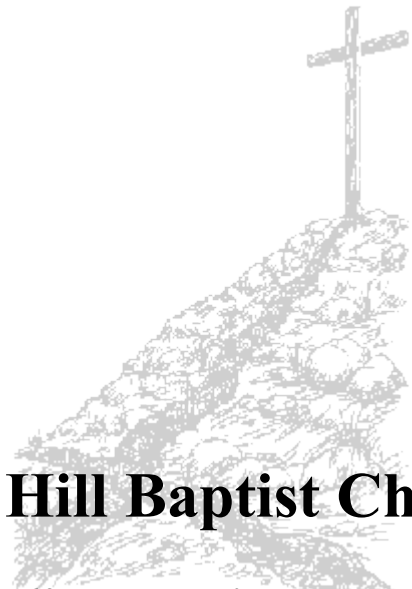


Called The Sons of God

1 John 3:1-3



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FOCAL 1 John 3:1-3 ^{KJV} "Behold¹, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) 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. (3) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

What should the Christian's rallying cry be? What should be the sound of the trumpet that causes us to straighten up and march proudly, though all the world despise us? What should be the thing that drives us toward obedience? The Apostle starts chapter three with this word,

Behold!

Illustrate Oh, I pray that the Lord will give me the ability to preach this word to you today. So often I feel like the dear man in the art museum who, pointing his cane at a priceless painting, misjudged and drive the point through the canvas. Dear Lord, let me not destroy Your Word nor render it ineffective by my life. Dear Jesus, let not my cane tear the canvas of Your priceless Word!

¹ Second Aorist Active Imperative G1492 (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries), εἶδω, eidō, i'-do, A primary verb; used only in certain past tenses, the others being borrowed from the equivalent, G3700 and G3708; properly to *see* (literally or figuratively); by implication (in the perfect only) to *know*: - be aware, behold, X can (+ not tell), consider, (have) known (-ledge), look (on), perceive, see, be sure, tell, understand, wist, wot. Compare G3700.

There is *excitement* and *passion* in this word **behold**. We find the first use of the Greek *eido* in the original text at:

Matthew 28:6 ^{NIV} **He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. **Come and see** the place where he lay.**

where the

Angel of God told Mary and the other women who came to the empty tomb that Jesus was *no longer there*. The angel said, **behold - look and see - Jesus is risen!**

When our Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the locked room where His frightened disciples hid, He told them:

Luke 24:39 ^{KJV} **Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.**

Again, we see the same Greek word used. "**Behold - look and see** My hands and My feet. Oh Beloved, put your fingers in the holes, and see that it is I and not a ghost. I am Jesus!" This word **behold** is a word of command, and a word of excitement. What John says next qualifies his excitement.

FOCAL 1 John 3:1 ^{KJV} "**Behold², what manner**

2 Second Aorist Active Imperative G1492 (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries), εἶδω, eido, i'-do, A primary verb; used only in certain past tenses, the others being borrowed from the equivalent, G3700

of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. "

What should excite the Christian and drive him or her toward serving God is the *elite status* that the believer has before God. Listen to the Word!

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior then you have direct access to the Throne room of God. You need not approach God through Priest nor Prophet, Patriarch nor Parish. You need not some man dressed in strange robes stand before you and pronounce you clean or unclean.

You do not have an earthly High Priest as Israel did, sprinkling the blood of an animal sacrificed on a man made altar for you. You need no Papal decree to approach your Heavenly Father. The Blood of Christ is sufficient! We are all sons of God if the Spirit of God indwell us.

Romans 8:14 ^{KJV} **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**

If you are led by the Spirit of God, you ARE sons of God. We who have accepted Christ as Savior are recipients of God's Special Love. It is written:

and G3708; properly to *see* (literally or figuratively); by implication (in the perfect only) to *know*: - be aware, behold, X can (+ not tell), consider, (have) known (-ledge), look (on), perceive, see, be sure, tell, understand, wist, wot. Compare G3700.

John 3:16 ^{KJV} For **God so loved the world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Illustrate God loved the world by giving His Son to judgment so that we do not have to be judged. That love of God is available to all - but only we who have accepted Christ as Savior have received the benefits of that sacrifice. God has offered up His Son to pardon all from sin - but a pardon must be accepted in order to be valid. Preacher **W.R. Jones** writes³:

"In Pennsylvania, during 1829, George Wilson was convicted of mail robbery and murder. He was sentenced to death. Later pardoned by President Andrew Jackson, Wilson refused the pardon. Confusion reigned among all who were concerned about the case. Nothing like this had happened before. What were they to do with a man who refused a pardon and chose to die on the gallows instead? Finally, the Chief Supreme Court Justice, John Marshall, ruled: "A pardon is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the parties implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that one under the sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon. But if it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must hang."

