



The Lighthouse

NEW TESTAMENT NOTES

2 John

Mark W. Fenison, ThM.

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Preface

Here is a letter written from one “*sister*” congregation to another sister congregation encouraging it to resist false teachers and to continue to walk in the truth. The congregation at Jerusalem was in the center of the fight between Jewish Gnostic Christians and the congregations of Christ. To win over “*The Lady*” (lit. Gr. *kuria* feminine form of *kurios* translated “Lord”) or the first Lady of the Lord Jesus Christ which was the source of all New Testament congregations would be a great victory for Gnosticism.

Sister congregations should encourage and exhort each other in the faith as they are all committed to a common cause (Mt. 28:19-20) and striving for a common goal (Rev. 19:6-7).

The particular attack by the Gnostics was upon the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. They attempted to distinguish and separate the humanity from the divinity of Jesus Christ. The same heretics are alive and well today. The United Pentecostal Church denomination, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, The Oneness Movement and New Age Christianity are all “antichrists.”

Only New Testament Congregations are privileged to be qualified to receive a “*full*” reward or to be in the future eschatological “bride” of Christ. Not all the “saved” (Rev. 21:24) will dwell in that city named in honor of Christ’s bride (Rev. 21:1).

I hope these commentary notes encourage your congregation and its individual members to continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.

Mark W. Fenison
June 2, 2015

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Introduction to the Second Letter from John the Apostle

Theme: The theme is “*the truth*” (vv. 1, 2, 3, 4). The writer deals with two specific and inseparable truths. He deals with “*the commandment*” of love (vv. 5-6) and “*the doctrine of Christ*” (vv. 9-11). John is concerned that this metaphorical “*lady*” with “*her children*” will be corrupted by false teaching and false teachers (v. 7).

Date: The date is unknown. However, after A.D. 70 the apostle John would be the only remaining apostle and so the epitaph “*The elder*” would be the appropriate title for the apostle John between A.D. 70 and his death. So the date is somewhere between A.D. 70 and the date of his death after A.D. 97.

Writer: He is so well known among the congregations that he only has to introduce himself as “*the elder*.” He is most likely the Pastor of the congregation at Ephesus and the last living apostle, John the beloved. Hence, the description “*The elder*” not only reflects his pastoral office but reflects his seniority among all pastors in the apostolic age, as well as the last of the apostles of the apostolic age. Also, many of the same expressions used in the first epistle of John (“*no new commandment*” - 1 Jn. 2:7 - and love is keeping of the commandments - 1 Jn. 5:3-4 - are repeated verbatim in this epistle (vv. 5, 6). In 1 John 4:2 the same Gnostic heresy spelled out. In 1 John 2:18 the same reference to antichrists is found. His emphasis on commandment keeping and truth strongly infers that the same writer penned first, second and third John. There is strong early tradition that affirms the apostle John is the writer.

Occasion: John is writing this letter due to Gnostic influences. A Gnostic type of Christianity has its origin in the first century and began to flourish in the second century. At the center of this early Gnostic influence upon the congregations of Christ was the “*doctrine of Christ*.” Early Christian Gnostics believed that Christ was but one of the *aeons* that emanated from God. He was the Gnostic *soter* who simply indwelt the human Jesus at his baptism until Jesus was put on the cross, and then departed from him. They denied that Christ came in the flesh, but only Jesus was the fleshly man. John calls those who deny that Jesus Christ came in the flesh “*deceivers*” and “*an antichrist*” (v. 7). More importantly, he claims that those who embrace such a doctrine are without God (v.9) and should not be formerly “*received*” into the “*house*” where the congregation assembled. That is they should not allow such a one to publicly address the congregation or teach among them (3 Jn. 9-10).

Audience: This is written from one congregation with its Pastor to another congregation. The congregation of Christ was metaphorically described as “*chaste virgin*” (2 Cor. 11:2). The fact it is from “*the elder*” and “*elect sister*” with her “*children*” to an elect “*lady and her children*” makes its clear these are metaphorical women or congregations and individual members thereof (1 Cor. 12:27). In the first epistle these “*children*” are claimed as “*my little children*” who are obviously metaphorical “*children*.” The elect sister is the congregation at Ephesus and the “*children*” are the members of that congregation over which John was the “*elder*” or Pastor. The “*Lady*” is most likely the congregation at Jerusalem as the Greek term used here is *kuria* or the feminine of the masculine *kurios* translate “*Lord*.” She is “the” *kuria* or first lady of the Lord who had been constituted personally by Christ in Jerusalem of whom “all” who have known the truth were familiar with (2 Jn. who was first to receive “*the commandment*”). This is not the first time the Ephesian congregation was referred to as a metaphorical woman (Eph. 5:22-25). This letter provides the Biblical basis of addressing other congregations as “*sister*” congregations.

