

SERIES: I JOHN: HOW TO KNOW YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, WEEK 12

TITLE: NEW YEAR'S HOPE

TEXT: I JOHN 2:28-3:3

INTRODUCTION: (1) EACH NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW HOPE TO MANY IN OUR WORLD.

* NEW HOPE OF A BETTER ECONOMY FOR SOME.

** NEW HOPE OF PEACE IN OUR WORLD FOR OTHERS.

*** NEW HOPE OF LESS PAIN BOTH PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY FOR MANY.

**** NEW HOPE FOR RECONCILIATION BETWEEN ESTRANGED PEOPLE.

(2) NEW HOPE FOR GOOD HEALTH FOR SOME OR MAYBE TO LOSE WEIGHT.

* AND IN SUMMARY, JUST NEW HOPE FOR A BETTER YEAR THAN 2010.

** AND THERE IS SOMETHING FRESH ABOUT A NEW YEAR, A NEW START, A FRESH COAT OF PAINT, A NEW OUTLOOK, A NEW PAGE TO TURN IN LIFE.

*** BUT FOR MANY IN OUR WORLD TODAY THAT ARE LOOKING FOR NEW HOPE IN 2011, THEIR HOPE IS THE HOPE OF POSSIBILITY, I HOPE SO, MAYBE, I'LL KEEP MY FINGERS CROSSED, NOTHING CERTAIN.

**** YET, FOR THE CHRISTIAN IN 2011 AND ALWAYS AND FOREVER, WHEN THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF HOPE, IT REFERS TO SOMETHING IN THE FUTURE THAT IS CERTAIN, WITH NO UNCERTAINTY.

(3) THE WORD AND TRUTH OF HOPE IN THE BIBLE IS LOADED WITH POP, WITH PUNCH, UNLIKE IT'S MEANING IN OUR ENGLISH LANGUAGE WHICH CONVEYS A WISHFUL DESIRE THAT MAY OR MAY NOT BE FULFILLED.

* BUT IN CONTRAST AGAIN, IN THE BIBLE, HOPE IS A BELIEF IN AN ABSOLUTE, FIXED CERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE, A CONFIDENT ASSURANCE ABOUT TOMORROW.

** AND ALTHOUGH THERE IS CERTAINTY IN BIBLICAL HOPE, THE HOPE MAY NOT BE REALIZED.

*** FOR EXAMPLE WE HAVE SURE HOPE THAT JESUS WILL RETURN, THAT IS A CERTAINTY ONE DAY BECAUSE GOD'S WORD PROMISES IT.

**** BUT THAT HOPE MAY NOT BE REALIZED THIS YEAR. BUT IT IS STILL A SURE HOPE, A CERTAINTY THAT WILL HAPPEN, MORE THAN A WISH.

(4) AND FOR EVERY TRUE BELIEVER, A NEW YEAR'S HOPE THAT ALL OF US SHOULD HAVE IS THAT JESUS WILL RETURN IN 2011, MAYBE TODAY.

* FOR AS WE GRASP THE HOPE OF CHRIST'S RETURN, IT WILL SURELY GRIP OUR HEARTS. IT WILL PURIFY US AND SET US APART FROM OUR EVIL WORLD.

** IT IS TO SAY THE REALITY AND FACT THAT CHRIST WILL RETURN ONE DAY SHOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR BEHAVIOR.

*** AND KNOWING THAT JESUS WILL RETURN WILL MOTIVATE US JUST AS A BRIDE WANTS TO LOOK HER BEST ON HER WEDDING DAY FOR HER HUSBAND.

**** I MEAN THE WEDDING DAY IS CIRCLED IN RED ON THE CALENDAR, IT IS THE BIG DAY. MONTHS OF PLANNING AND PREPARATION GO INTO THAT DAY. IT'S A DAY OF GREAT ANTICIPATION.

* AND THE LAST THING A BRIDE WANTS TO DO IS LOOK BAD ON HER WEDDING DAY. I MEAN SHE DOESN'T WANT TO WALK DOWN THE AISLE IN A DIRTY, TORN AND TATTERED DRESS.

