

# 1 John 3:2 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<br>1 Jn 1:1-2:27 |                        | Manifestations of Fellowship<br>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 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ([NASB: Lockman](#)):

Greek: [Agapetoi, nun tekna theou esmen. \(1PPA\) kai oupo ephanerothe \(3SAP\) ti esometha. \(1PFMI\)](#)

[oidamen \(1PRAI\) hoti ean phanerothe \(3SAPS\) homoioi auto esometha. \(1PFMI\) hoti opsometha \(1PFMI\) auton kathos estin. \(3SPA\)](#)

**Amplified:** Beloved, we are [even here and] now God's children; it is not yet disclosed (made clear) what we shall be [hereafter], but we know that when He comes and is manifested, we shall [as God's children] resemble and be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He [really] is. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ASV:** Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is.

**BBE:** My loved ones, now we are children of God, and at present it is not clear what we are to be. We are certain that at his revelation we will be like him; for we will see him as he is.

**CEV:** My dear friends, we are already God's children, though what we will be hasn't yet been seen. But we do know that when Christ returns, we will be like him, because we will see him as he truly is. ([CEV](#))

**GWT:** Dear friends, now we are God's children. What we will be isn't completely clear yet. We do know that when Christ appears we will be like him because we will see him as he is. ([GWT](#))

**ICB:** Dear friends, now we are children of God. We have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him. We will see him as he really is. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

**ISV:** Dear friends, we are now God's children, but what we will be like hasn't been revealed yet. We know that when Christ is revealed we will be like him, because we will see him as he is.

**KJV:** Beloved, now are we the **sons** of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

**Macent:** beloved, we are now the sons of God, tho' it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when this change shall be, his immediate presence will give us a divine resemblance.

**MLB** (Berkley): Beloved ones, we are God's children now, and what we shall be has not yet been shown; but we know that when He appears we shall resemble Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

**Moffatt:** We are children of God now, beloved; what we are to be is313 not apparent yet, but we do know that when he appears, we are to be like him—for we are to see him as he is.

**Montgomery:** We are God's children now, beloved; what we shall be has never yet been made manifest. But we know that when He is manifested we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is.

**NCV:** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and we have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him, because we will see him as he really is. ([NCV](#))

**NET:** Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. But we know that whenever it is revealed we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is. ([NET Bible](#))

**NIV:** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NJB:** My dear friends, we are already God's children, but what we shall be in the future has not yet been revealed. We are well aware that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is. ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Oh, dear children of mine (forgive the affection of an old man!), have you realized it? Here and now we are God's children. We don't know what we shall become in the future. We only know that, if reality were to break through, we should reflect his likeness, for we should see him as he really is! ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**TEV:** My dear friends, we are now God's children, but it is not yet clear what we shall become. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is.

**TLB:** Yes, dear friends, we are already God's children, right now, and we can't even imagine what it is going to be like later on. But we do know this, that when he comes we will be like him, as a result of seeing him as he really is.

**Weymouth:** Dear friends, we are now God's children, but what we are to be in the future has not yet been fully revealed. We know that if Christ reappears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

**Wuest:** Divinely loved ones, now born-ones of God we are. And not yet has it been made visible what we shall be. We know absolutely that whenever it is made visible, like ones to Him we shall be, because we shall see Him just as He is. ([Erdmans](#))

**Young's Literal:** beloved, now, children of God are we, and it was not yet manifested what we shall be, and we have known that if he may be manifested, like him we shall be, because we shall see him as he is;

**Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be: Agapetoi, nun tekna theou esmen, (1PPAI) kai oupo ephanerothe (3SAPI) ti esometha. (1PFMI):**

- 1Jn 1:1; 5:1; Isaiah 56:5; Romans 8:14,15,18; Galatians 3:26; 4:6) (Psalms 31:19; Romans 8:18; 1Corinthians 2:9; 13:12; 2Corinthians 4:17
- [Click to listen to the timeless, raspy voiced exposition of 1Jn 3:2 by Dr J Vernon McGee](#)

### **1Jn 3:1: WHAT WE ARE**

### **1Jn 3:2: WHAT WE SHALL BE**

### **1Jn 3:3: WHAT WE SHOULD BE**

**Warren Wiersbe** summarizes the first 3 verses of 1John 3...

First John 3:1 tells us **what we are** and 1 John 3:2 tells us **what we shall be**. The reference here, of course, is to the time of Christ's coming for His church. This was mentioned in 1John 2:28 as an incentive for holy living, and now it is repeated. God's love for us does not stop with the new birth. It continues throughout our lives and takes us right up to the return of Jesus Christ! When our Lord appears, all true believers will see Him and will become like Him (Phil 3:20, 21). This means, of course, that they will have new, glorified bodies, suited to heaven. But the apostle does not stop here! He has told us **what we are** and **what we shall be**. Now, in 1John 3:3, he tells us **what we should be**. In view of the return of Jesus Christ, we should keep our lives clean. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

First John 3:2 at first reading seems relatively straight forward but the profound truth it teaches is so amazing that it prompted the great British expositor **Dr. Martyn-Lloyd Jones** to confess...

I suppose we must agree that nothing more sublime than this has ever been written, and any man who has to preach upon such a text or upon such a word must be unusually conscious of his own smallness and inadequacy and unworthiness. One's tendency with a statement like this always is just to stand in wonder and amazement at it. I have never chosen, in and of myself, to preach upon this text. I have often felt that I would like to, but there are certain great words like this in Scripture of which frankly I am, in a sense, frightened; frightened as a preacher, lest anything that I say may detract from them or may rob anyone of their greatness and their glory. That may be wrong, but this is how it always affects me...

Furthermore, it is when one confronts a text like this that one realises what a privilege it is to be a Christian minister. I am rather sorry for anyone who has not had to spend a week with a verse like this! (**Ed: Beloved pastor, how many kingdom hours do you invest each week in the pure milk of the word to assure that you handle it rightly that you might richly feed your sheep on Sunday?**) I assure you it is a very enriching experience, a humbling one and an uplifting one. There is nothing surely in life that can be more wonderful or more glorious than to have to spend a week or so with a word like this, looking at it, listening to it, and considering what others have said about it. It is indeed something for which one humbly thanks God.

What we have here is one of those great New Testament descriptions of the Christian and of the Christian's life in this world. A number of things inevitably must strike us on the very surface before we come to any detailed analysis. The first thing is how utterly inadequate are our ordinary, customary ideas of ourselves as Christian people. When you read this, and then when you think of yourself and what you generally see and observe about yourself and about your life as a Christian in this world, oh, how inadequate are all our ideas! Or take it as it was put in that hymn of the great Richard Baxter:

Lord, it belongs not to my care  
Whether I die or live;  
To love and serve Thee is my share,

And this Thy grace must give.

If life be long, I will be glad  
That I may long obey;  
If short, yet why should I be sad  
To soar to endless day?

Christ leads me through no darker rooms  
Than He went through before;  
He that into God's kingdom comes  
Must enter by this door.

Come, Lord, when grace hath made me meet  
Thy blessed face to see;  
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,  
What will Thy glory be?

Then shall I end my sad complaints  
And weary sinful days,  
And join with the triumphant saints  
Who sing Jehovah's praise.

My knowledge of that life is small;  
The eye of faith is dim:  
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,  
And I shall be with Him.

**Can we really say those words from the heart? Is that our view of ourselves and of our life as Christian people in this world? Is that our view of the possibility of our life being short or of being long? Is that our view of life and of death and of eternity?** Well, according to this text we are looking at in this chapter, that is the Christian view. 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.' (Lloyd-Jones, D. M. Children of God)

**Alexander Maclaren**, another respected expositor from yesteryear had a similar reaction to preaching a message on 1Jn 3:2...

