

SONS OF GOD

1 JOHN 3:1-2 • TV-020B

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1 John 3:1-2

“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. 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.”

I want you to open your Bibles today to the **book of 1 John 3:1**. My subject: **“THE SONS OF GOD.”**

Who calls us sons of God? What’s the nature of the sons of God and how does a man become a son of God?

Now our text begins this way; *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God.”*

Now the text begins with this word *“Behold.”* It’s a word of wonder. It’s a word of amazement, *“Behold.”*

**“Oh what a wonder that Jesus found me
Out in the darkness, no light could I see
He put His strong arms under
Oh what a wonder that Jesus loved me.”**

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Now John's life was a life of wonders. It was a life of amazement. John was with the Master on the Mount of Transfiguration when Elijah and Moses appeared with Christ. He saw the glory of the Son of God.

John witnessed the miracles of Christ. How many blind men He saw regain their sight. How many lame men John saw walk away after having been brought to Christ on beds of misery. They got up and walked away.

He even saw Christ raise the dead. John saw the feeding of the 5,000 with only five loaves and two fishes. He was with the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was at the cross when our Saviour died. He was at the tomb when Christ arose.

He received on the Isle of Patmos the revelation of Jesus Christ when God showed him things that are and things that are to come. Yet, when he opens this precious epistle of love he begins with this statement: *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God."*

Old John Newton said this; he said, "When I get to heaven, (and it might be good for you to listen to this), when I get to heaven three things are going to amaze me; I'm going to see some folks in glory I really didn't expect to see because you see, (I have no insight into the Book of Life). And one of the things that will amaze me and delight me; I'll see many people there I did not expect to see. But he said another thing that will amaze me is that I'm going to miss some folks I thought would be there. They said they would be there. I thought they would be there. But maybe they're among those who said, *'Lord; we preached in your name and cast out devils and performed many wonderful works, to whom Christ said, I never knew you.'*"

But he said, "You know; the thing that will amaze me most is to find myself there. Oh what a wonder." *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, (folks like you and me, that we of all people) should be called the sons of God."*

Thank God, *"He delights to show mercy."* Thank God, *"Christ died for the ungodly."* Thank God, *"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" because "we are the chief of sinners."*

Well, let's look at this now, three things in the message:

First of all: Who calls us sons of God?

"Behold, what manner of love that we should be called the sons of God." Who calls us, *"sons of God?"*

Now you know men take upon themselves names and titles which they don't deserve. I know a lot of folks who've got titles before their names that really don't deserve those titles. They don't deserve them and they're not entitled to them but they choose them and wear them themselves.

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It's one thing to call yourself a, "*son of God*;" it's quite another thing to really be entitled to wear that name. So, who calls us, "*sons of God*?"

Well first of all, the Father himself calls us, "*sons of God*." This is not an honor which is conferred upon you by your church. This is not an honor that's conferred upon you by your organization.

This is not an honor which you confer upon yourself but the Father calls us, "*His sons*." Listen; in **2 Corinthians 6:18**; He says, "*I'll be a Father unto you and you shall be my sons and daughters*; (here's the key) *saith the Lord God almighty*." Who said that, "*the Lord God almighty*?"

Who calls us, "*sons of God*?" Well, not only the Father but Christ calls us, "*sons of God*." His disciples said to Him one day; "*Lord teach us to pray*." And He said, "*When you pray say; listen, our Father which art in heaven*." Now Christ would have never instructed you to call God a Father if you were not God's son.

And then He said to His disciples one day; "*I go to my Father and your Father*." And then He said in Hebrews, "*He's not ashamed to call us brethren*." Who calls us, "*sons of God*?" The Father does and the Son does. We are entitled to this name because He gives it to us.

And then who else calls us, "*sons of God*?" Watch this in **Romans 8:16**, "*the Holy Spirit*." It says, "*The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God*," lifted from the dunghill and seated on the throne, strangers, aliens, from the commonwealth of Israel, enemies of God and now adopted into the family of God and made sons forever.

"*What manner of love*," that we should be called by the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, sons of God. It's undeserved love; I'll tell you that because we didn't love Him.

The Scripture says, "*Herein is love, not that we love God, but He loved us and gave himself for us*." And I'll tell you this, It's an everlasting love. "*I've drawn you with an eternal love. And having loved His own He loved them to the end, even to the death of the cross*."

