

AMAZING GRACE

1 JOHN 3:1 • TV068A

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1 John 3:1

“Behold, 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.”

I’m speaking to you today on the subject: **“AMAZING GRACE.”**

And my text will be taken from the book of **1 John chapter 3:1**, *“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called sons of God.”*

You know, when the prophet Isaiah wrote of the coming Redeemer, the coming Messiah in **Isaiah 7:14**; he said: *“Behold; (the word is amazing, incredible) behold, the Lord Himself shall give you a sign, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son and thou shall call His name Immanuel.”*

And then, when the angels announced the birth of this Son, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, when the angels appeared to the shepherds on the Judean hillsides that evening they said; *“Behold; (amazing, incredible) we bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, Christ the Lord,”*

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And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. God in the flesh.”

And then when John the Baptist had delivered his message of repentance and he announced the coming of the Messiah, *“Prepare ye the way of the Lord, the kingdom of God is at hand,”* he pointed to the carpenter from Nazareth and he uttered that word himself: *“Behold, (incredible, amazing) behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”*

And then the Scripture tells us that; *“One day the clouds will roll back and the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the arch angel and the dead in Christ shall rise.”* And the cry shall be in that day; *“Behold; (amazing, incredible) He cometh, He cometh with clouds.”*

Well our text begins with the same words, the same words that Isaiah used, (amazing, incredible): *“Behold; the Lord Himself shall give you a sign, a virgin shall conceive,”* the same words that the angels used in announcing the coming of Jesus Christ, the same words that John the Baptist used down there by the River Jordan when he pointed to Jesus Christ and said; *“Behold the Lamb of God,”* the same words that shall be used when our Lord comes back to this earth again, *“Behold He cometh,”* that same word (amazing, incredible, unbelievable). *“Behold”* is used by John in the text that I read a few moments ago, God given announcements are made with *“behold”* and no less amazing is this announcement right here.

“Behold what manner of love, (amazing, incredible, unbelieving love) that God hath bestowed upon us, (us sinful creatures, sons of Adam, fallen rebels) what manner of love that God hath bestowed upon us (that we of all people) should be called the sons of God, children of God.”

Now there’s a foolish dream in our day concerning the Fatherhood of God; it is a dream that God is the Father of all creation and all creatures, that all men are the children of God. Now that’s deceitful and that’s gross error. That’s not according to the Scripture and I can show you that in just two or three verses.

Our Lord said: *“If God were your Father you would love me.”* Our Lord encountered those religious Pharisee’s who rebelled against His message and against His ministry and He said, *“You are of your father the devil.”* He said, *“God is not your Father for if He were your Father you would believe me.”*

And then in another Scripture in **John 1:11** the Scripture says: *“He came to His own and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave He this privilege, (this blessed privilege) of becoming sons of God, to them who were born of God.”*

And then another Scripture in **1 John 5:2**, *“By this we know that we are children of God if we love God and keep His commandments.”* *“Behold what manner of love, (what amazing and incredible, unbelieving love), that God hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God.”*

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And this deserves a “*behold*” just as much as any announcement in the Scriptures because it is amazing. John Newton wrote about it when he wrote **Amazing Grace**:

**“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I’m found
I was blind but now I see.”**

I’d like for you to open your Bible to that Scripture that I just read: “*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God.*” And I’d like to take these statements one at a time in the first five or six verses of **1 John 3:1**; (that’s the **epistle of John**).

First of all: “*What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.*” Herein is love; here is real love!

You know, when you ask someone to define love, well they say, “A mother’s love or a father’s love or a brother’s love or a sweetheart’s love.” But here is love, God says; here’s the definition of love, here’s an example of love, and here’s an illustration of love, “*Not that we love Him but that He loved us.*”

It was His love that made Christ our Surety in eternity past before we were ever born, before we ever sinned, before we ever fell. It was His love for us, everlasting love. He said, “*I’ve drawn you with an everlasting love.*”

And then it was His love that sent Christ into the world; “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*”

God loved the world but the world didn’t love God. “*We love Him because He first loved us.*” What manner of love, what immutable love, unchangeable love, everlasting love, infinite love, love that gave His Son, His only begotten well-beloved Son.

