

## 1 John 2:29-3:1: The Righteousness of Our Benevolent God

If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

### 1 John 2:29

*(If) You know He is righteous*

- Why do you know?
- What type of knowledge is this?
- What is righteousness?
- What makes God's righteousness unique in comparison to all other beings in the universe?
- How can you observe and identify righteousness?

The Greek word for know here is Eido, knowledge gained by perception. John is drawing on the concepts given in the earlier part of the book and identifying the fundamental assumptions here about having relationship with God as a presupposition for all believers and fellowship as a presently conditional scenario. As with many concepts, the concept of Righteousness is defined in and by God. Earthly understanding of righteousness pales in comparison to what the Lord has infinitely, but we are still able to comprehend the principle of righteousness because of the morality inherently gifted by being made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26).

*Everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him*

- Who is everyone?
- What does it mean to practice or do righteousness?
- How can we practice righteousness?
- What are some theological implications of being born of Him?

John tells us that all who practice righteousness are born of God. The quick logical jump is to assume that all who are presently, actively righteous will have been doing so and will continue doing so without any disruption. John has addressed this to a certain extent in 1 John 2:1, and will address it again in 3:3 and 3:6. Being born of something implies a 'type-ness'. John is leading us to 3:1 where he's going to (briefly) cover the doctrinal concept of being born of the Father and what being a child of God implies. At the very least this means that we should be practicing righteousness. This comes through the work of the Holy Spirit through abiding.

### 1 John 3:1

*See How Great a Love the Father Has Bestowed Upon Us*

- How 'great' is great?

- What type of love?
- What does it mean to bestow?
- What does bestowing leave us to do?

John started this epistle off by describing having seen Christ and this verse starts off with an appeal that the believer should behold the greatness of God's love. John uses the Greek word Agape to describe the love of God here. The word translated 'great' here has to do with the quality of something (thus in the King James it is the word 'manner'): "Behold the great quality of love from the Father's love." The Father's Agape, selfless, benevolent love bestowed or gave to us the gift of being His children. Paul uses this word in 2 Corinthians multiple times as a gift: 1:22, 5:5 [the Spirit]; 5:18 [ministry of reconciliation]. The love of God cannot be earned, but it is given selflessly.

*That we would be called children of God*

- What does it matter if we've been named or called children of God?

Often with doctrines there are understatements of a truth that when meditated upon we could spend quite some time enjoying the amazing nature of the truth. Being called children of God is definitely an amazing doctrine! We've been named (called) children (teknon) of God. Ephesians 3:14-21 describes a richness of family. Being part of this family of God comes not only with implications of righteousness (as John states) but also of a fullness of God's character.

*For this reason the world does not know us because it did not know Him.*

- What type of know?
- What is the logical foundation for this lack of knowledge?

John states something he'll restate in the coming verses: because of our fathers we cannot know (*ginōskō*) the world and it cannot know us. This kind of knowledge is a type of intimacy-based knowledge and not simply something we know by research or perception. Instead of an analogy of separation by feud we should understand this as a familial analogy of protection. The father protects his children from sin and the children are set aside unto righteousness.

Now had the world established a relationship with, or known (*ginōskō'ed*), God, they would have known Him and been drawn to Him and made children like we are. The principles that John has been discussing before of relationship and fellowship are key and draw into this passage: we've got to have a relationship to be able to walk in fellowship.

**Next week:** The Fullness of Who Christ Is