And it's an infinite love. "Preacher, can you describe the love of God, the depth of it, the height of it, and the glory of it?" I think I can in one verse of Scripture:

"*For God so loved the world that He gave His Son. Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends*." What about his enemies? "*And God commended His love toward us in that while we were sinners, (enemies) Christ died for us*."

And then it's a divine love; "Oh love of God How rich, how pure." The deepest human love is impure. The greatest human love is impure. But God's love is pure.

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And someone said that this verse of this song was found on the wall of an insane asylum. I can't vouch for that but this is the tradition, this is what is told that this verse that I'm about to quote to you was found written on the wall of an asylum and this is what it says:

**“Could we within the ocean fill?
And where the skies of parchment made
Where every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade**

**To write the love of God above
Would drain that ocean dry
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky**

**Oh love of God, how rich, how pure
How measureless, how strong
It shall forever more endure
The saint's and angel's song.”**

“Behold,” no wonder; John knew himself. Do you know yourself? John knew the depths of his iniquity. Do you know anything about it? Could you cry with Paul, *“Oh the exceeding sinfulness of sin?”*

Could you say with the apostle, *“O wretched man that I am?”* Can you explain with Isaiah, *“I am a man of unclean lips?”* Can you say with Job, *“I've heard of thee Lord; now mine eyes seeth thee, wherefore, I hate myself.”*

If you can, then you know something about the *“Behold, what manner of love God hath bestowed upon us that we should be called sons of God.”* And I'll tell you, if you ever get a grasp on those two things, the infinite love of God and the sinfulness of sin, you'll never lightly use that term again, *“sons of God.”*

Secondly: Let's look at the nature of the sons of God!

Now that's the name, *“sons of God,”* but the nature. Now my friends, adoption; adoption gives us the name, *“son of God.”* But the new birth gives us the nature of sons of God. Adoption is the legal act by which the Father receives us into His family. Regeneration is that spiritual work by which we receive the nature of God, the nature of our heavenly Father.

Now man; listen to me, and I wouldn't offend you, but I want to be truthful with you and with myself. A man has no right to wear the name, *“son of God”* who does not, to some degree, have the nature of a Son of God.

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Do you see what I'm saying? I'm saying, "*Let a man examine himself.*" Let this preacher examine himself and all of you who are listening to me who are professing Christians and Church members; you examine yourself.

It's one thing to wear the names, "*Son of God*" but you have no right to call yourself a, "*son of God*" if you don't have the nature of a "*Son of God.*"

I read today in the paper about two preachers in Washington who had swindled the government out of thousands and thousands of dollars. They were called, "Reverends." They called themselves, "sons of God." They call themselves, "Christians."

There's nothing, "Christian" about those men; they're not sons of God. You can't claim the nature of a Son of God, the name Son of God, if you don't have the nature of a Son of God.

Listen to these Scriptures. Now these Scriptures are unanswerable. Let's turn to several Scriptures that talks about sons of God and who are they are and what they're like. Let's see if I'm one and see if you're one.

In **John 1:12** it says this; listen, "*To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become sons of God.*" That's the first one. Let me ask myself, "Have I really received Christ?"

It doesn't say, "As many as received His church or His law or His benefits or as many is willing to receive heaven at His hands; it says, "*as many as received Him, (Him, as my prophet to teach me about God, as my Priest to offer a sacrifice for my sin, as my King to reign over me).*"

My friends, the Bible knows nothing about, "A doormat named Jesus." The Bible knows nothing about, "A fire escape from hell named Jesus." The Bible knows something about a living Lord who is called Jesus, His name of humiliation who came into this world to bear our sins. "*Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sin.*"

He is the Lord Jesus. Have you received Him? Have you bowed to Him? I know a lot of people would like to receive His benefits, maybe even His laws, maybe even His organization, but how about Him?

Second: Am I a son of God? Listen to what it says in **Romans 8:14**: "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*" Am I truly led by the Spirit, led in my life, led in my walk, led in my conversation, led in my attitude by the spirit of God?

You'll find not I've got no right to wear the name. Am I led by the Spirit of God or the spirit of self or the spirit of flesh or the spirits of this world or the spirit of Satan? My friends, there are a lot of spirits in this world. In fact the Bible tells us to, "*Try the spirits whether they be of God.*"

And the spirit of anti-Christ is so strong that God says, "*If it were possible he would deceive the very elect, as many as are led by the Spirit of God.*" Where does the Spirit of God lead? Listen

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to me; the Spirit of God leads us to the person of Christ, to His blood, to His cross, to His righteousness.