I have hesitated, as you may well believe, whether I should take these words for a text. They seem so far to surpass anything that can be said concerning them, and they cover such immense fields of dim thought, that one may well be afraid lest one should spoil them by even attempting to dilate on them. And yet they are so closely connected with the words of the previous verse, which formed the subject of my last sermon (1Jn 3:1 The Love That Calls Us Sons), that I felt as if my work were only half done unless I followed that sermon with this. (The Unrevealed Future Of The Sons Of God ) {Ed: Note the KJV translates the Greek tekna with the word "**sons**" rather than the more accurate translation as "**children**". The Greek has another word for **sons** (huios) which conveys a different sense than the word for **children** (tekna)}

**Beloved** - The apostle launches into this great verse with one of his favorite terms of endearment by which he loved to describe the saints of God - he used **beloved** 6 times in this short letter (1Jn 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11) and the similarly endearing phrase **little children** (teknion) 7 times (1Jn 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21), this latter phrase being unique to John's writings (not used by any other NT writer).

One must asked the question "**Beloved of whom or by whom?**" To be sure we as believers are beloved of John the apostle, even though he has never seen us. And yet there is a greater love of which he speaks, the love of our Father, His Son and the Holy Spirit. How easy it is to miss the depth of the richness of this brief epithet (a characterizing word or phrase accompanying or occurring in place of the name of a person or thing). Ponder the truth that the Holy, Holy, Holy God of eternity, has willed to call you **beloved** today. Perhaps you need this reminder for others have deserted you or let you down, but God has promised His beloved that He would never, ever, ever leave us nor forsake us (Heb 13:5-note)

While paraphrase Bibles can be helpful to "flesh" out the intent of a passage, they can sometimes be misleading and in my opinion the Phillips fits the latter description on this verse, being rendered...

Oh, dear children of mine (forgive the affection of an old man!)

John does not say "forgive the affection of an old man!" in the original Greek and in my opinion he does not mean to make apology

for calling his readers **beloved**. So while I enjoy reading Phillip's thoughts on many texts, in this case, I think he has missed the mark completely! Never restrict your study to paraphrased Bibles, including dynamic paraphrases such as the NIV.

**Hiebert** comments on "**beloved**" writing...

Of vital significance for believers is the fact of God's transforming love. In enjoining his readers to contemplate God's love-gift, John gives personal expression to that love by addressing them as "**Beloved**" (agapetoi). (cp 1Jn 2:7). The recipients of God's love are also loved by the writer.

**Dr Martyn-Lloyd Jones** adds...

I do feel that this is perhaps the greatest weakness of all in the Christian church, that we fail to realise what we are, or **who we are**. We spend our time in arguing about the implications of the Christian truth or the application of this, that and the other. **But the central thing is to realise what the Christian is**. We grumble and complain, and it is all due to the fact that we have not really seen ourselves in terms of this picture. Surely, as we read these words, we must of necessity be humbled, indeed in a sense humiliated, as we realise the inadequacy of our ideas and the unworthiness of our view of ourselves as Christian people. (Lloyd-Jones, D. M. Children of God) (Ed: **Beloved, are you not as convicted as I am by this gentle exhortative rebuke? Oh, how we all need to meditate on our identity in Christ, the ultimate Beloved of the Father!**)

**Steven Cole** follows up with the practical note that...

Godly conduct rests on our understanding of our true, great position as children of God. If you begin to see this truth and allow it to shape your identity, it works out like this: You are tempted to engage in some sin or to join the world in some degrading form of entertainment. But you think, "I can't do that because I'm a child of God and it would disgrace the name of my heavenly Father." Or, you're reading the Bible and it convicts you that some of your behavior is not godly. It may be lustful thoughts or a grumbling, ungrateful attitude or words that put down others. Perhaps you frequently bend the truth to cover up your own misdeeds. But when Scripture confronts you, you think, "I'm now a child of God. I can't do that as a member of His family." Your new identity motivates you to grow in holiness. John begins with the foundation of our present position.

**Beloved** (verb) (27) (**agapetos** from **agapao** = to love, **agape** = unconditional love begotten by the Spirit in surrendered saints - Gal 5:22-note) means beloved, dear, very much loved. **Agapetos** is love called out of one's heart by preciousness of the object loved. **Agapetos** is used only of Christians, and reflects our covenant union with God or our "family union" with each other in His love.

**Agapetos** - 61x in 60v (**Take a moment and observe who is referred to as beloved in Scripture**) -

Mt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mk 1:11; 9:7; 12:6; Luke 3:22; 20:13; Acts 15:25; Rom 1:7; 11:28; 12:19; 16:5, 8f, 12; 1 Cor 4:14, 17; 10:14; 15:58; 2 Cor 7:1; 12:19; Eph 5:1; 6:21; Phil 2:12; 4:1; Col 1:7; 4:7, 9, 14; 1Th 2:8; 1Ti 6:2; 2Ti 1:2; Philemon 1:1, 16; Heb 6:9; Jas 1:16, 19; 2:5; 1Pe 2:11; 4:12; 2 Pet 1:17; 3:1, 8, 14f, 17; 1Jn 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11; 3 Jn 1:1f, 5, 11; Jude 1:3, 17, 20

Although primarily spoken to Israel (the **remnant**), the following words are also appropriately applicable to all believers who are **beloved** of God for Jehovah Himself promises...

To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, and a **name better than that of sons and daughters** ("**Beloved**"); I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off. (Isaiah 56:5)

**NOW...**  
**NOT... YET**

**Now** (3568) (**nun**) - A good reminder of our present position and the inherent privileges associated with that position. We are God's children **now**, not just in eternity future (which praise God we are also), and such great truth should **now** transform our thinking, renew our minds and radically impact our daily lives. We must ever fight to keep from forgetting that we are **now** His **children**, so that **now** we might conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the children of the King so that we can give a proper opinion to the lost world of our great Father Who is **now** in heaven (cp Mt 5:16-note)

**Akin** commenting on the juxtaposition of "**now... not... yet**" says here John...

uncovers a stark contrast between the present and the future, the known and the unknown. On the one hand, John wants to accentuate the fact that we are the **children of God** here and **now**. At the same time, the full extent of what we will be has yet to be revealed. Although our present status as **children of God** is wonderful, our future state will be even more extraordinary. God has only begun a work in us that will not reach full fruition

until the "not yet" has been fulfilled (cp Php 1:6-note). John's "apostolic confession of ignorance" affirms that the exact nature and state of the **children of God** after Christ's return has not been revealed to him. It will be disclosed only when He appears. "**What we shall be**" (ti esometha) remains veiled from our sight until His coming. Wild speculation and guesswork are futile and should be avoided. (Akin, D. L. . Vol. 38: 1, 2, 3 John; The New American Commentary. Page 135. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers)

**J Vernon McGee** comments ([1Jn 3:1.mp3](#); [1Jn 3:2.mp3](#)) with the use of the word "**now**"...

John is saying that we do not expect **to be** the sons of God, **we are** the sons of God. A better translation includes the words "and we are." The child of God can say emphatically, "I am a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ." We don't hope to be, we don't expect to be, but the thrilling fact is that every believer can exult and rejoice and constantly thank Him that he is God's child. We are boasters not in ourselves, but we are boasting of the wonderful Shepherd that we have. John makes it perfectly clear that if you are a born again child of God, you are going to exhibit a life that conforms to the Father (**Ed**: Cp the old aphorisms -- "Like father, like son" or "The apple doesn't fall very far from the tree"). A child of God **need not** be in the false position of saying as an old hymn says:

'Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought,  
Do I love my Lord or no?  
Am I His, or am I not?  
—Author unknown

**A T Robertson** offers an observation which should encourage all tried and weary children of the Living God...

We have a present dignity and duty, though there is greater glory to come. [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#)

**Vincent** adds that...

The two thoughts of the present (**now**) and the future condition of God's children are placed side by side with the simple copula, **and**, as parts of one thought. Christian condition, **now** and eternally, centers in the fact of being **children of God**. In that fact lies the germ of all the possibilities of eternal life. [Word Studies in the New Testament](#)

**We are** ([2070](#)) (**esmen**) - "**We**" unites John with his readers. The **present tense** signifies that **we** will never be "disinherited" as some earthly fathers do to their physical offspring. In contrast to the changing whims of earthly fathers, we as children of our heavenly Father can be absolutely assured that we will...

obtain an inheritance (kleronomia) which is imperishable (aphthartos) and undefiled (amiantos) and will not fade away (amarantos), reserved (tereo-perfect tense = signifies a "permanent reservation" which cannot be "cancelled"! in heaven for (us), who are protected (phroureo) by the power (dunamis) of God through faith (pistis) for a salvation (soteria) ready to be revealed in the last time. (1Pe 1:4-note, 1Pe 1:5-note)

**Children of God** - John explains the genesis of this supernatural parturition (act of giving birth to offspring) declaring that...

