

# 1 John 2:28-29 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			

From Talk Thru the Bible

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, **abide** in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from

**Greek:** και νυν τεκνια μενετε (5720) εν αυτω ινα εαν φανερωθη (5686) σχωμεν (5632) παρρησιαν και μη αισχυνωμεν (5686) απ αυτου εν τη παρουσια αυτου

**Amplified:** And now, little children, abide (live, remain permanently) in Him, so that when He is made visible, we may have and enjoy perfect confidence (boldness, assurance) and not be ashamed and shrink from Him at His coming.

**Barclay:** And now, little children, remain in him, so that, if he appears, we may have confidence and not shrink in shame away from him at his coming.

**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.

**HCSB:** So now, little children, remain in Him, so that when He appears we may have boldness and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

**KJV -** And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

**NET:** And now, little children, remain in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink away from him in shame when he comes back.

**NIV:** And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

**NLT:** And now, dear children, continue to live in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame.

**TLB:** And now, my little children, stay in happy fellowship with the Lord so that when he comes you will be sure that all is well and will not have to be ashamed and shrink back from meeting him.

**Weymouth:** And now, dear children, continue in union with Him; so that, if He re-appears, we may have perfect confidence, and may not shrink away in shame from His presence at His Coming.

**Wuest:** And now, little children [born-ones, bairns], be continually abiding in Him, in order that whenever He is made visible, we may have instant freedom of speech and not be made to shrink away from Him in shame at His coming and personal presence.

**Young's Literal:** And now, little children, remain in him, that when he may be manifested, we may have boldness, and may not be ashamed before him, in his presence;

- **little:**, 1 John 2:1
- **when:**, 1 John 3:2; Mark 8:38; Colossians 3:4; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 1:7, 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 1:7
- **have:**, 1 John 3:21, 1 John 4:17; Isaiah 25:9, Isaiah 45:17; Romans 9:33
- **at his:**, Malachi 3:2, Malachi 4:5; 1 Corinthians 1:7, 1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Peter 3:4-12
- **Reciprocal:**, Joshua 2:19 - whosoever Job 11:15 - lift up Job 14:15 - shalt call Ps 62:8 - Trust Ps 119:6 - shall I Ps 119:31 - put me Ps 119:46 - will not Ps 119:80 - that I be Joel 2:26 - and my Luke 1:17 - to make Luke 6:48 - the flood Luke 12:9 - shall Luke 21:36 - stand John 1:13 - of God John 15:9 - continue Acts 11:23 - and exhorted Acts 13:43 - persuaded Romans 6:21 - whereof 1 Corinthians 11:26 - till Philippians 1:20 - in nothing 1 Thessalonians 2:19 - in 2 Timothy 4:1 - at 1 John 2:5 - hereby 1 John 2:6 - he 1 John 2:27 - ye shall 1 John 3:6 - abideth
- 1 John 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### [Sam Storms- Outline of 1 John 1:1-3:10](#)

- I. Introduction: The Apostolic Message - 1 John 1:1-4
- II. The First Series of Tests - 1 John 1:5-2:27
- III. The Second Series of Tests - 1 John 2:28-4:6
  - A. The Moral Test (3) - 1 John 2:28-3:10a

## PREPARING FOR THE LORD'S RETURN

**Westcott** introduces this verse noting that now "John turns from the ideal view of the believer to the practical enforcement of duty: 'I have said that God's gift is unchangeable; and that the Christian continues living in that which he received, and so abides in his Lord; and now, in the face of your enemies, realise your life: do you abide in Him, and prove your fellowship by your action.' The verses serve also to prepare the way for the next section, introducing ideas which are afterwards developed ([1 John 2:28 Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** introduces this next section with these summary comments - John has now concluded his message on fellowship and is about to begin his message on sonship. He has pointed out the contrasts between light and darkness (1 John 1:1–2:6), love and hatred (1 John 2:7–17), and truth and error (1 John 2:18–27). He has explained that a real Christian lives a life of obedience (walking in light, not darkness), love, and truth. It is impossible to live in fellowship with God if you are disobedient or hateful or untruthful. Any of these sins will lead you out of reality and into pretense. You will have an "artificial" life instead of an "authentic" life. 1John 2:28-29 are a "bridge" from the fellowship section into the sonship section ("born of God"); in these verses John uses three words that ought to encourage us to live in fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. (The Bible exposition commentary)

**A E Brooke** refers to this verse as reflecting the saint's "need of constancy, and its reward. Confidence in the presence of the Judge." ([A critical and exegetical commentary](#))

**Brooke** explains **and now** - This can hardly be taken as temporal, the exhortation to abide being specially needed in view of the nearness of the Parousia, which is expected in the immediate future, at the end of the last hour, which has already struck. The general use of the phrase seems to be to introduce a statement, especially a prayer, exhortation, or command, which is regarded as the necessary deduction from the requirements of present circumstances. "Since the case is so," "such being the case," would perhaps bring out the meaning most clearly by paraphrase. Cf. Jn. 17:5; Ac. 3:17, 7:34 (= Ex. 3:10), Acts 13:11, 20:22, 25, 22:16, 26:6; 2 Jn. 5. Contrast Jn. 11:22. Cf. also Ac. 5:38, 16:37. ([Ibid](#))

**Hiebert** sees **and now** "as a concluding appeal from the realities in 1Jn 2:26–27....Clearly John is appealing to his readers in view of the crisis created by the continued seductive efforts of the false teachers. The renewed use of the direct address "little children" (cf. 2:1) marks John's pastoral concern for his readers in view of the crisis they face. He now joins the urgency of the present with the strength to be drawn from the motivating power of the Christian hope for the future." ([1 John 2:18-28 Exposition \(Part 4/10\)](#))

**Little children** (5040)(**teknon**) is literally My "born ones", the diminutive expresses affection accounting for some of the translations as "my dear children." Teknion designates a little child and is used by John to address those who are true followers of Jesus. From John's repetitive use of teknion in this epistle, one might say it is an epistle for little children! But the subjects with which John deals are not "child's play," but have serious implications regarding one's spiritual life, now and in eternity future! The Apostle John used teknion in warning his readers of spiritual dangers. Clearly the 8 NT uses of teknion strongly infer that the recipients of this title are genuine born again ones.

**Barclay** - The first thing to note in this passage is the sheer affection in it. John begins with the address, "little children." Both in Latin and in Greek diminutives carry a special affection. They are words which are used, as it were, with a caress. John is a very old man; he must be, in fact, the last survivor of his generation, maybe the last man alive who had walked and talked with Jesus in the days of his flesh. So often age gets out of sympathy with youth and acquires even an impatient irritableness with the new and laxer ways of the younger generation. But not John, in his old age he has nothing but tenderness for those who are his little children in the faith. He is writing to tell them that they must not sin but he does not scold. There is no cutting edge in his voice; he seeks to love them into goodness. In this opening address there is the yearning, affectionate tenderness of a pastor for people whom he has known for long in all their wayward foolishness and still loves. ([1 John 2 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Little children** (uses by John) - John 13:33; 1 Jn 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21. It is John's term of affection by which he seeks to appeal to their familial (spiritual) relationship to "enforce the exhortation," as he does in 1Jn 2:1,2:12, 3:7,18, 5:21.

**Spurgeon** comments on John's description of his readers as **little children** - (1) This indicates the apostle's love to them. He could not wish them a greater blessing out of the depth of his heart's affection, than that they should faithfully abide in Christ. (2) Next, by this he suggests their near and dear relation to their Father in heaven. Because you are little children, you are not of traveling years, therefore stay at home and abide in your Lord. (3) Does he not hint at their feebleness? Even if you were grown and strong, you would not be wise to gather all together and wander away into the far country; but as you are so young, so dependent, so feeble, it is essential that you abide in Him. Is He not your life, your all? (4) Does not the apostle also gently hint at their fickleness? You are very changeable, like little babes. You are apt to be hot and cold in half an hour. Surrender yourself to Him by an everlasting covenant never to be cancelled. Be His forever and ever. (5) Did not this remind them of their daily dependence upon the Lord's care, as little children depend on their parents? ([1 John 2:28 Preparation for the Coming of the Lord](#))

The truth of Christ's return to take us home is a strong inducement to abide in Him now.

**Candlish** - The motive urged for your abiding in Christ is the hope or prospect of **His appearing**, "**His coming**." It is urged very earnestly and affectionately. There is a tender emphasis in the appeal "And now, little children!" ([1 John 2:26-28 The Guileless Spirit, through the Abiding Messianic Unction](#))

## THE KEY TO BEING CONFIDENT & UNASHAMED

The key is found in one word, **abide**, one of John's favorite words, one he uses more than all other NT writers combined, and 24 times in this short epistle (1Jn 2:6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 24, 27-28; 3:6, 9, 14-15, 17, 24; 4:12-13, 15-16)! Just before Jesus was crucified, He spoke His parting words to His disciples in the Upper Room Discourse using the word **abide** 11 times (last words of anyone are important, especially if His Name is Jesus!) (Jn 15:4-7, 9-10, 16).

**Abide in Him** - In Jesus. **Why does John give this exhortation?** The **NET Note** explains "At the time he is writing them, the readers do still "remain" (abide) since they have not yet adopted the heretical teaching of the opponents. But now the author wants to forestall the possibility that they might do so at some point, and so he begins this section with an exhortation to the readers to "**reside/remain**" in Christ."

**Herbert Lockyer** - "Abiding in Jesus will give us a single eye; a burning zeal; holy discretion; and enable us to seize all opportunities to glorify His adorable Name." Jesus made the word "abide" so rich in splendid possibilities that once we realize what it is to abide in Him, the word is never commonplace again. Jesus promises us that this abiding life will be a fruitful, God-glorifying life. His life flows into us as the sap flows into the vine. (All the Promises of the Bible)

**Spurgeon** - Abiding in Jesus (living in Jesus) is not a passive thing; it is an active thing. We must give ourselves, mentally and spiritually, to living in Jesus. "We abide in him, not by a physical law, as a mass of iron abides on the earth; but by a mental and spiritual law, by which the greatness of divine love and goodness holds us fast to the Lord Jesus." Yet, not only are we called to abide in Him; but we also know that He abides in us. It is a two-way relationship. "You are to take care that you abide in Christ as much as if all depended upon yourself; and yet you can look to the promise of the covenant, and see that the real reason for your abiding in Christ lies in the operation of his unchanging love and grace."

**Mattoon** - Abiding in the Lord involves spending time and being at home with the Lord.

See **J C Philpot's** - [Abiding in Christ](#)

**Wendell Johnson** - In 1John 2-4 the apostle John expanded on Jesus' teaching about abiding. The twenty-six references to abiding in these three chapters give evidence that this is a major theme in the epistle. Abiding in Christ affects one's conduct, for as John wrote, "Whoever claims to live [meno] in Him must walk as Jesus did" (1Jn 2:6). Abiding "in the light" is associated with love of other believers (1Jn 2:9-11). Abiding or remaining in God's Word enables believers to overcome the evil one (1Jn 2:14), and it guards them from being deceived by false teachers (1Jn 2:26-27; see also 1Jn 4:6). Abiding in fellowship with Christ gives confidence about the future (1Jn 2:28; 1Jn 4:17). Those who abide are characterized by righteous living (1Jn 3:6), and the Holy Spirit's indwelling assures them that they are abiding in Christ (1Jn 4:13)....Conscious abiding in Christ should be the desire of every believer, and the way to abide is clearly delineated in Scripture. (The Theological Wordbook)

**John Phillips** on abiding in Him - John remembered the Lord's own teaching about these things. In the Olivet discourse, He portrayed a wise and a wicked servant (Mt. 24:45-51), and in His parable of the talents He contrasted the diligent servants and the dilatory one (Mt. 25:1-30). The sure way to guarantee being unashamed before the Lord at His return is to "abide in Him." That is the way to win His approval when the time comes for us to eternally abide with Him. (1 John Commentary)

**Smalley** observes that **Abide in Him** signifies "a deep and permanent relationship between the believer and God (or God's word) in Christ and by the Spirit....Malatesta (Interiority, 226) notes that, of all the exhortations in 1 John, this is the only one which "encourages an attitude directed immediately to Christ" (cf. 2:1, 6, 15, 24). However, the appeal in 2:6 ("living as Jesus lived") is closely related....the basic setting implied is that of a reciprocal (covenant) relationship between the Christ of God and his people ("abide in him, as he does in you"). On this foundation alone spiritual growth is possible for believers." (Word Biblical Commentary)

**Wuest** - The exhortation, "**Be constantly abiding in Him**" is given in view of the uncertainty of the time of His coming. The believer must live in close fellowship with His Lord that he may be ready for that coming. (Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament)

See **James Smith's** discussion of What It Means to Abide in Him

**Abide** (continue, endure, remain, stay) ([3306](#))(**meno**) in simple terms means to remain in the same place or position over a period

of time. **Meno** is used "of someone who does not leave the realm or sphere in which he finds himself." (BDAG) It means to take up permanent residence, to make one's self at home. **Abide** is in the **present imperative** which is a command for abiding to be our lifestyle, one of continuing intimate fellowship, something only possible as we learn to depend on the power of the Spirit (cp Jesus' example for us to imitate = Acts 10:38) - we need to be continually filled by the Spirit (Eph 5:18-note) and we need to continually walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16-note). Remember, God never commands us to do anything, that He does not also enable us to accomplish! Our daily "theme song" should be "I can't (in my power). He never said we could. But He can (in His power) and He always said He would!" Because of the New Covenant and our union with Christ, every believer "**abides**" in Him positionally (and eternally). However the fact that John issues the command to **abide** is a call for our daily experience to match our eternal position! In short, to abide in Jesus is our responsibility and requires us to make choices to facilitate our abiding.

**Hiebert** adds that "It is not a call to maintain a static relationship but rather to enjoy and deepen a vital personal fellowship with Christ."

And so John's charge is that we keep on abiding in Him. How do we abide in Him? Obedience. Trusting Him for the power to live this Christian life. Working out our salvation in fear and trembling, realizing though it is God in us both to will and to work to His good pleasure. (Phil 2:12-note, Phil 2:13-note) Abiding speaks of being at home with Someone (Christ), comfortable with Him, enjoying unbroken fellowship, being open, honest and transparent. Abiding means maintaining a clean conscience. Abiding means we confess our sins quickly and seek repentance earnestly, ever eager to return to our first love (Rev 2:4-note). Abide means we do not make ourselves unclean with the "swarming" things that swarm upon the earth (Lev 11:44, 2Cor 6:17-18, 2Cor 7:1-note) Abiding means we guard our garden from the little foxes that spoil the vineyard when they are in bloom (Song 2:15). Abiding means we watch over our heart with all diligence, knowing that out of it flow the springs of life. (Pr 4:23-note). And the list goes on and on. You might consider pondering your own life circumstances, asking what does it mean for you to abide? Do I need to consider taking another job, because the one I am in compromises and tempts continually? Do I need to break off a relationship that is drawing me away from my love for Christ?, etc, etc. Give the Spirit the freedom to do a thorough "house cleaning", being open to His difficult questions and requests!

**Vance Havner** discusses what it means to "**abide in Him**" (from his message on John 15:1-8) - Our relationship is fixed, but our fellowship with Him depends upon whether we abide in Him as we ought. This abiding is not a tense and strained affair, but an utter dependence upon Him for every need—feeding upon Him, drawing from Him, as the branch from the vine, all our strength and security. This **abiding** means obedience: "He that saith he **abides** in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). But our greatest obedience is to **abide** in Him. **Abiding** is revealed in holy living: "Whosoever **abides** in Him sins not" (1John 3:6). This is not "sinless perfection," but living above willful and habitual sin. This **abiding** is witnessed by the Spirit: "And hereby we know that He **abides** in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us" (1 John 3:24). **Abiding** in Him is also the condition of answered prayer: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). This reminds us of the discourse on the Bread of Life in John 6. When the disciples complained that He was declaring a hard saying, He simplified it by saying: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." So here He makes His **abiding** in us clearer by saying "if My words **abide** in you." We are to feed upon His truth, and if we do, our prayers shall be answered. This **abiding** is manifested in fruitfulness: "He that **abides** in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit" (John 15:5). Notice that the fruit-bearing is just the natural consequence of **abiding**. We fret and worry about results, our good deeds, our behavior (and churches bother about by-products) when our interest should be concentrated upon this focal point: to abide in Him. That is our business; all else is a natural result. (**Reflections on the Gospels**)

**Spurgeon** discusses what John means to "**abide in Him**" - "He meant fidelity (faithfulness) to the truth taught by our Lord. We are sure he meant this, because, a previously, in 1Jn 2:24, he had said, "As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father." Beloved, you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ unto the salvation of your souls. You have trusted in Him as the Son of God, the appointed Mediator, and the effectual Sacrifice for your sin. Your hope has come from a belief in Christ as God has borne witness to Him.