No man who is led by the Spirit of God can call Jesus Christ accursed. No man can call Him Lord but by the Spirit of God, it says. The Spirit of God leads us to Christ. Our Lord said, *“When He is come the Spirit of truth, He won’t speak of himself. He’s not going to glorify himself. He’s going to glorify me.”*

Where does the Spirit of God lead? It leads us into the presence of God. It’ll lead a man to the house of God. It’ll lead a man to worship. He’ll lead a man to prayer. He’ll lead a man to communion with God. That’s where the Spirit of God leads.

Am I led by the spirit of God? He won’t lead you away from the house of God on the Lord’s Day; He’ll lead you to it. David said, *“I was glad when they said to me; let’s go to the house of the Lord.”*

Who do you suppose said that to him, the Spirit of God? The Spirit of God leads a man to the truth of the Gospel. The Spirit of God is not the spirit of error; He’s the spirit of truth. And when He’s come *“He’ll guide you unto all truth.”* The Holy Spirit is our teacher.

People will read the Bible and they’ll say, “Well this is what I think.” Well, *“My thoughts are not God’s thoughts and my ways are not God’s ways.”* I must subject my thoughts to His Word, not His Word to my thoughts.

“This is what I think it means.” No; what does it mean and then I’ll think? I’ll think the way it teaches me. It’ll change my thoughts. The Spirit of God leads a man to the truth, to tell the truth about his sins.

He said, *“If we say we have no sin we’re liars and the truths not in us. If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves. If we say we have not sin we make God a liar.”*

Now a man who is led by the Holy Spirit is not going to call God a liar. A man who is led by the Holy Spirit is not going to be deceived. The Holy Spirit leads a man to a spirit of humility, not pride.

We see so much pride. And pride is not only out yonder in the world; it’s in the church, people who are proud of their race and proud of their face and proud of their place and even proud of grace.

Some of the worse places in the world for human pride are nowhere in the world but in religious circles. God’s not in that. Paul said, *“I’m lest than the least of all the saints.”* Paul says, *“I’m the chief of sinners.”*

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“Look not on your own things but on the things of others.” The Spirit of God leads a man to bear fruit. *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, kindness, generosity and humility”* and these are the fruits of the Spirit.

Now let’s ask ourselves this question, “Am I a son of God?” I can go around here talking about being a Christian and making professions of faith and going to heaven when I die but am I a son of God? *“As many as are led by the Holy Spirit; they are the sons of God,”* nobody else.

And then watch **Philippians 2:14**; now listen to this: *“Do all things without murmuring and disputing* (and the amplified version says, complaining against God) *that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God.”*

Brethren, I tell you, we are living in a world of greed. We’re living in a world of murmuring. We’re living in a world of complaints. We’re living in a world of covetousness. It prevails all around us. Are you different? *“Do you have the peace of God that passeth understanding? Thou wilt keep him,* (the Word of God says) *in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.”*

Can you face trials and difficulties with peace in your heart? Do you have that rest and that joy and that thanksgiving in your soul or are you like the murmuring Israelites in the wilderness to whom God sent the fiery serpents?

“Do all things without complaining (and arguing and disputing and murmuring) *that you may be harmless, blameless, what, sons of God.”* That is how the sons of God act. The King’s sons, all of them know that everything’s in the King’s hands and everything’s going to work out for his glory and their good. Therefore, they are at peace.

And then watch this, **1 Peter 1:14**; listen to this; *“As obedient children, as He who has called you is holy, so be ye holy.”*

Now I’m not going to stand up here in front of this camera and claim to be perfect; I’m not and you’re not. Somebody said to Mr. Spurgeon one time; they said, “If God would give you anything you want then what would you ask for?”

He surprised them. They thought he’d ask for great wisdom, great knowledge like Solomon. They thought he’d ask for great wealth and great power. He said, “I’d ask God to make me like Christ, perfect and holy because he says that’s my goal; *“I’ll be satisfied when I wake with His likeness.”*

Well, I don’t have His likeness yet. But I’m saying this; if we are sons of God, the nature of God, the nature of honesty, the nature of integrity, the nature of truth, the nature of righteousness dwelleth in us.