Whoever believes (pisteuo in the present tense) that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah) is born (begotten) of God, and whoever loves (present tense) the Father loves (present tense) the child born (begotten) of Him. (1Jn 5:1, cp Mk 12:30, 31)

**The IVP NT Commentary** notes that...

The present fact that we are children of God is contrasted with two things: the lack of present recognition by the world (1Jn 3:1), and the future revelation of what we shall be (1Jn 3:2). ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

**Maclaren** - We are the **children of God now**—and if we are children **now**, we shall be grown up some time. Childhood leads to maturity. The infant becomes a man. That is to say, he that here, in an infantile way, is stammering with his poor, unskilled lips the name '**Abba! Father!**' (Ro 8:15-note, Gal 4:6) will one day come to speak it fully. He that dimly trusts, he that partially loves, he that can lift up his heart in some more or less unworthy prayer and aspiration after God, in all these emotions and exercises, has the great proof in himself (cp 1Jn 2:20, 27, and "we know" here in 1Jn 3:2) that such emotions, such relationship, can never be put an end to. The roots have gone down through the temporal, and have laid hold of the Eternal. (cp 1Co 13:12) Anything seems to me to be more credible than that a man who can look up and say, 'My Father,' shall be crushed by what befalls the mere outside of him; anything seems to me to be more believable than to suppose that the nature which is capable of these elevating emotions and

aspirations of confidence and hope, which can know God and yearn after Him, and can love Him, is to be wiped out like a gnat by the finger of Death. The material has nothing to do with these feelings, and if I know myself, in however feeble and imperfect a degree, to be the son of God, I carry in the conviction the very pledge and seal of eternal life (cp "**we know**"). That is a thought 'whose very sweetness yieldeth proof that it was born for immortality.' 'We are the sons (children) of God,' therefore we shall always be so, in all worlds, and whatsoever may become of this poor wrappage in which the soul is shrouded.

Note that John repeats what he has just clearly state in 1Jn 3:1, that we are **children of God**, and undoubtedly his objective is to firmly fix this essential truth in our minds. He wants to emphasize that this is (**now**) our current position, and this great truth should dominate our think and transform every aspect of our daily conduct. Our position and privilege as **children of God** should saturate and shape how we think, how we live, and how we relate to the many temptations in this present evil world (Gal 1:4).

**Children (5043)** (**teknon** from **tikto** = to bring forth or bear children ) literally refers to those who are "born ones" and in the plural (**tekna**) refers to descendants, posterity or children, those viewed in relation to their parents or family. Heret**eknon** is used figuratively to refer to those who have by grace through faith been born (by the Spirit - Jn 3:5, 6, 7, 8, Ep 2:8, 9-note) spiritually (Jn 1:12, 13). **How can we be certain we are children of the Living God?** (Answer: 1Jn 5:13 **What things?** E.g., see 1Jn 2:29, 3:7, 9, 10, 5:2, et al - noting that all the verbs [practice, observe, love] in these passages are in the present tense = they reflect one's general lifestyle! They signify the direction of one's life, albeit not perfection in this life! cp Ro 8:14-note) The Holy Spirit bears testimony to our human spirit that we are **children of God**, and our Spirit-energized spirit thus joins the Holy Spirit in a joint-testimony to that fact (Ro 8:16, 17-note). Paul adds that now...

because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son (Ro 8:9-note) into our hearts, crying, "**Abba! Father!**" (Gal 4:6)

## **THE BEST IS YET TO COME!**

**Not yet (3768)** (**oupo** from **ou** = not [absolute negation] + **po** = yet) is an adverb which strongly negates an extension of time beyond a certain point = not yet, still not. **BDAG** says **oupo** conveys "the negation of extending time up to and beyond an expected point". Beloved, "**no, not yet, but yes, then**" ought to be our continual mindset. **Oupo** clearly promises a cessation to our present natural appearance which will be superseded by our supernatural appearance when He appears! Is this grand truth not every child of God's "**blessed hope**" (Titus 2:13-note), a hope which like an anchor sustains us when the times are tough and the storm clouds of affliction hide our Father's face? When those seasons come beloved, may the Spirit bring to our minds a vivid recollection of the truth "**no, not yet**" but "**yes, then**" and may this sure truth enliven a faith in future grace which enables us to walk daily by faith and which stabilizes our "spiritual compass" so that we keep on pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Php 3:14-note)

**Oupo** - 26x in 26v - **NAS** = ever(1), yet(24), yet... ever(1).

Matt 16:9; 24:6; Mark 4:40; 8:17, 21; 11:2; 13:7; Luke 23:53; John 2:4; 3:24; 6:17; 7:6, 8, 30, 39; 8:20, 57; 11:30; 20:17; 1 Cor 3:2; 8:2; Heb 2:8; 12:4; 1 John 3:2; Rev 17:10, 12.

**Hiebert** comments that...

With "**and ... not yet**" (kai oupo), John contrasts the present with the future and links the two aspects in connection with our new life as God's children. This God-imparted life "is not static but dynamic. A son grows, develops, matures. His goal of growth is maturity in the likeness of Christ Himself." While rejoicing in the present possession of eternal life believers also look forward to the undisclosed future still ahead; they know that God's work in and with them is not yet complete.

**Paul** draws on the truth of our "**not yet, but yes, then**" blessed hope to encourage us explaining...

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God (Ro 8:18, 19-notes)

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of *our* body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? (Ro 8:23-note, Ro 8:24-note)

And his first epistle to the church at **Corinth**, **Paul** encouraged the saints with a precious "**not yet, but yes, then**" promise...

just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." (1Cor 2:9)

**Comment:** Morris writes that "The reference comes from Is 64:4, but Paul has interpreted "wait for Him" as "love Him." The glories of "the new heavens and the new earth" (Is 6:22) are beyond human imagination, for they are being "prepared" for us by Christ Himself (Jn 14:2,3).

**Paul** latter adds that...

now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face (when we see Him just as He is); now I know in part, but then I will know fully (for then we will be like Him) just as I also have been fully known. (1Cor 13:12)

**Has not yet appeared** - It is not yet been made manifest. What the child of God's future will bring has not yet received open, visible display. The **aorist tense** emphasizes that it has never been previously manifested on any occasion. This statement stands in marked contrast with the opponents of Christianity who have been revealed (now) as **antichrists!** (See 1Jn 2:18, 22, 4:3 cp 2Jn 1:7)

**Appeared** (5319) (**phaneroo** [word study] from **phanerós** = manifest, visible, conspicuous in turn from **phaino** = give light; become visible in turn from **phos** = light) is literally "to bring to light" and primarily means "to make visible" or to cause to become visible.

The basic meaning of **phaneroo** is to make known, to clearly reveal, to manifest (see Vine's elaboration of "to be manifest" below), to cause to be seen or to make clear or known.

**Phaneroo** - 49x in 44v - Mark 4:22; 16:12, 14; John 1:31; 2:11; 3:21; 7:4; 9:3; 17:6; 21:1, 14; Rom 1:19; 3:21; 16:26; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 2:14; 3:3; 4:10f; 5:10f; 7:12; 11:6; Eph 5:13f; Col 1:26; 3:4; 4:4; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Tim 1:10; Titus 1:3; Heb 9:8, 26; 1 Pet 1:20; 5:4; 1 John 1:2; 2:19, 28; 3:2, 5, 8; 4:9; Rev 3:18; 15:4. **NAS** = appear(1), appeared(6), appears(3), become visible(1), becomes visible(1), disclose(1), disclosed(1), displayed(1), made... evident(2), made known(1), made manifest(2), make... clear(1), manifested(18), manifests(1), revealed(7), show(1), shown(1).

