

“Are We There Yet?” (1 John 2:28-3:3)

Few things are more difficult than driving a long distance with small children. No matter how many activity books, video games, and DVD's you bring, you still hear the steady whine of, “When are we going to be there?” “How much longer?” “Are we there yet?” When one of your children asks that question, how do you respond? I respond in one of four ways:

- *The Irritated Response:* “We’re closer now than the last time you asked.”
- *The Threatening Response:* “If you keep asking when we’re going to get there I’m gonna turn around and go home!”
- *The Sneaky Response:* “Okay kids, let’s play a game and see how long we can go without asking if we’re there yet.”
- *The Negligent Response:* This is where I ignore my child’s question by pretending not to hear.

Yet, no matter how we respond, on long trips kids are totally focused on the final destination. While this may be a bit irritating for parents, there is a lot we can learn from our children. The question that we must ask is: Why don’t we think and act more like children in anticipation of heaven? Why don’t we ask the typical traveling questions of our kids? An infinite God would have infinite patience with His children who implore Him, “When are we going to be there?” “How much longer?” “Are we there yet?”

The Bible pictures the Christian life as a journey, and the book of 1 John provides us with a roadmap to ensure that we don’t get lost and that we enjoy the trip to heaven. One of the road signs along the way that will keep us from getting lost or losing our joy is: “Always anticipate Christ’s coming.” John shares this strategic key to spiritual victory in 1 John 2:28-3:3. In these five verses, he utilizes a sandwich approach. In 2:28, John begins with an exhortation/motivation and in 3:3 he closes with an exhortation/motivation. The filling in between (2:29-3:2) consists of what our Christian lifestyle should be.

1. Anticipate Christ’s coming (2:28). John’s words in 2:28 serve as a “hinge” between the first and second half of the book (1:1-2:27 and 2:29-5:21).¹ The exhortation in 2:28 applies equally well to both halves.² Thus, 2:28 serves as a primary theme of 1 John.³ So let’s closely consider this important verse. John writes: “**Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.**”⁴ The word “now” starts us off with a bang! John’s point is: In light of all that I have said—“Now!”⁵ What I am about to say to you is for “now,” and it is critical that you hear my words. John then addresses his readers as “little children.” Again the elderly apostle lapses into his loving ways by referring to his readers as “little children.” The last time he did this was in 2:18 and a lot of hard talking has flowed from his quill in the intervening verses. So John once again affirms his readers. He wants them to know that he loves them and cares for them. He has a shepherd’s heart. John then commands his little children to “abide” in Jesus. The word “abide” is John’s favorite word for an intimate, ongoing relationship with Christ. He expects that his readers will remain in and continue with Jesus. What does this look like? John has already told us thus far in his book:

- Adhere to biblical doctrine (1:1-2).
- Pursue fellowship with God and others (1:3-4).
- Confess your sin (1:5-2:2).
- Obey God and love others (2:3-11).
- Wage war against your spiritual enemies (2:12-17).
- Guard yourself from false teachers (2:18-27).

I have seen a bumper sticker that reads, “Simplify.” That’s not bad advice in all areas of life, but it is especially appropriate for our walk with the Lord. By simply living out the contents of 1 John, we will be able to abide in Christ.

Why is abiding in Christ so important? John includes a purpose or motivation for abiding: “So that when He [Jesus] appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.” The phrase “when He appears,” is literally “*if* He appears.” However, the uncertainty is not about the fact of Christ’s coming,⁶ but rather the timing of Christ’s coming.⁷ Since we don’t know the exact time of Christ’s return, we need to be ready at all times. We need to anticipate His coming.

Our church has been fortunate to have a number of military families among us. One of the challenges of being a military family is saying “goodbye” to your loved one when he/she goes overseas on duty. I can’t imagine the pain of being separated for a year from someone you love so much. Yet, these families understand something that many of us can’t fully appreciate, and that is “the art of anticipation.” Many of these families count the days until their loved one is scheduled to return. They are continually hoping and praying that their family member will return quickly and safely. There is what we could call a “homecoming theme.” These families are anxious for the return of their soldier! In the same way, we ought to be anxious for Jesus to return. We ought to be counting the days. We ought to be living in light of His coming!