** SHE DOESN'T COME IN WITH HER HAIR MESSED UP. HER VEIL IS NOT TORN. SHE PUTS ON HER BEST PERFUME, AND DOESN'T WALK DOWN THE AISLE WITH NO DEODORANT ON.

*** WHY? SHE WANTS TO LOOK AND SMELL HER BEST FOR HER SOON TO BE HUSBAND, THE ONE SHE LOVES.

**** AND THAT WORK AND PREPARATION IS FOR THE BIG EVENT. AND TO ARRIVE AT THAT DAY UNPREPARED WOULD BE TO INDICATE THAT SHE REALLY DOESN'T CARE A WHOLE LOT ABOUT THE DAY AND THAT HER LOVE IS WANING FOR HER SOON TO BE HUSBAND.

(5) BEING UNPREPARED IS AN INDICATION THAT TRUE LOVE FOR THE OTHER PERSON IS MISSING, FOR LOVE STIRS THE HEART TO PREPARE FOR ONE'S BELOVED.

* WELL, LIKEWISE, CHRIST IS OUR BELOVED, AND WE SHOULD WANT TO BE AT OUR BEST, IN ESSENCE TO LOOK AND SMELL OUR BEST WHEN HE ARRIVES, TO BE LIVING AND LOVING HIM FOR HE FIRST LOVED US, AND HE CHOSE US OUT OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD TO BE HIS BRIDE.

** AND WE SHOULD LIVE IN HOPE AND ANTICIPATION FOR THE DAY WE CAN BE FOREVER WITH OUR BRIDEGROOM. AND IT SHOULD HAVE A PURIFYING EFFECT, A LIFE CHANGING EFFECT UPON US.

*** WE SHOULD BE LOOKING FORWARD TO HIS RETURN.

**** JOHN CALVIN SAID AND I QUOTE: “IF WE DO NOT ARDENTLY LOOK FORWARD TO THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, WE HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.” (END QUOTE)

***** SO A NEW YEAR’S HOPE FOR US THAT ARE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST IS THAT HE WOULD RETURN IN 2011, OR THAT OUR DESIRE AND LOVE FOR HIM WOULD GROW TO THE DEGREE WHERE WE WANT HIM TO RETURN MORE THAN WE DID IN 2010.

(6) AND IN LIGHT OF THAT, I’VE TITLED MY FIRST SERMON FOR 2011, NEW YEAR’S HOPE.

* FOR HOPE AND THE 2’D COMING OF CHRIST AND RIGHTEOUS HOLY LIVING ARE A THEME OF OUR TEXT TODAY TO THE PLACE THAT OUR HOPE OF CHRIST’S RETURN HAS A PURIFYING EFFECT ON OUR LIVES.

** AND UNDER THE THEME OF NEW YEAR'S HOPE WE'LL LOOK AT 5 THINGS AS WE WORK THROUGH I JOHN 2:28-3:3.

*** NO. 1 THE RETURN OF CHRIST, V. 28; NO. 2 THE REFLECTION OF CHRIST THAT SHOULD BE SEEN IN THE LIVES THAT HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN, V. 29; NO. 3 THE REALITY OF GOD'S LOVE, V. 1; NO. 4 THE RENOVATION THAT WILL TAKE PLACE IN OUR LIVES WHEN WE SEE CHRIST, V. 2; AND NO. 5 THE REFINING THAT SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN OUR LIVES AS THE RESULT OF OUR HOPE OF CHRIST'S RETURN, V. 3.

**** SO WE'LL LOOK AT THE RETURN, THE REFLECTION, THE REALITY, THE RENOVATION AND THE REFINING UNDER THE TITLE OF NEW YEAR'S HOPE.

(7) AND WITH THAT OUTLINE AS OUR SPIRITUAL GPS, LET'S LOOK AT OUR FIRST POINT TODAY, THE RETURN. LOOK AT CHAPTER 2 VERSE 28 PLEASE.

I. THE RETURN, (READ V. 28)

A. TO BEGIN WITH, THE WORD NOW INTRODUCES A NEW SECTION IN JOHN'S WRITING TO THE CHURCHES IN ASIA MINOR AND CLEARLY INDICATES A PARAGRAPH BREAK FROM V. 27.