A few weeks went by and Wilson walked up thirteen steps. A black hood was placed over his head and a rope around his neck. Like a bolt of lightning, his body fell six or seven feet. The head jerked, the neck snapped, a few convulsive movements, and all was quiet. Wilson was dead! Why? Because he had to die? No. Because he refused the pardon. "

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son - and those who accept the Son as Savior then enter into a state of *sonship with God*. What was the manner of love that the Father hath bestowed upon us? John says:

FOCAL 1 John 3:1 ^{KJV} "Behold⁴, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, **that we should be called the sons of God**: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. "

We who are saved by faith in Christ are called or named⁵ "sons of God". Our Lord Jesus Christ was

"... **obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:** (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the

4 Second Aorist Active Imperative G1492 (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries), εἶδω, eidō, i'-do, A primary verb; used only in certain past tenses, the others being borrowed from the equivalent, G3700 and G3708; properly to *see* (literally or figuratively); by implication (in the perfect only) to *know*: - be aware, behold, X can (+ not tell), consider, (have) known (-ledge), look (on), perceive, see, be sure, tell, understand, wist, wot. Compare G3700.

5 **Vincent's Word Studies**, "We should be called (κληθῶμεν), Or, named. As **Matthew 2:23**; **Matthew 21:13**; **Luke 1:13**, **Luke 1:31**, etc. The verb is never used by John of the divine call. In **John 10:3**, for καλεῖ calleth, read φωνεῖ." **Robertson's Word Pictures**, That we should be called (*hina klēthōmen*). Sub-final use of *hina* with the first aorist passive subjunctive of *kaleō*, to call or name, as in **Matthew 2:23**.

earth; (11) And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:8-11 ^{KJV})

The Son of God was obedient unto death for our sake and for the Father's Glory, and the Godhead **gave Jesus Christ a name which is above every name**. It is by His name - Jesus - Precious and Anointed as it is, that we have been redeemed from the family of Adam and are now Children of the Most High. We are no longer sons of man, but we are **sons of God**. God **bestowed** this honor on us - not because we are better than anyone else - but because we *accepted the pardon that was offered us through Jesus*.

Illustrate A pardon must be accepted to be in force. The guilty party *must admit guilt* if the pardon is to be given. I heard another story - I do not know whether it is true or not - that long ago a certain newly crowned king in a certain land went to a prison to pardon all who would be set free. The king cried out, "Who here is guilty?", and one after another the prisoners shouted back, "We are innocent, set us free!". As the roar of the crowd died down the king heard one small, quivery voice say "I am guilty". The king quickly ordered his guards to release the one man who admitted guilt. The rest of the prisoners protested, begging to be released also, but the king would not relent. As he left the prison that day the guards heard him say, "An innocent person cannot be pardoned. Only the guilty can I set free".

God gave a *undeserved title* to all of us who have

admitted our guilt and came to Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

We are now known as the **sons of God** because the pardon that **The Son of God** secured is applied to our lives. Those who have not admitted guilt before God - repenting of their sins - cannot be **sons of God**.

Doctrine of Repentance

People get confused when they talk about repentance. Repentance is *not* getting better, but it is an admission of guilt before Almighty God. You cannot become a **son of God** by working your way into this state. As our focal text tells us,

FOCAL 1 John 3:1 ^{KJV} "Behold⁶, what manner of love **the Father hath bestowed⁷ upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew**

6 Second Aorist Active Imperative G1492 (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries), εἶδω, eidō, *i'-do*, A primary verb; used only in certain past tenses, the others being borrowed from the equivalent, G3700 and G3708; properly to *see* (literally or figuratively); by implication (in the perfect only) to *know*: - be aware, behold, X can (+ not tell), consider, (have) known (-ledge), look (on), perceive, see, be sure, tell, understand, wist, wot. Compare G3700.

7 Perfect Active Indicative G1325 (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries), διδομι, didōmi, *did'-o-mee*, A prolonged form of a primary verb (which is used as an alternate in most of the tenses); to *give* (used in a very wide application, properly or by implication, literally or figuratively; greatly modified by the connection): - adventure, bestow, bring forth, commit, deliver (up), give, grant, hinder, make, minister, number, offer, have power, put, receive, set, shew, smite (+ with the hand), strike (+ with the palm of the hand), suffer, take, utter, yield.

him not. "

Sonship is something **given once and for all by the Father** - this is the sense of the *Perfect Tense* of the Greek word for *bestow*.

The Father alone confers the honor of sonship on us. That honor is neither earned nor deserved, therefore *repentance* cannot be to "make yourself worthy". Repentance means something else.

**"Brethren, we shall not adjust our Bible to the age, but the age to the Bible."
(C.H. Spurgeon)**

You will find the word repent (or some form of it, such as *repentance* or *repented*) over 100 times in the Bible. Repentance is the *first step* in salvation. We are told:

2 Peter 3:9^{NIV} "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

The Bible says that repentance - an admission of guilt - is the *necessary first step* to salvation.