If we are abiding in Christ and anticipating His coming, we will have confidence on that day when He appears. The word “confidence” (*parresia*)⁸ means “courage and boldness, especially in the presence of persons of high rank.”⁹ It also means “the freedom to speak.” If you’ve ever had to go before a high-ranking official, you’ve probably felt a bit nervous. You may not have known what to say.¹⁰ Well, John says that when you go before the most important man in human history—the God Man—the Lord Jesus Christ—you *can* have confidence! You can stand before Him knowing that your life has been characterized by faithfulness.

So what if we’re not living in light of Christ’s coming? What if we’re not anticipating His any moment return? Tragically, Jesus may return at a time when we do not want Him to show up! The result will be that we will experience shame. This may shake up your view of the judgment seat of Christ. Maybe you thought that the judgment seat of Christ was a highlight video of your “good works.” Perhaps you assumed that since you are in a relationship with Christ, it really doesn’t matter how you live because you’re secure. No, no, no! The judgment seat of Christ is a comprehensive event that takes into consideration both the “good and bad” (2 Cor 5:10). In fact, all Christians must give an account of their lives in Christ—from the time they believed to the time they died or Jesus appeared. This will be sobering for all of us, I’m sure.¹¹

This brings a whole new light to the thinking of most believers about the judgment seat of Christ. Yes, there will be shame at this time for His children who have lived their lives poorly. Does this threaten their eternal destiny? No. No more than you may be more proud of some of your children than others. Maybe one of your children has taken the gifts he/she has been given, has worked hard to develop them, and is doing something productive with his/her life. You are proud of that child, and rightly so. Perhaps another child, even more gifted, has buried their gifts in the sand, has not worked hard to develop their God-given abilities, and is not doing anything productive with their life. Of that child you may be ashamed. Is he or she still your child? Yes, but you probably would not wish to reward that child for a slothful life.

This spells out the difference between “accepted” and “acceptable.” Those who are born again are accepted, but not all Christians will be found acceptable when they stand before Jesus Christ.¹² The kind of life we live will determine our acceptability. If we abide in Christ we will be able to have confidence at His coming. If we choose not to abide, we will experience shame; yet, we remain His children.

Now, I know what you’re thinking. You’re thinking, “I can’t abide all the time. I sin. I go through seasons where I’m not living for the Lord. I just know that Jesus will return and I will be caught unprepared.” You may be right. But this should motivate you to keep short accounts with God.

When I was in seminary, I attended a pastor's conference and was horribly convicted by a speaker who challenged us to cleanse ourselves from our past sins that were unresolved with others. I decided to take him up on his challenge and I began to write down sins that I committed during my life that I needed to confess to others. One of the sins I committed was that I cheated on an Eschatology (i.e., the study of last things) exam in Bible college. My professor, John W. Lawrence, a disciple of J. Vernon McGee, always said, "You can't cram for a Lawrence exam!" Well, I tried, but recognized that I was in too deep. When our class concluded, Professor Lawrence gave a handful of us permission to go to the library to complete the test. I took my exam to the library and used some of my class notes to ensure that I got an "A." The Holy Spirit convicted me but I kept ignoring Him.

Finally, God brought me to the place where I knew I needed to deal with this. So I went to Professor Lawrence's office to tell him what I had done. Please understand, I had already graduated from Bible college and I could have had my degree yanked! I could have been taken before the college president. I could have been asked to no longer attend seminary at Multnomah. I was scared out of my mind. When I stood before Mr. Lawrence in his office on that afternoon I experienced shame! But Mr. Lawrence looked me in the eye and said, "Thank you for coming in to tell me what you have done. I forgive you. And I want you to know that God forgives you, and this sin will never come up at the judgment seat of Christ."

I left Mr. Lawrence's office with a feeling of exhilaration. I exposed my sin and was willing to accept any consequences; but Mr. Lawrence was unbelievably kind to me. It is interesting to me that since I confessed my sin, God allowed me to review one of John Lawrence's books for a theological journal. Furthermore, the class that I cheated in, Eschatology, I now teach at a Bible school. Now that is the grace of God!

Abiding in Christ is never easy. There are challenges along the way. But there is no other way to live. The old cliché asks, "Are you ready to meet your Maker?" The confident Christian answers, "Meet Him? I've been walking with Him everyday!"¹³ If we maintain consistent fellowship with God and anticipate Christ's coming, we will not be embarrassed to meet Christ whenever He comes.