*** AND THAT PARAGRAPH OF THOUGHT WILL END WITH CHAPTER 3 VERSE 3. THUS YOU CAN SEE WHY I AM DOING THESE VERSES TOGETHER TODAY, WHICH ALSO INDICATES THAT CHAPTER 3 SHOULD PROBABLY START AT V. 28 OF CHAPTER 2.**

**** AND I'M NOT BEING SACRILEGIOUS HERE FOR MOST OF YOU REALIZE THAT CHAPTER DIVISIONS WERE ADDED LATER ON TO SCRIPTURE AND ARE NOT INSPIRED LIKE THE SCRIPTURES ARE INSPIRED AND PERFECT.**

***** SO JOHN BEGINS A NEW SECTION IN I JOHN, A NEW PARAGRAPH IN V. 28 AND USES THE WONDERFUL LOVING PASTORAL TERM TO BEGIN WITH IN THIS NEW SECTION, LITTLE CHILDREN TO ADDRESS THESE BELIEVERS IN THE CHURCHES.**

****** REMEMBER JOHN IS OLDER AT THIS TIME, AND IN FATHERLY PASTOR CARE ADDRESSES THEM WITH THIS TENDER PHRASE, LITTLE CHILDREN.**

1. NOW AFTER THAT, HE GIVES HIS LITTLE CHILDREN A COMMAND, FOR THE VERB ABIDE IS IN THE IMPERATIVE MOOD IN THE GREEK.

*** AND THE COMMAND IS TO ABIDE IN HIM, TO ABIDE IN CHRIST, AND WE KNOW THAT HIM IS CHRIST FOR JOHN**

WILL MAKE REFERENCE TO WHEN HE – CHRIST APPEARS.

**** NOW THE WORD ABIDE LIT. MEANS TO REMAIN, TO STAY, TO CONTINUE IN.**

***** SO THE COMMAND HERE IS TO PERSEVERE IN THE FAITH, TO GROW IN THE FAITH, TO SUSTAIN THEIR FAITH, TO KEEP ON ABIDING IN CHRIST.**

****** AND ABIDING IN CHRIST IS AN EVIDENCE THAT SALVATION IS REAL. AND THAT MEANS THE PATTERN OF A TRUE BELIEVER IS TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, TO GROW IN THE FAITH AND PERSEVERE IN THE FAITH.**

2. TO ABIDE IN CHRIST MEANS THAT ONE HAS TRULY RECEIVED CHRIST AND IS RESTING IN HIS GRACE, RELYING UPON HIS POWER AND WALKING WITH CHRIST ON A CONSISTENT BASIS.

*** AND A BRANCH ABIDES IN THE VINE, AS JESUS ILLUSTRATES IN JOHN 15 IN THE TRUTH OF ABIDING IN HIM, SO TRUE BELIEVERS RELY UPON CHRIST AND REMAIN CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH HIM.**

**** AND ALTHOUGH THEY MAY GIVE THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF STARTING WELL, COUNTERFEIT**

BELIEVERS AND FALSE TEACHERS WILL EVENTUALLY FALL AWAY AND RETURN TO THEIR PREVIOUS WORLDLINESS.

***** THEREFORE ABIDING IN CHRIST PRODUCES ASSURANCE AND THAT WE TRULY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE AND ARE CHRIST'S.**

****** AND SO THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING, WHEN I TALK ABOUT TRUE SAINTS PERSEVERING I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT THEIR HOLDING ON TO THEIR SALVATION, THAT THEY ARE WORKING TO BE SAVED. NO.**

3. FOR THE BIBLE TEACHES THE COMPLIMENTARY TRUTHS THAT TRUE BELIEVERS WILL PERSEVERE IN THEIR FAITH, AND THAT GOD WILL KEEP THEM ETERNALLY SECURE WITHOUT QUESTION, THE LORD SECURELY AND TIGHTLY HOLDS ONTO US AND WILL NOT LET US GO AFTER HE SOVEREIGNLY SAVES US.

