OUR GLORIOUS FUTURE

"Our Best Life Is Not Now"

A Study Guide for 1 John 3:2–3

MEMORY VERSE

"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

— 1 John 3:2–3

Overview

Biblical hope is not wishful thinking. It is confident expectation anchored to the unfailing promise and power of Jesus Christ. In a world that feels like it is unraveling, the certainty of Christ's return and our future glorification strengthens us to endure and pursue holiness.

John gives three truths that both encourage and engage the believer:

Sermon Outline

I. WHAT WE ARE (3:2a)

Key Truth: "Beloved, now we are children of God…"

John begins with our present identity. Salvation is a present possession. We are already God's children by new birth—not by our own works, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Key Emphases:

- Adoption precedes sanctification. We are children of God first; growth follows.
- Only the children of God will be rescued at Christ's return.
- The world hates us because we are no longer citizens of its kingdom (Col. 1:13).
- The greatest privilege in the universe is to be a child of God—escaping the second death (Rev. 20:6).

Supporting Texts: John 5:24; Romans 10:13; 1 Peter 2:9; Colossians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Matthew 24:9

II. WHAT WE WILL BECOME (3:2b)

Key Truth: "…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."

Salvation is threefold: justification, sanctification, and glorification. What God begins, He finishes (Phil. 1:6; Rom. 8:30). Our future is as certain as our present.

(a) It Is Prevented (Not Yet Manifested)

The fullness of our privilege is still future. We have the down payment (the Holy Spirit), but we eagerly wait for the full inheritance. Creation itself groans for the revealing of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19).

Key Texts: Philippians 3:20–21; Hebrews 9:28; 2 Corinthians 5:4–5; Romans 8:19

(b) It Is Promised

When Christ is manifested, we will be like Him. This includes glorified, resurrection bodies and perfect holiness. We will inhabit a world without pain, sorrow, or death.

Key Texts: Colossians 3:3–4; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 Corinthians 15:48–51; Revelation 21:4–5

(c) It Is Powerful

Seeing Christ face to face will powerfully transform us. Just as Moses' face shone after seeing God's glory, and as we are being transformed now by beholding Christ in Scripture (2 Cor. 3:18), the full sight of Him will perfect us.

Key Texts: John 17:24; Revelation 21:2; Psalm 17:15; Exodus 34:30; Matthew 17:2

III. WHAT WE ARE TO DO (3:3)

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

Doctrine always leads to duty. The certain hope of Christ's return produces a purifying effect in the believer. We do not purify ourselves by accident; we do it intentionally.

To have this hope fixed on Him means we:

1. Look to Jesus

What we look at determines where we walk. We fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith (Heb. 12:2). Christ cannot remain in the periphery if we expect to purify ourselves. Something holds the throne of the heart—sports, shopping, hobbies, entertainment, or Christ.

Key Texts: Hebrews 12:1–2; Matthew 6:24; Romans 13:12

2. Labor for Application

Readiness requires preparation through the means of grace. Sanctification comes through the truth (John 17:17). We must fight for the supremacy of Scripture in our minds and treat the local church, small groups, and corporate worship as non-negotiable.

Key Texts: John 17:17; Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:16; 1 Timothy 3:15

3. Long for His Appearing

Paul links the crown of righteousness to those who have loved His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8). Longing hearts are ready hearts. The five wise virgins were ready because they longed for the Bridegroom (Matt. 25).

Key Texts: 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13; Matthew 25:1–13

Discussion Questions

1. How does the biblical definition of "hope" differ from the way the word is commonly used today? Why does that difference matter for the Christian life?
2. John emphasizes that we are children of God "now." How should the present reality of our adoption affect the way we face difficulty, persecution, or cultural hostility?
3. What does it mean that "it has not appeared as yet what we will be"? How does the "already / not yet" tension of salvation both comfort and challenge us?
4. John says we will be like Him "because we will see Him just as He is." Why is seeing Christ so powerfully transformative? How does this truth shape our present pursuit of holiness?
5. According to verse 3, what is the necessary result of having this hope fixed on Christ? Can someone truly claim to hope for Christ's return while remaining indifferent to personal purity?
6. How does a genuine longing for Christ's appearing differ from mere interest in end-times speculation?

Personal Application

1. What currently holds the "throne" of your heart? Is Christ central, or are lesser loves (entertainment, success, comfort, relationships) competing for supremacy?
2. In what specific ways are you intentionally "purifying yourself" in light of Christ's return? Where have you grown passive?
3. How would your weekly schedule, media intake, and church involvement change if you truly believed Jesus could return at any moment?
4. Do you regularly cultivate a longing for Christ's appearing through Scripture, prayer, and the means of grace—or has that hope grown cold?

5. Write one concrete step you will take this week to fix your hope more firmly on Christ and pursue purity.

FOR REFLECTION

"But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'"
— Matthew 25:6

A glorious future awaits those who are ready. The Christian's best life is not now—it is yet to come.

Lift up your heads, for your redemption is drawing near.
Luke 21:28