[To ensure that we will anticipate Christ's coming, it is imperative that we abide in Christ. In the next three verses, John will also encourage us to...]

2. Appreciate our position (2:29-3:2). In these three verses, John lays out what we should be (2:29), who we are (3:1-2a), and who we will be (3:2b). First, in 2:29, John tells us what we should be for Christ. John closes chapter 2 by saying: "**If [since] you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices¹⁴ righteousness is born of Him.**"¹⁵ The idea here is that *righteous* acts can only come from *righteous* persons. This verse tells us how children of God can manifest who they really are as "born again" people. We need to be clear about what John is *not* saying. He's not saying that those who do *not* practice righteousness are therefore *not* born of Him. Believers can and do fail to live righteously.¹⁶ John is saying that living righteously does indeed matter because God is righteous. As children of God, we have a responsibility to bear our Father's image. Our goal should be to display our new birth—to make it perfectly visible that we are born of Him.

Second, John tells us who we are in Christ. John opens chapter 3 with these comforting words: "**See¹⁷ how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children¹⁸ of God; and such we are**"¹⁹ (3:1).²⁰ We need to remember John is an old man, and he is close to death. But what is so amazing is this: He has not lost the sense of wonder of God's undeserved grace. When he ponders the unique relationship he enjoys with his heavenly Father, it leaves him gasping for air.²¹ The word "see" is often translated, "behold." It is both an exclamation and a command. As an exclamation, it shows that the Father's great love should amaze us. We should never yawn or say "ho-hum" when we reflect on God's love for us. It is unfathomable that the God of the Universe loves you and me.

The word “see” is also a command. This shows that the Father’s great love should instruct us. The command is, “Stop everything else! Look at this! Think about it! Ponder the significance of it!” The word translated “how great” (*potapos*), is literally “what kind.” It originally meant “of what country,” and always implies astonishment.²² It is a word that conveys the idea of something we are not used to or something we did not expect to find. For example, the disciples used the word when they were stunned with Jesus’ ability to still the storm on the Sea of Galilee (Matt 8:27; Mark 4:41). “The men were amazed, and said, ‘What kind [*potapos*] of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’” In other words, the man who did this is a different category from anyone we have come across before; and when we stop and think about it, that is equally true of the Father’s love for us. It is virtually unheard of! It’s as if John thinks about the Father’s great love and says, “Where does this come from? It must be from heaven, because there’s nothing like it in this world!” John is marveling at our heavenly Father’s great love for us that drove Him to adopt us in the first place. While we were yet sinners, hardened against God, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8). And through faith in Him we are given new life, adopted into God’s forever family (John 1:11-13). Family membership carries great privilege and a responsibility to live like the new children we are.

I set up my roommate in Bible college with his future wife. They have three boys. We learned this past week that Russ and Lisa are adopting a precious, two-year-old, little girl from Liberia. Over a year ago, Russ and Lisa went away to Bend, OR, for a weekend. They discussed whether to have another child or to adopt. They decided to adopt a little girl. They have been praying for her over a year. They will be accepting and loving this little girl as they do their own biological children. My hope and prayer is that Danika recognizes the privilege of being adopted by the Beguelin family. If she is grateful for what they have done, she will become the child that the Beguelins long for her to be.

A little boy was cruelly teased at school because he was adopted. He patiently suffered the merciless taunts and sickening jibes of his classmates; and then, when he could take it no longer, he blurted out in fierce self-defense, “You can say what you like. All I know is my parents chose me. Your’s couldn’t help having you!” This little boy was absolutely right! When we understand it that way, adoption is not a disgrace but a privilege. It seems to me, if that is true of those adopted by human parents, how much more true is it of Christians who have been called the children of God?²³

What are some implications of being a child of God?