It was His love that sent Christ into the world. It was His love that led Him to Calvary’s cross to bear our sins in His body on the tree. It was His love. “*Christ loved His own and having loved His own He loved them to the end,*” even to the death of Calvary’s cross. It was His love that led Him to that cross.

And it was His love that kept us in His favor and in His providence, and under His protective hand, even while we served other gods. It was His love that kept Saul of Tarsus, even on his road to persecution and blasphemy. It was His love that restrains you and kept you and protected you and provided for you until God brought you to a knowledge of Himself. It was not your love for Him it was His love for you.

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It was His love one day that awakened us from our dark state and from our lost estate and awakened us from our rebellion and revealed Christ to our hearts and brought us to cry, “*Lord; be merciful to me a sinner.*”

Our love is in response to His. His love is first. We seek Him because He first sought us. We call on God because God has called on us. “*We love Him because He first loved us.*” It was His love for me that nailed Him to the tree to die in agony for all my sins.

**“Was ever love so strong?
Was ever crime so wrong?
That Jesus suffered long
For all my sins.”**

That’s the way John opens that third chapter: “*Behold, (incredible, amazing) what manner of love,*” what infinite love, what unexplainable love, what indescribable love, that God could make us His children, that God should so love us.

“*That we should be called sons of God,*” sons of God, with all our infirmities; think of it, with all our iniquities; think about those, with all our sins and our thoughts we are right now sons of God.

That’s what he’s saying. It’s not some future promise or future work but a present possession. He says, “*We are now the sons of God. Behold what manner of love God hath bestowed upon us that we can be called the sons of God.*”

Verse 2: “*Beloved; now, right now, are we the sons of God.*” We are the sons of God how?

First of all: We are sons of God by divine adoption.

In **Ephesians Chapter 1:5** the Scripture says: “*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His own will.*” It pleased God to make you His people. It pleased God to make you His children.

Our God has come to the orphans of sin and He has come with the legal papers of justification and the parental rights, purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ, and cleared through the courts of glory, and He has adopted us into His family.

We are the sons of God by divine adoption. God has chosen us. God has elected us. God has made us His children, “*According to the good pleasure of His own will.*” Amazing, incredible! God has visited this orphan’s home in this world and chose us to be His children.

Secondly: And then we are sons of God by regenerating power!

In **John 1:12** it says, “*To as to many as received Him, to them gave He the right, (the privilege) to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born, not of blood.*”

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See, we didn't inherit this. We didn't receive this blessing from our parents. The only thing we inherited from our parents was sin. Adam begat a sinful son and on down the line but we have been adopted by God and brought into God's family and made sons, "*Not by blood, not by the will of the flesh, (not because we volunteered) not because of the will of man, but we were born of God.*"

Thirdly: And not only did God adopt us and make us His children by divine adoption but He made us His children by regenerating power; we were born again; we were born the first time of the flesh and the second time of the Holy Spirit.

Now you know we can adopt children. I could go down to the orphan's home and if the courts would let me I could adopt a son or a daughter. There's no way that I could give that son or daughter my nature, no way.

Now if I beget a child, my wife gives birth to a child, that child will look like me or have some habits like mine or personality traits or characteristics or it'll have my nature because it's my son or daughter.

But when you adopt a child that's somebody else's child that you've taken into your home, made your own. What a blessed event, what a blessing, what a wonderful thing to do.

But God adopts His children and also regenerates them and gives them His nature. He begets in us a new nature, a new spirit. He gives us His divine nature, so that His children take on His personality and take on His characteristics, and take on His nature, those that are adopted. They are also regenerated.

Fourthly: Then we are sons of God by the indwelling Spirit!

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:14**, "*As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God, as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the Sons of God and you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear but you have received a spirit of adoption whereby you cry my Father, my Father.*"

Yes now are we sons of God. And being sons of God, being children of God, then we are heirs of God.

Now your children are your heirs, even your adopted children. All of them who are born into your family or adopted into your family, they become your heirs. And we having been adopted into the family of God and made children of God by Jesus Christ; "*We are heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ.*"

Read on: "*Behold, what manner of love, (what amazing and incredible love) that we should be called sons of God.*" And now are we sons of God, right now, we are heirs of God.

