

**LIVE TO PLEASE YOUR GREAT GOD
CHRISTMAS 2011
1 JOHN 2:28 – 3:3**

O HOLY NIGHT

1. Joseph went to Bethlehem to **obey** the decree of Caesar with Mary his betrothed wife (Luke 2:1-5).
2. Mary gave birth to her **firstborn Son** and laid Him in a manger (Luke 2:6-7).
3. **Shepherds** were the first to be notified of Jesus' birth by a multitude of angels (Luke 2:8-14).
4. The shepherds rushed to Bethlehem to see the baby the **Lord God** had made known to them (Luke 2:15-20).

KEY THOUGHT: God's peace is a gracious **gift** to those who are the objects of His **good will** (Luke 2:14).

I. CHOOSE TO BE CONSTANTLY IN JESUS' PRESENCE (1 JOHN 2:28).

- A. The hope of Jesus' return should produce the effect of "**abiding**" in every Christian (John 15:1-6).
 1. Paul called it "loving His **appearing**" (2 Tim. 4:8).
 2. Abiding in Jesus signifies a constant **presence** in Him that **strengthens** our faith.
- B. The abiding is not passive, but **continual** and **active** by a Christian (Phil. 2:12).

KEY THOUGHT: Those who abide in Jesus have a **confidence** ("outspokenness") because they are **convinced** of Jesus' love for them (Col. 1:22-23).

II. CHOOSE TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY (1 JOHN 2:29).

- A. The hope of Jesus' return should make righteousness a **habit** (1 John 2:29).
 - 1. The term "born" used in 1 John 2:29 is the same verb Jesus used with Nicodemus about being "**born again**" (John 3:6).
 - 2. Those who are "born again" have their Heavenly Father's righteous **nature** (1 Peter 1:3, 13-16).

- B. Christians should display the **righteousness** of God (1 John 2:29).
 - 1. The result of our salvation is our righteous **behavior**.
 - 2. The cause of our righteous behavior is our **salvation**.

KEY THOUGHT: Righteous **living** is the proof of being born again (James 2:20, 26).

III. CHOOSE TO LIVE IN WONDER AT GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU (1 JOHN 3:1-3).

- A. Christians should display the **nature** and **lifestyle** of Jesus, their beloved Savior (1 John 3:7; 1 Cor. 2:15-16).

- B. Christians should practice being **like** Jesus and **conform** to His nature (1 John 3:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29).

- C. Living in the reality of Jesus' return makes a **difference** in a Christian's **behavior** (1 John 3:3).

KEY THOUGHT: Since Christians will be **like** Jesus when He comes again, our **desire** to be like Him now should grow stronger **every** day (1 Peter 1:22).

FOR FURTHER STUDY AND PERSONAL GROWTH

December 25, 2011

SUNDAY: ***God's peace is the greatest gift to all who believe on Jesus (Luke 2:14)!*** The list of miracles presented in Luke's recording of the birth of Jesus is astounding! God arranged every aspect of the birth to fulfill every prophecy offered regarding the birth of our Messiah. God's peace was heralded by the angels, proclaiming the salvation of men who will embrace the good will and love of the Father who just entered the world. Your salvation is a gift of heavenly peace granted to you directly by your Heavenly Father. How amazing to receive a gift so precious and eternal directly from the Father when you accepted Jesus as your Savior. Pause and thank the Lord for not only your salvation, but also for His tremendous expression of His love. Bless Him for His benevolent love and graciousness. Choose to make this Christmas the most life-changing one you have experienced thus far in your life. ***May you find the peace of God overwhelming this year when you consider you have received the greatest gift ever given!***

MONDAY: ***The promise of Jesus' return should produce a desire to constantly be in His presence (1 John 2:28)!*** John uses the term "abiding" in his writing. This term means to "remain" or "keeping being with". Every Christian should choose to be constantly in the presence of Jesus (1 John 2:28). "Being with" Jesus should cause us to keep our eyes off ourselves and on our Lord. The promise of our Lord Jesus returning should create a deep desire to be with Him every moment of every day. Surrendering to the Holy Spirit each morning and seeking to be cradled in His care throughout the day gives us the hope that we can live just exactly like our Lord. Choose to make a conscious effort today to fill yourself with the Holy Spirit and draw near to the Lord throughout the entire day. Choose only thoughts, words, and actions that would reflect the Jesus that lives through you. ***May each step that you take be placed in the very footprint of your Lord!***