*** BUT THAT WONDERFUL ASSURING TRUTH DOES NOT NEGATE NOR ABSOLVE TRUE CHRISTIANS FROM THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PERSEVERE IN THEIR FAITH AND ABIDE IN CHRIST.**

**** WITH THAT SAID AS WE MOVE ON IN V. 28, WHEN CHRIST APPEARS, WHEN HE COMES IN THE AIR FOR HIS BRIDE IN I THESSALONIANS 4:13-18, AND I CORINTHIANS**

15:51-57, THE RAPTURE, TRUE SAINTS WILL HAVE CONFIDENCE, ASSURANCE AND NOT SHRINK AWAY FROM HIM, THEY WILL NOT BE ASHAMED AT HIS COMING.

***** AND JOHN INCLUDES HIMSELF HERE, THAT WE MAY HAVE CONFIDENCE AND NOT SHRINK AWAY IN SHAME AT HIS COMING.**

****** AND BELOVED UNDERSTAND, AT THE TIME OF CHRIST'S RETURN IN THE AIR, THERE WILL BE SEPARATION OF TRUE BELIEVERS FROM MAKE-BELIEVERS. SHEEP WILL BE TAKEN AND GOATS WILL BE LEFT BEHIND.**

4. BUT FOR THE TRUE BELIEVER WHO ABIDES IN CHRIST, THERE WILL BE CONFIDENCE, AND THE WORD CONFIDENCE HERE COMMUNICATES AN ASSURANCE DEFINED FROM A SANCTIFIED LIFE OF ABIDING IN CHRIST.

*** BUT IN CONTRAST, UNBELIEVERS WILL SHRINK AWAY FROM HIM IN SHAME. IN FACT THEY WILL MANIFEST THAT BY THEIR CONTINUED DISOBEDIENCE AND NOT PERSEVERING IN THE FAITH, AND FOR WHAT I CAN SEE, GO ON WITH LIFE UNAFFECTED THAT OTHERS ARE GONE.**

**** THEY ARE ASHAMED OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL BY THEIR DAILY PATTERNS, SO ARE NOT LOOKING FORWARD TO HIS RETURN AND CONTINUE IN THEIR UNRIGHTEOUS LIFESTYLE.**

***** AND THAT THIS IS THE CONTEXT IS CONFIRMED IN V. 29 SO LOOK AT V. 29 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE REFLECTION.**

II. THE REFLECTION, (READ V. 29)

A. NOW A SIMPLE TRUTH IS COMMUNICATED HERE.

*** A CHILD EXHIBITS THE PARENT'S CHARACTER BECAUSE HE SHARES THE PARENT'S NATURE.**

**** TO SAY IT ANOTHER WAY A FAMILY RESEMBLANCE OR LIKENESS IS FOUND IN EVERY FAMILY TO SOME DEGREE AND GOD'S FAMILY IS NO EXCEPTION.**

***** AND WE KNOW THAT CHRIST WAS AND IS RIGHTEOUS, THAT GOD IS ABSOLUTELY RIGHTEOUS. THEREFORE WE KNOW THAT EVERYONE WHO PRACTICES RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHO ABIDES IN CHRIST, IS BORN OF HIM, BORN OF GOD.**

****** AND BELOVED THE TRUTH IS CRYSTAL CLEAR. WE REFLECT OUR FATHER. AND JUST AS CHILDREN TAKE**

ON THE LIKENESS OF THEIR PARENTS, SO GOD'S CHILDREN BEAR THE RESEMBLANCE TO THE ONE WHO BEGOT THEM.

1. AND BELOVED THROUGH THE MIRACLE OF NEW BIRTH, CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUS NATURE IS IMPLANTED WITHIN US AND WE WILL BEGIN TO DISPLAY OUR FATHER'S RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER.

*** AND WHEN CHRIST RETURNS, HE WILL SUMMON ALL THOSE WHO RESEMBLE HIM. WE WILL BE EASY TO DETECT, FOR WE LIVE IN A DIFFERENT WAY AS THE PRACTICE OF OUR LIVES.**

**** AND THUS IN V. 29, JOHN REITERATES THE POINT THAT THOSE WHO HAVE ETERNAL LIFE ARE NOT VERIFIED SO MUCH BY WHAT THEY PROFESS OR CLAIM, BUT BY HOW THEY LIVE.**

***** AND HOW DO TRUE CHILDREN OF THE FAITH LIVE? THEY PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE PATTERN, NOT THE PERFECTION, BUT AS THE PATTERN OF THEIR LIVES.**