**Abide** in the **truth which you received from the beginning**; for in your earliest days it wrought salvation in you. The foundation of your faith is not a changeable doctrine: you rest on a sure word of testimony. Truth is in its very nature fixed and unalterable. You know more about it than you did; but the thing itself is still the same, and must be the same. **Take care that you abide in it. You will find it difficult to do so, for there is an element of changeableness about yourself: this you must overcome by grace. You will find many elements of seduction in the outside world.** There are men whose business it is to shake the faith of others, and thereby to gain a reputation for cleverness and depth of thought. Some seem to think it an ambition worthy of a Christian to be always questioning, or, as the apostle puts it, to be "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2Ti 3:7) To throw doubt into minds which, by a gracious certainty, have been made blessed, is their chosen life-work. Therefore, you will be often led to try (test) your foundation (**the truth which you received from the beginning**), and at times you will tremble as you cling to it. Harken, then, to this word from the mouth of your Lord: "**Abide in Him.**" Keep yourself where you were as to the truth which you believe. That which has justified you, will sanctify you. That which has, in a measure, sanctified you, will yet perfect you. Make

no change as to the eternal verities upon which you ground your hope. As a stone, you are built on the foundation; **abide** there. As a branch, you have been grafted into the stem; **abide** there. As a member, you are in the body; **abide** there; it is all over with you if you do not. **Abide** in that holy mold of doctrine into which you were at first delivered. Let no man deceive you with vain words, though there are many abroad in these days who "would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect." **Abide in Jesus, by letting His words abide in you.** Believe what you have found to be the means of your quickening. Believe it with a greater intensity and a greater practicalness; but "cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." (Heb 10:35)...**"Abide in Him,"** in the sense of being at home in Him. Do not go to Jesus one day, and to the world another day; do not be a lodger with Him, but abide in Him. What a comfort to have our Lord Himself to be our chosen dwelling place in time and in eternity! Why does the apostle urge us to abide in Christ? Is there any likelihood of our going away? Yes, for in this very chapter he mentions apostates, who from disciples had degenerated into antichrists, of whom he says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would, no doubt, have continued with us." "Abide in Him," then, and do not turn aside unto crooked ways, as many professors have done. ([Read full sermon for Spurgeon's additional explanations of what it means to abide in Him](#))

**Vance Havner** - A traveler in the jungle said to his guide, "But there is no path, no road, no way." The guide replied, "There is no road, I am the Way!" Our Lord is not the way-shower, He is The Way. When we **abide in Him**, we need no chart or compass. (Van Havner Notebook)

**So that (hina)** is a **term of purpose** and here states the purpose of John's exhortation for his readers to abide in Jesus. The purpose is in order that at the Second Coming when Christ is revealed, the readers may have confidence and not shrink back from him in shame.

**Derickson** - Following the command to abide, John employs a purpose-result hina clause to say that what follows is both the reason to abide as well as the result of abiding. (First, Second, and Third John, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary, Lexham Press)

The simple question is what is the purpose and/or result of abiding in Jesus? Unashamed boldness!

## **LET US CULTIVATE A "MARANATHA MINDSET!"**

**When He appears** - Jesus is coming again. And He will not return in anonymity, but in great glory for all to see (Da 7:13**note**, Rev 1:7-**note**, Mt 24:30, Zech 12:10). As explained below, **when** (ean) could be translated **if**, reflecting not any doubt about the **fact** of His return, but uncertainty about the **time** of His return. In a word, Christ's return is always **imminent**, an adjective which has an interesting derivation from the Latin word *imminere* which means to hang or project over. Literally one could say that **imminent** describes an event which is "hanging over one's head, ready to befall." **Reginald Showers** explains "an imminent event is one that is always hanging overhead, is constantly ready to befall or overtake a person, is always close at hand in the sense that it could happen at any moment. Other things may happen before the imminent event, but nothing else must take place before it happens. If something else must take place before an event can happen, that event is not imminent. The necessity of something else taking place first destroys the concept of imminency."

**Smalley** - The motivation for keeping the Christian faith, by abiding in Jesus, is now introduced; and it is eschatological in character: "so that we may have confidence when he appears." The "timeless" character of "remaining in the light" (1Jn 2:10) and "knowing the truth" (1Jn 2:21) is replaced (as in 1Jn 2:18, to which the present verse obviously looks back) by a sense of urgency. A response of faith is necessary because the end is near; it is the "final hour" (1Jn 2:18), and the "arrival" of Jesus is expected imminently (1Jn 2:28). (Cf. Houlden, 85.) In this setting the reiterated command, "abide in him," acquires particular force. (Word, Incorporated)

**A. E. Brooke** - The nearness of the day affords a new motive for the effort to which they are urged. The nearer the Parousia of their Lord the greater the need of constancy....If that happens which, as circumstances have shown, may befall them now at any moment, they must be in a position not to be ashamed, when the object of their longing expectation is there. ([1John 2:18-21 Commentary - International Critical Commentary](#))

**B F Westcott** on "when" writes that John's point was that Christ's coming "**might be while they all still lived.**"

A continual consciousness of Christ's imminent return will motivate a desire and enable the power to supernaturally **abide in Him** continually. See related resource - [Thoughts on a Maranatha Mindset](#). The famous hymn writer **Fanny Crosby** although physically blind had a vibrant "Maranatha Mindset" which gave her "vision" and passion to pen words like "Take the world but give me Jesus—In His cross my trust shall be; Till, with clearer, brighter VISION, Face to face my Lord I SEE!" (1Cor 13:12-**note**) Now that's a person who is abiding in Jesus! **Maranatha!**

In light of the certainty and imminency of our Lord's return, it behooves us as His children to abide in Him, by redeeming the precious moments He has loaned us! As John Wesley said "Catch the golden moments as they fly!" (See [Redeem the Time](#))



**J Vernon McGee** asks "Why has He not revealed to us the time of His coming? A Christian ought to live in the light of the imminent coming of Christ. If you tell me today that He is not coming for another ten years (I may not live that long!), then I do not need to worry about today, and I can be a little careless in my living. But if He might come today, if He came right at this moment, He would catch me preparing this Bible study and that would be fine. I hope He will come at a time like that, but I don't know when He will come. There are times when I get behind a driver who won't let me around to pass him, and I tell him what I think of him. If the Lord were to come at that moment, I might be ashamed at His appearing. So you and I need to be living all the time in the light of His imminent return. ([Listen to McGee's Mp3 on 1 John 2:28-29](#))

**Lightner** explains that "When" may also be translated "if." John uses the subjunctive mood. This construction does not mean that John was expressing doubt about the fact that Christ will appear. Rather, he was acknowledging that there is uncertainty as to the exact time of His appearing. New Testament saints expected the Lord to come again in their lifetime. They believed in the imminent hope of Christ's return. The doctrine of the Lord's return was part of the primitive apostolic faith. Paul used four words (in verbal or substantive form) to describe it—Christ's **coming** (Greek, **parousia**), His appearing (Greek, **phanerosis** related to **phaneroo**), His epiphany (Greek, **epiphaneia**), and His revelation (Greek, **apokalupsis**). Of these John uses the first two in this verse (1Jn 2:28). There is ample evidence in the papyri that at that time in the East the word was the usual expression for the visit of a king or emperor. **Parousia** means literally "presence," and the two words together imply that our Lord's return will involve the personal presence of one now absent, the visible appearing of one now unseen." (Twenty-First Century Biblical Commentary - 1 John)

**Steven Cole** - James Boice writes (The Epistles of John [Zondervan], p. 96) that in the New Testament, "... one verse in twenty-five deals with the **LORD'S RETURN**. It is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament. It is mentioned in every one of the New Testament books, with the exception of Galatians, which deals with a particular doctrinal problem, and the very short books such as 2 and 3 John and Philemon." Jesus repeatedly mentioned His own return. On the night before His crucifixion, He promised the anxious disciples (John 14:1-3), "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." When the disciples watched the risen Jesus ascend bodily into heaven, two angels appeared and said (Acts 1:11), "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." He will come bodily." ([Are You Ready for His Coming- 1 John 2:28-29](#))

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, you can mark it down - What (Who) you are looking for, will determine what (Who) you are living for!

## **WHAT IF HE APPEARS TODAY!**

**Appears** ([5319](#)) (**phaneroo** from **phanerós** = manifest, visible) means literally to bring or come to light, to illumine, to make manifest, to make visible and thus to make known, to clearly reveal, to cause to be seen. There is an external manifestation to the senses which is open to all. **Vine** adds that **phaneroo** means "To be manifested, in the Scriptural sense of the word, which mean more than to simply "appear." A person may "appear" in a false guise or without a disclosure of what he truly is. To be manifested is to be revealed in one's true character." Indeed, John says "we shall see Him just as He is!" (1Jn 3:2-note)

**In a word, in that glorious day,  
the invisible becomes visible!**

**Marshall** - The first coming of Jesus was the revelation of the previously hidden Word of God in human form, so that those with eyes to see could confess, "We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14-note). Now he is again hidden from view, although he is spiritually present with his disciples, but one day he will again be revealed from heaven. (The New International Commentary on the New Testament)

John uses **phaneroo** 9x in 7v in this letter - 1Jn 1:2-note; 1Jn 2:19-note, 1Jn 2:28; 1Jn 3:2-note, 1Jn 3:5, 8; 1Jn 4:9.

The verb **phaneroo** is used of the appearance of Jesus in the flesh (1Jn 1:2-note; 1Jn 3:5, 8; 1Ti 3:16; 1Pe 1:20-note; cf. Jn 1:31); in his resurrection body (Jn 21:1, 14; cf. the "longer ending" of Mark 16:12, 14); and in glory at the end (1Jn 3:2; Col 3:4-note; 1Pe 5:4-note). (Word Biblical Commentary)

**George G. Findlay** - Christ is to be manifested in His promised advent,—when we know not, but it may be soon; and we must appear before Him, with shame or confidence. Abiding in Him, we shall be prepared whenever He may come. If the present should prove to be the world's last hour and the Lord should appear from heaven while we are yet on earth, how welcome His appearing to those who love Him and keep His word! Christ stands waiting to return. At any moment the heavens may open and He "may be manifested,"...**The Christian man, susceptible to these impressions, will surely ask himself, "What if my Lord should now**

appear? How should I meet Him, if He came to-day: with joy or grief; with shame or rapture?" This is a test that Christ's servants might often with advantage put to themselves. In this one instance St. John writes of the parousia, as St. Paul has done so frequently, and builds on the anticipation of a definitive return of the Lord Jesus. The fact that he does speak of it in this way, though but once, and that he lays a solemn stress on the expectation, proves his agreement with the prevalent eschatology of the Church. ([An Exposition of the Epistles of St John](#))

**Wiersbe** - Not all Bible students are agreed as to the details of future events, but evangelical Christians agree that Christ is returning for His church (1Th. 4:13–18). Though Christians will not then be judged for their sins, they will be judged on the basis of their faithfulness in serving Christ (1 Cor. 3:10–15). Those who have been faithful will receive rewards (1 Cor. 4:5); and those who have not been faithful will lose rewards. This event is called "the Judgment Seat of Christ" (Ro 14:10; 2Cor. 5:10); do not confuse it with the "Great White Throne Judgment" of unsaved people at the end of time (Rev 20:11–15). The fact that Jesus Christ may return at any moment ought to be an incentive for us to live in fellowship with Him and be obedient to His Word. (Ibid)

## THE POSITIVE REACTION AT HIS APPEARING

**We may have confidence** - Notice John humbly includes himself. As **Spurgeon** says "The beloved John needed to have confidence at the appearing of the Lord, and confidence fetched from the same source as that to which he directed his little children. How wisely, and yet how sweetly, he puts himself upon our level in this matter!"

**Alford** - "This was not a matter in which Apostle and converts, teacher and hearer, were separate; but one in which all had a share."

**Vincent** - Teacher and pupil must alike abide in Him.

Dear reader, I pray for each of that we will be walking worthy of our holy calling, so that when He returns, we can joyfully sing out **Charles Wesley's** words from [And Can It be...](#)

**Bold** I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

**Confidence** (boldness) ([3954](#))(**parrhesia** from **pás** = all + **rhesis** = speech, act of speaking) is literally all speech or speaking all things and thereby conveys the idea of freedom to say all. The basic idea in the word is freedom of speech, when the word flowed freely.

**Plummer** says that, in 1John and in Hebrews, **parrhesia** "means especially the fearless trust with which the faithful soul meets God."

John's thought is that we (himself included) might have the same confidence on that great day, that a man might have today as he enters into the presence of a the king and speaks to him without fear of condemnation or reprisals!

**Parrhesia** is **confidence** that speaks up (so to speak) and thus is outspoken confidence. It is a deep**confidence** that shows itself in bold, candid speech, by one being "ready and willing" to make their convictions known in public without fear of repercussions (cp Acts 4:13, 29, 31, 9:31, 28:31 - O, for such a Spirit imbued holy boldness in my heart!)

**Boice** - Dodd calls attention to the fact that in ancient times the word rendered "**confidence**" stood for the most valued right of a citizen in a free state to speak his mind. He adds that "although the meaning of the word became wider and more vague in course of time, yet there always hangs about it this special association with the thought of freedom of speech, unhampered by fear or shame." (The Epistles of John: an expositional commentary)

**Wuest** - The word speaks of the heart attitude of a saint who lives so close to the Lord Jesus that there is nothing between him and his Lord when He comes, nothing of known sin in his life when the Rapture occurs. This is the kind of saint that keeps a daily check-up on himself as to sin in his life. He maintains a constant yieldedness to and dependence upon the Holy Spirit to show him sin in his life and give him the grace to judge it and put it out. (Ibid)

It is that attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear ("shaking" fear - godly, reverential fear is always appropriate) means in essence the freedom to say all. The dominant idea is boldness, confidence, as opposed to fear, ambiguity, or reserve.

Ultimately this quality of **confidence** is that which is energized by the indwelling Spirit, emboldening (Spirit filled) believers to openly declare (with great conviction) all that He births within (cp Acts 4:31).

**Liddell-Scott** record that in secular use **parrhesia** could refer to "a proverb or statement quoted with resolve."

**Marvin Vincent** - It is opposed, as here, to **aischunomai** to be ashamed, in Pr 13:5, where the Septuagint reads "a wicked man is



ashamed (**aischunomai**) and shall not have boldness (**parrhesia**). Also in Phil 1:20-note. (**Ed**: Where Paul uses this same combination of words = "put to shame" and "boldness.") Compare 2 Cor. 3:12. The idea of free, open speech lies at the bottom of the word: coming before God's bar with nothing to conceal. The thought is embodied in the general confession of the Book of Common Prayer: "*That we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our Heavenly Father, but confess them.*" ([1 John 2 Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

In one sense, we shrink back from the idea of being bold in the presence of the Holy One, but "It is not an improper boldness, but one which the Father Himself, in His nature, makes possible through the Son." (Smalley)

### **Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness**

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

**Bold shall I stand in Thy great day;**  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
Fully absolved through these I am  
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

John uses **parrhesia** twice in the context of boldness in judgment (1Jn 2:28, "confidence in the day of judgment" = 1John 4:17)) and twice in the context of boldness in prayer ("confidence before God" = 1Jn 3:21, "confidence which we have before Him" = 1John 5:14).