And we will live by His grace a life of good report both from within the church and without the church. And we will seek to make as our motto, the rule which Christ laid down for His disciples, *“As you would that men should do to you; do you even so unto them.”*

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1 John 3:10; now listen to this Scripture, now this is so clear: *“In this, the children of God are manifested, (are revealed, are known) and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother”* what’s that saying, that’s saying if we can’t love one another we are not children of God.

A man who stands in the pulpit or who sits in the seat of elder, deacon, steward, or whatever office he occupies in the church or however long he’s been there, sings in the choir, plays the instruments, leads the singing, if he is a person who carries in his heart hatred and malice against others he is not a son of God.

It doesn’t matter who it is. Let me be perfectly honest with you. *“He that loveth not knoweth not God.”*

Now, whether you hate your neighbor or whether you hate some other nationality or whether you hate some other denomination or whether you hate your next door neighbor or maybe one of your in-laws or relatives you don’t know God because hatred and Christ cannot dwell in the same house. And where hate reigns Christ doesn’t reign. How can we love God then?

John said, **1 John 4:20**; *“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”*

**“Lord, do you have a lamb in all your flock
That I would wish to flay?”**

**Lord, do you have a man in all the world
For whom I cannot pray?”**

Do you know the Bible teaches us to pray that God would forgive us and we forgive others? And He said, *“If you forgive not others their trespasses, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”*

And then here’s the last one, **Hebrews 3:6**; *“Christ is a Son over His house whose house we are if we hold fast our confidence and rejoicing of hope (profession, our faith) firm unto the end to the end.”*

Let me tell you something; you people who talk about being eternally secure and the eternal security of the believer; you rest on the fact that you have made a profession, you joined the church, you’re saved, you can never be lost no matter what you do, well you’re wrong.

And you people who claim that you can be in the kingdom of God today and lost tomorrow, you can be in Christ today and out of Christ tomorrow, you’re wrong too. That’s right, both of you are wrong.

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The Word of God doesn't teach either one of those. Here's what the Word of God teaches; it teaches a two-fold, a two-fold situation. It teaches that the saints will persevere and it teaches that Christ will preserve them. *"We are kept by the power of God through faith."*

That's what he's saying here. John said, **1 John 2:19**; *"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."*

They would have held onto faith. They would have continued in faith. They would have persevered, not only that, but God would have kept them. God would have given them the will. God would have given them the grace and God would have given them the power.

Job said, *"Though He slay me I'll trust Him."* Oh yea, the way may become dark but quit, never, by His grace. The burden may become heavy, but lay it down, never, by His grace. The trial may be severe but desert from God's army, never, by His grace.

The heavens may be brass when I cry but cease to cry, cease to call, never, by His grace. The night may be lonely but thank God I know, *"Joy cometh in the morning."*

So, all of these folks out here arguing, "Do you believe in once saved always saved, the eternal security of the believer, the preservation of the saints?" They've got a one-sided, lop-sided truth which becomes error.

And the folks out here arguing, "You can come down the aisle and join the church today and be in Christ and then out in the world and lost tomorrow;" they've got a lop-sided error. Neither one of those positions are true.

The real position is this, *"We're kept by the power of God through faith."* The saints will persevere and that which God does is forever. He will keep His own. He said, *"My sheep hear my voice and they follow me. And I give them eternal life and they shall never perish."* And it says in the Word of God, *"We shall never depart from Him."*

Now last of all, how do men become sons of God? It says, *"To as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born not of blood."*

That is, I didn't inherit it from my father. I inherited my black hair, my blue eyes, and my particular stature from my father, some of my ways, but not salvation, *"Not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but we're born of God."* That's how we become the sons of God, we're born of God.

How did I become a son of my first father; he begat me; I was conceived in my mother's womb by my father. And the Scripture says, *"Of His own will God begat us through the word of truth."*

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It's a supernatural birth. It's the work of God. *"We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus."*

I know people say today they've reduced it down to walking down an aisle. If you want to be a son of God get up from where you sit, walk down an aisle, shake the preacher's hand, join the church and automatically you're a son of God. That's not how God's sons are born; they're born of the Spirit. They're born of the Word. They're born by the power of God. They're regenerated. They're quickened. They're begotten into the family of God.

How does God bring a man into His family? He gives him a revelation of his sin, a revelation of his Saviour in all of his sufficiency and a revelation of total commitment by faith! By a revelation from God!