****** THEY REFLECT THEIR FATHER'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, THEIR SAVIOR'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. AND WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT POSITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT ALL TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE IN CHRIST. WE ARE DECLARED RIGHTEOUS IN HIM BY FAITH, IN JUSTIFICATION.**

2. BUT HERE IN V. 29 WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT JUSTIFICATION, BUT SANCTIFICATION.

*** AND SANCTIFICATION IS GROWING IN RIGHTEOUS BEHAVIOR. IT IS DOING THE WILL OF GOD MORE AND MORE, OBEYING HIS COMMANDS MORE, AND LOVING HIM AND OTHERS MORE.**

**** AND IN V. 29 WE HAVE EFFECT AND CAUSE. THE CAUSE OF RIGHTEOUS BEHAVIOR IS REGENERATION, THE NEW BIRTH. SO THE CAUSE, NEW BIRTH, THE CAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BRINGS ABOUT THE EFFECT OF RIGHT LIVING.**

***** AND AGAIN WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT PERFECTION, BUT DIRECTION AND DESIRE.**

****** ABIDING IN CHRIST IS A RESULT OF THE NEW BIRTH, BEING BORN OF HIM. WE ACT LIKE OUR FATHER TO A CERTAIN DEGREE AND LOOK FORWARD TO OUR SAVIOR'S COMING MORE AND MORE AND WITH ASSURANCE. WE HAVE CONFIDENCE AND WILL NOT BE ASHAMED AT CHRIST'S APPEARING.**

3. AND GET THIS. THE REASON WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD AND ARE BORN OF GOD, IS BECAUSE OF THE GREAT REALITY OF THE FATHER'S GREAT LOVE FOR US. AND THIS IS BROUGHT FORTH IN CHAPTER 3 VERSE ONE,

WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR THIRD POINT TODAY, THE REALITY. LOOK AT CHAPTER 3 VERSE 1 PLEASE.

III. THE REALITY, (READ 3:1)

A. NOW THE REALITY OF HOW GREAT THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR HIS OWN, FOR HIS CHILDREN THAT ARE BORN OF HIM IS ASTONISHING TO JOHN, IT AMAZES JOHN.

*** IT IS TO SAY, THE MENTION OF BEING BORN OF HIM IN V. 29, LEADS JOHN TO A GREAT OUTBURST OF AWE AND WONDER AT GOD'S LOVE IN MAKING US HIS CHILDREN. IT IS SHOCK AND AWE.**

**** THEREFORE V. 1 HERE CALLS THE CHILD OF GOD TO DROP EVERYTHING AND CONSIDER THE GREAT TRUTH OF THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR US.**

***** HENCE JOHN BEGINS IN V. 1 WITH THE WORD BEHOLD, OR SEE DEPENDING ON WHICH TRANSLATION YOU HAVE, AND THIS VERB IS A COMMAND IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE.**

****** SO DO THIS CHILD OF GOD, BEHOLD, SEE, LOOK AT THIS!**

1. LOOK AT HOW GREAT, SEE HOW GREAT, SEE WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS BESTOWED ON US.

*** AND THE WORDS HOW GREAT OR WHAT MANNER OR WHAT KIND, IN THE GREEK LIT. MEANS “OF WHAT COUNTRY” OR WHAT RACE OR WHAT TRIBE.**

**** AND THIS GREEK WORD SPEAKS OF SOMETHING FOREIGN, MEANING THE LOVE OF GOD FOR HIS ELECT, HIS CHILDREN IS FOREIGN TO US. IT IS NOT NATIVE FOR HUMANS.**

***** IT’S FROM ANOTHER REALM. IT’S AS IF THE FATHER’S LOVE IS SO UNEARTHLY, SO FOREIGN TO THIS WORLD, THAT JOHN WONDERS FROM WHAT COUNTRY IT COMES. IT’S NOT FOUND NATURALLY IN HUMANITY.**

****** SO JOHN IS IN AWE, HE IS ASTONISHED, HE IS AMAZED.**

2. FOR TRULY GOD’S LOVE FOR SINNERS IS OUT OF THIS WORLD, UNDESERVED AND UNSOUGHT AND YET FREELY GIVEN TO THOSE WHOM BY GRACE ARE CHOSEN BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

*** FOR THERE WAS NOTHING FORESEEN IN US THAT ATTRACTED GOD TO US, BUT ACCORDING TO THE KIND PLEASURE OF HIS WILL AND TO THE GLORY OF HIS**

SOVEREIGN GRACE HE FORELOVED US AND FOREORDAINED FOR US TO BECOME HIS CHILDREN.