**Smalley** - In secular Greek the word group (the noun **parrhesia** and the verb **parrhesiazomai**, "I speak freely") signifies the democratic right of a citizen to express an opinion freely and in public. This idea of "outspokenness" or "frankness" between people includes the more general meaning of "courage" or "boldness." In the biblical literature the noun **parrhesia** often acquires this sense of "confidence," both in relation to men (e.g. Lev 26:13 [where "erect" is translated with parrhesia], LXX; Acts 4:29; 2Cor 7:4) and to God (e.g. Job 27:10, LXX = "confidence before Him"; 1Ti 3:13; Heb 10:19). (Word Biblical Commentary)

**Parrhesia** - 13/31 uses are by the apostle John = Mark 8:32; John 7:4, 13, 26; Jn 10:24; Jn 11:14, 54; Jn 16:25, 29; Jn 18:20; Acts 2:29; 4:13, 29, 31; 28:31; 2Cor 3:12; 7:4; Eph 3:12; 6:19; Phil 1:20; Col 2:15; 1 Tim 3:13; Phlm 1:8; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35; 1 John 2:28; 1Jn 3:21; 4:17; 5:14

**Criswell** - Christ's return will inevitably cause one of two reactions. For the believer, the response is **confidence**. The term "confidence" is a translation of a Greek word which literally means "all speech" or "free speech." Confidence is indicated in the believer's ability to verbalize, in contrast to the silent terror and shame of those who must quake before Him at His return. (Believer's Study Bible)

**Henry Morris** - If we "love His appearing" (2Timothy 4:8-note) and "look for Him" to "appear the second time" (Hebrews 9:28-note), then naturally we will be careful to seek to please Him daily in our thoughts, words and deeds, as well as being diligent in studying His Word. ([Defender's Study Bible Notes](#))

**Wuest** has an interesting comment on the verb **may have** (in **may have confidence**) - "**May have**" is schōmen, the aorist subjunctive, speaking of instantaneous action here. That is, the saint at the time of the Rapture (**Ed**: See discussion of the verb for "caught up" [Latin = *rapturo*] = **harpazo**) should be living in such close fellowship with his Lord that the sudden appearance of the Saviour merely continues the fellowship that was in progress on earth, like Enoch who walked with God on earth and suddenly was not, for God took him (**Ed**: Cp Ge 5:19-21, Ge 5:22-24 and Heb 11:5-6-note). There is no need for a gradual adjustment to that fellowship into which he is being introduced at the Rapture, because the latter fellowship is just a continuation of the former. It is an instantaneous freedom of speech, of holy boldness, of assurance." (Ibid)

**William Barclay** - In 1Jn 2:28, John urges his people to **abide** continually in Christ so that, when he does come back in power and glory, they may not **shrink from Him in shame**. By far the best way to be ready for the coming of Christ is to live with him every day. If we do that, his coming will be no shock to us but simply the entry into the nearer presence of one with whom we have lived for long. Even if we have doubts and difficulties about the physical Second Coming of Christ, this still remains true. For every man life will some day come to an end; God's summons comes to all to rise and bid this world farewell. If we have never thought of God and if Jesus has been but a dim and distant memory, that will be a summons to voyage into a frightening unknown. But if we have lived consciously in the presence of Christ, if day by day we have talked and walked with God, that will be a summons to come home and to enter into the nearer presence of One who is not a stranger but a Friend. ([1 John 2 Commentary](#))

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## THE NEW BIRTH: ITS EVIDENCES AND RESULTS 1 JOHN

The Apostle John does not point out in this Epistle how regeneration can take place, because that he had already done in his Gospel, particularly John 1:12, 13+, and the whole of chapter 3. Here in his Epistle he points out the proofs whereby we may know we are born from above.

I. **Faith** is both the condition and the proof of regeneration. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1+).

II. **Love**. "Every one that loveth is born of God" (1 John 4:7+).

III. **Life**. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (margin, "practice") sin; or as W., "No one who is a child of God is habitually guilty of sin" (1 John 3:9+). This is to say, one of the clearest proofs of the new birth is to be found in the fact that a new life is begun. Not a life of sin as before, but a life of victory—there may be, there usually is, especially in the early days, lapses into sin, but not a life of sin. By and by we learn the secret of full victory.

IV. **Overcomes**. "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4+).

V. **Kept**. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but He that was begotten of God (i.e., the Lord Jesus) keepeth him" (1 John 5:18+, R.V.). The begotten one is kept by the only Begotten of the Father. And the result?

VI. **Holiness**. Personal holiness. "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (1 John 2:29+).

([James Smith - Handfuls on Purpose](#))

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## THE NEGATIVE REACTION AT HIS APPEARING

**Shrink away from Him in shame at His coming** - Some conservative commentaries interpret **shame at His coming** as related to rewards - those who are ashamed will not receive a full reward. Others see this as a reference to the exposure of those who were never genuine believers. They say these are individuals who professed Christ but they did not truly possess Him (i.e., they were not born again), as shown by their failure to live holy lives (not speaking of perfection but direction.) Frankly, after studying this passage and reading many conservative commentaries, I am not 100% sure which interpretation is the correct one. You will have to read the text and ask the Spirit to lead you into all truth. In the following section, there are some quotes from both viewpoints.

**Robert Candlish** has a conscience probing discussion on **shrink away from Him in shame** which should cause ALL of us (without exception) to search our hearts (yea, even praying Ps 139:23-24), independent of how we interpret this section: "With a view to that we remind you of the **anointing** which you as well as we have received of Christ, the Holy One. With a view to that we counsel you to **abide in him**; that as there is no real difference now between you and us, there may be none hereafter, when it would be final and fatal; that when He shall appear, we may altogether appear with Him in glory; that you and we alike **"may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."** For we all alike need to be admonished of this risk. And what a thought! what a contingency or possibility to be imagined! **"To be ashamed before Him at His coming!"** It is a very strong expression. It carries us back to that old scene in Paradise when it was lost. The guilty pair "hear the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, in the cool of the day." (Ge 3:8) And they shrink with shame from him **"at his coming."** (Ge 3:9-12) Is it thus that we should shrink at His coming now? Were He at this moment to appear, how would we feel? What would be our first impulse, our instinct? To run to meet Him, or to shrink from Him in shame? There are those who at the coming of the Lord shall **"hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"** (Rev 6:16-17) Would we be among that terrified multitude, that woeful crowd? It is to have in it not a little of the pomp and fashion of the world; **"kings of the earth, great men, rich men, chief captains, mighty men, as well as bond and free men, without number."** They may know no shame or fear now; unused to blush, or be abashed, or tremble in any presence, however they may force others to blush, and be abashed, and tremble before them. But at the Lord's appearing, their brave, bold looks are gone. Ashamed, alarmed, despairing, they shrink from Him. Surely we would not be of that miserable crew. **Nay, fear apart, we who believe and love Him would not wish to be found by Him, at His coming, in any mood of mind, in any attitude of body, in any company, at any work, in any pleasure, over any book, that would cause even a momentary shrinking from Him in shame. We would not choose to be so caught by Him and taken by surprise; when we were not thinking of Him, or serving Him; when perhaps we were tempted to be ashamed of Him, or of one of His saints, or of some things about His cause and kingdom, before those who happened to be our associates at the time;—so caught, I say, and taken by surprise, as to wish for a moment's delay, that we might get over our nervous flutter and confusion, and summon courage to bid Him welcome. Who**

**is He who comes?** And for what? Is it not “he whom our soul loveth,” our Saviour, friend, brother, who has gone to prepare a place for us among the many mansions of his Father’s house? (Jn 14:3) And for what does he come? To take us to Himself, that where He is we may be also. Can we tolerate the idea of being ashamed before Him when He comes, and comes on such an errand? Ah! if we would be safe from any such risk then, let us “**abide in him**” now; “**abide in him**” always. So, “**when he shall appear, we may have confidence.**” Let me be ever asking myself, at every moment, If He were to appear now, would I have confidence? If He were to come into my house, my room, and show Himself, and speak to me face to face; would I have confidence? Could I meet His look of love without embarrassment? Only if He found me “**abiding in Him**,” doing whatever I might be doing “in His name, giving thanks unto God even the Father by Him;” only if he found me keeping Him in my heart. **Let us then be always abiding in Him; every day, every hour, every instant; even as we would wish to be found abiding in him, were he to appear this very day, this very hour, this very instant.** He is about to appear; to appear suddenly; to come quickly. Oh let us see to it, that as we would not wish Him to come when we were in such a state as to cause shrinking from Him in shame; as we would rather that when He appears we were in a position to spring forward with keen eye and outstretched arm, to welcome in all confidence Him Whom we love; let us see to it that we “**abide in him.**” Let us be always in the posture in which he who gives his “little children” this counsel was himself when he closed the book of the Revelation. “**He which testifies to these things says “Yes, I come quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**” (Rev 22:20) ([1 John 2:26-28 The Guileless Spirit, through the Abiding Messianic Unction](#))

**Shame** (only use by John) ([153](#))(**aischunomai** from **aíschos** = shame. disfigurement, disgrace) means to be put to shame, be made ashamed or have a feeling of fear or shame which prevents person from doing a thing. To be made to feel embarrassed (Lk 16:3) or disgraced.

**Marvin Vincent** on **not shrink away from Him in shame** - The expression is peculiar. Literally, “be ashamed from Him.” The fundamental thought is that of separation and shrinking from God through the shame of conscious guilt. The same construction is found in the Septuagint. Isa. 1:29, “They shall be ashamed from their idols.” Jer. 2:36, “Thou shalt be ashamed of (from) Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of (from) Assyria.” Jer. 12:13. ([1 John 2 Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

**Aischunomai** is used only in the middle and passive voices in the New Testament - in the middle it means “**be ashamed**,” in the passive it means “**be put to shame.**” You say “so what?” **Raymond E Brown** offers this interesting explanation - “The **passive** reflects a legal situation where one is disgraced, while the **middle** has more the psychological aspect of the individual’s feeling shame.” (The Epistles of John: translated, with introduction, notes, and commentary, Anchor Yale Bible)

**Hiebert** picks up on **Brown’s** analysis and explains that “Those who take the verb as passive understand John to mean that the shame comes from Him, that they will be openly put to shame by Christ. Thus **Marshall** remarks, “For them the coming of Jesus will mean judgment and rejection.... Those who will be ashamed when he comes are the people who did not live in union with him on earth, those who were merely nominal in their allegiance to him, and their rejection at his coming will be the final confirmation of a life of spiritual separation from him.” But others hold that in this context the middle voice is more probable, as depicting the feeling of personal shame of those who have fluctuated in their devotion and service and have allowed things to come into their lives which they will then recognize as evoking Christ’s disapproval. This is suggested in the rendering “shrink away from Him in shame” (NASB). “This intimates divine disapproval at the judgment seat of Christ, referred to in 4:17–19.” Then the picture is not of an unsaved individual but of a born-again believer who has allowed sin in his life because of slackness in his relationship with Christ. In support of this view is the first-person, plural subject of the verb, as denoting John and his readers.” (Ibid)

**Derickson** - Of note is John’s inclusion of himself with the first person plural (Lieu, 116). He is not warning about losing one’s salvation or being declared unregenerate by Christ at His appearing. Rather, he is describing the emotional response a believer will have when brought before Christ at His appearing. Every believer, including John, will have one of two responses to Jesus when they stand in His presence for the first time: the believer either will be comfortable in His presence or will be looking for somewhere to hide in humiliation....the judgment alluded to here must be what has been labeled the Bema Seat judgment of Christ, described by Paul in Rom 14:10–13, 1 Cor 3:10–15 and 2 Cor 5:9–11. In this judgment every deed of every believer will be judged. In 1 Cor that judgment will evaluate the quality of their impact in the lives of others, what value they added to the foundation of Christ in each believer’s life. Paul warns that some believers will find all of their works burned but will themselves be saved “as through fire,” having lost everything. Further, he notes that believers who understand the significance of this judgment from Christ will “fear” Him and persuade men to get right with Him. John, in describing this same judgment does not distinguish Jesus’ two comings (rapture and return), but points to the one judgment believers face. He next explains what will determine how one feels when facing Jesus for the first time as our righteous judge. (First, Second, and Third John, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary)

**Henry Morris** - This does not mean loss of salvation, but rather shame and loss of confidence if we are behaving inconsistently when Christ returns (Matthew 24:42-46; 2Peter 3:11). ([Defender’s Study Bible Notes](#))

**Burge** - Christ’s appearance will produce two reactions. Some people will experience **confidence**, while others will experience **shame**. Literally, the latter group will “**shrink from him**,” while the former will enjoy confidence and assurance, even poise....John’s

warning about **shame** is not meant to threaten Christians, who are born of God. He is here addressing those who stand in opposition to Jesus, for whom his climactic coming will be a catastrophe of the first order. (The NIV Application Commentary)

**Steven Cole** - John indicates that there are two possibilities when Jesus Christ comes: either you will have confidence or you will “shrink away from Him in shame.” But, is John referring to believers who will be ashamed at the Lord’s coming, or to the heretics and those who have followed them in their denial of the deity of Jesus Christ? **It seems to me that the primary reference in the context is to the heretics and their followers.** For a while, they professed to know Jesus Christ, but they turned away, showing that their faith was not genuine, saving faith (2:19). They have denied Him His rightful place as the Sovereign Lord and have turned, instead, to foolish speculations that puff them up with pride in their supposed knowledge. Because by their denial of Christ, they were ashamed of Him, when He comes He will be ashamed of them (Mark 8:38). **They will shrink back in fear and shame when they see Him in His glory** (Mt 22:11-13; Rev 6:15-17). But, there may be a secondary sense, momentary in duration, in which even true believers could be ashamed when He comes. Some have worked for Christ out of selfish, prideful motives. They will be saved, but as through fire when their works are burned up (1Cor. 3:12-15). Surely, they must feel a sense of shame over their sin, even though they quickly will be transformed into Christ’s image and enter heaven in their perfect resurrection bodies (1John 3:2; 1Cor 15:50-53). Even we who have conscientiously served Christ are painfully aware of our many shortcomings and failures. We may have a brief moment of shame or regret when we see Him and think, “If only I had done more for Him!” But, for those who abide in Christ, the dominant mood will be confidence when He comes. ([Are You Ready for His Coming- 1 John 2:28-29](#))

**Butler** - If one has not lived a holy life, they will be shamed before the Savior. He will still be saved, but oh the **shame** for unfaithfulness in behavior. However, if one has lived a holy life, the return of Christ will be a glorious time. (Analytical Bible Expositor: 1, 2, 3 John & Jude)

**John Calvin** - Those who indulge in their vices without a care are in effect turning their backs on God; nor can they obtain peace in any other way but by forgetting him. This is the security of the flesh, which stupefies people, so that, turning away from God, they neither dread nor fear death; and in the meantime they shun Christ’s tribunal. But a godly conscience delights to look at God. Thus godly people calmly wait for Christ and do not dread his coming.

**Robert Cameron** - John wants these “little children” to have confidence, and not to be shamed away from him at his coming. The figure is that of a loving child, conscious of disloyalty or disobedience when brought into the presence of a father. He does not want us to shrink as a guilty thing surprised. (The First Epistle of John, or, God Revealed in Life, Light, and Love, 1899)

**Warren Wiersbe** - Some Christians will be “ashamed before Him at His presence” (1 John 2:28). All believers are “accepted,” but there is a difference between being “accepted” and being “acceptable.” A disobedient child who goes out and gets dirty will be accepted when he comes home, but he will not be treated as though he were acceptable. “Therefore also we have as our ambition... to be pleasing to Him” (2 Cor. 5:9, nasb). A Christian who has not walked in fellowship with Christ in obedience, love, and truth will lose his rewards; and this will make him ashamed. No matter in which direction a Christian looks, he finds reason to obey God. If he looks back, he sees Calvary, where Christ died for him. If he looks within, he sees the Holy Spirit who lives within and teaches him the truth. If he looks around, he sees his Christian brethren whom he loves; he also sees a world lost in sin, desperately needing his godly witness. And if he looks ahead, he sees the return of Christ! “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3). The return of Christ is a great inspiration for godly living. (Ibid)

**J Vernon McGee** - A great many people are talking about the coming of Christ, and they get very excited about it; but it certainly is going to be embarrassing for them because they will not have any **confidence** and they are going to be **ashamed** before Him **at His coming**. Why? Because of their lives. The Lord Jesus says, “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12). Many people will look around for their reward, and they will find that they haven’t got any. Paul wrote, “If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:15). It is very important to have a life that commends the gospel....The Rapture is not going to be such a thrilling event for a great many believers because of the lives they lived down here.

**B F Westcott** on **shrink away from Him** - The same thought of separation is found more plainly expressed 2Th 1:9. The construction shame from (aischunthomen apo) is used in the same sense in the LXX: Isa 1:29 (Lxx uses aischunomai and epaischunomai); Jer. 2:36 (Lxx uses kataischuno), Jer 12:13 (Lxx uses virtually the identical phrase as John - aischunthete apo).

**Kistemaker** - Believers do not turn in shame from Christ, for they know that their sins have been forgiven. They are free from shame. But those who have pretended to be Christians cannot stand in the revealing light of his coming. They cannot hide their shame.