When our Lord Jesus Christ preached He said:

Mark 1:15^{HCSB} "The time is fulfilled, and the

kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news!"

The Apostles preached:

Acts 3:19-20^{HCSB} "Therefore repent and turn back, that your sins may be wiped out so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, (20) and He may send Jesus, who has been appointed Messiah for you."

Can there be salvation without repentance? Absolutely not! You must recognize that you are a sinner, lost, and hell bound before Christ can be your Savior. Repentance means to *change your mind*⁸, to realize that you are wrong and need to be right, to *cease trying to save yourself* and, recognizing your lost estate, to *call out to Jesus for salvation*. Again, I go back to the illustration of the king offering a pardon. Only he who said "I am guilty" could be saved from prison. Only he who says to God "I am guilty" can be given that wonderful title, **son of God**. Until you stop saying you are good enough for God and until you start saying "I am guilty", God cannot **blot out** our sins with the Blood of Christ.

One day the Pharisees saw our Lord Jesus sitting down and having a meal with those they considered *sinners*. We read:

Matthew 9:10-13^{KJV} And it came to pass, as Jesus sat

8 G3340 (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries), μετανοέω, metanoēō, *met-an-o-eh'-o*, From G3326 and G3539; to *think differently* or *afterwards*, that is, *reconsider* (morally to *feel compunction*): - repent.

at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. (11) And when the Pharisees saw [it], they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? (12) But when Jesus heard [that], he said unto them, **They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.** (13) But go ye and learn what [that] meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for **I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**"

This is an interesting text because it shows us that, just like that king we talked about earlier, Jesus will only save those who recognize themselves *as sinners*. If you are a *sinner* in need of the *Savior*, you can accept the *Son* and become a *son* of God. But if you feel yourself righteous, a *good person* not in need of salvation, then you will find yourself without Christ - and still a child of Adam. Sonship is only possible where repentance is.

Though the popular idea that "God loves you the way you are" may have some merit - after all, God so loved the world - the love of God *cannot bestow sonship on you until you repent*. And any who do *not* repent shall perish in their sins.

Jesus used disasters that took place among Israel to describe the need to repent. He said:

Luke 13:1-5 NASB "there were some present who

reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. (2) And Jesus said to them, "(2)Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? (3) "I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.** (4) "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? (5) "I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**"

God will not blot out sin unless there is a recognition of sinfulness in our lives. Recognition of need of salvation, recognition that **I** am a sinner and need the Savior to pardon me is what repentance is and will always be. We are commanded to repent (Acts 17:30). Once we do so, we are adopted into the Family of God. We are *sons of God*.

Sons of God Are Not Part Of This World

FOCAL 1 John 3:1-2 KJV "... therefore **the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.** (2) **Beloved, now are we the sons of God ..."**

A son of God is not a part of this world. We are *in this world* but *not of this world*. Let's look at what God has bestowed on us who believe.



A son of Adam has Satan as a parent, a son of

God has God as his Parent. We read in Scripture that Jesus told the religious leaders of His day:

John 8:41-44 KJV "Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, [even] God. (42) Jesus said unto them, **If God were your Father, ye would love me:** for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. (43) Why do ye not understand my speech? [even] because ye cannot hear my word. (44) **Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

You may not like this point, but it is nonetheless true. If you are of God, and if God is your Father, then you *will love Jesus*. If you do not love Jesus, then Satan is your father.

You are a child of this world, not of God. The natural divisions of family in creation is not along the lines of *red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight*. We as humans divide families by names or by colors. God does no such thing. He divides all humanity into *wheat or tares, sheep or goats, believer or unbeliever, saved or lost, child of God or child of Satan*. Just as the world did not know Jesus nor understand

Jesus, the world will not know nor understand the believer saved by Jesus. Our Parent tells us to love our enemy, their parent tells them to take vengeance on their enemy. Our Parent tells us to turn the other cheek, their parent tells them to strike at those who strike at you. Our Parent tells us to hate sin and love the Savior, their parent tells them to enjoy self satisfaction and sin, regardless as to what the Savior says. Our Parent tells us to grieve over those who will not accept the Savior's love, but their parent tells them all people go to Heaven no matter what - after all, God is love.

Sometimes sons of God get confused, and begin to operate like sons of Satan. When Jesus was going to go to Samaria and the Samaritans refused to care for Him, the disciples responded:

Luke 9:54-56 NIV "**Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?**" (55) **But Jesus turned and rebuked them, (56) and they went to another village.** "

Not too long ago modern day evangelist **Pat Robertson** made the same mistake when he suggested that we ought to assassinate Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. He said:

"You know, I don't know about this doctrine of assassination, but if he (Chavez) thinks we're trying to assassinate him, I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it."

