

1 John Lesson 7 Articles

What we are now is wonderful; but what we shall be is even more wonderful! “We shall be like Him.” This means inheriting a glorified body like His body (Phil. 3:20–21) and sharing in His eternal glory (John 17:24). But the saint who really expects Christ to return will obey His Word and keep his life clean. We shall see Him “as He is,” but we must also “walk as He walked” (see 2:6) and “be righteous even as He is” (3:7). Saints are expected to purify themselves, that is, keep their hearts clean (2 Cor. 7:1).

John gives several reasons why Christ was made manifest: (1) to reveal the Father and enable us to fellowship with Him, 1:2–3; (2) to take away our sins, 3:4–5; (3) to destroy (annul) the works of the devil, 3:8; and (4) to reveal God’s love and bestow God’s life, 4:9. The fact that sin resulted in Christ’s suffering and death ought to be reason enough for the Christian to hate sin and flee from it. John defines sin as transgressing the law. The Christian who abides in Christ (this is the fellowship of chaps. 1–2) will not deliberately break God’s law. Every Christian sins, perhaps without knowing it (Ps. 19:12); but no true Christian will deliberately and repeatedly defy God’s Word and disobey Him. Verse 6 ought to read, “Whosoever abides in Him does not habitually sin.” Ephesians 2:1–3 makes it clear that the unsaved sin constantly because they live in the flesh and for the devil. But the Christian has a new nature within and is no longer Satan’s slave.¹

John includes himself in the promise to the faithful (*schōmen*, “we may be”) as he reveals the twofold benefit of abiding in Christ. Positively, the one who remains true will have confidence before him at his coming. The word “confidence” (*parrēsian*) connotes the absence of fear when speaking. It carries the idea of boldness, openness, freedom, assurance, and courage. John uses the word four times in his epistle. Twice the term is used of the believer’s confidence at the return of Christ (here and in 4:17), and twice John uses the term to refer to the confidence and freedom by which the believer can approach God in prayer (3:21; 5:14). In the immediate context the word describes standing before Christ at the time of his second coming without fear or shame. It is a confidence that stems from a personal, obedient, abiding relationship with the Coming One.

Negatively, abiding in Christ is encouraged so that one will not be ashamed at the time of his coming. The verb translated “be ashamed” (*aischunthōmen*) appears only here in John’s writings. It carries the idea of shrinking back or being separated from God through guilt or shame. One is reminded of the words of Jesus in Mark 8:38: “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (NASB). Those who remain faithful to Christ will not have to withdraw from the Judge in shame or fear. Instead, they can stand with confidence before him at his coming (cf. Heb 9:24–28).²

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 771–772). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

NASB New American Standard Bible

² Akin, D. L. (2001). *1, 2, 3 John* (Vol. 38, pp. 129–130). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.