**Paul Carrier** - Outside the New Testament, parousia was often used to speak of the “coming” of a royal dignitary, perhaps one who was passing through a village on a journey. People would line the road and give honor as he went past. John has this in mind when he speaks of being “confident and unashamed before him” (1 John 2:28). Rather than sneaking off into a corner like a traitor, we

rush to see our beloved King Jesus. Knowing that we “continue in him,” both morally and spiritually, makes this possible. (James-Jude: Unlocking the Scriptures for You)

**Barton** - There are two responses that people will have when Christ returns: 1. Those who are confident can approach him in boldness. They know their relationship is secure in him because they confess him as Christ (1Jn 2:22) and abide in him (1Jn 2:24, 27–28). They have no reason to dread his judgment. 2. Those who are ashamed will be afraid. Those who reject Christ will be rejected by him in the final judgment.

(Life Application Bible Commentary)

**Crain** - The apostle now turns to a consideration of the ways in which the life eternal manifests itself in those in whom it dwells. He begins by setting before us a most solemn fact. The one who professes to have, but has not, life in the Son, will be ashamed in His presence when He appears. The false claim and its presumption will be shamed away from Christ's presence (ver. 28). (Readings on the First Epistle of John)

**A E Brooke** - The idea would seem to be that of withdrawing ashamed from His presence, shrinking back from a sense of guilt.

**NET Bible Note** - Anyone who does not ‘remain’ (**abide**) demonstrates (just as the opponents demonstrated by their departure from the community in 2:19) that whatever profession he has made is false and he is not truly a believer.

**MacArthur** - No one who professes to believe the gospel but then permanently abandons the faith possesses eternal life (see 1Jn 2:19) Only those who remain faithful to the Lord and His Word, and give evidence of the fruits of righteousness (5:1–5, 10; Matt. 7:17–18; 12:33, 35; John 3:21, 36; 13:35; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:22–23; 6:7–8; Eph. 5:9; James 2:14–26; cf. Isa. 3:10; Jer. 17:9–10) by the indwelling power and presence of the Spirit (cf. Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Gal. 4:6) are truly saved....Nominal (**Ed**: in name only) Christians, who are actually unbelievers, will **shrink away from Him in shame** because they are not genuine children of God (Mt. 13:20–22; cf. John 8:31; 15:6; Heb 3:6, 12; 6:4–6; 10:39)—their hypocrisy having been evidenced by the fact that they did not persevere in the faith they initially professed. (1, 2, 3 John : MacArthur NT Commentary).

**Coming** (only use in John's writings)([3952](#))(**parousia**) is a combination of two Greek words **para** = with, alongside + **ousia** = being (**ousia** is the participial form of the verb **eimi** = to be) which together literally mean to be alongside. Most lexicons in fact state that **parousia** is derived from **pareimi** (from **para** = near, with + **eimi** = to be) which means to be present, to be nearby, to have come.

In secular Greek **parousia** was used of the arrival of an owner, who alone can deal with a situation (ponder that for a moment as you contemplate the Master's/Owner's return!)

**Parousia** literally describes a being beside and thus a personal presence (And so translated in 2Cor 10:10). The word denotes both an arrival and a consequent presence with. **Parousia** conveys the thought of an advent or coming of a person to a place plus the idea of their presence at that place until a certain event transpires. The word **parousia** has no English equivalent and therefore is often transliterated.

**Raymond Brown** - In the ancient world **parousia** has a pertinent twofold sense: (1) the coming of a hidden divinity who makes his presence felt by his power or miracles; (2) the visit of a king or emperor to a province (Latin: *adventus*). Christians took over the second aspect in their picture of how Christ would come back. (The Epistles of John: translated, with introduction, notes, and commentary-Anchor Yale Bible).

**Marshall** adds that **parousia** "was used for the visit of a ruler to some part of his dominions, an occasion for celebration and rejoicing. Even today, although we have become accustomed to seeing the face of the monarch or president on TV, people will still turn out in great numbers on state occasions to see and cheer the ruler; how much more must this have been the case in the ancient world where to see the emperor was possibly the event of a lifetime. It is this kind of atmosphere which is conveyed by this word. It conceives of the return of Jesus to this world in visible splendor, like a monarch (cp Rev 19:14-16-[note](#)). (The New International Commentary on the New Testament)

**Brooke** on the secular use of **parousia** - From the Ptolemaic period to the second century AD there is abundant evidence that in the East the word was the usual expression for the visit of a King or Emperor. In Egypt, special funds were raised by taxation to meet the expenses of such visits. In Greece a new era was reckoned from the visit of Hadrian. The earliest mention is rightly interpreted by Wilcken to refer to the collection made to provide a crown to be presented on the occasion of the visit; and in the Tebtunis Papyri there is an interesting description of the efforts made by the village elders in connection with the expected visit of Ptolemy II. The word is also used of the appearance of the god Asclepius in his temple. In Latin, *Adventus* was used in the same way. Cf. the coins struck to commemorate Nero's visit to Corinth, *Adventus* Aug. Cor. Altars were also erected to commemorate visits of members of the Imperial family, as in Cos, in memory of the visit of C. Caesar (a.d. 4). The word was naturally used by Christians of the advent of their King ([A critical and exegetical commentary on the Johannine epistles](#))



**Charles H. Spurgeon on His coming** - The date of that **coming** is concealed. When he shall come, no man can tell. Watch for Him, and be always ready, that you may not be ashamed at His advent. Should a Christian man go into worldly assemblies and amusements? Would he not be ashamed should his Lord come and find him among the enemies of the Cross? I dare not go where I should be ashamed to be found should my Lord come on a sudden. Should a Christian man ever be in a passion? Suppose his Lord should there and then come; would he not be ashamed at His coming? One here says of an offender, "I will never forgive her; she will never darken my doors again." Would you not be ashamed if the Lord Jesus came, and found you unforgiving? Oh, that we may **abide in Him**, and never be in such a state that His coming would be unwelcome to us! **Beloved, so live from day to day in duty and in devotion, that your Lord's coming would be timely. Go about your daily business and abide in Him, and then His coming will be a glorious delight to you.** (12 Sermons on the Second Coming of Christ)

**Have you ever pondered what motivated men like the apostle Paul to abide in Him?** "Someone has said that Paul's calendar had only two days, "**TODAY**" and "**THAT DAY**." (2Ti 1:12) The man who is ready for **THAT DAY** is ready for **ANY DAY**. But we need to wear our spiritual bifocals and see **BOTH DAYS**. Some of the saints are near-sighted. Some are far-sighted. Paul may have had trouble with his physical eyes, but he had no spiritual astigmatism. He had good bifocals; he saw the near and the far. Do not busy yourself TODAY with "wood, hay, stubble," and fail to build with "gold, silver, precious stones" against THAT DAY. For "THE DAY shall declare it," and the works of some will go up in smoke! On the other hand, do not so contemplate ETERNITY (THAT DAY) that you waste TODAY. Some people think they are Mystics when they are only Mistakes!" (Vance Havner)

**Hiebert** - John believed that our prophetic hope exerts a practical impact upon present Christian living....The early Church remembered that Jesus had told His disciples that the time of His return was unrevealed (Mark 13:32-33) and in view of that uncertainty had urged them to be ready (Matt. 24:44; 25:13; Luke 12:40). (Ibid)

**THOUGHT - Are living TODAY looking forward toward THAT DAY or are you fearful of THAT DAY because you are not abiding in Him TODAY?** Making the most of TODAY is the best way to be ready for THAT DAY. "TODAY let us rise and go to our work. Tomorrow, we shall rise and go to our reward!" (R Fuller)

#### [I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED](#)

I know not why God's wondrous grace,  
To me He hath made known.  
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love,  
Redeemed me for His own.

But I know Whom I have believed,  
And am persuaded that He is able  
To keep that which I've committed  
Unto Him against **THAT DAY**.

I know not how this saving faith  
To me He did impart  
Nor how believing in His Word  
Wrought peace within my heart.

I know not when my Lord may come  
At night or noontide fair,  
Nor if I'll walk the vale with Him,  
Or meet Him in the air.

**John MacArthur** adds that "**Parousia** refers to more than just coming; it includes the idea of "presence." Perhaps the best English translation would be "arrival." The church's great hope is the arrival of Jesus Christ when He comes to bless His people with His presence. That glorious truth appears in more than 500 verses throughout the Bible. ([MacArthur J. James. Moody](#))

**Jesus** spoke about His **coming** often giving warnings - "For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will." (Mt 24:44, Lk 12:40, cp James 5:9) "And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. And later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us. 'But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' 'Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.'" (Mt 25:10-13)

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**[Hampton Keathley III](#) - 1 John 2:28.** This verse undoubtedly refers to the *Bema* and shows there will be both boldness as a result



of abiding, and shame before the Lord as a result of failing to abide.

**“And now little children.”** John is writing to believers. This is his term of endearment for his readers as born again people.

**“Abide in Him.”** “Abide” is a synonym for fellowship which is the subject of the book (1:3-7). It means to remain in Him from the standpoint of drawing on His life as the source of ours and then to obey Him out of that relationship of dependence. This is the basis of rewards or the cause of their loss, the abiding, Christ-dependent life.

**“So that”** points us to the purpose, the return of the Savior and what it will mean.

**“When He appears.”** The “when” points to the imminency of the return of the Lord. It is literally “if He appears.” The conditional clause does not question the reality of Christ’s coming, only the time of it and thereby points to its imminency. “Appears” refers to the rapture which leads quickly into the *Bema*.

**“We may have confidence.”** “Confidence” is *parrhesia* and means “courage, boldness to speak.” Point: Though none of us are perfect or ever will be, still, faithfulness to abide and obey the Lord will give confidence of rewards.

**“And not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming (presence).”** Please note several things here. (a) The verb is what we call in Greek an aorist subjunctive, and with the basic meaning of this verb, the grammar points to a future act, but not a continuous state. This in no way suggests a permanent condition. (b) The voice of the verb is passive. The subject receives the action, that is, he is made to feel shame. But how? (c) There are two views:

(1) The believer who fails to abide is made to feel shame by the Lord, i.e., the Lord puts him to shame. This would be somewhat punitive and does not fit the concept of the *Bema* nor the promises of the Lord that we will not come into judgment.

(2) The believer who fails to abide experiences shame by the revelatory nature of Christ’s presence at the *Bema*. This is caused by the realization of what his own failure and sin has cost him in terms of the loss of rewards and loss of glory to the Lord. But this will only be momentary or short-lived at best in view of passages like Revelation 7:17; 21:4 and Isaiah 65:17.

**Hoyt** has a good summary of what this passage is talking about and involves:

The Bible suggests that there will be shame at the judgment seat of Christ to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the measure of unfaithfulness of each individual believer. Therefore it should be each believer’s impelling desire to be well-pleasing to the Lord in all things. Although Christians apparently will reflect on this earthly life with some regret, they will also realize what is ahead for them in the heavenly life. This latter realization will be the source of boundless joy. English strikes a proper balance on this subject.

“Joy will indeed be the predominant emotion of life with the Lord; but I suspect that, when our works are made manifest at the tribunal, some grief will be mixed with the joy, and we shall know shame as we suffer loss. But we shall rejoice also as we realize that the rewards given will be another example of the grace of our Lord; for at best we are unprofitable servants” (E. Schuyler English, “The Church At the Tribunal,” in *Prophetic Truth Unfolding Today*, ed. Charles Lee Feingberg [Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1968], p. 29)

The elements of remorse, regret, and shame cannot be avoided in an examination of the judgment seat of Christ. But this sorrow must be somewhat relative because even for the finest of Christians there will be some things worthy of unceasing remorse in the light of God’s unapproachable holiness. This would mean that the finest of Christians could be sorrowful throughout eternity. However, this is not the picture that the New Testament gives of heaven. The overwhelming emotion is joyfulness and gratefulness. Although there is undeniably some measure of remorse or regret, this is not the overriding emotion to be experienced throughout the eternal state.

The emotional condition of the redeemed is that of complete and unending happiness. Emotion proceeds from the realization of facts in personal experience. Hope will at last become reality for all those who are delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:18-25). Elimination of the curse, pain and death will also remove sorrow, tears and crying (Rev. 21:4).

The judgment seat of Christ might be compared to a commencement ceremony. At graduation there is some measure of disappointment and remorse that one did not do better and work harder. However, at such an event the overwhelming emotion is joy, not remorse. The graduates do not leave the auditorium weeping because they did not earn better grades. Rather, they are thankful that they have been graduated, and they are grateful for what they did achieve. To overdo the sorrow aspect of the judgment seat of Christ is to make heaven hell. To underdo the sorrow aspect is to make faithfulness inconsequential.<sup>18</sup>

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## Related Resource:

- Comparison of the Rapture vs the Second Coming

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**Steven Cole** gives an excellent overview of what it means to abide in Christ - **"Note five things about what it means to abide in Him:**

### **(1). TO ABIDE IN HIM, YOU MUST BE IN HIM. -**

Believers are never commanded to be **in Christ**, because that is a fact, but we are commanded to **abide in Him**. When you trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, you are placed **in Him**. Paul uses this phrase often to describe our permanent position of identification with Christ and all of the blessings that He bestows on us by His grace (Eph. 1:3). This position of being in Christ comes to us through the new birth, when we are born into God's family. **If you wonder how you can know if you've been born again, look for signs of new life** Have you truly trusted and are you now trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation? Have you repented and are you now repenting of your sins? Do you love God and the things of God? These and many more are signs that you have been born again. If you have been born again, you are in Christ.

### **(2). TO ABIDE IN HIM IS BOTH PASSIVE AND ACTIVE AT THE SAME TIME.-**

There is a popular teaching that if you are abiding, you are not striving or exerting any effort. You are simply resting in all that Jesus is for you, as the branch abides passively in the vine. That's half of the truth, but not all of it (for a more complete discussion of this see James Rosscup, *Abiding in Christ* [Zondervan], pp. 146-170). There is the passive sense in which we rest or trust in Christ as our life and strength. We will accomplish nothing of value for God unless we abide in Christ in that sense (John 15:5). But at the same time, we are commanded to abide in Him, which implies that we must be active. The active side involves the three tests: obeying His commands (1 John 2:6; 3:24), loving the brethren (2:10; 4:16), and holding tenaciously to the truth of the gospel (2:24; 4:15).

### **(3). TO ABIDE IN HIM MEANS TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY. -**

1Jn 2:29 (in context) explains how not to be ashamed at Christ's coming, namely, to live righteously (it also anticipates the theme of 1Jn 3:4-10). When John says, "If you know that He is righteous," **"if"** has the sense of **"since."** "He" could refer to Jesus Christ the righteous (1Jn 2:2), who is the subject of verse 28. But since the Bible normally talks about the Father as the one who begets us as His children, the "He" and "Him" of verse 28 probably look ahead to the Father (1Jn 3:1). Note also that His righteousness (1Jn 2:29) is perfectly compatible with His great love (1Jn 3:1). We fall into error if we do not hold to both. Don't mistake the point of 1Jn 2:29. It is not saying that righteous behavior is the cause or condition of the new birth, but just the opposite. The verb is literally, "has been born of Him" (Greek perfect tense). The meaning is that a righteous life is evidence of the new birth. Like begets like. A child will be like his parents, because he shares their nature. Because God is righteous, those truly born of Him will be righteous in the overall pattern of their lives. When we are born of Him, He grants to us "everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2Pet. 1:3; see also, Eph. 4:24). That new life in us produces godliness, or righteous living (1John 3:9). Living righteously is a lifelong process of growth in obedience to God's Word. It does not happen instantly or without setbacks and struggles. But if you are born again, you will be learning to judge every thought, motive, and attitude by God's Word. You will seek to please the Lord, beginning on the thought level (Mt. 5:27-30; Mk 7:20-23). The fruit of the Holy Spirit will be growing in your character (Gal 5:22-23). You will be disciplining yourself for the purpose of godliness (1Ti 4:7). **Of course, all of this is done in dependence on the Holy Spirit, but you must be involved actively in the process** (Phil 2:12, Phil 2:13; Gal. 5:16).

### **(4). TO ABIDE IN HIM MEANS TO HOLD FIRMLY TO THE TRUTH OF THE WORD, ESPECIALLY TO THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. -**

We focused on this last week (1Jn 2:24, "what you heard from the beginning"), and so I only mention it in passing. In a day when there are many pressures to compromise the gospel in order to display love and unity, we must stand firm. If you do not hold tenaciously to the truth, you are not abiding in Christ, who is the truth.