Robertson since apologized for the statement, saying,

"Is it right to call for assassination? No, and I apologize for that statement. I spoke in frustration that we should accommodate the man who thinks the U.S. is out to kill him."⁹

We must all remember that **Beloved, now we are the sons of God**. We are sons of God **right now**, not just when we get to Heaven. And as sons of God we must act like sons of God.

B A son of Adam can only be a good son of Adam, but a son of God *will be like Jesus*. Our text tells us:

FOCAL 1 John 3:2-3 ^{KJV} "... 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. (3) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.**"

A son of Adam can never be greater than a mortal can be. A son of Adam has only his own strength to rely on. A son of Adam can only expect to grow old, to accomplish a few things in this life that may be noteworthy, and then to die and go to a place of fearful judgment. But what of a son of God? Look at those words, **we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is**. Our eyes will be opened in yonder glory, and we will see Jesus as He is. **C.H. Spurgeon** wrote:

AMIDST us our Beloved stands, And bids us view His pierced hands; Points to His wounded feet and side, Blest emblems of

the Crucified.

What food luxurious loads the board, When at His table sits the Lord! The wine how rich, the bread how sweet, When Jesus deigns the guests to meet!

If now with eyes defiled and dim, We see the signs but see not Him, Oh, may His love the scales displace, And bid us see Him face to face!

Our former transports we recount, When with Him in the holy mount, These cause our souls to thirst anew, His marred but lovely face to view.

Thou glorious Bridegroom of our hearts, Thy present smile a heaven imparts: Oh, lift the veil, if veil there be, Let every saint Thy beauties see!

The Apostles Peter, James, and John saw Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration standing with Moses and Elijah (**Matthew 17:1-5**). When they saw this wonderful thing they were prompted by their humanity to offer to make three altars - one for each glowing person there. God rebuked them, and said, "**This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!**". Peter, James, and John saw Jesus as no more or less than Elijah and Moses - but Jesus is much more! But this is the way of man. We see Jesus, and know Him as the Son of God. But until we see the glories of Heaven we will not fully understand *how much He has done for us* by making our salvation sure.

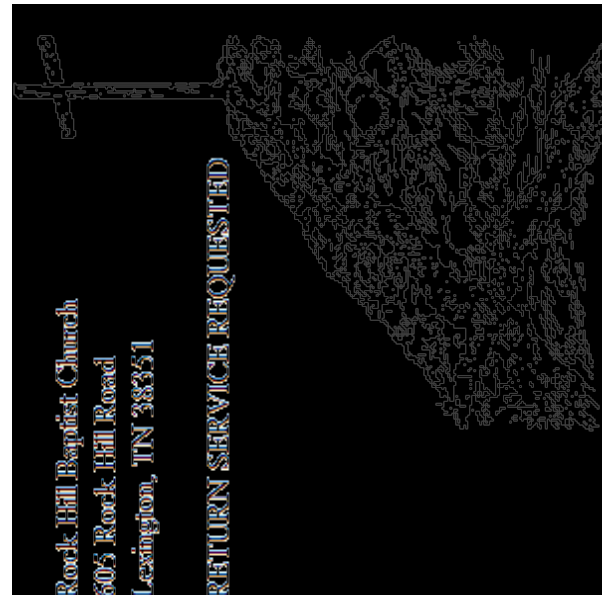
A son of Adam will never go very far. One of the richest of all men, Bill Gates, has no relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord. What good are his riches? Will he take them with him? What about Ted Turner, a fool and an

atheist? He has billions of dollars, and follows that god called Mammon very closely. Will that money help him when death comes knocking at the door? For all their money, death still scares them. Yet for the believer the sting has been removed from death.

Illustrate A young Nigerian, Ode Sunday, came to accept Jesus Christ as His Savior in his village. Shortly after he met the Lord he began coughing, and three days later he died. Prior to his death he wrote on the doorway of his house in chalk, "Accept Jesus". Ode understood that death was only a doorway, that he was not ending his life but just beginning it. Though he walked only a few steps on his Christian journey, he changed lives even after his death. Those who came to his house saw the chalked message on the door and accepted Christ as Savior. The Chief authorized that a Church be built, and souls are coming to Jesus even now. Two other villages, hearing about the event that happened in Ode's village, now want Churches built. Life is not an end, but a glorious new beginning for the Christian.¹⁰

If you are in Jesus, you **purify yourself**, rejecting sin and embracing righteousness. You walk as Jesus walked, loving others, regarding all life as precious. You know that you are a child of God, a son of God, and that one day you will rule and reign with Him. So you walk in Him, in the world but not in worldliness.

May God touch your hearts with these words.



¹⁰ from <http://www.bibleteacher.org/wwk.htm>