**** AND THIS PROFOUND AMAZING LOVE OF GOD HAS BEEN LAVISHED ON US. FOR CHILDREN OF GOD HERE IN V. 1 IS NO MERE TITLE, BUT A FACT.**

***** FOR WE ARE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD IN V. 1 AND SUCH WE ARE, JOHN SAYS, THIS IS WHAT WE ARE BY HIS LOVE.**

****** AND SUCH LOVE IS UNEXPLAINABLE IN HUMAN TERMS AND THEREFORE IT IS NOT SURPRISING THEN, THAT THE WORLD DOES NOT KNOW THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS BELOVED CHILDREN, BECAUSE IT DID NOT KNOW HIM.**

3. BELOVED, UNBELIEVERS CANNOT UNDERSTAND US BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW GOD. THE WORLD DOES NOT RECOGNIZE US BECAUSE THEY DO NOT RECOGNIZE GOD.

*** THE CHILDREN OF GOD AND THE WORLD ARE SO DIFFERENT FROM EACH OTHER THAT THE WORLD DOES NOT KNOW US.**

**** AND AGAIN THE REASON FOR THIS IS THEY DO NOT KNOW HIM, THEY DON'T KNOW CHRIST, THEY DON'T KNOW THE FATHER, THEY DON'T KNOW GOD.**

***** AND THE WORLD CAN'T FIGURE US OUT IN THE WAY WE LIVE AS THE CHILDREN OF GOD IN OUR LOVE, OUR FORGIVENESS, OUR OTHER WORLDLINESS BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW GOD OR UNDERSTAND GOD'S GREAT LOVE FOR HIS CHILDREN.**

****** THEY ARE NOT BORN OF GOD, STILL DEAD IN THEIR SINS AND WE AND GOD DON'T MAKE ANY SENSE TO THEM.**

4. AND MOVING ON, IF WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MOTIVATION TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY AND TO LOVE GOD MORE IN 2011, WE HAVE MORE MOTIVATION FOR THE CHILD OF GOD IN THAT, ONE DAY, WE WILL BE COMPLETELY AND TOTALLY CHANGED AND BECOME JUST LIKE CHRIST.

*** THERE IS GOING TO BE FUTURE TRANSFORMATION, COMPLETE RENOVATION. LOOK AT V. 2 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR FOURTH POINT, THE RENOVATION.**

IV. THE RENOVATION, (READ V. 2)

A. NOW IN VERSE 2, IN THE BEGINNING, WE SEE WHAT WE ARE, WE ARE THE BELOVED AS JOHN ADDRESSES US THAT WAY AND WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD BECAUSE OF THE FATHER'S GREAT LOVE.

*** BUT IN THE END OF V. 2, WE SEE WHAT WE SHALL BE.**

**** LET ME EXPLAIN. WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD NOW, WE ARE THE BELOVED, THAT IS THE TRUTH AND PRINCIPLE THAT JOHN BEGINS WITH IN V. 2.**

***** BUT THAT WHICH IS PRINCIPLE NOW WILL BECOME FULL REALITY IN THE FUTURE WHEN CHRIST APPEARS, WHEN CHRIST RETURNS.**

****** AND YOU TALK ABOUT NEW YEAR'S HOPE!**

1. ONE DAY, WE WILL BE ABSOLUTELY LIKE CHRIST WHEN WE SEE HIM AT HIS APPEARING AND WE WILL BE CHANGED AND TRANSFORMED COMPLETELY AND RECEIVE A NEW BODY LIKE CHRIST'S AND WE WILL NEVER SIN AGAIN, WE WILL BE RIGHTEOUS THEN ACTUALLY.