### **(5). TO ABIDE IN HIM MEANS TO BE AT HOME WITH HIM AND TO BE AN ALIEN TO THIS WORLD. -** We looked at this in 1Jn 2:15-17, where John draws the line between love for the world and love for the Father. In contrast to this fleeting world, the one who does the will of God abides forever. If you are more comfortable watching TV or godless movies and hanging out with worldly people

to join them in their vain entertainment than you are spending time with the Lord and His people, then you are not abiding in Him. **If you have secret areas of your life where you block God out, you are not abiding in Him.** To abide in Him means that you are at home with Him and He is at home with you. You feel increasingly like an alien or foreigner to this evil world: "For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him" (1Jn 3:1).

Much more could be said, but notice, also, how John again addresses his flock as "little children." The implication is:

## **B. ABIDE IN HIM AS HIS LITTLE CHILD. -**

We live in a day when pastors are told that they lack the professional expertise to help people with their "deep" problems. In seminary, you are told that you need to refer these difficult cases to the trained professionals. The not-so-subtle implication is that the Bible does not have answers for the tough problems that people face. For solutions there, we have to turn to worldly psychology. I recognize that if there are biochemical imbalances or if drugs are involved, things get complicated to sort out. I also realize that some problems are not easy to overcome. Yet at the same time, the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes and the Holy Spirit in the believer is quite capable of producing His fruit, which describes an emotionally and relationally whole person. If the promises of God's Word do not apply to the difficult problems of life, then they really aren't much good. John's words, "little children, abide in Him," suggest at least four simple truths:

### **(1). AS A LITTLE CHILD, DO NOT OVER-COMPLICATE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. -**

"**Little children**" implies that abiding in Christ is simple, not something that you need a graduate degree to understand or practice. In fact, Jesus said (Mt. 18:3), "unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." I have seen a bumper sticker that reads, "Simplify." That's not bad advice in all areas of life, but it is especially appropriate for your walk with the Lord. Ask yourself these basic questions:

Do I spend consistent, regular time alone with the Lord in the Word?

Am I trusting God by drawing near in prayer to His throne of grace in all of my trials?

Do I memorize and meditate on God's Word, applying it to my life?

Am I faithful as a steward of all that God has entrusted to me, maintaining integrity and putting off greed?

Am I growing in holiness, developing the fruit of the Spirit by walking in the Spirit?

Am I judging, confessing, and forsaking sin, beginning on the thought level?

Am I working at maintaining and deepening the relationships with those in my life, especially in my immediate family? This includes truthful, loving communication; listening; kindness; patience; forgiveness; and, humility.

This isn't rocket science! It is basic Christian living and those who have applied these things have endured terrible suffering and even martyrdom with God's joy. Invariably, when people have serious personal or family problems, they are failing at these and other basics of the Christian life.

### **(2). AS A LITTLE CHILD, DEPEND ON YOUR FATHER FOR EVERYTHING. -**

Little children depend on their parents for everything. Their parents must protect them and provide for them. They would not survive for a day if their parents abandoned them to the elements. If you are abiding in the Father as a little child, you depend on Him for provision, life, and power. You take every need to Him in prayer and draw near to Him as your loving, caring Father. When trials come into your life, you must actively draw near to the Lord and depend on Him as you have never had to do at other times. If you do not actively do this, you will become angry and bitter at God and drift away from Him. This is why Peter writes to suffering believers (1 Pet. 5:7-11): Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### **(3). AS A LITTLE CHILD, DO NOT THINK MORE HIGHLY OF YOURSELF THAN YOU OUGHT TO THINK. -**

You must humble yourself as a child (Matt. 18:4). Children are not strong in themselves, but only in their protector. They run to their parents for refuge. You are weak, but your heavenly Father is strong. It is only when we're aware of our own weakness that we rely on Him for our strength (2Cor. 12:9-10). We can see an example of this in our text, in the little word "we" (2:28). In the flow of the sentence, you would expect, "you," not "we." But John includes himself with these little children. Even though he was an aged apostle, even though he had been with the Lord, he recognized his need to abide in Him as a little child.

#### **(4). AS A LITTLE CHILD, REVEL IN THE FATHER'S GREAT LOVE FOR YOU. -**

This is implicit in the relationship between a father and his children. Every father loves his children with a special love. John will state this explicitly in 3:1-2, and we need to wait until our study of those verses to comment more. But for now, note that if you know and revel in the Father's great love, abiding in Him will not be a difficult chore, but a great delight.

**Conclusion** - So, are you ready for the biggest, most amazing event in world history—the return of Jesus Christ? The answer to that question depends on your answer to another question: **Are you abiding in Him as a little child?** If not, why not begin today? Get alone with the Lord and your Bible. Confess all known sin to Him. Mourn over your coldness toward the Father's love and toward the Lord Jesus, who gave Himself for you on the cross. Accept His gracious forgiveness. Go over the questions that I mentioned earlier and prioritize where you need to begin. Change your daily schedule so that you can begin to implement these basics of abiding in Christ. As you do, you will grow in confidence as you anticipate His coming." (Bolding added) ([Are You Ready for His Coming- 1 John 2:28-29](#))

#### **Little children, abide in him.**

Spurgeon, "Preparation for the Coming of the Lord"

Just as little children are in daily dependence  
on their parents, Christians depend upon the  
Lord's care.

Why, beloved, the Lord has to nurse you! He  
feeds you with the unadulterated milk of the  
Word; he comforts you as a mother does her  
child; he carries you in his bosom, he bears  
you all your days.

Your new life is as yet weak and struggling;  
do not carry it into the cold atmosphere of  
distance from Jesus.

Little children, since you derive all from Jesus,  
abide in him. To go elsewhere will be to wander  
into a howling wilderness. The world is empty;  
only Christ has fullness. Away from Jesus you  
will be as a child deserted by its mother, left  
to pine, and starve, and die; or as a little lamb  
on the hillside without a shepherd, tracked by  
the wolf, whose teeth will soon extract its  
heart's blood.

Abide, O child, with your mother!

Abide, O lamb, with your shepherd!

Cling to the Lord Jesus in your feebleness,  
in your fickleness, in your nothingness; and  
abidingly take him to be everything to you.

**Abide with Me|**  
**James Smith**  
**1859**

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine — neither can you, unless you abide in Me." John 15:4

Union with Christ is one of the greatest privileges of the believer; and to be one with Christ is the privilege of every believer. Nor ought anyone who professes religion to be satisfied without knowing, and daily realizing — that he is one with Christ. Our comfort, our stability, and our usefulness, very much depend on this.

The union between Christ and His people is represented by Himself by the figure of a vine and its branches; teaching us that our union with Him is as real, as close, and as necessary — as the union of the branch with its parent stem. O what a glorious privilege to be one with Christ! Thus . . .

receiving all our supplies from Christ,  
partaking of the nature of Christ,  
bearing fruit like Christ,

being absolutely dependent on Christ for all our spiritual life, vigor, and strength. Being one with Christ, our Beloved Lord gives us this gracious and necessary direction, "Abide in Me."

Let us make this the great object of our lives, and keep it constantly before our minds. And in order that we may be enabled and encouraged to abide in Jesus — let us consider . . .

what it supposes,  
what it requires, and  
what it secures.

Holy Spirit, as the glorifier of Jesus — be our teacher:

unfold the truth to our understandings,  
apply it to our hearts, and  
write it in large characters upon our memories.

**What does abiding in Christ suppose?** Of course, that we are engrafted into Him by a true and living faith, and that we rest alone on Him for our acceptance with God; for unless we are in union with Christ — we cannot abide in Him. But being in Christ, in order to our actual and experimental abiding in Him — we must daily feel our need of Him. One great part of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is to . . .

empty us,  
strip us of self,  
lead us to feel our own weakness,  
and bring us as poor sinners to look to Jesus alone, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

And just in proportion as we feel our need of Christ, and realize our absolute nothingness without Christ — shall we prize Him, enjoy Him, and exercise dependence upon Him.

As we must daily feel our need of Christ — so also we must have a scriptural knowledge of Christ. Just in proportion as we know Christ — shall we make use of Him, cleave to Him, and rejoice in Him. Well did the Apostle know how necessary the knowledge of Christ was, and therefore he prayed for the Ephesians, who knew so much of Christ already, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." And giving expression to the desire of his own soul, he exclaimed, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

O how little do many of us know of Christ, and therefore it is that we make so little use of Christ, receive so little from Christ, and do so little for Christ! Our sense of our need of Christ, if it is deep and increasing — will lead us to seek to know more of Christ; and knowing more of Christ, we shall daily come to Christ for all our supplies.

This is the next prerequisite to our abiding in Christ, we must come to Him. We come to Him at first — as poor, lost, helpless sinners, that we may be saved by his merit and mercy. And as believers, we must continually come to Him . . .

with all our burdens — that He may bear them;

with all our cares — that He may manage them;

with all our sorrows — that He may sanctify them;

with all our foes — that He may conquer them;

with all our sins — that He may cleanse them;

and with all our needs — that He may supply them.

All that we need is in Christ — and it is in Christ, for us. Our deep necessity fits us for Christ — and His infinite fullness fits Him for us! Our trials, troubles, temptations, disappointments, and vexations — are to teach us our need of Christ; and what we receive from Christ is to make all these things blessings to us.

Fellowship with Christ is necessary to our abiding in Christ. Peter describes the Christian life thus: "Coming to Him as to a living stone . . . you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:4-5

If therefore we would abide in Jesus, we must more and more feel our need of Him; we must increase in our knowledge of Him; we must seek all our supplies from Him; and realize that we are in union with Him!

**What does abiding in Christ require?** Many things — and we will notice a few of them. We must think of Him, or exercise the intellect upon Him. As we are capable of thinking, and have the power of fixing our thoughts upon an object — we must make Christ the great object of our thoughts, and think of Him. That we think of Christ so little, so seldom — is one great reason why we enjoy Christ so little.

Beloved, we should think . . .

of His glorious person;

of His free and abounding grace;

of His infinite and everlasting merit;

of His deep and tender sympathy;

of His authority and unlimited dominion;

and of His eternal and changeless love!

We should think . . .

of what He was in glory;

of what He became on earth;

of what He did while here below;

of what He suffered on our behalf; and

of what He is now doing at the right hand of God.

We should think of . . .

His nature,

His offices,

His relations, and

His glorious second advent!

**Oh, how much there is in Jesus to occupy our thoughts, and feast our souls! Is it not astonishing that we do not think of**



**Him more?** Never, never, shall we enjoy deep spirituality; or rise above our doubts and fears; or rejoice in God; or be very useful among our fellow-men — unless we think of Christ more!

As we must think of Christ — so we must hear and read of Christ. The senses should be employed on Christ, as well as the intellect. If we can hear at all — we should go where we can hear of Christ, not only on the Lord's day — but on other days too. If we can read at all, we should read of Christ; and as Christ is the most important subject, and as we are more deeply interested in Him than in anything else — we should read of Him most. It is one thing to read religious books — and quite another thing to read of Christ; for many religious books have very little of Christ in them. Nor should we so much read what man says of Christ — as what God says. God's own book should be our book, and we should read it, that we may know more of Christ, and become more like Christ.

We shall never abide in Christ as we ought, unless we hear more of Christ, read more of Christ, and think more of Christ. But we must not stop at thinking, hearing, or reading of Christ — we must actually commune with Christ. There is often much prayer — and yet little communion with Christ. We should realize that Christ is present with us. That we are alone with Him. That he is giving us His whole attention. That he expects us to tell Him . . .

all that troubles us,  
all that grieves us,  
all that pleases us,  
all that we need, and  
all that we desire.

We should keep back nothing from Him — but speak to Him freely on every subject, and every circumstance. And realizing that Christ is with us, listening to us, and by sympathy entering into all our circumstances — we should expect to receive . . .

intimations of His will,  
proofs of His approbation,  
communications of His grace, and  
the consoling influences of His love.

Our thoughts should ascend to Jesus, and His thoughts should descend and take possession of our minds. Without more direct, sensible, and secret communion with Christ — we shall not much enjoy our union with Christ, or attend to the admonition to abide in Him.

Having communion with Christ — we must trust Him. He requires us . . .

to treat Him with confidence;  
to believe what He says;  
to expect what He promises;  
to do what He bids us.

We must trust him with the salvation of our souls, and having put them into His hands, having committed them to His keeping — we should rest satisfied that He will save them. We must trust Him with the body as well as the soul, believing that He feels an interest in the one as well the other. Yes, we must ask Him to work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure; to fulfill in us all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power. And we must trust for temporal concerns also, looking to Him for food and clothing, as well as for grace and glory.

We do not half trust the Savior as we ought. Our confidence in Him is not worthy of Him. Our doubts, fears, and misgivings dishonor Him. Let us therefore seek grace that we may trust in Him at all times; trust Him for all, and trust Him notwithstanding all.

As we must trust Jesus, so we must identify our cause with His. Christ and His people are one. As the branch and the vine are one, as the members and the head are one, as the building and the foundation are one — so Christ and his people are one. He has identified Himself with them — and they should identify Him with themselves. He has identified His cause with theirs — and they should identify theirs with His. Jesus takes an interest in all that concerns them and theirs — and they should take an interest in all that concerns Him and His. "You are not your own, you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are His."

Christ says, "My person, My obedience, My grace, My Spirit, My word, My wealth, My glory — is yours! You shall taste My sorrows now — and share in My throne, kingdom, and glory by and by." We therefore should say, "My person, my property, my time, my talents, my influence, my all — is yours. You, O my Savior, shall be honored by . . .

my poverty or wealth,  
my adversity or prosperity,

my sickness or health,  
my life or my death.

I will be for You, and for You alone now — as I hope to be with You and like You forever.

Beloved, let us think of Christ more,  
let us read of Christ more,  
let us commune with Christ more, and  
let us identify ourselves with the cause of Christ  
— so shall we abide in Him.

### **What will abiding in Christ secure?**

1. It will secure our safety. Noah was not so safe in his ark; Lot was not so safe in Zoar; the man-slayer was not so safe in the city of refuge — as the true believer is in Christ. Abiding in Christ, to him there is no condemnation; every sin is pardoned; the whole, the perfect, the glorious righteousness of Christ is his! All the glorious perfections of His nature are thrown around the man who abides in Him. He is . . .

safe from Satan, who cannot destroy him;  
safe from sin, which shall not have dominion over him;  
safe from men, for no weapon formed against him shall prosper;  
and safe from death, for Jesus has said, "He who keeps My sayings shall never taste of death." In Christ! his person is secure.

2. Abiding in Christ — all things work together for his good. Happy believer, no one shall ever pluck you out of your Redeemer's hands, or sever you from your Savior's love! Abiding in Christ will not only secure our safety — but our happiness! Happy, thrice happy is the man who is in Christ.

He is not only pardoned — but justified;  
not only justified — but accepted and pleasant in the sight of God;  
not only accepted — but adopted, and is God's beloved child;  
not only a beloved child — but an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ!

Is it not enough to make a man happy, to know that God . . .

has blotted out all his sins;  
has given him a glorious, eternal inheritance;  
and never looks upon him, but as in Christ, nor treats him otherwise than as a beloved child?

3. Abiding in Christ not only fixes us in a happy state — but secures our supplies. All that we need for the body and for the soul, for life and in death — is provided for us, secured to us, and will be conferred upon us — as we need it. O how precious the Apostle's words to the Philippians: "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus!" Well may our beloved Lord say, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." (Matthew 6:34.)

Beloved,  
the God who has numbered the very hairs of our heads;  
the God who has redeemed our souls from everlasting death;  
the God who has made us so one with His Son, that we are forever united with Him  
— this God has provided for all our needs, has promised to supply all our needs, and will be as good as His Word.

4. Abiding in Christ will also secure our usefulness. We long to be useful, and by our usefulness to glorify our God, and honor our beloved Savior. Usefulness does not depend on great gifts, on exalted station, or on bodily vigor; but it does depend very much on our union to Christ, communion with Christ, and abiding in Christ. "He who abides in Me," says Jesus, "and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit." Not only fruit, you see — but much fruit. O if we were living in close and intimate fellowship with Jesus, if we were abiding in Him as the branch in the vine — then how useful we should be!

