

# Light Brings Salt

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## Iron Range Bible Church

*Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God*  
*"Sanctify them in the truth: Your word is truth."*



### *The Gift of God's Love*

Pastor John Griffith

In First John 3:1 John details the dynamic reality of the new life of the believer in Christ. The chapter break is unfortunate since John's statements here flow from 2:29. Having become members of God's family through the new birth, believers find that their new life has deep present as well as future significance.

John calls upon his readers here to contemplate the amazing reality of their present membership in God's family (v. 1a). He also reminds them that this relationship they have with Him explains the reaction of the world toward them (v. 1b). And he stresses that this new life as God's children also has future implications.

First we need to examine the amazing gift of God's love in the first phrase of 3:1. John's excitement at the implications of what he says about the awesomeness of being born again, being a part of God's family; being born one's. This wonder and excitement is evident as he says to his readers, See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God.

The plural of the aorist imperative, "See," or "Behold" [εἶδον] calls upon the readers to take a more thorough look at the amazing love which gave them membership in God's family.

The strong force of See/Behold is that we need to take time to contemplate this love and allow its reality to sink down into the depths of our thinking. The very core of our new self, the new creation in Christ. The exhortation to them is to carefully note "how great a love" the Father has bestowed on them. Need to

focus on the unique nature of God's love.

The adjective rendered "how great" occurs only seven times in the New Testament "how great" (ποταπός) has 2 threads of meaning. First it is used of anything foreign, the idea of that meaning in context is that the love of God/F is foreign to this world and its thinking. If your looking for a unique illustration of God's love, you won't find it in the world, its unique its foreign to any experience in this world. Paul says in Eph. 3:19 the love of Christ surpasses human knowledge.

This word ποταπός also carries the idea of anything that astonishes or amazes or causes admiration. The more that we understand the love of God that flows to us from His Grace as a result of faith in Christ we should be amazed and it should cause us to be occupied with Him and His great provision for us.

So John is saying take a careful look, focus on the kind of love that God has which is foreign to this world, that you can't find an illustration for in this world and secondly look at the amazing love of God and notice the admiration that it provokes. The expression conveys both a qualitative and quantitative force, the idea being "what glorious, measureless love!" This love, originating with God, ever seeks the true welfare of those loved.

It is amazing indeed when we remember our personal status before Him before we believed in Christ, before salvation. [We were ungodly, sinners, enemies, dead] God's love is a love that works visible, transforming results in the lives of its recipients, those who become children of God, as we are responsive to His grace provision for our life. The

perfect-tense verb "has bestowed" (δίδωμι) declares that this love is a permanent gift.

Not talking about the believers future at this point, he is talking about the present reality of the believer, experiencing the love of God, that flows from a past act, the point of salvation.

Being the recipient of God's great love cannot be earned or purchased but is a gift one that will not be withdrawn. Can never be lost. John's adds "bestowed on us" indicates that he explicitly includes himself among the recipients of this amazing love.

that we should be called children of God; This clause explains how this love is revealed. Its through us, our lives. The force of the clause is factual, an unfolding of the nature of God's gift of love - that we are "called children of God."

The aorist passive verb "be called" speaks of our status as born ones, passive says that God Himself acted to make this a reality, we are now members of His family.

Since it is used without the article, "children of God" calls attention to our character, our nature, as members of the family, "God-children-a divine progeny." [spiritually] The KJV rendering "sons" does not adequately render the force of the Greek term. The word for children is τέκνον and speaks of the natural relationship of children as members of the family. [born ones]

It becomes a technical term John uses referring to this special relationship. John uses υἱός 'son,' in 1 John only for Jesus in relationship to God." The added comment "and (such) we are" says its a true statement but doesn't appear in some texts, KJV. The phrase certainly adds to the force to the statement. John emphatically declares that we are not merely God's children in name, children is not just a title, but is a reality. Therefore this should give us assurance, encouraging and strengthening us. Its an expression of a fact, *we're children of God, the objects of His love*, facts which should impact all of our thoughts and actions. ?? How is this great love manifested to the world? Through the lives of believers, the ones who practice righteousness, that is know what is right and do it.