- Eternal security (Rom 8:14-17)
- Access to the Father (Gal 4:6-7)
- Victory over the enemy (1 John 4:4)

John continues his thought about our identity in Christ as he wraps up 3:1: “**For this reason** [we are children of God who perform righteous deeds] **the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.**” John wants his readers to know that the world’s approval is to be feared, not desired. To be hated by the world may be unpleasant, but ultimately it should reassure the members of the community of faith that they are loved by God, which is far more important than the world’s hatred.²⁴ The world hates the children of God (3:13), just as it hated Jesus (John 15:18-20), since they do not belong to the world.²⁵

Let me be clear: If everybody likes you, you’re not a healthy child of God. The world will call us fanatics. We will be seen as misfits of society. We will be viewed as freaks and oddballs. We will be scorned and taunted. We will be the butt of many a joke. Why? Because we abide in Christ and the world cannot explain our doctrine or our lives. Yet, our righteous lives and willingness to stand for the truth in an age of compromise glorifies God. Furthermore, we know that the Lord is working behind the scenes to draw men, women, and children to Christ through our words and righteous living. Even though we are sinful, God chooses to use us in spite of ourselves.

John has one final word on who we are in Christ. In 3:2a he writes, **“Beloved, now²⁶ we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be.”** Again, John assures us that we are God’s children! He doesn’t want us to miss this important theme! He even says that the best is yet to come. One day we will truly understand and appreciate God’s lavish love for us.

I have always known that my earthly father loves me, but something happened when Lori gave birth to my firstborn child. I was overwhelmed with the miracle of birth. When I saw my baby boy for the first time, I was awed. When I took Joshua in my arms, I began to understand how much my dad loves me. Yet, amazingly, a parent’s love for his or her children grows over time. This is not true with God. His love for us is perfect. It does not grow or develop. But one day, He will allow us to realize His love in an even fuller expression.

Our third and final emphasis in this section is what we will be in Christ. In 3:2b, John continues his encouragement with these words: **“We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”²⁷** John is speaking of the day when we will stand before God in our heavenly home, when we will see just how pure and righteous and good He really is. In that day, we also will be like Him. In other words, we will be given a glorified body. We will be free from the very presence of sin. Moreover, blind people will see Jesus with opened eyes. Deaf people will hear the voice and words of Jesus. Lame people will walk hand-in-hand with Him. There will be no deficiency, no disease, and no death.²⁸ What an amazing day that will be.

[John has challenged us to anticipate Christ’s coming and to appreciate our privileged position. In our final verse, John will also encourage us to...]

3. Fixate on Christ (3:3). When we grasp the reality of Christ’s return, it will change our lives. John closes this passage with these motivating words: **“And everyone²⁹ who has this hope³⁰ fixed on Him purifies³¹ himself, just as He is pure.”³²** In the Bible “hope” isn’t just wishful thinking, it’s a confident expectation that God is going to keep His promises. This hope is the Bible’s promise that Jesus will return one day. As believers, our hope is not in circumstances or in some optimistic wish for a better tomorrow. Our hope is in the person of Jesus Christ. He said that He was returning to heaven to prepare a place for us (John 14:2). Then He added these wonderful words of hope (14:3), “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” He didn’t leave us forever! He’s coming back for us, and when that happens we will go to be with Him in the place that He has prepared for us! All of our hope should be fixed on Him. This hope ought to transform our lives. In John’s words, it ought to lead us to “purify” ourselves.

Most of you who are married dated your spouse. [I’m not sure I’m aware of any arranged marriages.] Before you left for your date you would likely shower or bathe. In most cases you used soap. [Display a bar of soap.] Why did you use soap? You wanted to be sweet smelling, because you were looking forward to meeting that special person. The soap cleaned you up. It purified you. In the same way, John exhorts us to clean ourselves up as we look forward to meeting Christ. Since He’s fully pure, we will want to be pure. Soap will make us pure, but we have to use it. God has given us His Word, prayer, and the means of grace by which we can keep our life clean and pure every day. He gives them, but we must use them.³³ When we use soap, may the Lord remind us of the need to anticipate His coming, appreciate our position, and fixate on Christ. And may our heart’s cry be, “Are we there yet?”