**Vine** summarizes **phaneroo**...

in the active voice, "to manifest"; in the passive voice, "to be manifested"... To be manifested, in the Scriptural sense of the word, is more than to "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; this is especially the meaning of **phaneroo**, see, e.g., John 3:21; 1Co 4:5; 2Cor 5:10, 11; Ep 5:13note. ([Vine, W E: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. 1996. Nelson](#)) (Bolding added)

**What we will be** (2071) (**esometha**) describes a future event. This is the promise of future glory, of that moment in time when this natural will put on supernatural, or as Paul said...

**A T Robertson** points out a subtle observation noting that John does not say...

*tines* (*who*), but *ti* (*what*) (which is) neuter singular predicate nominative.

**So what?** Bengel seems to be struck with wonder at this subtle point and adds that...

This *what* ("what we shall be") suggests something unspeakable, contained in the likeness of God.

**Lenski** writes that...

A child of God is here and now, indeed, like a diamond that is crystal white within but is still uncut and shows no brilliant flashes from reflected facets.

**We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is: oidamen (1PRAI) hoti ean phanerothe (3SAPS) homoioi auto esometha, (1PFMI) hoti opsometha (1PFMI) auton kathos estin. (3SPAI):**

- Malachi 3:2; Colossians 3:4; Hebrews 9:28) (Psalms 17:15; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:49; Philippians 3:21; 2 Peter 1:4) (Job 19:26; Psalms 16:11; Matthew 5:8; John 17:24; 1Corinthians 13:12; 2Corinthians 3:18; 5:6, 7, 8

**Beloved child of God, are you discouraged, in despair, growing weary of well doing, trapped in the pit of despond, stuck in the miry clay, etc? Then mediate on John's uplifting hope filled truth in these opening verses of chapter 3. May we all continually recall to mind the truth "it has not appeared as yet what we will be... we will be like Him"- God is faithful and will complete what He has begun in each one of His Children! (Php 1:6-note, 1Th 5:24-note) - Play the beautiful song below**



sung by Steve Green -- be sure to ponder the encouraging words that go along with the melody...

[He Who Began — A Good Work In You](#)

**We know... we will be like Him** - While our final destiny as the **children of God** has not yet been either fully or openly revealed, John makes it clear that believers can be fully confident that this glorious promised manifestation will occur in the future when Christ appears. In other words, John does not say "we speculate that we might be like Him" but that we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we will be like Christ some day in the future.

Steven Cole explains that...

Biblical hope (**Ed**: elpis [word study]) is not a good guess about the future. It is not, "There is a 50 percent chance that this will happen." It is 100 percent certain because it is based on the sure promises of God and on the testimony of His Son as relayed to us by the apostles in the New Testament. As Francis Schaeffer so helpfully pointed out, one of the errors of our times is to relegate faith to the "upper story," rather than to recognize that the Christian faith is rooted in true historical facts. In other words, the modern way of thinking is, "Your faith is your own subjective reality. It may be true for you personally, but it is not absolutely true for everyone."

But, the Bible is clear that God's truth about Jesus Christ is what Schaeffer called "true truth." It is supremely revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all of which are historically validated. He fulfilled all of the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah. His word about the future is not uncertain speculation. It is absolutely certain, but just not yet realized. We know certainly that He will appear and in that instant, we will be instantly transformed. ([1John 3:2-3 - The Purifying Hope](#))

**Why can believers be so confident?** Because the Scripture clearly teaches that one day in the future, we will become **like** Christ and that this **divine transformation/conformation** (to the image of Christ, Ro 8:29-note, "into conformity with the body of His glory" = Php 3:20, 21-note) will take place in a moment, in an instant! **Paul** explained this great truth in 1Corinthians 15, the "Resurrection Chapter" writing that...

Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (cp Kingdom of Heaven or God); nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **Behold**, (idou = this word is inserted to add a peculiar vivacity to the text by bidding/commanding the reader to attend to what is said - "Behold! See! Lo!". The aorist imperative = a command to "Do it now! Listen up! Don't miss this next important point!") I tell you a mystery (musterion); we will not all sleep (at the Rapture), but **we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed** (1Th 4:16-note, 1Th 4:17-note). **For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.** (1Cor 15:49, 50, 51, 52, 53) (See also Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming)

**We know** ([1492](#)) (**eido**, **oida** - eido is used only in the perfect tense = oida) literally means perception by sight (perceive, see) as in Mt 2:2 where the wise men **saw His star**. The meaning of **eido** is somewhat difficult to convey but in general this type of "knowing" is distinguished from **ginosko** (and epiginosko, epignosis), the other major NT word for knowing, because ginosko refers to knowledge obtained by experience or "experiential knowledge" whereas **eido** often refers to knowledge which is more intuitive, although the distinction is not always crystal clear. In spiritual terms, **eido** is the perception, the awareness, the understanding that only the Holy Spirit can give. And considering it's "genesis" **eido** is knowledge which is absolute and without a doubt. **Oida** further suggests fullness of knowledge, rather than progress in knowledge, which is expressed by ginosko, a distinction illustrated in John 8:55, (Jesus said "you have not come to **know** {ginosko} Him, but I **know** {oida} Him). Here Jesus says in essence "I know God perfectly (oida)". In John 13:7 Jesus addresses Peter (Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not **realize** {oida} now, but you shall **understand** {ginosko} hereafter.")

It is notable that the apostle John uses **eido/oida** 13 times in this short epistle (1John 2:11, 20, 21, 29; 3:2, 5, 14, 15; 5:13, 15, 18, 19, 20) (for comparison, Paul uses **eido/oida** 16 times in the 16 chapter letter of Romans). Clearly John wants his readers **to know that they know!** (**And beloved of God, he wants us today to have this same confidence and assurance!** cp the principle in Ro 10:17-note) In regard to their **knowledge** which John alludes to here in 1Jn 3:2, notice what the apostle had just taught the saints about their intuitive, "beyond a shadow of a doubt" knowledge...

But you (**addressing the believers in Christ**) have (present tense = continual possession of) an **anointing** (KJV = "unction" - **chrisma** - see below) from the **Holy One** (8x in the NT study to see "Who" the "Holy One" is = Mk 1:24, Lk 4:34, Jn 6:69, Ac 2:27, 13:35, 1Pe 1:15, 1Jn 2:20, Re 16:5), and you all **know** (**eido/oida** = not

a studiously acquired knowledge, but an inner Spirit-imparted knowledge) (**all** = not just a few of the more "elite" saints but "you **all** without exception **know** beyond a shadow of a doubt"). (1John 2:20)

**Comment:** Keep the context in mind - John knows that his readers are face with peril created by the presence of the many heretical antichrists (1Jn 2:18) and so he now reminds the saints of the resources which God has already provided them that they might meet and resist this doctrinal/spiritual crisis with confidence. The word for **anoint** is **chrisma**, where the **-ma** suffix refers to the result of an action... thus in 1Jn 2:20 the **chrisma** is the result of the Holy Spirit's work in us (cp Jesus' **anointing** Lk 4:18, saints **anointing** in 2Co 1:21, 22 - an anointing **every believer** receives at conversion!), as our Guide, Revealer of things to come, Witness and Glorifier of Christ. Each and every believer has received this "anointing" from the Holy One (Christ Jesus - cp His promise in Jn 14:17, 15:26, 16:13) in the form of His Holy Spirit Who now continually abides in and supernaturally enables every believer (especially in the context of 1John to discern between God's truth and the error of the Gnostics, cp Heb 5:14-note)

John goes on to expand upon the significance of this **anointing** for the children of God writing...