TUESDAY: ***Abiding in Jesus is an active and continual decision for the Christian (Phil 2:12)!*** Paul told the Philippian Christians to "actively work" at their relationship with Jesus (Phil. 2:12). Abiding in Jesus' presence should cause the Christian to tremble in righteous awe. It should cause a display of respect due to a healthy fear of offending his Lord. It is the believer's responsibility to actively obey the commands given to him through the scriptures. Have you made the concerted decision to demonstrate an active obedience to the Lord's commands? Is your obedience nonnegotiable over the long-haul? Paul is calling for us to decide once and for all to actively pursue an obedient lifestyle that is unwavering and without compromise. Ask the Lord to help you build each day upon the successes you experienced the day before. Consider making a commitment to the Lord to build a recognizable consistency into your spiritual life. ***May your decision to pursue an active obedience to the Lord's commands bring a fulfillment that is unequalled in the Christian life!***

WEDNESDAY: ***Anticipating Jesus' return should make righteousness a habit (1 John 2:29)!*** The promised return of Jesus should not only sustain and even strengthen our faith, but it should cause righteousness to become a habit in our lives (1 John 2:29). Our fear of a sovereign Lord that will judge every aspect of our lives should cause us to live in fearful awe and loving

devotion (2 Cor. 5:10). Each day should become a precious commodity that is seen as a sacred trust that demands careful and thoughtful execution. It may very well be your last day to prepare to stand before your God and King. Is righteousness your standard for living each day? Do you live each day with the appreciation that it may be your last? Ask the Lord to impress upon your spirit the sacred trust of a day in your hands. Request instructions in prayer and seek them from the pages of scripture today. Pledge your unqualified devotion to your Lord and Savior today. ***May the intensity of the love you demonstrate toward the Lord be returned to you tenfold!***

THURSDAY: ***Righteous living is proof of a Christian's salvation (James 2:20, 26)!*** James hit the nail on the head when inspired to write, "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20, 26)! Words come too easily too often for us, and we do not weigh them carefully (Prov. 29:9, 11). James is contrasting two kinds of faith – a faithful man whose life affirms what he says he believes, and the other man whose life contradicts his words. Look deep inside of yourself and evaluate which one you are really striving to become. Righteous living should be the habit of the Christian and is living proof for his salvation! Ask the Lord where you are to start in your life. What is the first area for you to develop spiritual goals and action steps? Commit yourself to the lifelong process of proving your faith every minute of every day. ***May your growing comprehension of the vast love of God drive your heart to righteous living!***

FRIDAY: ***Each Christian should choose to live in wonder at God's great love for him (1 John 3:1-3)!*** Jesus' return will unite the believer with his Heavenly Father. John expresses how overwhelmed he is by God's relentless love for His children. Paul expounds on his astonishment at God's love for believers in making them His children (Rom. 8:17; 1 John 3:2). Therefore, it should be clear to us that we do not belong to this world (1 John 3:1). No wonder the Bible describes Christians as "pilgrims", "sojourners", and "strangers" (Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:11). As God's children, we are to be like Him and be conformed into the image of Jesus (1 John 3:2; Rom. 8:29). It is the great love of God that should motivate His children to pursue righteousness hard and with purpose! Fall on your face before God today, asking forgiveness for your selfish living. Ask that as the Holy Spirit fills you today He would bring a passion for righteous living that will glorify your Heavenly Father. ***May your zeal for righteousness grow and your compassion for the lost multiply!***

SATURDAY: ***The desire to live like Jesus right now should grow every day (1 Pet. 1:22)!*** Peter divinely describes a love that is driven by choice (1 Pet. 1:22). *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart"* (v. 22). This is a love that you choose to give, and it is willing to be stretched to the limit. Only the redeemed soul of a Christian is capable of this depth of love. This form of love demonstrates itself by striving to meet someone at their point of need (Phil. 2:1-8; 1 John 3:11). Are you known as a forgiving and compassionate person? Do the wounded seek you out because they crave the love and mercy you pour out? Are you willing to ask the Lord to increase the capacity of your heart to embrace those damaged by the ugly forces of this life? Ask the Lord to help you live more like Him today. Beg the Spirit to reveal areas of your life and specific cases where you have been unlike Jesus. ***May your growing desire for conformity to the life of Jesus bring you peace, but also a hunger for more of His nature!***