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He says, in **verse 2**: “*And beloved, it doth not yet appear what we shall be but when He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.*” I don’t need to tell you this; for you already know it, but we’re still in the flesh. We’re still human aren’t we; we’re still human beings. As our Lord was in the flesh, even so, we are in the flesh.

And as the world did not know Him, they do not know us. That’s what the Scripture says: “*The world doth not know us because it knew him not.*” It did not know Him. When they saw Him and they said, “Well who does He think He is?”

“Well, we know Him; He’s from Nazareth. We know His mother. Is this not Jesus the Son of Joseph? Is not this the carpenter? Who does He think He is claiming to be God’s Son? Why He’s not God’s Son; He’s Joseph’s Son and Mary’s Son, and Joses’ brother, and Judas’ brother. We know His sister. Who does He think He is? Well, we know who He is. He’s the carpenter. We know His family. What does He mean He is the Son of God?”

The world didn’t know Him and the world does not know us. And with all of our infirmities and our failures and our faults we don’t look very much like sons of God. And sometimes we don’t act much like sons of God.

And unfortunately, sometimes we don’t feel much like children of God do we? Sometimes doubts fill our own minds. And we see so much in us that is not God-like; isn’t that right? And we don’t sometimes feel that we are sons of God.

But you know, some of the great children of God of past days have felt that way. David mourned God’s absence. He mourned when the heavens seemed to be brass and God didn’t seem to hear.

Old John Newton wrote a hymn:

**“Tis a point I long to know
And oft it gives me anxious thought
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His or am I not?
When I turn my eyes within
All is dark and vain and wild
There’s so much unbelief and so much sin
Can I really call myself God’s child?”**

Yes, by faith in Christ, not by works, not by human righteousness, not by my merit, not my personal inheritance, but by the death of Christ, by the blood of Christ, by the mercy of Christ, by the grace of Christ, by the mediatorial work of Christ, by the power of God’s Spirit; “*now are we the sons of God.*”

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“And it doth not yet appear what we shall be, (not yet).” You can’t look at a believer now and tell what he will be. You can’t look at a believer now and tell what he’s going to be, *“But when He shall appear,”* oh, when He comes back again, when Christ returns to this earth; He’s going to raise our vile bodies.

That’s what He says over in **Philippians chapter 3:21**: *“He shall change our vile bodies”* and they are; they’re vile, they’re flesh. And that’s all they are, from the soles of our feet to the top of our head, they’re flesh.

“And He’s going to change these vile bodies. They are going to be sown in corruption but He’s going to raise them in incorruption. They are going to be sown in weakness and He’ll raise them in power.” They’re going to be sown or buried in shame but He’s going to raise them in glory. And He’s going to make our bodies like unto His glorious body. Yea, *“It doesn’t now appear what we shall be but when He shall appear we’re going to be like Him.”*

Like Him in mind. Yes, *“I know in part”* and I don’t feel like I know very much but then I shall, *“know as I have also been known”* and know that we’re going to be like Him in body.

We’re going to be free from all infirmities and all weaknesses and all sickness, all pain, all disease, and all death, and we’re going to be like Him in soul. We are going to be as holy as He is holy. *“When He shall appear we’re going to be like Him.”*

And someone asked blind Fanny Crosby one time; you know she was blind all of her life, never saw anything, she was always blind. She wrote thousands of great Gospel hymns. And someone asked her one time, “How are you going to know Christ when He appears at the resurrection morning? How are you going to know Him? You’ve always been in darkness and you’ve never seen the light. How are you going to know Christ?”

And she wrote these words:

**“When my life’s work is ended
And I cross the narrow tide
When that bright and glorious morning I shall see
I shall know my Redeemer
When I reach the other side
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.**

**I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
As Redeemed by His side, I shall stand
I shall know Him, I shall know Him
By the print of the nails in His hands.”**

“When He shall appear we are going to be like Him.”

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Now **Verse 3** says: *“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure, every man that hath this hope.”*

Now my friend; I want you to listen to me a moment, redemption and salvation is a whole lot more than just association or affiliation with a religious organization. Salvation and redemption is a whole lot more than just believing some doctrines and keeping the rules of religion and going to church on Sunday and paying your tithes.

