as they are by John!
  - e. This purification is from everything that is inconsistent with the character and will of God in Christ.
  - f. This truth is directed against the Gnostic teaching and practice that sin does not pollute the enlightened person.
  - g. "Even as he is pure," i.e., as Jesus was pure in the days of his flesh.
    - (1) The word pure (hagnos) signifies the purity of one who, having been subjected to temptation, overcomes it.
    - (2) This is true of Jesus Christ, and his pureness is the standard set for the believer.
    - (3) John does not say that, "He purified himself," but that "He **IS** pure."
    - (4) It is the believer who has to purify himself.
    - (5) This purifying is something that one does himself –by the grace of God, of course. For in one sense, one purifies

himself. But in another sense, the Lord purifies the individual.

- h. The verb “purifieth” meaning “to cleans from defilement” (Vine, III, 233) (present active indicative), refers to a continuous act or action, keep on purifying, an essential prerequisite to the maintaining of “this hope.”
3. Taught here, therefore, in the most emphatic fashion is:
  - a. The conditionality of our salvation, even after our initial conversion to Christ.
  - b. The necessity of abstaining from every form of impurity. Cf. 1Jno.1:6.
  - c. The encouragement to faithfulness which hope affords, and which is its responsibility.
  - d. The example of purity that Jesus Christ himself supplies and which we are to imitate.

### III. CONCLUSION

1. Once again John strikes a fatal blow to the Gnostic heresy and the antichrists among the believers of that day. He does it by teaching:
  - a. That only those who know that God is righteous and who habitually practice righteousness, are begotten of God as his children, i.e., who stand begotten of God or who maintain that spiritual relationship to God in good standing, which, of course, neither the Gnostic nor the antichrists did.
  - b. That only those who had their hope set on Jesus Christ:
    - (1) Would be like him when he was manifested at his 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.
    - (2) Would be motivated to keep on purifying themselves even as he is pure because of that hope set on him.
2. This strikes a fatal blow to the Gnostic heresy and the antichrist of that day, because they did not have their hope set on Jesus Christ as the Son of God, nor did they habitually practice righteousness, 1Jno.1:6; 2:18-23.
3. Don't overlook the tremendous value of the influence of the hope set on Jesus Christ, nor of the responsibility that hope carries with it!