*** JOHN GOES FROM THE REITERATION THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD TO THE CONSIDERATION OF WHAT WILL BE.**

**** AND IT HAS NOT YET APPEARED WHAT WE WILL BE, MEANING THE EXACT STATE AND CONDITION OF THE REDEEMED IN HEAVEN HAS NOT BEEN REVEALED TO HIM.**

***** HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT OUR FUTURE STATE. WE DO KNOW SOME THINGS FROM SCRIPTURE.**

****** BUT ABSOLUTELY WE DO KNOW SOMETHING FOR SURE, AND THAT IS WHEN CHRIST APPEARS, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.**

2. AND THE SEQUENCE IS CLEAR. FIRST HE WILL APPEAR, IN CONSEQUENCE, WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS IN GLORY AND SPLENDOR GLORIFIED; AND SO WE WILL BE LIKE HIM.

*** AND UNDERSTAND THIS, IN SANCTIFICATION THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS BEEN SHAPING US MORE INTO CHRIST'S IMAGE TO BE LIKE HIM.**

**** BUT IN GLORIFICATION, WHEN CHRIST RETURNS WE WILL BE ABSOLUTELY AND TOTALLY CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF GOD'S SON.**

***** AND THIS TAKES US BACK TO ROMANS 8:29, FOR GOD HAS PROMISED TO BRING ABOUT SUCH A CLIMACTIC TRANSFORMATION BECAUSE THOSE WHOM HE**

FOREKNEW, FORELOVED, FOREORDAINED TO BE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, THOSE WHO HE PREDESTINATED TO BE HIS OWN, HE ALSO PREDESTINED TO BECOME CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON.

****** AND THAT TRANSFORMATION WHEN CHRIST APPEARS WILL MAKE THE REDEEMED PERFECTLY HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS AND CHRISTLIKE AS WE PUT OFF THE OLD TO PUT ON THE NEW. WOW! WHAT A DAY THAT WILL BE. MAYBE TODAY, MAYBE IN 2011, BUT DEFINITELY ONE DAY.**

3. BUT UNTIL THEN, THE REFINING PROCESS CONTINUES TO GO ON TO MAKE US CHRISTLIKE WHICH IS THE TRUTH WE'LL SEE IN OUR LAST POINT TODAY, THE REFINING. LOOK AT V. 3 PLEASE.

V. THE REFINING, (READ V. 3)

A. NOW IN VV. 1&2A WE HAVE SEEN WHAT WE ARE, THE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND IN V. 2B, WHAT WE SHALL BE, TOTALLY CHRISTLIKE.

*** BUT HERE IN V. 3 WE SEE WHAT WE SHOULD BE NOW AND THAT IS PURE FOR CHRIST.**

**** AND JOHN HERE SPEAKS OF HOPE AND THAT THIS HOPE, THE HOPE OF CHRIST'S RETURN HAS A PURIFYING EFFECT ON US, A SANCTIFYING EFFECT.**

***** IN V. 1 WE WERE SANCTIFIED POSITIONALLY BY THE FATHER'S LOVE THROUGH NEW BIRTH AND CONVERSION THAT FOLLOWS.**

****** IN V. 2, ONE DAY WE WILL BE TOTALLY SANCTIFIED.**

1. BUT HERE IN V. 3 WE GO BACK TO PRACTICAL PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION, WE ARE BEING SANCTIFIED.

*** AND HERE IN V. 3, JOHN JUST STATES A PLAIN FACT, EVERYONE WHO HAS THIS HOPE PURIFIES HIMSELF.**

**** AND NOTICE JOHN DOESN'T EXPRESS A WISH, MAY HE PURIFY HIMSELF, OR A POSSIBILITY, HE MAY PURIFY HIMSELF, OR A COMMAND, HE OUGHT TO PURIFY HIMSELF.**

***** JOHN JUST STATES THE FACT FOR THE TRUE BELIEVER, ONE WHO HAS THIS HOPE OF CHRIST'S COMING, WHO HAS A FIXED HOPE, PURIFIES HIMSELF. FACT.**

****** AND THE IDEA OF PURIFYING OURSELVES DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE GENERATE OUR OWN SANCTIFICATION.**

2. RATHER IT EMPHASIZES THAT THE SANCTIFYING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT TAKE PLACE APART FROM OUR OBEDIENCE AS BELIEVERS AND THE USE OF THE MEANS OF SANCTIFYING GRACE.