This thing of salvation is a living union with a living Lord. That’s what salvation is; *“It’s Christ in you the hope of glory.”* You’re brought into a living relationship with Christ. He’s not just a historical character. He’s not just a God down in a building or reigning in a denomination.

He’s not just a myth or a fable or a fact of theology; He’s a person and He dwells in us. We’re brought into a vine and branch relationship with Him, a head and body relationship, a sheep and shepherd relationship. He walks with us. He lives within us. That’s what salvation is.

And salvation is also to walk in newness of life in submission to a living Lord. Christ’s Word becomes our Word, His commandments, our commandments, His will, and our desire.

And this thing of salvation is to have a blessed hope of someday being like Christ. He that hath this hope that someday he’s going to be like Christ; it’s a living hope. It’s a life changing hope. It’s a blessed hope. It’s a true hope. We’re going to be like Christ.

And the person whose heart beats in this direction, whose mind is turned in this direction, whose soul is desirous of this hope, this reformation and this manifestation; he endeavors to walk with Christ: *“He hungers and thirsts for righteousness.”*

He loves the law of God. He loves the people of God. He loves the fellowship of God. It’s his life. It’s not just an empty religious profession; it’s his life.

Now watch the next verse: And sons of God not only know Christ but they know what sin is. It says in **verse 4**, *“Sin is the transgression of the law.”*

Now sons of God know what sin is. I know the average person. About all the average person thinks about sin is this, it is an offense against their fellow man. That’s what sin is. Sin is doing somebody wrong. Sin is a crime against society. Sin is a violation of a church rule or a church law.

But sons of God know that sin is a transgression of God’s law. David said, *“Against thee and thee only have I sinned.”* Sin has to do with God.

Very few people have confessed their sins. They might have talked to a human about another human or something they did to the third human or against the fourth human but to confess sin is to realize that sin is a transgression of God’s law; it’s an offense against God.

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It's a violation of the perfect mind and perfect will and perfect glory of a perfect God. It has to do with God. It doesn't have to do with violations of human rights; it has to do with violation of divine right.

And that's the reason that some church members think they live without sin is because they don't offend a human being. But sin is against God. And you haven't repented of sin until you've repented toward God.

You haven't mourned over sins until you've mourned apart, not with somebody, but mourned apart personally, individually, for your transgression of the law of God. This knowledge of what sin is; it's a transgression of God's law, His perfect law, the law of the heart, the law of the soul, the law of the mind, the law of the thoughts, the law of the motives.

This is the knowledge that made Isaiah to cry: *"I am a man of unclean lips."* It was this knowledge that made Paul to cry, *"O wretched man that I am."* It was this knowledge that made the righteous Daniel to say, *"My comeliness, (my beauty), hath melted into corruption."*

It was this knowledge that made Job of whom God Himself said; *"He's an upright man"* but it made Job cry, *"I hate myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes."* No matter what my relation is to the society or to people or to government, I have violated God's law.

"Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength," and we don't do it. *"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,"* and we don't do it. God almighty demands a perfect thought and a perfect imagination and a perfect motive. And our motives are not perfect; they are most imperfect. The child of God knows what sin is.

And not only that, but look at the next verse, sons of God know who Christ is and they know what He did and they know why He did it. It says in **verse 5**, *"Now sin is a transgression of God's law, and you know that He was manifested to take away our sins."*

Isn't that good news? Talk about, *"Behold."* *"Behold what manner of love God hath bestowed upon us that we (of all people should) be called sons of God. Now are we the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be but when He shall appear, (when He comes to appear again), we are going to be like Him. We are going to see Him like He is."*

Now we know what sin is and we know what we've done. We've transgressed God's law. But we also know this that Jesus Christ was manifested. He was incarnate; He was God in the flesh. He came down here to this earth to take away sin!

He was manifested, *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief."* He was manifested to take away sin. He took away sin. He put it away. He cast it into the depths of the sea. He blotted out our transgressions. He put them away by the sacrifice of Himself.

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Now watch this: “*And in Him there is no sin.*” You who are in Christ have no sin. Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:22**: “*He reconciled us in the body of His flesh through death to present you holy; unblameable; unreprouvable, (not in the sight of men) in the God of sight.*”

“*He was manifested to take away sin and in Him there is no sin,*” no sin, if you are in Christ!