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Scripture Reading

1 John 2:28-3:3

John 15:5-11

Romans 14:10-12

2 Corinthians 5:9-11

Colossians 3:23-24

James 2:12-13

James 4:8-10

Study Questions

1. John implies that some believers will be ashamed at Christ's coming while others will have confidence (2:28). Do I truly believe that Christ *could* return today? How can I ensure that I will possess confidence when Christ returns? What is presently lacking in my life that would prohibit me from being confident upon Christ's return? Read James 4:8-10. After reading James' words, what steps do I need to take to make certain that I'm in fellowship with God?
2. The natural response of being born of God is righteous behavior (2:29). Am I progressively growing in practical righteousness? Why or why not? Would there be enough evidence to convict me of being a Christian in my workplace and neighborhood? If so, what words or works would my coworkers and neighbors point to? If not, what can I do to be indicted for being a Christian?
3. Even as an aged man, John is overwhelmed with God's love (3:1a). Can I honestly say I am awed by God's great love? If so, how does my sense of wonder manifest itself? If a fellow believer asks me, "How can I cultivate my love for God?" how would I respond? What principles from my own personal experience could I share?
4. Not everyone will understand our unique relationship with God (3:1b). How have I reacted when I have been misunderstood or rejected by the world? Read Jesus' words in John 15:18-22. Is it wrong to be popular with everyone? Why or why not? Am I willing to accept being an outsider?
5. John declares that when we see Christ "we will be like Him" (3:2). What excites me most about this future prospect? How does this provide me confidence and assurance in this life? How can I use this biblical truth to comfort and encourage other believers?
6. John urges his Christian readers to have "hope" in Christ's coming (3:3). If Christians honestly don't yearn for Christ's return, is there a problem? If so, what should be done about this? As a leader, church member, spouse, parent, coworker, and neighbor, how can I help those in my sphere of influence anticipate Christ's coming?

Notes

¹ Beginning the present section at 2:28 allows the three addresses to the readers as “Children” (2:12, 2:18, 2:28) to stand in parallel, and this seems the most logical solution.

² The word “abide” (*meno*) is used ten times in 1 John 1:1-2:27 and thirteen times in 2:29-5:21 (see 2:6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 24 [three times], 27 [two times], 28; 3:6, 9, 14, 15, 17, 24 [two times]; 4:12, 13, 15, 16 [three times]).

³ John uses the word “abide” eleven times in chapter 2.

⁴ John uses a play-on-words in 2:28. He writes that God’s children should have confidence [*parresia*] at Christ’s coming [*parousia*].

⁵ John only uses the word “now” (*nun*) in 1 John 2:18, 28; 3:2; and 4:3.

⁶ Consider the following examples: One verse in 25 deals with the Lord’s return. It is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament. It is mentioned in every one of the New Testament books, with the exception of Galatians, which deals with a particular doctrinal problem, and the very short books such as 2 and 3 John and Philemon. See James Montgomery Boice, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 96. Another insight I have come across that is rather staggering is: For every one verse in the Bible talking about Jesus Christ’s first coming, there are eight more verses that describe His second coming at the end of the age.

⁷ In this context “if” (*ean*) does not indicate uncertainty about whether or not Christ will return, but rather uncertainty about the exact time the event will take place. In the Koiné period *ean* can mean “when” or “whenever” (see John 12:32 and 14:3). Thus, the phrase here should be translated, “so that whenever He should appear...” Other passages that teach the imminency of Christ’s return include 1 Cor 1:9; 4:5; 15:51-52; 16:22; Phil 3:20; 4:5; 1 Thess 1:10; 2 Thess 3:10-12; Titus 2:13; Jas 5:7-9; Rev 3:11; 22:7, 12, 17, 20.

⁸ The word *parresia* is used four times in 1 John, and it always refers to the confidence the believer has before God or God’s Son: at the judgment (here and in 4:17), in making requests (5:14), or both the preceding ideas (3:21).

⁹ BDAG, Electronic Ed. It is also worth noting that the word used for “coming” (*parousia*) was used of the visit of a king or emperor.

¹⁰ Even John, when he saw Jesus in His glory, “fell at His feet like a dead man” (Rev 1:17). But here John says, “we may have confidence...at His coming.”

¹¹ One afternoon, I walked downstairs and turned on the TV. As I was flipping through the few channels we have, I came across an ungodly talk show that is now using the slogan, “An hour of your life that you’ll never get back.” This slogan is being used on “The Jerry Springer Show.” WARNING: Avoid this show at any cost.

¹² This verbiage came from Jerry Vines, *Exploring 1, 2, 3 John* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1989), 99.