Let us then be deeply impressed with the consideration that our safety, happiness, supplies, and usefulness — depend on our abiding in Jesus! And just in proportion as we wish to . . .

realize our safety,  
enjoy solid happiness,  
live without care and anxiety, and

to be useful in our day and generation  
— shall we endeavor to abide in Jesus.

My dear friends, we live in stirring times, everything is full of life and vigor — except the Church of Christ, which ought to be more so than anything else. We hear of the outpouring of the Spirit, and of a great revival of religion in another land, and we need the same blessing in our own. Many seem to be impressed with this fact, and means are being used to obtain such a blessing. But is it not to be feared that many are looking to meetings, to excitement, and to the use of means — rather than to God. And is there not reason to fear that the feelings produced by exciting circumstances and startling news from abroad, will end with them? It is not mere excitement that we need — but something purer, deeper, and more spiritual. We may have physical excitement, mental excitement, and even spiritual excitement — and it may end in nothing. We need deep spirituality. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We need abiding in Christ, that we may . . .

breathe the spirit of Christ,  
copy the example of Christ, and  
so be extensively useful in the cause of Christ.

Shall we have a revival of pure and undefiled religion? Shall we be instrumental in obtaining and bringing about such a blessed state of things? If so, we must attend to the following things:

First, we must be in Christ. Apart from Christ, without union to Him — we can do nothing in this matter. As poor sinners, we must feel our need of Christ, come to Christ, obtain salvation from Christ, and by faith and love be united to the person of Christ. No union to Christ — no grace, no spiritual life, no acceptance with God, or access with confidence to God. Without union to Christ, we have no power with God; and unless we have power with God, we shall have no power with man for spiritual and saving purposes.

Second, we must be intimate with Christ. We must live by faith in Him. We must walk with Him. We must carry everything to Him. We must seek all we need from Him. We must be constantly . . .

going to Christ,  
conversing with Christ,  
and obtaining from Christ.

The branch receives from the vine night and day, summer and winter; there is a constant communication from the root, through the trunk to the branches, and hence the buds, the blossoms, and the fruit.

Just so, there must be constant fellowship between Christ and our souls. The more we receive from Christ, the more we can do for Christ. This leads me to observe,

Thirdly, that we must act for Christ. There are many things done by religious people, and in the cause of God — but they are not done for Christ. Jesus could not say, "You did it unto Me." We may act from pity — or from pride, for applause — or to satisfy conscience; but we should act for Christ. The glory of Christ should ever be our aim and end in all our religious actions. As all that Christ did, as the Savior — he did for us; so all that we do as Christians — should be done for him.

Now, unless we are in union with Christ, we cannot be intimate with Christ; so unless we are intimate with Christ, we shall not, in our efforts and endeavors to do good acts for Christ.

Fourth, we must be like Christ. We may possess His nature, for "if any man has not the Spirit of Christ — he is none of His." We must become His disciples, and learn of Him. We must . . .

copy His example,  
breathe His spirit,  
and imbibe His temper.

Every Christian should represent Christ in the world, in the family, and in the Church of God; and if we do not give a fair representation of Christ — we do not answer the end of our new creation.

Until we are more like Christ, it cannot be said of us, "You are manifestly declared to be the epistles of Christ, written not with ink — but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone — but in the fleshy tables of the heart." O for grace to make us more like Christ.

Finally, we must receive the Holy Spirit from Christ. The Father promised to give His Holy Spirit to the Church. When the Son had finished His work on earth, He went up to Heaven, and received of the Father the promised Spirit. On the day of Pentecost He sent down that Spirit into His Church; and by the wisdom, power, and operations of that Spirit — sinners were converted, the Church increased, and believers were edified.

Now, the great thing we need for ourselves, is the Spirit in His fullness and in power. That fullness and power of the Spirit that we need must be obtained from Christ — but it can only be obtained by close walking with Christ.

The great thing needed by the Church, in order to its union, harmony, and increase — is the Spirit in His fullness and in power. That blessing would . .

remove our prejudices against each other,  
break down all the walls and hedges that keep us asunder,  
lead us more fully into the truth,  
and fill us with love to one another.

Then we would love one another as Christ has loved us, and this being the case, the Church of Jesus would soon "appear like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession!"

Then the poor, selfish worldlings around us, would be compelled to exclaim, "See how these Christians love one another!" And then the conviction would be forced on every conscience, that the religion of Christ is a divine reality, a holy power, and a supernatural nature. Nothing will impact the world — like the holiness of the Church! This, then, is what we need for the Church — not worldly titles, places, or honors; not worldly wealth, respectability, or distinctions; not so much great gifts, splendid talents, or powerful minds — but the Spirit in His fullness and in power!

This is the great thing needed by the world. It has the Gospel, the Christian ministry, the Church, and all various religious societies — and yet it still lies in the power of the wicked one. There are comparatively few conversions, while multitudes are hardening in sin. Nothing but the Spirit in His fullness and in power — will awaken sinners to a sense of their danger, convince them of sin before God, or lead them to the Cross for life and salvation. The world is God's enemy. The world is governed by Satan. The world hates the light. And in this state it will continue "until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high" — and then there will be deep convictions, numerous conversions, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed.

Reader, are you in Christ? This is a very solemn and important question. Press it home on your heart, nor rest until you can say, "Yes, blessed be God, through free and sovereign grace — Christ and my soul are one!"

If you are in Christ — are you intimate with Christ? Is there a constant fellowship carried on between Christ and your soul, in reference to all things, both temporal and spiritual? Remember, if you are a Christian, the Lord Jesus feels interested in everything that affects you, however insignificant it may appear.

Do you act for Christ? Is the honor and glory of Jesus the great end at which you aim, the chief object which you have habitually in view?

Think for Jesus.  
Speak for Jesus.  
Act for Jesus.  
Let your whole life be consecrated to Jesus.

May you sincerely say, "For to me, to live is Christ!" — and then for you "to die will be gain". Whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him.

Are you like Christ? I think I hear you exclaim, "Oh, how faint the resemblance! If at all like Him — O how little!" Well, friend, if you would be like Christ, you must be much with Christ; and if you are much with Christ, you will in Christ see the glory of God, and be gradually changed "into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Will you receive the fullness of the Spirit from Christ? He has it. He has promised it. He is prepared to bestow it. But He will have us feel our need of it, ardently long for it, earnestly seek it, and persevere in our applications — until we obtain it. In this way the Spirit in His fullness and power may be obtained — but in no other way. We have not — because we ask not — or because we ask amiss. Let us come to Jesus as poor, empty, needy creatures, and seek until we obtain this invaluable blessing at His hands.

And now to conclude, let us pity the Church — torn and divided, comparatively powerless and feeble as it is. And for the honor of Christ, and out of pure love to the brethren — let us set our hearts upon obtaining the empowering of the Holy Spirit for it, in greater fullness than it has been enjoyed by it in our day.

Let us also look with joy on this poor unhappy world, which lies under sentence of death, only waiting for the day of execution; and let us endeavor to bring down the Holy Spirit upon it, by earnest, united, importunate, persevering prayer! Morning, noon, and night — let us pray for it. In public, in private, and in our families, let us pray for it.

And while we pray that the Holy Spirit may descend upon it, let us speak to all about us of Jesus, and try, as if all depended on our

efforts — to save souls from death. The secret of success lies here, in our being united to Christ, abiding in Christ, and acting for Christ; acting for Christ — as if everything depended on what we do — and yet depending upon the Holy Spirit — as if everything depended on His presence, power, and operation alone.

Gracious Lord, make us thorough Christians, and use, oh, use us, to bring about a revival of pure and undefiled religion, for Christ's sake! Amen. ([Abide with Me](#))

## 1 John 2:29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him

Greek - εαν ειδητε (5762) οτι δικαιος εστιν (5719) γινωσκετε (5719) οτι {Variant #1: } {Variant #2: και } πας ο ποιων (5723) την δικαιοσυνην εξ αυτου γεγεννηται (5769)

**Amplified:** If you know (perceive and are sure) that He [Christ] is [absolutely] righteous [conforming to the Father's will in purpose, thought, and action], you may also know (be sure) that everyone who does righteously [and is therefore in like manner conformed to the divine will] is born (begotten) of Him [ God].

**Barclay:** If you know that he is righteous, you must be aware that everyone who does righteousness is born of him.

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

**HCSB:** If you know that He is righteous, you know this as well: everyone who does what is right has been born of Him.

**KJV -** If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

**NET:** If you know that he is righteous, you also know that everyone who practices righteousness has been fathered by him.

**NIV:** If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

**NLT:** Since we know that God is always right, we also know that all who do what is right are his children.

**Phillips:** You all know that God is really good. You may be just as sure that the man who leads a really good life is a true child of God. (**Ed Comment:** I don't like this paraphrase as it could be easily extracted out of context and used to support the false teaching that leading a really good life by itself equates with being a child of God. There are many men who at least ostensibly lead really good lives but they are not born again and are therefore destined for eternal separation from God because He is NOT their Father!)

**TLB:** Since we know that God is always good and does only right, we may rightly assume that all those who do right are his children.

**Weymouth:** Since you know that He is righteous, be assured also that the man who habitually acts righteously is a child of His.

**Wuest:** If you know in an absolute manner that He is righteous, you know experientially that everyone who habitually does this aforementioned righteousness [which God is], out from Him has been born, with the present result that that one is a born-one.

**Young's Literal:** if ye know that he is righteous, know ye that every one doing the righteousness, of him hath been begotten.

- **he is:** 1 John 2:1, 1 John 3:5; Zechariah 9:9; Acts 3:14, Acts 22:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 1:8-9, Hebrews 7:2, Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 3:18;
- **that every:** 1 John 3:7, 1 John 3:10; Jeremiah 13:23; Matthew 7:16-18; Acts 10:35; Titus 2:12-14;
- **is born:** 1 John 3:9, 1 John 4:7, 1 John 5:1; John 1:13, John 3:3-5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3, 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:4;
- **Reciprocal:** Ps 15:2 - worketh Ps 53:3 - none Ps 112:4 - righteous Ps 119:17 - I may live Proverbs 12:28 - General, Proverbs 21:8 - but Ezekiel 14:20 - by Ezekiel 18:5 - if Ezekiel 18:9 - is just Luke 1:6 - walking Luke 6:47 - doeth Luke 8:21 - which John 3:5 - and of John 3:8 - so Romans 2:13 - For not Ephesians 5:9 - righteousness 1 Peter 2:24 - live 1 John 5:18 - whosoever 3 John 1:11 - He that doeth good
- See comments on Born Again in John 3
- 1 John 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ORTHODOXY SHOULD LEAD TO ORTHOPRAXY

**Steven Cole** notes that "1Jn 2:29 (in context; **Ed note: Keep Context King**) explains how not to be ashamed at Christ's coming (1Jn 2:28) , namely, to live righteously (it also anticipates the theme of 1Jn 3:4-10)." ([1 John 2:28-29 Are You Ready for His Coming?](#))

**A E Brooke introduces this verse** - In thought this verse is closely connected with the preceding (1Jn 2:28). The ground of the appeal to "**Abide in Him**" was their expectation of the speedy return of their Lord in glory, and their desire to be able to meet Him with **confidence** and joy, and not to have to **shrink away** abashed from His presence. This naturally raises the thought of the conditions which would make such a meeting possible. Those only who are His own can look forward with unclouded confidence, and His own are those who share His qualities, especially those which characterize the Judge, righteousness and justice. The doing of justice is the sure sign, and the only sign, that they are "**born of Him**." And so the meditation passes over to the next subject on which the writer wishes to dwell, the being born of God. ([1 John 2 Commentary - International Critical Commentary - A critical and exegetical commentary on the Johannine epistles](#))

**Kruse** observes that "This verse begins a long treatment of the fundamental connection between **knowing God** and **doing righteousness** (1Jn 2:29–3:10), which provides a basis for distinguishing those who are the children of God from those who are the children of devil. This treatment is interrupted in 1Jn 3:1–3 by an exposition of the greatness of God's love, the immense privilege of being his children, and the hope of being made like Christ at his appearing, but is taken up again in 1Jn 3:4–10. (The letters of John. The Pillar New Testament commentary)

**Hiebert** entitles 1Jn 2:29-3:3 "**The Marks of the Children of God**" explaining that "The conflict between believers and the antichristian heretics prompts John to set forth the distinguishing marks of a true believer. He points out the practice of righteousness as the mark of the new birth (1Jn 2:29), asserts the reality and the dynamic nature of the new life (1Jn 3:1–2), and notes the practice of the believer's self-purification as prompted by the hope of the future (1Jn 3:3).

**If you know** ([1492](#))(**eido**) means to know intuitively, to know beyond a shadow of a doubt, it is a knowledge that the Spirit births in us. They absolutely know that God is righteous.

The "**If**" is not necessarily introducing doubt. **Brown** comments that John's purpose is "not to question the certainty that 'he is just,' but to turn the audience toward self-interrogation: Have they realized that he is just?" The UBS Translator's Handbook suggestion of "**Since**" or "As it is a fact that" loses this nuance. (The Epistles of John: translated, with introduction, notes, and commentary, New Haven; London, 2008)

**Westcott** - The use of ean (**if**) with the subjunctive, when there is no intention of questioning the fact or treating it as uncertain, often serves to turn the thoughts of the hearer or reader upon it in the way of self-interrogation: 'if, as I assume to be the case, as you profess, as by silent inquiry you can assure yourselves....' Cp. 1John 4:12 (1Jn 5:15); John 14:15. ([1 John 2 Commentary](#))

**He is righteous** - This could refer to either the Father or the Son or possibly Both (Smalley-WBC). Some see it as reference to the **Father** (Bruce; Lenski; Lieu; Plummer; Stott-TNTC) The following see He as a reference to **Jesus** (Brooke-ICC; Bultmann-Hermeneia; Grayston; W Hall Harris-Exegetical Commentary; T F Johnson-Understanding the Bible; Klauck; Marshall-NICNT; Smith-Interpreter's Commentary).

Hiebert favors that both pronouns (**He** is righteous...born of **Him**) refer to the **Father**.

Finally, some feel that the first pronoun refers to Jesus and the second to the Father. John uses a similar change from Christ to God in 1Jn 5:1.

**Cole** - "**He**" could refer to Jesus Christ the righteous (1Jn 2:2), Who is the subject of 1Jn 2:28. But since the Bible normally talks about the Father as the one Who begets us as His children, the "**He**" and "**Him**" of 1Jn 2:28 probably look ahead to the **Father** (1Jn 3:1). Note also that His righteousness (1Jn 2:29) is perfectly compatible with His great love (1Jn 3:1). We fall into error if we do not hold to both. ([1 John 2:28-29 Are You Ready for His Coming?](#))

**Brown** on the other hand sees "**He**" as a reference to Christ adding that "In 1John 2:1 '**just**' (**dikaio**s) was applied to Jesus Christ serving as Paraclete in the Father's presence, atoning for our sins and thus winning the case for us. Here it is applied to Christ who will return in judgment, not as an enemy but as a friend who gives confidence because he is forgiving." (Ibid)

**Westcott** - "The true solution of the difficulty seems to be that when St John thinks of God in relation to men he never thinks of Him



apart from Christ (comp. c. 1Jn 2:20). And again he never thinks of Christ in His human nature without adding the thought of His divine nature." ([1 John 2 Commentary](#))

**Righteous (just)** ([1342](#))(**dikaio** from **dike** = right, just) defines that which is in accordance with high standards of rectitude (in this context specifically God's perfect standard). It is that which is in right relation to another and so in reference to persons defines the one who is morally and ethically righteous, upright or just. **Dikaio** "denotes that which is in full accord with what is right and just in character and conduct." (Hiebert) It is "correct moral behavior, acceptable to God" (Marshall)

**Vincent** on **dikaio** - Used by John both of God and of Christ. Of God, 1 John 1:9; John 17:25; Apoc. 16:5; of Christ, 1 John 2:1; 3:7. ([1 John 2 - Vincent's Word Studies](#))

**Lenski** - "Righteousness is one of His (God's) energetic attributes. He is righteous in all His ways: in His laws, His promises, His verdicts, or a single act of His."

**You know** ([1097](#))(**ginosko**) means to know by experience, in this case the readers know from personal experience that one of the signs of being born again is the practice of right behavior. They know that people give evidence of their spiritual parentage by their conduct, either godly (born of God) or devilish (children of the devil - 1Jn 3:10).