And as for you (placed first for emphasis to contrast his believing readers with the deluded deceivers, cp 2Ti 3:13-note), the **anointing (chrisma** - the only other NT use) which you received from Him abides (present tense) in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His **anointing** (His indwelling Holy Spirit) teaches you (plural = emphasizes all believers have this competency) about all things (all things they need to know to distinguish truth from error in any teaching to which they are exposed. Eg, note the Spirit's teaching in Ro 8:16-note), and is true and is not a lie (this is stated to assure the readers they have the necessary "equipment" to resist the deceivers), and just as it has taught you, you **abide** (although there is not clear consensus "abide" is most probably a present imperative which calls for the readers to accept responsibility to live in the sphere of the divine teaching and truth God has provided) in Him. (1Jn 2:27)

**Comment:** Note that His anointing continually abides or dwells (present tense) in all believers, equipping them to stand firm against deceivers and assuring victory as they appropriate His power in the experiences of daily life. Note also that when John says "you have no need for anyone to teach you", he does not infer that they no longer need a teacher to instruct and edify them, for that in fact is the very purpose of his letter (i.e., John is in effect "teaching" them). Keeping in mind the context of many deceivers (those who play loose with the truth), John is saying that the believers have the Holy Spirit who will enable them to discern the heretical errors and as Hiebert says they have "no need for some cult leader to initiate them into additional secret 'knowledge' or professed spiritual insight." Kistemaker adds that "Believers do not have to consult learned professors of theology before they can accept God's truth; in the sight of God, clergy and laity are the same; the Holy Spirit is the teacher of every believer, without distinction." (**Amen!**)

Note that this "beyond a shadow of a doubt" **knowing** in 1Jn 3:2 is also part of the fulfillment of the **New Covenant promise** made to those in Israel (the remnant) who would receive (Jn 1:11, 12) and believe in their Messiah (Jer 31:31, 32, 33) and by way of application to **all Gentiles** who would believe in Him...

And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know (Lxx = ginosko = aorist imp = know Jehovah by experience) the LORD,' for **they shall all know** (Septuagint/LXX = **eido/oida** - they shall all know by the Spirit given intuitive "beyond a shadow of a doubt" knowledge) Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer 31:34)

**Know (oida)** carries the idea of well assured knowledge and in context describes the divinely given intuitive knowledge which **every one** of John's readers received when they were born into the family as **children of God** and became partakers of His divine nature (2Pe 1:4-note). Unsaved men cannot know divine truth intuitively unless they are born by the Spirit into God's family (1Co 2:14). In short, the children of God **know** that this life is not all there is to eternal life, but that one day (soon) our Beloved Bridegroom, will appear in the sky, and call us home to be with Him forever. Hallelujah! In that day when He appears we will instantaneously transformed and conformed into His likeness (cp Php 3:20, 21-note)

**Akin** adds that...

Although the exact nature of the "not yet" has not been disclosed to John, he can affirm with certainty (1) the reality of Christ's appearance and (2) that when he appears we will be like him. The verb "**know**" (oidamen) carries an assurance, a certain knowledge concerning this particular aspect of the **parousia**. As in 1Jn 2:29 the conditional aspect of *ean* ("if" or "**whenever**") does not cast doubt on the certainty of the event itself, but rather on the exact time of the event. John wants his readers to anticipate and be prepared for the event, even

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

**When He appears** - First, note that John does not vacillate or equivocate. He clearly "prophesies" that Jesus will appear. Our English versions rightly translate it "**when**" not "**if**" even though technically the Greek word is a conditional particle (ean), but in this context it does not indicate uncertainty that Christ will return, but rather uncertainty about the exact time the event will take place (See related **discussion on imminency**). John's point is that Jesus will return. On that **sure word of prophecy** (2Pe 1:19KJV-note) we can stake our lives, beloved. John had heard this precious promise from our Lord's own lips and he believed His promise. And it was undoubtedly truth such as this with which he had girded his mind for action so that he might remain steadfast in the face of fierce opposition and strong temptation. The application for believers today is clear.

In his gospel John records **Jesus' promises** that...

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 (PROMISE #1). And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again (PROMISE #2), and receive you to Myself (PROMISE #3); that where I am, there you may be also (PROMISE #4). (Jn 14:2, 3)

And so here in 1Jn 3:2, John is clearly making reference to the Second Coming (the "first phase") of Christ for believers in this present age, often termed the "church age", which will culminate at the Rapture of Christ's bride (Rapture), the Church (see Table comparing Rapture - the First Phase versus Second Coming; see also Table Outlining The Jewish Wedding Analogy - courtesy of Tony Garland)

A few verses earlier **John** clearly alluded to the **Second Coming of Christ** writing...

And now, little children, **abide** (present imperative - keep on abiding in Jesus. He is speaking not of perfection [which no one but Jesus could ever achieve] but of the general pattern of our life) in Him, so that **when He appears**, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His **coming** (**parousia** [word study]). (1John 2:28)

**Hiebert** writes that...

John has no doubt as to the certainty of Christ's return, but he was well aware that, from the standpoint of those cherishing this hope (Related study: The Blessed Hope), its occurrence during their lifetime was uncertain. The condition expresses an attitude of expectancy, however. God in His wisdom left the date of Christ's return undisclosed so that each successive generation of believers may know the stimulating power of that blessed hope (cp Titus 2:11-note, Titus 2:12-note, Titus 2:13-note, 1Jn 3:3-note).

## WE WILL BE LIKE HIM

**We will be like Him** - This is both a promise and an assurance of future glorification which all the children of God possess. No more will they have the limitations they now experience in their "lowly" bodies, which are humbled by disease and sin. Their resurrected bodies will be like Christ's, and their sanctification will be completed. "**Like Him**" is not the same as being Him, and thus John is not saying believers will one day be "little gods" as some falsely teach.

In a parallel passage Paul reminds the saints who were citizens of the Roman colony of Philippi that...

our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait (apekdechomai in the present tense = eager expectation for our next life should continually be our mindset in this present life!) for a Savior (soter), the Lord Jesus Christ Who will transform (metaschematizo) the body of our humble state (tapeinosis) into conformity with (summorphos) the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power (dunamai) that He has even to subject (hupotasso) all things to Himself. (Phil 3:20, 21-note)

**Like (homoios)** means like or similar and denotes of the same nature or kind as. This adjective reminds John's readers that our transformation will be to a resemblance of Christ but not into little "Christs" or "little gods".

**Akin** points out that...

Scholars also disagree concerning the antecedent to the words "like him" (*homoioi autō*). While some suggest

that the pronoun refers to God the Father, others believe it refers to Christ. Again, context appears to suggest the reference is to becoming like Christ. While it is true that the New Testament teaches that the believer is to be like God (Eph 5:1-note), more frequently it refers to our Christlikeness (Ro 8:29-note; 2Cor 3:18; Phil 3:20, 21-note). So when John states that "we shall be like him," his reference is to the promise that the Christian will be made like Christ. W. Alexander recorded that on the mission field, when native converts came to this phrase, the scribe laid down his pen and exclaimed: "No! It (sic) is too much; let us write, 'We shall kiss His feet.'" (Akin, D. L. Vol. 38: 1, 2, 3 John The New American Commentary. Page 136. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers)

**Burdick** puts it this way...

Believers can never be equal to Christ, since He is infinite and they are finite; but they can and will be similar to Him in holiness and in resurrection bodies. (The Letters of John the Apostle)

**Paul** explained that Christ-likeness is God's purpose for all of His children...

for those whom He (God) foreknew, He also predestined to **become conformed** to the **image of His Son**, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren (Ro 8:29)

**Guzik**: God's ultimate goal in our lives is to make us like Jesus, and here (1Jn 3:2), John speaks of the fulfillment of that purpose.

This conformation into the image of God's Son is already under way in this life, **Paul** explaining that...

all of us (believers), as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit. (2Cor 3:18 AMP)

Paul describes the believer's future physical transformation at which time we will **'be like Him'**...

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Php 3:20, 21)

**Ryrie** comments that **"like Him"**

includes both physical changes of the resurrection body and spiritual changes of purity (1Jn 3:3), no sin (1Jn 3:5) and righteousness (1Jn 3:7).

