

## Chapter 3vs 1: How Great a Love!

**3 See how great a love the Father has given us, that we would be called children of God; and in fact we are. For this reason the world does not know us: because it did not know Him.**

The apostle John loves to talk about family. He so often addresses those he has taught as “my beloved children”, or “little children”. And, so he can’t really resist talking about the wondrous nature of God’s love by which we are granted this privilege.

### Behold

This is something “visible” to the believer, in that God’s love in our lives can be known and should be seen.

### See How Great a love

John is asking us to appreciate in awe, wonder, and amazement the fact that God would not only save us through Jesus shed blood on the cross, but adopt us as His children. The Father’s love is so unconditional, measureless, long-suffering, patient and supranatural compared to the limited, conditional, sometimes even shallow love that we can express that we can hardly comprehend it.

### God’s love is infinite, measureless

God’s love infinite measureless: Psalm 86:15 **But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.** Psalm 103:17, etc.

### God’s love is revealed in Jesus

The Lord God has chosen to fully reveal Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ. He has done it in such a way that a finite mind might understand Him. We see this in the introduction to Hebrews in 1:1-3 **1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and [e]upholds all things by the word of His power.** We have a hard time wrapping our head around an infinite God, but we understand Jesus, he is both Man and God, bridging the gap, allowing us to understand God. **“No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him”** as it says in John 1:18. We have come to know God’s love “because He laid down His life for us” (1 John 3:16). John 4:9-10 **9 By this the love of God was revealed in us, that God has sent His only Son into the world so that we may live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** And Rom 5:8 **8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** And so, in a very real sense, God sent Jesus to live the life that HE lived in perfect accordance with the Will of the Father, being without sin, and then die for us on the cross, in order to explain His boundless, infinite, long-suffering love for us in a way that, if we will look at it, examine it, can’t help but point us to the bedrock of God’s love for us.

### Has lavished

To lavish means to bestow, or give something in abundance, with profuseness or excess. God’s love is extravagant, lacking in moderation and restraint. And the key here is that He “has lavished” (dedōken) perfect past tense, it’s something already accomplished, and it’s effects are still continuing. The extravagant gift of Jesus, His Son, has already been given. Once someone gives you a present, it takes away all ability to earn it. Furthermore, God has not just given His son as a sacrifice, but has raised Him so that we can have a relationship with God through Him, by the power of His Holy Spirit within us, and by His advocacy at the right hand of the Father. We get to be part of God’s magnificent plan. It’s His act. His love for us, and our status as His Children, if we are truly His, is not earned but is a gift, an act of unmerited and unimaginable generosity, founded not on any obligation felt by God nor on any expectation, but on love. And therefore it rests on His faithfulness.

### The Father

John isn't pointing us so much to our relationship with the Father as His Children as proof of His love, but rather THE MEANS by which this relationship was made possible. John is pointing us to God the father as the source. And John is pointing to the lavish love that God has poured out on us—Jesus. His blood was poured out for us. The love that God has lavished on us is His Son Jesus. That's what we're supposed to Behold, to see, to comprehend, to think about.

### **That we are called Children of God**

And not only do we get to be transformed into the image of Jesus, we also get to bear God's name. We have a relationship with God, through the relationship that we have in Jesus as our kinsman redeemer. We are members of God's family.

### **For this reason**

The next part of the verse begins "For this reason", or "on account of this". On account of what? On account of our relationship with God, as His children, THROUGH CHRIST. Because Christians are partakers in the divine love and have been designated the children of God in CHRIST the world does not understand them.

This view that God is the one who is loving, and Through Jesus is allowing us to have relationship as His Children is consistent throughout the New Testament. God does not love us so that we can become His Children, God loves us, so He sent Jesus to die for our sins, so that we can have relationship with Him through Jesus, and thereby become His adopted Children. We see this in John 1:12-13 **12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.** It's our receiving of Jesus that, placing our trust in Him, we become Children of God—And God arranged this—there's nothing in us that would commend us to Him, but He sent Jesus anyway!

### **The World does not understand**

The "world" (kosmos) refers to the evil humanistic system that dominates the society around us, a hostile order that stands in opposition to God. It is this unbelieving world which does not know 'us', and it did not know 'him' either. John 1:9-11: **9 This was the true Light that, coming into the world, enlightens every person. 10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, and yet the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own people did not accept Him.**

To be called God's children indicates a family relationship that the world does not want to choose, but is jealous of, all the same.

### **The world does not know us, because it did not know Him.**

We are identified with Christ—we are Christians, followers of Christ, and our life is In Him. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. We can count on LESS acceptance from the world, because we are His. See 1 John 3:13 **13 Do not be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.** The world accepts it's own, not us 1 Joh 4:5 **5 They are from the world, therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them.** 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:19 **19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.** John highlights this again in John 1:10 ('**He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him [the Word = Jesus Christ]**'). Being identified with God leads to alienation from the world. See John 15:18-25 18. The world hates us, just like it hated Jesus. We are no longer Of the World, just passing through it as Pilgrims, chosen out of the world to be God's Children, and hated by the world for it. It's our refusal to live by the world's selfish system, and "play the game", scam and be scammed, that the world hates. It's our identification with Christ that the world hates, but it's our identification with Christ that gives us life in Him, and allows us to be called the Children of God! And, so in a very real sense, the world's people are not "all God's Children" The world does not know us, because it has not know God. What a privilege to get to know God in relationship!