

Children of God

1 John 2:28-3:10

God's Child Considers Jesus' Second Coming

1. Who are the "children of God?"¹

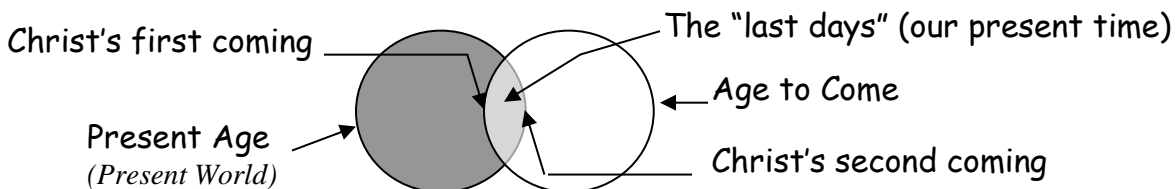
📖 "Yet to all who did receive [Jesus Christ], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." (*John 1:12-13, NIV*)

2. Read 1 John 2:28-3:3. Jesus will come again (personally, visibly, physically)² to judge the world, complete his redeeming/saving work, and establish his kingdom. As we consider Jesus' future return, how should it affect us today? How should being a "child of God" affect our attitudes and actions?

Purpose. The "new self" was "created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (*Ephesians 4:24*). The child of God is "predestined to be conformed to the image of [God's] Son" (*Romans 8:29*).

Process. "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate (or reflect) the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (*2 Corinthians 3:18, NIV*).

Perfection. When we meet the Lord, he will "transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (*Philippians 3:21*).



Reflection/Application

- Are you a "child of God?" Are you prepared for the Lord's second coming? (Consider Matthew 24:36-25:46.) Are you looking toward his coming? (*2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:11-14*) How does his promised coming affect *your* daily attitudes and actions?

¹ All humans are God's 'offspring' in the sense that God made us all, and we are all one race (*Acts 17:28*). However, the Bible uses 'children of God' to refer to those who have entered into God's family in a spiritual sense.

² The phrases 'when he appears' and 'at his coming' refer to Jesus' 'second coming.' Also see Matthew 26:64; John 14:3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

God's Child Considers Jesus' First Coming

Read 1 John 3:4-6.³ In general, both “lawlessness” and “sin” refer to the rejection of God’s will, or opposition to God’s will. The person who practices sin is rebelling against (or opposing) God himself. However, Jesus Christ (the only human without sin) came to take away our sins, which provided the way to be united with him. Those who’ve been truly united with him through faith (thus brought into a relationship with God) will *not* “keep on sinning.”⁴

📖 “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (*John 1:29, NIV*) “He committed no sin ... He himself bore our sins ...” (*1 Peter 2:22, 24*). “...so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many...” (*Hebrews 9:28*).

Child of Whom?

3. Read 1 John 3:7-10. John talks about two categories of people: (1) the children of God, and (2) the children of the devil.⁵ What are differences between the people in these categories?



4. How is a person “born of God?” (*John 1:12-13; 1 John 5:1*)⁶
5. Verse 9 says, “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.” How does “God’s seed”⁷ keep a person from continuing to sin? What can we do to help “God’s seed” to “grow” in our lives so we can reflect and honor our heavenly Father?

Reflection/Application

- Are you a “child of God?” Do you need to become God’s child through faith in Jesus?
- If you are a “child of God,” is it evident in your attitudes and actions? Make a specific commitment to cultivate (help to grow) “God’s seed” in you, according to His grace.

³ The ESV translates v. 4: ‘Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.’

⁴ There have been various interpretations of 1 John 3:4-9 concerning the Christian’s ability to sin. For a good discussion, see John Stott’s commentary, pages 134-140 (Tyndale). The most common interpretation is reflected in the NIV and ESV translations, which understand ‘sin’ in verses 6 and 9 to be habitual and persistent sin.

⁵ ‘devil’ – the fallen angelic creature who leads in the opposition to God and his purposes. Jesus said to the Jews who opposed him, ‘If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God... You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires’ (*John 8:42-43*).

⁶ ‘Doing what is right’ is evidence that we are God’s children (3:7), but we *become* God’s children by God’s grace through faith, *not* by our good behavior (*John 1:12-13, Ephesians 2:8-9*).

⁷ ‘God’s seed (*sperma*)’ is interpreted in various ways, including the divine nature or principle (*2 Peter 1:4*), ‘God’s life’ (*NLT*), the indwelling Holy Spirit in his regenerating and transforming presence, and God’s word (*1 Peter 1:23*). By the new birth, God implants in us His life, truth and power, which results in deep, inward transformation