Some writers interpret this verb **know** as an imperative (a command) so that the sense would be "you must recognize" (as rendered by the Jerusalem Bible). Others use the indicative (which speaks of reality of something) which implies that the readers know that God is righteous and that His children should exhibit similar conduct. In context of false believers, this "understanding enables a believer to feel assured that another whose life reflects the practice of righteousness is indeed a fellow believer." (Hiebert)

**John** uses **ginosko** 25 times in this epistle - 1John 2:3-5, 13-14, 18, 29; 3:1, 6, 16, 19-20, 24; 4:2, 6-8, 13, 16; 5:2, 20

### **PRACTICE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS MARKER OF THE NEW BIRTH**

**Everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him** - In context this is a "test" of whether one is abiding in Jesus. It is a marker of whether one is truly born again (See comments on Born Again). What they know reflects what they have been taught. What they are to practice reflects how they are to walk in the light of that knowledge. Our spiritual wealth (knowing God is righteous) should always be worked out in our spiritual walk! Privilege should be followed by practice. Doctrine demands duty. Revelation of God leads to our responsibility to walk for God. In short, what you say you believe about God is most accurately reflected in how you behave. If you say you know God is righteous and habitually live an unrighteous life, it is doubtful that you truly know God! Do not be deceived by anyone who might contend otherwise.

**A T Robertson** - Doing righteousness is proof of the new birth.

Those truly born of God will resemble God in their behavior (imperfectly now but one day in glory perfectly. Hallelujah!)

**Everyone** (pas) means all without exception. John is saying that every one who is a true believer will practice right behavior. No exceptions. He is not speaking of perfection, but of the habitual practice of what is right, the general direction of one's life. **What is the "general direction" of your life? Heavenward? Or the alternative? This is a good marker of whether you are truly born from above.** Do not be deceived by those even in evangelical circles, even with theological degrees, who teach that once you "accept Jesus into your heart" (a phrase not in the Bible), you can live your life any way you please, because you have obtained the "fire insurance policy!" This is a false and deadly teaching (to the souls of those who believe it).

**Alexander Ross** - The proof that we are begotten from on high and remain God's children (perfect tense) is to be found in the habitual doing of righteousness. Other signs of the new birth are love of the brethren (1Jn 4:7) and faith in Jesus as the Christ (1Jn 5:1). John proceeds in his next words to describe some of the wonderful results of the new birth. (The Epistles of James and John. The New International Commentary on the New Testament)

**Who practices** ([4160](#)) (**poieo**) means to do, to accomplish, to carry out and in the describes this righteousness as their lifestyle. It is not describing perfection, but it does describe direction of one's life. If one's life is "Godward," it is clear he or she is truly regenerate, a new creature in Christ. If one's life is "earthward" so to speak, it is not clear what their birth status is, but the suggestion is that they are not born again.

**Practices** is in the **present tense**, signifying that for those who are born of God the practice righteousness is their habitual practice, the general direction of their life. Remember, we're not speaking of PERFECTION, but of DIRECTION -- is the general "direction" of your conduct, your choices, your lifestyle, toward heaven or toward hell. **Hiebert** adds that "The **present active participle** "denotes habit of life, the prevailing principle of one's life, not a single action, but a succession of acts which make up the life." (Ibid)

**Wuest** adds that "The habitual doing of God's will is in view here. The habitual actions of a person are an index to his character.

The habitual actions of righteousness, God's righteousness here as produced by the Holy Spirit (the definite article stands before the word "righteousness" in the Greek text, marking this out as a particular righteousness) is an indication of regeneration. (Ibid)

**It follows that "practices" begs the question of how would you characterize your lifestyle?** What thoughts occupies your thought life? Would you say that you generally practice right behavior, right conduct? Note that some commentators (e.g., Zane Hodges) see this characteristic pattern not as a marker of the reality of one's new birth (even though the context clearly states they are **"born of Him"**), but as a marker of being in fellowship with other believers. To be sure, believers can and will sin, but to say that this is the practice of their life as these commentators imply, is to teach something that John is not teaching. This is a dangerous and deceptive teaching! Beware of the "false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies." (2Pe 2:1) Let me quote the highly respected expositor **Warren Wiersbe** - "The difference is that a true Christian knows God. **A counterfeit Christian** may talk about God and get involved in "religious activities," but he does not really know God. The person who has been **"born of God"** through faith in Christ knows God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. **And because he knows them, he lives a life of obedience: he does not practice sin.**" (The Bible exposition commentary) Dear reader, John could not have been more clear!

**Steven Cole** - Don't mistake the point of 1Jn 2:29. It is not saying that righteous behavior is the cause or condition of the new birth, but just the opposite. (Ibid)

The **Disciple's Study Bible** says "God is righteous, meaning that He not only opposes what is evil but is the source of what is right. He actively seeks to make His people righteous. Righteous lives show God at work. Compare 1Jn 3:10. God is the standard of righteousness. Disciples are His born-again children who imitate His actions by doing right.

**Faithlife Study Bible** - Obedience reveals commitment to Christ; this serves as a valid test for determining someone's relationship with Him. See John 15:10.

**Merrill Unger** - The fruit of abiding is the practice of righteousness, which gives evidence of one's relationship to and fellowship with the Righteous One, Christ, 29. (The new Unger's Bible handbook)

**A T Robertson** - Doing righteousness is proof of the new birth.

**Andrews Study Bible** - Doing right is evidence that one has been born of God through faith in Jesus (5:1; John 1:12).

**Henry Alford** - God is righteous, and therefore the source of righteousness; when then a man doeth righteousness, we know that the source of his righteousness is God, that consequently he has acquired by new birth from God that righteousness which he had not by nature. We argue from his doing righteousness, to his being born of God. The error of Pelagians is to conclude that doing righteousness is a condition of becoming a child of God. (Alford)

**H A Ironside** - In verse 29 (1 John 2:29) John reminded us of what should characterize those who have been born of God. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." Don't be content to say, "I have trusted Christ and have been made the righteousness of God in Him." When God justifies a man by faith, He proceeds to make that man just by the working of His Holy Spirit. He does not justify people by faith and leave them in an unjust condition. Everyone that is born of God does righteousness, loves righteousness, and seeks to walk in righteousness. Let us test ourselves by some of these things, and see whether or not we are professing to be Christians when we have never known righteousness. (H A Ironside Notes)

**Righteousness** (1343)(**dikaioisune** from **dikaios** = being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified being or in accordance with what God requires) in simple terms is what is right in the sight of men, but most importantly in the sight of God. It is not manmade righteousness, but Spirit enabled righteousness. It is not "natural" righteousness, but "supernatural" righteousness. **Dikaioisune** conveys the idea of conformity to a standard and in Biblical terms the "standard" is God and His perfect, holy character. In this sense righteousness is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God. Practically **righteousness** means to do what is **right**, in relation to both God and man. Righteous acts initiated and carried out in our own fleshly energy and calculated to impress others, do not impress God! Righteousness before men to be noticed by them is self righteousness. Righteousness that God accepts is His character reproduced by His Spirit in and through us for His good pleasure.

Note that this **righteousness** is in a manner of speaking that which is obtained from the Father (by the Spirit) and which "is passed on to His children as a family characteristic." (Burdick) This righteousness is evidence of the new birth, not a means of the new birth. It is the fruit of the new birth, not the root. No one can merit the new birth by righteous behavior, but their righteous behavior is evidence or fruit testifying to the validity of their new birth.

**Kistemaker** - To be righteous is the equivalent of being holy. It implies doing the will of God, obeying his commands, and loving him and one's neighbor. In short, "righteous" is a term that stands for being free from sin....Their conduct is right because believers are children of God. ( Exposition of James and the Epistles of John. Baker)

**MacArthur** - John looks from effect (righteous behavior) to cause (being truly born again) to affirm that righteous living is the proof of being born again (James 2:20,26; 2 Pet. 3:11). (The MacArthur Study Bible)

#### Related Resources:

- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Righteousness](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Righteousness](#)
- [What is righteousness?](#)
- [Why does Christ's righteousness need to be imputed to us?](#)
- [What does it mean to pursue righteousness?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about self-righteousness?](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Righteousness of God, the Righteousness Imputed Righteousness](#)
- American Tract Society [Righteousness](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Righteousness](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Righteousness](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Righteousness](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Righteousness](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Righteousness Righteous. Righteousness](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Righteous Righteousness Jehovah our righteousness](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Righteous. Righteously Righteousness](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Righteousness Righteously](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Imputed Righteousness Righteousness](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Righteousness](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Right and Righteousness](#)

**Born of Him** - John uses the expression **born of Him** twice (1Jn 2:28, 1Jn 5:1) and **born of God** seven times (1Jn 3:9-twice, 1Jn 4:7, 1Jn 5:1, 1Jn 5:4, 1Jn 5:18-twice). Clearly this marks a point of major emphasis in the last half of John's letter. It is worth noting that with one exception, all of John's uses of the verb "**born**" are in the **perfect tense** which describes a past completed action with continuing effect and speaks of permanence of the effect, specifically the permanence of the new birth! So just as when a baby is born into a family, so too believers are born again into the family of God (Jn 1:12) and are now the children of God (1Jn 3:1-**note**) and have the right and privilege to call God their Father (Contrast those who are unsaved and have no right to call God their Father.) In short, the new birth means a new life forever and ever. Amen! But orthodoxy always begets orthopraxy and so the practical significance of **born of God** is that the like father, like child. In other words, children exhibit their parents' **character** because they share their parents' **nature** (See 2Pe 1:4-**note**). Here the child practices righteousness because he is born of God Who is the essence of perfect righteousness.

**Brooke** - To be **born of God** is a favorite phrase of the writer's (cf. Jn. 1:13), especially in this Epistle (1Jn 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 4, 18), whereas he never uses the expression "to be born of Christ." ([1 John 2 - International Critical Commentary - ICC](#))

**Vincent** - The interpreters differ as to the reference of **Him**; some referring it to God, and others to Christ. Against the latter is the fact that men are not said to be **born of Christ**, but **of God**; and that to be born of God is a characteristic phrase of John, while to be born of Christ is a phrase which occurs nowhere. On the other hand, the undoubted reference to Christ in ver. 28, would seem to demand a similar reference here. Men are said to abide in Christ as well as in God, and to be born of the Spirit. Westcott's remark is pertinent. "When John thinks of God in relation to men, he never thinks of Him apart from Christ (see 1 John 5:20); and again, he never thinks of Christ in His human nature without adding the thought of His divine nature. Thus a rapid transition is possible from the one aspect of the Lord's divine-human person to the other." ([1 John 2 - Vincent's Word Studies](#))

**David Guzik** - Being born again has changed our lives from a disposition to sin to a disposition to righteousness. This is a test of our abiding in Him, the same kind of test John mentioned in 1 John 1:6, 2:4, 2:9. When someone is born of someone else, there is almost always a family resemblance. You say, "Look, she has her mother's eyes" or "He has his father's nose." Well, the children of God have a family resemblance to their Father in heaven. **He is righteous**, so those who are **born of Him** also **practice righteousness**. "God hath no children destitute of his image, or who resemble him not." (Poole) We will not perfect righteousness until we are glorified with Jesus; but we can practice righteousness right now, as we are born of Him. There are three precious claims for each Christian in this chapter. I know Him (1John 2:4), I abide in Him (1John 2:6), and I am in the light (1John 2:9). **John wants us to know that if these statements are true, it will show in our lives, especially in our love for brothers and sisters in Jesus.** (1 John 2 - David Guzik Commentary on the Bible)

**Kruse** writes that "The author's purpose for including this treatment of the connection between being **born of God** and **doing right**

was to provide the readers with a way of assessing the claims of the secessionists who were seeking to lead them astray. This becomes evident in the later treatment of this subject (cf. 1Jn 3:7) following the parenthetical exposition of the theme of the love of God and the hope of the children of God in 1Jn 3:1–3." (The letters of John. The Pillar New Testament commentary)

**Of God** - Means the new birth is from God not from man's works or merit.

**Roy Laurin** rightly observes that "Many people exhibit deeds of morality who are not born of God. Such morality is the result of culture and comes from human kindness and it is the exception, not the rule. The characteristic of life apart from God is unrighteousness, although that unrighteousness may be sprinkled with moral deeds and may have the semblance of being right. Taken as a whole a godless world is an unrighteous world." ([First John- Life at Its Best](#))

**Lehman Strauss** on **practice righteousness** - Someone may argue that there are plenty of morally good persons in the world who, even though they are not Born Again, **practice righteousness**. But such reasoning misses the meaning and bearing of the verse. The "righteousness" here is God's righteousness in contradistinction to man's righteousness. The two are as different as night is from day. That which man calls righteousness is as a polluted garment in God's eyes (Isaiah 64:6). There is that righteousness which the Bible calls "the righteousness of God" (Romans 1:17; 3:5, 21, 25, 26). The unsaved are totally ignorant of it, and "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3). God's righteousness is an attribute peculiar to Himself, and it means essentially the same as His faithfulness, His truthfulness—that quality of holiness in Him which must find expression in His hatred and condemnation of sin. Man's standard of righteousness falls far below God's. It is only as one is in Christ that he becomes a "new creation" [is born again], and thus becomes "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21). It is only in Christ that a man can become all that God requires him to be, and then righteousness is reckoned to him because of his faith in Christ (Romans 4:6, Ro 4:11), "not by works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus 3:5). The man who is born again seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). The Apostle John is saying in 1 John 2:29 that he who practices righteousness is born of God, because God's nature has become his nature. **The reality of one's sonship may be deduced from the fact that God's righteousness abides in him. Internally, the right relationship to God is acquired through faith, but an outward expression of righteousness in the life is the way of determining whether or not one has been born again. Test yourself!** (2Cor 13:5) The conclusive evidence of your relationship to God is your standard of righteousness. Doing and thinking righteously is the normal expression of, yea, the proof of, the new birth. It is a righteousness which comes from being right. The tense of the verb "**practices**" denotes the habitual doing of God's will, for, after all, it is the habitual actions of a person that are an index to his character. (1John Commentary)

**Born** (begotten, father of, conceived) ([1080](#))(**gennao** from **genos** = offspring, in turn from **ginomai** = to become) means to beget, to bring forth, to give birth, to procreate a descendant, to produce offspring, to generate. To beget is spoken of men (Mt 1:2-16), whereas to bear is spoken of women. The passive voice means to be begotten or to be born.

To reiterate in 1Jn 2:29, **born** is in the **perfect tense** signifying the permanent effect of the (new) birth. In other words, everyone God has saved in the past continues to give evidence of that fact in the present and will continue to do so in the future. Wuest adds that the **perfect tense** signifies that "The relationship between God and the believer as Father and child is a permanent one."

The most notable uses of **gennao** are in the description of Jesus' virgin birth in which He was supernaturally "**conceived** (gennao) in her (Mary) of the Holy Spirit." (Mt 1:20) and His subsequent supernatural resurrection in which He is described as "**begotten** (gennao)." (Acts 13:33).

**Gennao** describes the commencement of life where previously none had existed. In fact most of the uses of gennao refer to biology (birth) but as noted some refer to spirituality (new birth). **Gennao** can refer literally to begetting or conceiving a child or figuratively to spiritually "begetting" a person, resulting in them finding new life when they are born again (Jn 3:3, 5) In a similar use Paul presents himself as the spiritual father of the Corinthians. (1Cor 4:15)

All of John's uses of **gennao** in his First John are figurative and refer to the impartation of spiritual life to one formerly dead in their trespasses and sins.

**Gennao** gives us English words like "generation," "genetic," "gene," and even Genesis, which in essence describes the birth of mankind!

In Acts 13:33 **gennao** is used of Jesus, the Father declaring "I have begotten You" quoting from Psalm 2:7. Compare similar uses of **gennao** in Heb 1:5 and Heb 5:5 ("I have begotten You" quoting Ps 2:7 again).

In Mt 1:20 **gennao** is used of conception of Mary by the Spirit.

In a figurative use in 2Ti 2:23 Paul uses **gennao** to describe the "birth" of an attitude as a result of sowing the seed of foolish and ignorant speculations!

