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By Rev. Jerry Rea

The Children of God?

What love! At 1 John 3:1 John marvels that God allows us to be called the "Children of God." I think it must be the huge privilege and honor of being God's children that he has in mind. To be "saved" is big, but to be children is bigger. To be His sheep is a privilege, but to be His children, what can compare? I can easily wrap my mind around being God's servants, slaves, or workers, but this is larger than that. Further, John rightly sees the motive. He loves us enough to make us children. He loves us enough to call us His own children. What a love!

Then John steps up his perspective to include the afterlife. What a prospect he says (verse 2) to be like Him in glory. I think his thinking goes like this. It is more than enough to be called children (verse 1), but when we shall see Him, we will be like Him. It is one thing to be *under* Him, but to be privileged to be *like* Him, that's too much. Here's another point. We are (now) children, we will be in the future like Him. Our text goes into very little detail as to what that future life will be like or look like. In our inquisitiveness we want to understand all about that and we want it now. We are not told. In fact, in my opinion, God doesn't tell us a lot of things about heaven. Sure we'll have a mansion, but we want to know what type of mansion. Sure, we'll inhabit glorified bodies but will we be able to play baseball or football in them? Sure, we'll know all things, but does that mean we'll know things like God knows things? The Bible doesn't say, and I think it a bit presumptuous for us to think it our privilege to know these things now. Jesus told John "it is not for you to know." That little phrase helps me when I can't/don't understand. Some knowledge is too high for me, and some is not my place to know.

Then, verse 3 helps us with the right now. Knowing that we have been adopted into God's family and are called "children," then encouraged with the prospect of being like God in the future, verse 3 says we ought to live differently right now. It says, "Having this hope" we purify ourselves, under the prospect. Having this hope we remain pure. Hoping for tomorrow we live a life of godliness today. So, rather than knowing a lot of things about tomorrow, we are urged to live holy lives today. Sometimes, I think we want to know more just so we don't have to do anything. Christianity has become a thing of the mind, not a character for our lifestyle. Scripture is so very practical. What real difference will it make in our day-to-day what kind of mansion we'll have in heaven? So, remember the thought of verse 3. Since we have this hope, we ought to live a different type of life. We ought to be a different type of person. After all, we are the Children of God!

Love you!

Jerry Rea