John next focuses on the world's failure to understand believers. This amazing fact that we are now members of God's family, His children, explains the world's attitude toward believers:

For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Question to answer here is this, Does "For this reason" (literally "because of this") look forward to the concluding clause "because it knew him not," or does it look backward to the fact John has just stated that we are now "children of God."

If we look forward the meaning is that the world does not recognize or understand believers because it never recognized Him. If we take the backward view, then John explains that the world does not recognize us because we are children of God. The backward view I believe seems more natural in the flow of the context.

Basis then of the worlds attitude towards believers is that we're God's children, and our life manifests that reality! Because believers are members of God's family, and when they are reflecting that family relationship, i.e. walking in the light, they are radically different from the world, therefore "the world," [κόσμος] the organized mass of lost humanity in its estrangement from God, "keeps on not knowing us".

For the world there is no true understanding or appreciation of those who are born-again believers, they haven't a clue.

The fact of regeneration is foolishness in its eyes, those who are children of God, having believed in Christ, the world considers deluded. By its very nature the world, which "lies in the power of the evil one" (5:19), cannot truly understand or establish friendly relations with God's children. No basis for deep abiding relationship. 2 Cor 6:14-17

God's children understand why the world does not understand them: because it did not know Him. The aorist tense, "did not know" records the historical fact of the world's failure to know and understand reality of God.

The precise failure in view is determined by the accepted identity of "Him." If "Him" is understood as a reference to God the Father,

John summarily notes that "the world's whole course is one great act of non-recognition of God." Repeatedly history has demonstrated that "*the world through its wisdom did not come to know God*" (1 Cor. 1:21).

More probable is the view that the aorist tense points to a particular point in past time when the world did not know Him. It would be most natural to see here a reference to Christ's reception at His first coming.

The world failed to understand or receive God's supreme revelation of Himself in His Son (John 1:10-11; 12:45; 14:9-11); it hated and rejected Him. (Jn 15:18-21)

John reminds his readers of this fact, that Christ was rejected, not known, which should help them/us to understand the world's reaction to His spiritual children, that is us. So the fact of their rejection by "*the world*," which includes all unregenerate individuals, attests that they are indeed members of God's family as it does for each of us.

Therefore, one commentator, Glenn W. Barker notes, "The author wants his readers to know that approval by the world 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."

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## Creation Moment

Your Busy Liver

*Hebrews 3:4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.*

An adult's liver is about the size of a football and weighs about three pounds, making it the body's largest internal organ. Tucked neatly beneath the ribs, your liver performs more than 500 different tasks. It is a vital link between your heart, lungs and digestive system.

Inside the liver is a bewildering array of microscopic veins in which each drop of blood is processed. Here, blood conditions are constantly monitored to make sure everything is up to standard. If more of certain substances are needed in the blood, they are supplied. Useless chemicals are broken down into useful chemicals. Proteins are made in

the liver, blood-clotting factors are corrected, hormone balances are maintained, and poisons are neutralized. If substances are needed to fight an infection, they are produced and added to the blood.

The liver also stores vitamins and minerals and prepares itself to provide your body with quick energy when you need it. In addition, the liver makes bile, which is essential for digestion.

Structures like the liver have caused many evolutionists to abandon the idea that life is a result of millions of years of accidents. The liver is just too well designed and integrated into the body to have been produced by purposelessness and mindlessness. Surely it makes more sense to acknowledge a supremely wise Creator who loves His Creation, including you and me.