**Guzik** comments on **we will be like Him** noting that...

This does not mean that we cease to be ourselves, full of the distinct personality and character God has given us. Heaven will not be like the Nirvana of Eastern mysticism, where all personality is dissolved into God like a drop into the ocean. We will still be ourselves, but our character and nature will be perfected into the image of Jesus' perfection. We will not be "clones" of Jesus in heaven! (**Ed**: Nor will we be "little Christs" as the New Age movement teaches!)

**Do you long to be like Jesus?** God will never force a person to be like Jesus if they don't want to. And that is what hell is for: people who don't want to be like Jesus. The sobering, eternal truth is this: God gives man what he really wants (**Ed**: cp Jn 3:19, 20, "darkness" in Mt 8:12, 22:13, 25:30).

**If you really want to be like Jesus, it will show in your life now, and it will be a fact in eternity**

**If you don't really want to be like Jesus, it will also show in your life now, and it will also be a fact in eternity.**

**We will be like Him**: This reminds us that even though we grow into the image of Jesus now, we still have a long way to go. None of us will be finished until we see Jesus, and only then truly we shall be like Him.

**Cole** adds that...

Since sin now dwells in our earthly bodies (Ro 7:18, 23, 24; 8:10, 13), we have to do battle against it until we die or Jesus returns. But when He returns, instantly we will receive our new resurrection bodies (1Co 15:52). At that moment, we will be freed from all sin. (**Ed**: In this present age believers are free from sin's penalty and power [domination - Ro 6:11-note] and in the future age will be free from sin's presence and pleasure!)

**John MacArthur** writes that...

It has been rightly said that imitation is the highest form of praise, and this transformation (**We will be like Him**) will be a supreme tribute to Jesus Christ—that He is the Chief One, the **prototokos** [word study], among many who are made like Him (**Ed**: cp Christ the first fruits 1Cor 15:20). Those whom the Father has elected to salvation through the Son will be made like the Son, conformed to the image of Christ (**Ed**: Instantly, 1Co 15:53). He will be the first among His elect and redeemed humanity who will join with the holy angels to praise and glorify His name, reflect His goodness, and proclaim His greatness, as they worship Him endlessly. (**Ed**: And all God's children cry "Maranatha! Amen!")

**Jamieson, Fausset and Brown** commenting on **we will be like Him** write that we will be like Christ, and since...

all sons have a substantial resemblance to their father, and Christ, Whom we shall be like, is "the express image of the Father's person," (Heb 1:3-note) so that in resembling Christ, we shall resemble the Father. We wait for the manifestation (literally, the "apocalypse"; the same term as is applied to Christ's own manifestation [in 1Jn 2:28]) of the sons of God...

**Our first temptation was that we should be like God in knowledge (Ge 3:5), and by that we fell; but being raised by Christ, we become truly like Him, by knowing Him as we are known, and by seeing Him as He is** [Pearson, Exposition of the Creed].

As the first immortality which Adam lost was to be able not to die, so the last shall be not to be able to die.

As man's first free choice or will was to be able not to sin, so our last shall be not to be able to sin [Augustine, The City of God, 22.30].

The devil fell by aspiring to God's power; man, by aspiring to his knowledge; but aspiring after God's goodness, we shall ever grow in His likeness. ([1John 3 JFB Commentary](#) - as an aside JFB is one of the better "older" commentaries on prophetic matters - it tends to interpret prophetic Scriptures more literally and not to replace Israel with the church [see Israel of God] - as does Matthew Henry)

**J Vernon McGee** tells about the story...

when a great big piece of marble was brought in to (the great artist Michelangelo), Michelangelo walked around it, looking at it, and then said, "My, isn't it beautiful!" One of his helpers who was standing there said, "Well, all I see is a great big piece of marble—that's all." Michelangelo exclaimed, "Oh, I forgot. You don't see what I see. I see a statue of David there." The helper looked again and replied, "Well, I don't see it." Michelangelo said, "That is because it is now in my own mind, but I am going to translate it into this piece of marble." And that is what he did. God says, "It doth not yet appear what you shall be." He sees what He is going to make out of us someday. We are discouraged when we look at each other as we are now, but God sees us as we shall be when He shall appear and we shall be like Him. What a glorious prospect this is for us!

**"We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"** We are going to see the glorified Christ. We are not going to be equal to Him, but we are going to be like Him in our own way. This does not mean that all of us are going to be little robots or simply little duplicates—it is not that at all. We will be like Him but with our own personalities, our own individualities, our own selves. He will never destroy the person of Vernon McGee. He'll not destroy the person that you are, but He is going to bring you up to the full measure, the stature where you will be like Him—not identical to Him, but like Him. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#)) ([Listen to the Mp3 on 1Jn 3:2](#))

**Because** ([3754](#)) (**hoti**) serves as a marker of cause or reason, but interpreters are somewhat divided regarding whether this qualifies the previous verb **oidamen** (we know because - here the idea is that our future resemblance to Christ is based on the fact that "we shall see him just as he is.") or the verb **esometha** ("we shall be like Him because we shall see Him just as He is") so that being like Him is the direct result or outcome of seeing Him (the **cause** - see explanations by Akin and Hiebert below). This latter seems to be John's emphasis -- that we shall be like Him -- rather than on how (the **reason**) the transformation (if the emphasis is on the verb **oidamen**) will take place.

**Akin** adds that...

The better understanding is that our future likeness of Christ is based on the fact that we will one day see him as he is (cause). The transformation idea (reason) is not absent, but it is not the primary one here. (Akin, D. L. Vol. 38: 1, 2, 3 John The New American Commentary. Page 137. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers)

**Hiebert** explains that **because**...

may indicate either the **reason** for our assurance that we shall be like Christ or the **cause** of our being like Him. Under the former view "**for**" (hoti, or "**because**") is taken as introducing a dependent clause relating back to the main verb, "**we know**," giving the sense "**we know that we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him.**" This rendering assumes that only those who shall be like Christ shall then be permitted to see Him as He really is.

If the clause is connected with the immediately preceding words, "**we shall be like him**," then John explains that our future face-to-face encounter with the glorified Christ will complete our transformation into His likeness. Thus the amazing assertion that "**we shall be like Him**" receives the needed explanation. In the words of Bruce, "If progressive assimilation to the likeness of their Lord results from their present beholding of Him through a glass darkly, to behold Him face to face, to '**see him even as he is**,' will result in their being perfectly like Him. The comparative adverb "**as**" (kathos, "just as") emphasizes that then our beholding of Christ will no longer be as "through a glass, darkly," but we will truly be seeing our glorious Lord "face to face" (1Co 13:12).

**Just as** ([2531](#)) (**kathos**) means in accordance with a degree as specified by the context or in proportion as. We shall see Him in all His radiant splendor and majestic glory and no longer through a mirror dimly. **He is** is in the **present tense** signifying our Lord Jesus Christ's continuing state of glorious grandeur.

**David Guzik** commenting on **we shall see Him just as He is** writes that...

**Perhaps this is the greatest glory of heaven: not to be personally glorified, but to be in the unhindered, unrestricted, presence of our Lord.**

Paul said of our present walk, For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known (1Co 13:12). Today, when we look in a good mirror, the image is clear. But in the ancient world, mirrors were made out of polished metal, and the image was always unclear and somewhat distorted. **We see Jesus now only in a dim, unclear way, but one day we will see Him with perfect clarity.**

Heaven is precious to us for many reasons. We long to be with loved ones who have passed before us and whom we miss so dearly. We long to be with the great men and women of God who have passed before us in centuries past. We want to walk the streets of gold, see the pearly gates, and see the angels round the throne of God worshipping Him day and night. However, none of those things, precious as they are, make heaven really "heaven." **What makes heaven heaven is the unhindered, unrestricted, presence of our Lord, and to see Him as He is will be the greatest experience of your eternal existence.**

**What will we see when we see Jesus?** Rev 1:13, 14, 15, 16 (notes - [Re 1:13](#); [1:14](#); [1:15](#); [1:16](#)) describes a vision of Jesus in heaven:

He was dressed in a long robe with a golden [breastplate]; His head and His hair were white as snow-white wool, His eyes blazed like fire, and His feet shone as the finest bronze glows in the furnace. His voice had the sound of a great waterfall, and I saw that in His right hand He held seven stars. A sharp two-edged sword came out of His mouth, and His face was ablaze like the sun at its height. (J. B. Phillips translation)

This isn't the same Jesus who walked this earth, looking like a normal man.