¹³ Barclay 84.

¹⁴ The NASB makes an interpretive decision for us in how they translate this verse. There is no word in the Greek text for “practices.” The phrase should literally read “does (*poieo*) righteousness.”

¹⁵ This is the first reference to the new birth in 1 John. The concept is mentioned again in 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18.

¹⁶ Hodges writes, “We must not make this verse say more than it does. John certainly does *not* say, ‘Whoever does *not* do righteousness is *not* born of Him.’ That would be an inference in no way justified by John’s statement. He is not talking here about how we can decide if a person is saved. If we know that a person *believes* (cf. 1 John 5:1 . . .), we can know he is saved. But here, John is clearly concerned with the deduction which we can make if we know that God is righteous. If *that* is known, it follows that one who to any extent reproduces His righteous nature is actually *manifesting* that nature and can rightly be *perceived* as born of Him.” Zane C. Hodges, *The Epistles of John: Walking in the Light of God’s Love* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1999), 127.

¹⁷ The word translated “see” is a plural (*idete*) as opposed to the standard *idou* (“see,” “look,” “behold”). This is an actual call to really take a look at, to see how glorious this love is. David R. Anderson, “*Simul* 1 John—Relationship or Fellowship,” Unpublished notes.

¹⁸ This is the first of four uses of the word in 1 John (also in 3:2, 3:10, and 5:2). (The word used in 2:1, 2:12, 2:28, 3:7, 3:18, 4:4, and 5:21 is *teknivon*, the diminutive form.) *Tevkna* is used to refer to God’s children in John 1:12 and 11:52 (both of which are significant for the usage here in 1 John) and in all four of the uses in 1 John.

¹⁹ The KJV and NKJV omit these words, but there is solid manuscript support for them.

²⁰ The chapter breaks in our Bibles is unfortunate. 1 John 3:1 clearly flows directly out of 2:29.

²¹ Sam Gordon, *Living in the Light: 1.2.3 John* (Greenville, SC: Trans World Radio, 2001), 104.

²² John R. W. Stott, *The Epistles of John*: TNTC series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 118.

²³ Gordon, *Living in the Light*, 103.

²⁴ Glenn W. Barker, “1 John,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981 [2001]), Electronic Ed.

²⁵ This very fact is a further proof that the readers are children of God: the way in which the world does not recognize them as being on its side is proof that they belong to God. I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John*: NICNT Reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 171.

²⁶ The word “now” (*nun*) is emphatic in this sentence. John is saying, “Right now we are children of God!”

²⁷ John’s references to Christ’s coming in 2:28 and 3:2 frame his references to the new birth in 2:29 and 3:1. See Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 1 John* (<http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/1john.pdf>, 2006), 33.

²⁸ Gordon, *Living in the Light*, 111.

²⁹ The hope of 3:2 challenges the believer to be like Christ now. The sudden switch from the corporate reference of 3:1-2 (“we”) to the singular thrust of 3:3 underscores the importance of the ethical demands which are laid upon every believer. The hope of being like Christ in the end should inspire Christ-like behavior even now. Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*: WBC series (Waco: Word, 1984), 148-149.

³⁰ Although the word “hope” (*elpis*) is frequent in Paul and in Peter’s writings, this is the only time that John uses the noun.

³¹ The verb “to purify” (*hagnizo*) is found only seven times in the NT. It can have either ceremonial or moral connotations. So, in John and Acts, it is used consistently in relation to ceremonial purification (John 11:55; Acts 21:24, 26; 24:18). However, in Jas 4:8 and 1 Pet 1:22, *hagnizo* definitely denotes moral purification, and this is what it means in this present context where people purify themselves in order to be pure as Christ is pure. See Colin Kruse, *The Letters of John*: Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 117.

³² That John speaks of this hope as a purifying hope is one of the reasons we believe the Rapture will occur before the Tribulation begins. If the Rapture takes place after the Tribulation, as many teach, I could wait until the middle of the Tribulation to start cleaning up my act. I could just wait around until the Man of Sin reveals himself, and then I could start getting serious about my Christian life. After all, I could count the days until His appearing. It will be 1260 days from the revelation of the Antichrist.

³³ Vines, *Exploring 1, 2, 3 John*, 110.