In 1Cor 4:15 Paul uses **gennao** to describe his role as spiritual father of the Corinthians through the Gospel. Compare a similar use by Paul in Philemon 1:10 to describe in role in the spiritual birth of Onesimus. **Zodhiates** notes these two uses are "Spoken in the Jewish manner of the relation between a teacher and his disciples, to beget in a spiritual sense, to be the spiritual father of someone, that is, the instrument of his conversion to a new spiritual life." **Detzler** adds that "In the Jewish world **gennao** referred to the relationship between a master and his disciple. Entering upon that relationship was likened to rebirth. Therefore "birth" had both a physical and a spiritual meaning." (New Testament Words in Today's Language)

**TDNT** - "Begetting" as an Image of the Relationship of Master and Disciple. In the LXX and NT, as well as Greek in general, *gennáo* means "to beget" (father) or "to bear" (mother). Already in the OT teacher and disciple are depicted as father and son (2Kgs. 2:12). The rabbis adopt this usage to express the supremacy of the teacher and the respect of the pupil, but with no thought of actual begetting (cf. Mt. 23:8ff.). Paul actually uses the term *gennán* for the relation in Gal. 4:19, but since he begets through the word (1 Cor. 4:15; cf. Philemon 1:10), he is obviously not thinking in mystical terms but simply expressing more forcefully the common rabbinic concept. (Theological dictionary of the New Testament)

In 2Ti 2:23 Paul uses **gennao** figuratively to describe foolish and ignorant speculations which are to avoided because they beget (**produce**) quarrels. In 2Pe 2:12 Peter uses **gennao** to compare the false teachers to brute beasts ("born as creatures of instinct") who operate on instincts and who will be caught and destroyed.

**Gennao** was used in relation to keeping genealogical records as was accomplished by the Jewish Sanhedrin. The genealogy records were necessary to demonstrate that one met the qualifications for the priesthood, proving that one was from the tribe of Levi. The genealogy records were lost when the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 70. Jews today cannot definitely determine their tribe of origin. Ezra 2:62-63, 9:2 illustrate the importance of keeping the genealogical records. Genealogies preserved the lineage and heritage of God's people, especially in the OT where they passed through periods of national disruption (or exile).

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) all use **gennao** of literal birth. In the genealogy records of Matthew, the **NAS** translates **gennao father** of whereas the more literal Young's translates it **begat**. It is not until John's Gospel that **gennao** is used with its figurative sense to describe spiritual birth (Jn 1:13, 3:3-8), in which a soul experiences a radical change which involves their total personality (cp 2Cor 5:17 where "new" = *kainos* = brand new, not just a "makeover!")

**Lawrence Richards** - This phrase is also found primarily in John's writings (Jn 1:13; 1 Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). The spiritual rebirth believers experience does not come through any natural process. God is the actor who effects the new birth in those who believe and receive the Son (Jn 1:12-13). New birth makes us children of God (v. 13) and leads to moral transformation. One who is born of God does what is right (1 Jn 2:29). While we may fail at times, no one born of God "keeps on sinning." God's life is planted within our reborn personality. "No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God" (1 Jn 3:6, 9; cf. 1 Jn 5:18). Another expression of the new life we receive from God is found in our love for one another (1 Jn 4:7; 5:1-2). Love and purity of life are sure to follow new birth, for God's own life swells within the twice born. We who have become God's children through faith are destined to grow into Jesus' likeness. (New international encyclopedia of Bible words)

**Vine's summary** - "to beget," in the Passive Voice, "to be born," is chiefly used of men "begetting" children, Matthew 1:2-16; more rarely of women "begetting" children, Luke 1:13,57, "brought forth" (for "delivered," in this ver., see No. 4); Luke 23:29; John 16:21, "is delivered of," and of the child, "is born" (for "is in travail" see No. 4). In Galatians 4:24, it is used allegorically, to contrast Jews under bondage to the Law, and spiritual Israel, AV, "gendereth," RV, "bearing children," to contrast the natural birth of Ishmael and the supernatural birth of Isaac. In Matthew 1:20 it is used of conception, "that which is conceived in her." It is used of the act of God in the birth of Christ, Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5, quoted from Psalm 2:7, none of which indicate that Christ became the Son of God at His birth. 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, John 3:3,5,7; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18; (b) of one who by means of preaching the Gospel becomes the human instrument in the impartation of spiritual life, 1 Corinthians 4:15; Philemon 1:10; (c) in 2 Peter 2:12, with reference to the evil men whom the Apostle is describing, the RV rightly has "born mere animals" (AV, "natural brute beasts"); (d) in the sense of gendering strife, 2 Timothy 2:23. ([Beget, Bear, Born - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words - Bible Dictionary](#))

**Related derivatives of gennao include -**

- **anagennáo** (313) = to give new birth (1Pe 1:3, 23);
- **artigennētos** (733) = newly born, newborn child (1Pe 2:2)
- **génnuma** (1081) = offspring (Mt 3:7, 12:34, 23:33, 26:29, Mk 14:25, Lk 3:7, 12:18, 22:18, 2Cor 9:10)
- **génnesis** (1083) = birth (Mt 1:18);



- **gennetós** (1084) = born (Mt 11:11; Luke 7:28; Job 14:1; 15:14; 25:4).

**Gennao** - 97x in 65v - **Usage:** bear(1), bearing children(1), became the father of(4), became...father(1), begotten(4), bore(1), born(41), Child(1), conceived(1), father(37), Father(1), gave(1), gives birth(1), produce(1).

Matthew 1:2 Abraham was the **father of** (begat) Isaac, Isaac the **father of** (begat) Jacob, and Jacob the **father of** (begat) Judah and his brothers.

3 Judah was the **father of** Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the **father of** Hezron, and Hezron the **father of** Ram.

4 Ram was the **father of** Amminadab, Amminadab the **father of** Nahshon, and Nahshon the **father of** Salmon.

5 Salmon was the **father of** Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the **father of** Obed by Ruth, and Obed the **father of** Jesse.

6 Jesse was the **father of** David the king. David was the **father of** Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah.

7 Solomon was the **father of** Rehoboam, Rehoboam the **father of** Abijah, and Abijah the **father of** Asa.

8 Asa was the **father of** Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the **father of** Joram, and Joram the **father of** Uzziah.

9 Uzziah was the **father of** Jotham, Jotham the **father of** Ahaz, and Ahaz the **father of** Hezekiah.

10 Hezekiah was the **father of** Manasseh, Manasseh the **father of** Amon, and Amon the **father of** Josiah.

11 Josiah became the **father of** Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

12 After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the **father of** Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the **father of** Zerubbabel.

13 Zerubbabel was the **father of** Abihud, Abihud the **father of** Eliakim, and Eliakim the **father of** Azor.

14 Azor was the **father of** Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud.

15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the **father of** Matthan, and Matthan the **father of** Jacob.

16 Jacob was the **father of** Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus **was born**, who is called the Messiah.

**Comment:** Every use of **gennao** in Mt 1:2-16a is in the **active voice** conveying the idea that the subject "**fathered**" the offspring who followed. However when it comes to Joseph, the last use of **gennao** in the genealogy is in the **passive voice**. In other words Joseph did not "father" Jesus. Jesus "was born". As the following verses make clear (Mt 1:18-25), this use of the passive voice points toward the conception brought about by God the Holy Spirit and not by the man Joseph! **How fascinating that the Spirit orchestrated every detail in Jesus' genealogy and birth, including even the inspiration of the passive voice in Mt 1:16b! Is God sovereign!**

Matthew 1:20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who **has been conceived** in her is of the Holy Spirit.

- [Virgin Birth - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Virgin, Virgin Birth - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Virgin Birth - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Why is the Virgin Birth so important?](#)

Matthew 2:1 Now after Jesus was **born** in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

4 Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was **to be born**.

Matthew 19:12 "For there are eunuchs who were **born** that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it."

Matthew 26:24 "The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of



Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not **been born**."

Mark 14:21 "For the Son of Man is to go just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not **been born**."

Luke 1:13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth **will bear** you a son, and you will give him the name John.

35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy **Child (begotten)** shall be called the Son of God.

57 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she **gave birth** to a son.

**Wayne Detzler** - In our day of easy abortion, birth is particularly important. When speaking of the coming Christ, the angelic announcement employs this word to describe the fetus. The Greek New Testament uses the word *gennao* (to bear) when referring to the conception of Jesus (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35). (Note: These texts equate "birth" with "conception.") A similar identification of conception with birth is found in a dialogue between Jesus and some Pharisees (John 9:34). Whether one considers the Old Testament (Ps. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5; Ps. 51:5) or the New Testament, the Bible paints a picture of personality which commences at conception. Thus abortion is a crime against a real person. (Ibid)

Luke 23:29 "For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never **bore**, and the breasts that never nursed.'

John 1:13 who were **born**, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

**Comment:** Exact meaning of "blood" is uncertain, but the ancients thought blood was important for the development of the fetus. It may refer to the genetic contribution of both parents and so be equivalent of "Human descent" (NET Note). "Will of the flesh" is a reference to sexual desire (in the normal biologic sense, not in an evil sense). "Will of man" is similar to will of flesh, but lays emphasis of the man's (husband's) decision or more generally "of any human volition whatsoever." (NET Note).

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born again** he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man **be born** when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and **be born**, can he?"

5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born** of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 "That which is **born of** the flesh is flesh, and that which is **born of** (**perfect tense** = describes a past completed action with continuing effect and speaks of permanence of the effect) the Spirit is spirit.

7 "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be **born again**.'

8 "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is **born of** (**perfect tense** = describes a past completed action with continuing effect and speaks of permanence of the effect) the Spirit."

**Comment:** Again is the word **anōthen**, which can mean either **again** or **from above** (as in Jn 3:31). In a sense, both meanings are true when the Spirit births new life in a sinner who believes in Christ. In a temporal sense, it is a second "birth" albeit spiritual not literal, although that is the way Nicodemus interpreted **anōthen**. In a "spatial" sense, it is from above, from the place where God is enthroned.

**Zodhiates** - **Gennao**, to give birth. This verb is never used in the NT in connection with baptism as if baptism physically introduces a person into the kingdom of God.

#### Related Resources:

- See comments on Born Again in John 3
- Regeneration - collection of articles and quotes
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Regeneration](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [New Birth](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Regeneration](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [New Birth](#)

- American Church Dictionary [New birth](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [New birth](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [New Birth](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [New Birth](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [New Birth](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [New Birth](#)
- American Church Dictionary [New birth](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [New birth](#)
- American Church Dictionary [Regeneration](#)
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- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Regeneration \(2\)](#) [Regeneration](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Regeneration](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Regeneration](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Regeneration](#)
- [In what ways is becoming a Christian becoming an entirely new man/woman?](#)
- [What does it mean that a Christian is a new creation \(2 Corinthians 5:17\)?](#)
- [What is regeneration according to the Bible?](#)
- [What is baptismal regeneration?](#)

John 8:41 "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not **born of** fornication; we have one Father: God."

**NET Note:** "We were not born as a result of immorality!" is ironic, because Jesus' opponents implied that it was not themselves but Jesus who had been born as a result of immoral behavior. This shows they did not know Jesus' true origin and were not aware of the supernatural events surrounding his birth. The author does not even bother to refute the opponents' suggestion but lets it stand, assuming his readers will know the true story.

**Detzler** - Satan also has spawned spiritual progeny. They have the same habits as their father. Even a religious exterior cannot hide their true, sinister natures. Jesus developed this idea when He confronted the Pharisees (**Ed:** More accurately these were Jews who had believed! Jn 8:30-31). They claimed kinship with Abraham, but Christ called them sons of Satan (Jn 8:38-47). (Ibid)

John 9:2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be **born** blind?"

19 and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was **born** blind? Then how does he now see?"

20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was **born** blind;

32 "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person **born** blind. (**Robertson comments** - "Perfect passive participle of gennaō. This is the chief point and the man will not let it be overlooked, almost rubs it in, in fact. It was congenital blindness.)

John 9:34 They answered him, "You were **born** entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" So they put him out.

**NET Note:** The disciples assumed that sin (regardless of who committed it) was the cause of the man's blindness. This was a common belief in Judaism; the rabbis used Ezek 18:20 to prove there was no death without sin, and Ps 89:33 to prove there was no punishment without guilt (the Babylonian Talmud, b. Shabbat 55a, although later than the NT, illustrates this). Thus in this case the sin must have been on the part of the man's parents, or during his own prenatal existence. Song Rabbah 1:41 (another later rabbinic work) stated that when a pregnant woman worshiped in a heathen temple the unborn child also committed idolatry. This is only one example of how, in rabbinic Jewish thought, an unborn child was capable of sinning.

John 16:21 "Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she **gives**

**birth** to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child **has been born** into the world.

John 18:37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I **have been born**, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

**Comment:** The Incarnation was for this purpose.

Acts 2:8 "And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which **we were born**?"

Acts 7:8 "And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham **became the father** of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac [*became the father*] of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

20 "It was at this time that Moses **was born**; and he was lovely in the sight of God, and he was nurtured three months in his father's home.

29 "At this remark, MOSES FLED AND BECAME AN ALIEN IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN, where he became the **father of** two sons.

Acts 13:33 that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I **HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU**.'

Acts 22:3 "I am a Jew, **born** in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.

28 The commander answered, "I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money." And Paul said, "But I was actually **born** a citizen."

Romans 9:11 for though the twins were not yet **born** and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

1 Corinthians 4:15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I **became** your **father** through the gospel.

Galatians 4:23 But the son by the bondwoman was **born** (perfect tense = stands on record) according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.

24 This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai **bearing children** who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.

29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh (natural descent) persecuted him who **was born** according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

2 Timothy 2:23 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they **produce** (cause to happen with implication of the result of existing circumstances) quarrels.

Philemon 1:10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I **have begotten** in my imprisonment,

Hebrews 1:5 For to which of the angels did He ever say, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I **HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU**"? And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"?

Hebrews 5:5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I **HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU**";

Hebrews 11:12 Therefore there **was born** even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.

23 By faith Moses, when he **was born**, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

2 Peter 2:12 But these, like unreasoning animals, **born** as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,

**Comment:** Perfect tense emphasizes their continuing state as living like brute beasts.

1 John 2:29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is **born** of Him.

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is **born** of God.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is **born** of God and knows God.

1 John 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is **born** of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child **born** of Him.

4 For whatever is **born** of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith.

18 We know that no one who is **born** of God sins; but He who was **born** of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

**Gennao** - 187 verses in the Septuagint -

Gen 4:18; Ge 5:3-4, Ge 5:6-7, 9-10, 12-13, 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 25-26, 28, 30, 32;6:4, 10; 10:8, 13, 15, 24, 26; 11:10-12; 17:20; 22:23; 25:3, 19; Ge 46:20-21; 48:6; Ex 6:20; Lev 18:9; Nu 26:29, 58, 60; Dt 4:25; 28:41; 32:18; Jdg 11:1; Ruth 4:18-20; 2Sa 5:14; 2Kgs 20:18; 1Chr 1:10, 34; 2:3, 10-12, 17-18, 20, 22, 36-38, 44, 46, 48-49; 3:4; 4:2, 8, 11-12, 14, 17; 6:4-6; 7:15, 32; 8:1, 7-9, 11, 32-34, 36-37; 9:38-40, 42-43; 2Chr 11:21; 13:21; 24:3; Ezra 10:44; Neh 12:10-11; Job 3:3; 5:7; 38:21; 42:13, 17; Ps 2:7; Pr 8:25; 11:19; 17:17; 23:22; Eccl 4:14; 5:14; 6:3; Isa 1:2; 9:6; 39:7; 45:10; 49:21; 66:9; Jer 2:27; 16:2-3; Ezek 16:20; 18:10, 14; 21:30; 23:37; 31:6; 36:12; 47:22; Hos 5:7; 9:16; Zech 13:3, 5;

**Gennao** is used often in the Septuagint to render **yalad** (3205 , יָלַד), "to bear, bring forth, beget, be delivered." This verb occurs in all Semitic languages and in nearly all verbal forms. The noteworthy exception is biblical Aramaic. However, the Aramaic verb is well attested outside the Bible. The verb yalad occurs about 490 times in the Bible.

One of the most notable uses of **gennao** in the Septuagint is in Isaiah 9:6 "For a child will be **born** to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

In the messianic Psalms two familiar passages employ a form of gennaō in the Septuagint translation. Ps 2:7 (quoted in Acts 13:33 and Heb 1:5; 5:5) states, "Thou art my Son; Today have I begotten Thee."

There are numerous passages in the Septuagint where the translators used a form of **gennao** to express the idea of "begotten" (e.g., Genesis 5, the generations of Adam; Genesis 11, the generations of Shem, etc.). In Deuteronomy 32:18 the Lord is the "Rock Who begot" Israel, who gave Israel "birth" as a nation, a distinct people group (see similar idea in Isaiah 1:2 = "Sons I have reared" [Lxx = gennao = begotten]).

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