At the same time, we know that in heaven, Jesus will still bear the scars of His suffering on this earth. After Jesus rose from the dead in His glorified body, His body uniquely retained the nail prints in His hands and the scar on his side (John 20:24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29).

In Zechariah 12:10, Jesus speaks prophetically of the day when the Jewish people, turned to Him, see Him in glory:

then they will look on Me Whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

Zechariah 13:6 continues the thought: And one will say to him,

"What are these wounds between your arms?" Then he will answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." (see also Rev 5:6 "Lamb... as if slain" = marks of His crucifixion - [see notes](#))

John makes the connection between seeing Him as He is and our transformation to be like Jesus. **Couldn't it be said that the same principle works right now? To the extent that you see Jesus as He is, to that**

same extent, you are like Him in your life. ([1John 3 Commentary](#) )

**Wuest** makes the point that...

Only at the Rapture will we be able to see our Lord as He is now, for physical eyes in a mortal body could not look on that glory, only eyes in glorified bodies. And that is the reason we shall be like Him, for only in that state can we see Him just as He is. ([Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Erdmans](#))

**The IVP NT Commentary** has an interesting note stating that...

Both the Gospel and epistles assert that **no one has ever seen God** (Jn 1:18; 1Jn 4:12, 20) except the Son, who makes God known. The statement we shall see him as he is does not imply that we have somehow been misled in understanding God or that we have been granted an inadequate vision of God in Jesus (Jn 14:8, 9, 10), any more than it implies that our present status as **children of God** is somehow inadequate or unsatisfactory. Just as it is true that we shall be changed, so also is it true that a future and new "seeing" of God is promised. We shall see God face to face, even as the Son who is "**always at the Father's side**" (Jn 1:1-18) sees God. Here John is not so much interested in speculating on what God is like, or precisely what we shall see in our future vision of God. Rather, the accent falls upon knowing God more fully and intimately than is possible for us now. ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

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**THE FINISHED PRODUCT** - Another day. Another strip of wallpaper goes up. Another wall gets painted. That's the way it's been around our house for the past year or so as we've tackled a remodeling project with a real do-it-yourself flavor. Living in an unfinished house where you have to push paint cans and ladders out of the way to get to the kitchen can be frustrating.

But once in a while, when we peer through the drywall dust, we can visualize the finished result. We have hope; we know that one day we will complete the job. Then we'll be able to live in our house the way people are supposed to—with carpet on the floors and the tools put away.

Hope. Completion. Those two words are even more meaningful to Christians. Our lives always seem to be in a state of remodeling. We are often frustrated by our inability to be complete in our likeness to Christ. We sin. We fail. We forget to honor the Lord in everything.

But just as our family keeps painting and papering because we know the finished product will be worth it, so also we as believers can keep going because we have the sure hope that someday we will be like the Lord Jesus (1Jn 3:2). That is every Christian's hope of completion. —J D Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**GOOD MUSIC TAKES TIME** - When a man visited a piano manufacturing plant, the guide took him first to a large workroom where employees were cutting and shaping wood and steel. Nothing there bore any resemblance to a piano. Next they visited a department where parts were being fitted into frames, but still there were no strings or keys. In a third room, more pieces were being assembled—but still no music.

Finally the guide took the guest to the showroom. There a musician was playing classical music on a beautiful piano. The visitor, aware for the first time of all the steps involved in the development of this marvelous musical instrument, could now appreciate its beauty more fully.

The apostle John said, "It has not yet been revealed what we shall be" (1John 3:2). God has saved us and is now changing us into the image of Christ "from glory to glory" (2Corinthians 3:18). One day that work will be completed because we were "predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). But for now, we are in process.

Spiritual progress often seems slow. But good work takes time, and God has allowed plenty of time in His production schedule to make sure His work on us is of the highest quality.—Paul Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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As Charles Simeon, the great nineteenth century English preacher, lay mortally ill in his Cambridge home, he realized that his time on earth was fast slipping away. He turned to those at his bedside and asked,

"Do you know what comforts me just now? I find infinite consolation in the fact that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

His friends asked how that thought could give solace as he faced death. He answered with the confidence of one about to meet the Lord,

"Why, if God can bring all the wonder of the worlds out of nothing, He may still make something out of me!"

To think of the glory that awaits God's children—to have a spirit perfectly pure and a resurrected body that will enable us to enjoy eternity to its fullest—staggeres the imagination. The great changes we will experience in glory are beyond our understanding.

Even now God's transforming power is at work in us. At conversion we became children of God and were made "alive together with Christ" (Eph 2:5). But that is not all. Paul said that in the future God will "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:7). No wonder the apostle John exclaimed with astonishment, "It has not yet been revealed what we shall be."

Glorious prospects await those who have trusted Christ for salvation. God is not done with us yet. The best is yet to be. —P. R. Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**While you prepare a place for us, Lord, prepare us for that place.**

Or as martyred missionary **Jim Elliot** once said...

When it comes time to die,  
make sure that all you have to do is die.

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**MOTIVATION TO OBEY** - A SCHOOL janitor posted a sign in front of the school that read: Keep Off the Grass. But the children still trampled the turf.

Then a fourth-grade class had an idea. That fall they gave each child a crocus bulb to plant along the edge of the sidewalk. As winter drew to a close and the snow receded from the sidewalk, the children watched for signs of spring. Instead of running across the lawn, they huddled over it looking for the first crocus. What a power those hidden bulbs had. Before they had even poked their heads out, they kept dozens of little feet on the right path.

Prohibitions against bad behavior rarely motivate anyone to do good. Some even stir up the desire to disobey. Tell kids not to do something and that's the one thing they'll want to do.

The strongest motivators of good conduct are those in which we have a personal investment.

We too need positive motivation to keep us on the right path. The Second Coming of Christ ought to motivate us to not do anything that would hinder the work He is doing in preparation for that day. —D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**J R Miller** writes that...

No sooner do we begin to behold the lovely face of Christ, which which looks out at us from the gospel chapters, than a great hope springs up in our hearts. We can become like Jesus! Indeed, if we are God's children, we shall become like him. We are foreordained to be conformed to his image. It matters not how faintly the divine beauty glimmers now in our soiled and imperfect lives--some day we shall be like him! As we struggle here with imperfections and infirmities, with scarcely one trace of Christlikeness yet apparent in our life, we still may say, when we catch glimpses of the glorious loveliness of Christ, "Some day I shall be like that!" ([Transformed by Beholding](#))

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**Thomas Watson** speaks of the consolation inherent in the great truth that we shall be like Him writing that...

Here is comfort to those who are by faith, married to Christ. This is their glorious privilege: Christ's beauty and loveliness shall be put upon them; they shall shine by His beams. This is the apex and crown of honor: the saints shall not only behold Christ's glory—but be transformed into it. 1Jn 3:2, "**We shall be like Him, for we will see Him as He really is!**" That is, we shall be irradiated and enameled with His glory. Christ is compared to the beautiful lily in Song 2:1. His lily-whiteness shall be put upon His saints. A glorified soul shall be a



perfect mirror or crystal, where the beauty of Christ shall be transparent. Moses married a black woman—but he could not make her complexion white; but whoever Christ marries, He alters their complexion. He makes them altogether lovely. **Other beauty causes pride; but no such worm breeds in heaven. The saints in glory shall admire their own beauty—but not grow proud of it.** Other beauty is soon lost. The eye weeps to see its furrowed brows, and the cheeks blush at their own paleness; but this is a never-fading beauty. Age cannot wither it; it retains its glossiness, the white and vermillion mixed together to all eternity!