*** AND BASICALLY THIS IS A CALL TO OBEDIENCE. IT'S A CALL TO APPLY THE TRUTH OF II CORINTHIANS 7:1 AND HEBREWS 12:14&15. (QUOTE THEM)**

**** AND BELOVED AS WE GO BACK TO V. 3, THIS IS VERY PRACTICAL. WHEN WE FIX OUR HOPE ON CHRIST AND HIS COMING AND LIVE WITH THAT SURE HOPE THAT IT WILL HAPPEN, WE LIVE PURE LIVES, JUST AS WE ARE PURE POSITIONALLY, WE WILL WANT TO BE PURE PRACTICALLY.**

IN WRAP UP: (1) I CAN'T THINK OF A BETTER PASSAGE TO BEGIN WITH IN 2011 TO HELP US SET THE COMPASS AND OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2011.

*** I MEAN THERE IS NEW YEAR'S HOPE FOR US. A SANCTIFYING HOPE AND DESIRE TO BE MORE**

CHRISTLIKE AND TO BE PURE AS WE LIVE IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST'S APPEARING.

**** IT IS TO SAY, PONDERING THE FATHER'S AMAZING PROFOUND ASTONISHING LOVE FOR US IN 2011 SHOULD BE QUITE A MOTIVATION, THAT WE ARE HIS CHILDREN BY SOVEREIGN SELECTION AND ELECTING GRACE.**

***** PONDERING OUR NEW BIRTH AND GOD'S SOVEREIGN WORK OF ENABLING US TO BE HIS SHOULD BE A GREAT MOTIVATION.**

****** PONDERING THAT WE WILL BE LIKE CHRIST SOON, WHEN HE APPEARS SHOULD MOTIVATE US TO BE MORE LIKE HIM TODAY.**

(2) AND LOOKING FORWARD TO HIS APPEARING WILL PURIFY US IN 2011.

*** AND LET ME ILLUSTRATE THIS WAY. IF YOU KNEW THAT JOHN MACARTHUR, OR R.C. SPROUL WERE COMING TO YOUR HOUSE IN A WEEK WOULD PROBABLY LEAD TO SOME CHANGES IN YOUR HOME.**

**** AT THE VERY LEAST YOU WOULD CHANGE THE SHEETS AND VACUUM. BUT FOR SOME IT WOULD LEAD TO SOME REPAIRS IN THE HOUSE, MAYBE SOME PAINTING, CLEANING THE BATHROOM, MAYBE EVEN BUYING ONE OF THEM A GIFT.**

***** NO DOUBT, YOU WOULD BEGIN PREPARING AND CLEANING YOUR HOUSE FOR THIS IMPORTANT HOUSEGUEST. I KNOW MOST OF YOU WOULD DO THAT.**

****** BUT WHETHER R.C. SPROUL OR JOHN MACARTHUR COME TO YOUR HOUSE IS INSIGNIFICANT TO THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS RETURNING FOR HIS OWN.**

(3) AND IF WE TRULY BELIEVE HE IS COMING BACK, WE WILL BEGIN CLEANING UP OUR LIVES TODAY.

*** AND SO HERE IN 2011, SOME OF US NEED TO SCOUR THE WALLS OF OUR HEARTS, OTHERS OF US NEED TO SCRUB THE FLOORS OF OUR INNER THOUGHTS, MOTIVES AND DESIRES.**

**** STILL OTHERS NEED TO PUT SOME GARBAGE IN THE TRASH CAN. SOME THINGS NEED TO BE REARRANGED IN PRIORITIES AND SOME THINGS REMOVED.**

***** BUT ALL OF US NEED TO PURIFY OURSELVES.**

****** MAY THAT BE OUR PASSION IN 2011. A PASSION FOR PURITY. AND MAY OUR LIVES AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST BE FILLED WITH HOPE IN 2011, FOR JESUS COULD RETURN THIS YEAR.**

(4) BUT THE REALITY IS, IF IT'S NOT THIS YEAR, READY OR NOT, HE WILL RETURN. EVEN SO COME LORD JESUS. ARE YOU READY? (LET'S PRAY)