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## Profiles of valor: USA Sgt. Rowell

Sergeant First Class Frederick Rowell of the United States Army served two tours in Iraq and displayed bravery above and beyond the call of duty during both. In April 2003, during the initial assault on Baghdad, his unit was attacked and fell back to their Bradley vehicle for cover. Another squad, however, was not as fortunate. They were pinned under heavy fire with little cover, no leadership and a wounded soldier. Rowell ran across the open terrain while under fire himself. Once he reached the other soldiers, he supplied cover fire and treated the wounded private. As the enemy fire intensified, Rowell threw himself onto the private to protect him and took an AK-47 round in his back. Fortunately, his armor protected him from serious injury. As help arrived, he lifted the private onto his back and ran 100 meters to the evacuation vehicle. For his bravery and self-sacrifice, he earned the Silver Star.

Sgt. Rowell was not finished, however. In September 2007, he was leading a scouting mission in Baghdad when his men, who were split into two observation posts in separate buildings, came under fire from multiple directions. Rowell decided to gather all his men at a single post, but one of his soldiers was severely wounded by an IED just outside the door. Rowell himself was knocked

unconscious by the blast. When he came to, Rowell grabbed his fellow soldier, pulled him to safety and continued to defend him. Soon, a group of Stryker combat vehicles arrived, and Rowell worked to evacuate everyone. Despite his own wound—later diagnosed as traumatic brain injury—he manned the roof gun on the Stryker during the evacuation. For his efforts and courage he was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat “V” for Valor.

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### MUSLIM FATHER BURNS DAUGHTER TO DEATH FOR HER FAITH IN CHRIST

The following is excerpted from “Muslim Father Kills Daughter for Converting to Christianity,” International Christian Concern, Aug. 13, 2008: “A Saudi Arabian man cut out the tongue of his daughter and burnt her to death after finding out that she had converted to Christianity. The girl came to know about Jesus Christ through the internet, according to Gulf News.

Her father found about her conversion and killed her ‘following a heated debate on religion,’ the source indicated. The man is currently in custody. There is no indication as to the killer’s identity or the date of the crime except that ‘the killing happened recently.’ The killer works for the mutaween (Commission for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice), an arm of the government that enforces religious purity and is the government’s face of persecution to Christians in Saudi Arabia. ... The Saudi Arabian officials are using their huge oil wealth to export Wahabbism (the most intolerant version of Islam) to other countries, including the United States. In its recent press release regarding the Saudi government school in Northern Virginia, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom indicated that, according to text books at the school, ‘It is permissible for a Muslim to kill an apostate (a convert from Islam).’

From Ethiopia to Indonesia, Saudi Arabia’s oil money is fueling the killings of Christians and destruction of their property.” “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice,

and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12).

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### Moslem Problem in Papua New Guinea

While Moslem leaders insist that Islam is the religion of peace, the history of Islam says otherwise. Islamic radicals, and many sects of Islam, are anything but peaceful. These radicals can easily dominate the majority of Moslems, and perpetuate a reign of terror on local non-Moslems, as well as any Moslems who oppose this religious violence. Most Moslems, and especially Moslem leaders in Moslem majority nations, delude themselves that this "Islam Is Peace" mantra is true. The result is that, when the Islamic radicals show up (and they have always been there, since the founding of Islam 1500 years ago), the more moderate leaders try to placate them. That doesn't work, and in a tragedy played out regularly in the history of Islam, the radicals are either suppressed, or gain strength until they are strong enough to fight a civil war. If the radicals win, they establish a religious dictatorship that lasts a generation or two, but eventually collapses from corruption and poor administration (running a government and economy according to the Koran does not work, a fact that the faithful keep denying despite evidence to the contrary).

As more Moslems move to Papua (the western half of New Guinea, one of the largest islands on the planet, and home of hundreds of Melanesian tribes that are very different culturally from the rest of Indonesia, and are largely Christian and pagan, rather than Moslem), ethnic and religious tensions have gotten worse. Along with these Malay (the largest ethnic group in Indonesia) migrants (seeking farmland in thinly populated Indonesia), come Islamic radicals, who promptly organize violence against the non-Moslem Papuans. But the Papuans push back, and local police have warned the national government that a major outbreak of violence is possible.