**Think of this, O you saints, who mourn now for your sins and bewail your spiritual deformities!**

Remember, by virtue of your union with Christ, you shall be glorious creatures; then shall your clothing be of wrought gold; then shall you be brought unto the King in glorious raiment—and you shall hear Christ pronounce that blessed word from Song 4:7: "You are all beautiful, My love—there is no spot in you!" ([The Loveliness of Christ](#))

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**J C Philpot** speaks of the great mystery of saved sinners one day **like Him** writing that...

Now this is a mystery which nature, sense, and reason cannot grasp; a mystery hidden from the wise and prudent, and yet revealed unto babes.

Has it not struck you sometimes as an inexplicable mystery, how you could be ever holy enough for heaven, so as to find all your delight to center in looking at Jesus and being like him through the countless ages of eternity; and to have no other happiness but what consists in communion with the Three-One God? Is not this a mystery? Now you can scarcely for a quarter of an hour be spiritually-minded, scarcely now for the space of five minutes be engaged in meditating on the Person of Christ. When on your knees, vile thoughts will intrude; when at the ordinance, some wicked iniquity will suggest itself; in hearing the word, your minds cannot sometimes for a quarter of the sermon keep up their attention. Being now so earthly and sensual, is it not a mystery how you, who are God's people, shall one day be perfectly holy, perfectly pure, and perfectly conformed to the image of Christ; and that all your happiness and joy will be in being holy, and in holding communion with the Three-One God?

O what a mystery is this to nature, sense, and reason. Do they not stagger and give way beneath it?

When we compare the happiness and glory of the saints in heaven with what we are here on earth, how amazing the contrast.

When we see our vileness, baseness, carnality, and sensuality; how our souls cleave to dust, and grovel in things evil and hateful; how dark our minds, how earthly our affections, how depraved our hearts, how strong our lusts, how raging our passions; we feel ourselves, at times, no more fit for God, in our present state, than Satan himself!

What a mystery then is this, that such a wonderful change should take place as to make the saints perfectly holy in body, soul, and spirit, and fit guests to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Sure I am, the more that a man becomes acquainted with the depravity of his fallen nature, and the more that he feels the workings of devilism in his heart, the more will he wonder how he can be brought into such a state as to be perfectly holy, enjoy uninterrupted communion with the Three-One God, and bask forever in the smiles of Jehovah!

**But though this is a mystery which nature, sense, and reason cannot comprehend, yet faith receives it as revealed by the Holy Spirit.** Would it be heaven, if we could carry our present depraved nature there; our pride, our presumption, our hypocrisy, with all the abominable workings of our fallen, filthy, and groveling hearts? To carry these with us to that glorious abode of perfection, holiness, and purity would make heaven to us a hell. Therefore, though it is indeed a mystery how it can be, yet, as received by faith, the child of God is happy that it should be so; for he is certain, were it otherwise, heaven would be no heaven for him. He would not be fit for it; he could not enjoy it; no, the very thought of being there forever would be irksome and intolerable to him.

**No more, when the soul is tossed to and fro by exercises and perplexities, and the workings of sin in a depraved heart, and can look forward with something of gospel hope to that day when it shall feel the plague of sin no more, but be perfectly holy and perfectly pure in body and soul, it becomes commended to the conscience, and is embraced by faith as a blessed mystery suitable to us, and glorifying to God.** ([Spiritual Mysteries](#))

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developmental disabilities. The original ministry opened its doors in 1964 to 36 children, providing them a loving residential environment and a school that would focus on their unique needs, helping them to reach their potential. Most importantly, this ministry started with a primary goal of sharing God's love with the residents and encouraging them toward a personal and growing walk with Jesus. Many of those original residents, now adults, still reside at Shepherds. The home, now known as Shepherds Ministries, has grown to include vocational training and a variety of other ministries all clustered around that central passion for delivering and living out the gospel.

I remember Bud asking me one time, "Hey, Joe, do you know what our biggest maintenance problem at Shepherds is?"

"I have no idea," I replied.

"Dirty windows. Our kids press their hands and faces against the windows because they're looking to the sky to see if today might be the day that Jesus will return for them and take them to His home where they will be healed and complete."

I love that! Talk about having your priorities in the right place. One of the hallmarks of a committed follower of Jesus is a longing for His return.

That's what Paul anticipates as he writes to Timothy in the waning days of his earthly ministry. He acknowledges that he is "being poured out like a drink offering" and humbly states, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:6-7). But rather than spending his last days looking in the rearview mirror, Paul continues to look forward to the "crown of righteousness, which the Lord . . . will award to me on that day" (2 Timothy 4:8).

Notice that the crown isn't some merit award for Paul's years of distinguished service. It isn't the "Church Planter of the Year" trophy. And it isn't exclusive to Paul. He makes that plainly clear when he adds, "and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." The "crown of righteousness" is available to all followers of Christ who live righteously because they have organized their lives around longing for Him to return—with the expectation that it could be any minute now!

That longing and expectation will change our priorities as well. It will make us think a whole lot less about how to build our kingdom and a whole lot more about His. It will pull our attention away from materialism and the accumulation of earthbound possessions and point us toward investment in that which is eternally significant. It will lift us from our anxieties and even the weight of this life's difficulties, reminding us each day that something better awaits us. And 1 John 3:2-3 reminds us that our hope in the Lord's return will motivate us toward purity, so that we want to be righteously pure and ready when Jesus comes for us.

You may have decorated your windows for Christmas, but have you gone to them recently to see if the Jesus of Christmas is coming back again for you? Go ahead, smudge up a window or two! Life will be wonderfully different if you keep your eyes to the sky!

YOUR JOURNEY...

How often do you spend time thinking about the return of Jesus?

How would it change your plans for the next 24 hours if you genuinely believed that Jesus could arrive at any moment? How about the next week? What about the next year?

What steps can you take to regularly remind yourself that Jesus could be returning at any moment? What would it look like to "smudge up some windows" as you watch for Christ's return in your home?

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**William Law on 1Jn 3:2 - WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM** - Consider the body. Here Jesus changes death's whole aspect. He dissolves its power. He takes away all icy terror from its sure approach. Death is no more a dreaded foe. It comes as a welcome friend. It is a jewel in the believer's casket. "All things are yours, life and death." It brings tidings that the chariot is ready to convey to endless rest--that the weary pilgrimage is ended--that Jesus is waiting to receive--that the ready mansions are prepared to welcome. Death is no loss to those whose life is Christ. Paul felt the truth, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Phil. 1:21. To depart and to be with Christ is far better. But who can tell what gain? who can measure the length and breadth of the far better! Death opens the cage-door, and the liberated spirit flies to the sight of Jesus. It dissolves the detaining clay, and instantly the spirit is in Paradise. It touches, and its touch is never-ending bliss. Thus Jesus is our Life. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all His benefits." Ps 103:1.

But the triumph of triumphs is not yet told. The consummating scene comes on speedily. Then will believers raise victorious heads. Their earthly frames will spring forth from their graves. A voice--a mighty voice--the voice of Jesus shall call, and they shall stand again on earth, a living multitude in living bodies. But oh! how changed! All traces of sin, and sin's hideousness, and sin's deformity, and sin's infirmity are forever gone. Corruption--dishonor--weakness disappear. Incorruption--glory--power, reign. The natural body is

now spiritual--"When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2. Where is death? It is completely vanquished. It is utterly abolished. It is swallowed up in victory. "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." Rev 20:14.

Thus believers in resurrection-robos inherit life--the life of immortality--the life of glory--the life of blessedness in the presence of God and of the Lamb. Who will not love, and bless, and serve this great Redeemer--this glorious Conqueror--our thrice-precious Jesus! How perfect is His work! Its pinnacle cannot be higher. What adorations can we adequately render! Let every breath be praise. Let our few days on earth be wholly a thank-offering. Let our one study be to magnify His name. How little is all life-long service when weighed against the debt! But by the Spirit's help, let all we can do be most gladly done. And while abounding in the work of the Lord, let us ascribe all strength--all pardon--all salvation to free grace! The happiest pilgrimage on earth is living out of self, in Christ, to God--in sight of heaven--in hope of glory--smiling at death, and realizing endless life. Hallelujah! Come Lord Jesus! Amen.  
([Reference](#))