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New Testament congregations did not own public meeting houses. They commonly assembled in houses of members (v. 10; Rom. 16:5) Moreover, this demonstrates an elect within the elect. Election unto salvation consists of the whole family of God, but within that election there is a bride elect or the institutional congregation of Christ. Each congregation of Christ is a metaphorical virgin bride (2 Cor. 11:2) chosen to maintain its purity of doctrine and faithfulness to the apostolic pattern of faith and practice. The institutional congregation is “*the pillar and the ground of the truth*” (1 Tim. 3:1) and therefore the emphasis of each congregation would be on “*the truth.*”

Outline

Greetings – v. 1a

A. The Centrality of the truth – vv. 1b-4

1. Lovers of truth – v. 1
2. Knower’s of truth – v. 2
3. Boundary of truth (“in”) – v. 3
4. Practitioners of truth (“walking”) – v. 4

B. The Foundation of truth – vv. 5-6

1. The Preeminent truth (“the commandment”) – v. 5
2. The Limits of truth (“in it”) – v. 6

C. The Enemies of truth – vv. 7-9

1. Deceivers – v. 7
2. Apostates – v. 8
3. Antichrists – v. 9

D. The Defense of truth – vv. 10-12

1. Don’t receive them – v. 10a
2. Don’t bless them – v. 10b
3. Don’t Partake with them – v. 11
4. Don’t fail to respond – v. 12

Salutations – v. 13

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The Second Letter from John the Apostle

Chapter 1

The elder¹ unto the elect² lady³ and her children [1 Jn. 2:1], whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;⁴

2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth⁵ in us, and shall be with us for ever.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace,⁶ from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.⁷

¹ **“The elder”** – There are three different titles used to describe the leadership of New Testament congregations (see Acts 20:17, 28). (1) Elder – Gr. *presbuteros* – which denies they are novices or immature Christians; (2) Overseers or Bishops – Gr. *episkopos* – which describes their authority as shepherds watching over sheep; (3) Pastor – Gr. *poimaino* – which describes their responsibility to teach the Word of God. However, the writer here uses the definite article “the” to distinguish himself above all other leaders at this period in the first century. He was the last remaining apostle and he was the pastor at Ephesus, hence, he was “the” elder or the most senior pastor and apostle at this point in history.

² **“Elect”** – This term refers to God’s choice or selection before the world began (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thes. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:7) of specific individuals (Jer. 1:5; Rom. 8:28-32) out of fallen and justly condemned mankind to have mercy upon them (Rom. 9:16, 18) for salvation (“*her children*”) and for service (Lady – the institutional congregation). God has chosen individuals unto salvation (“*her children*” 2 Thes. 2:13) and he has chosen the institutional congregation as the way of service (“*the elect lady*”). Election to salvation or service is not based upon foreseen actions (Rom. 9:11) but has its sole basis in grace (Rom. 11:5). In direct contrast, justice would condemn all fallen mankind equally to eternal death. Mercy cannot be demanded on the basis of justice as the two are antithetical. By definition mercy is not getting what you justly deserve, while justice is getting exactly what you deserve. God arbitrarily based upon the pleasure of His own will had mercy upon a great number of fallen mankind, while exercising strict justice upon the rest of fallen mankind.

³ **“Lady”** – feminine form of *kurios* translated “*lord*.” The definite article means she is a very specific well known lady. She is the first lady of the Lord Jesus Christ or the congregation at Jerusalem. She is the congregation that “*all*” who have known the truth were well familiar with, as she is the source congregation from “*the truth*” and the pattern for “*walking in the truth*” and unto whom the commandment of love originated from.

⁴ **“All they that have known the truth”** – The words “*the truth*” refer to “*the doctrine*” (Rom. 16:17) or “*the faith*” once delivered (Jude 3) or that system of faith (1 Tim. 4:1) or “*the doctrine of Christ*” (v. 9; Heb. 6:1) and practice established by and commissioned by Christ (Mt. 28:20) which had been passed down (“*the Tradition*” – 2 Thes. 3:6) to the congregations, as the “*apostles doctrine*” (Acts 2:42) in order that they might not be tossed to and from with every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14) but would be established in maturity (Eph. 4:15). The New Testament was written to “*we...us...ye...you*” who were found in New Testament congregations of like faith and order. This New Testament “*we...us...ye...you*” are not Post-Apostolic Christians divided into denominations of conflicting doctrine and practice. Although the first century Christians “*have known the truth*” or the faith once delivered, this is not true of all post-apostolic Christianity. This was a well known congregation to “*all*” who have known the truth.

⁵ **“Dwelleth in us”** – The Spirit of truth indwells all true children of God (Rom. 8:8-9) before and after the cross (Gal. 4:28-29), as the individual physical body is the “*temple of the Spirit*” of Christ (1 Cor. 6:19) in regard to His individual “*children*.” However, the institutional congregational body is also the “*temple of the Spirit*” as the “*elect lady*” (1 Cor. 3:16).

⁶ **“Grace, Mercy and Peace”** – “*Grace is the unmerited favor of God whereby we get from Him what we don’t deserve or “God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.” Mercy is that aspect of the grace of God whereby we do not get*

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4 I rejoiced⁸ greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth,⁹ as we have received a commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beseech [passionately request] thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

what we deserve. Peace is that aspect of God's grace whereby we enjoy an indescribable union and tranquility in Christ that words fail to describe, for it goes beyond what we can even understand (Phil. 4:7). " – Larry Killion, The Landmark Edition of the King James Study Bible, "Second John".

⁷ **"In truth and love"** – Notice the combination of truth and love that is repeated in verses 1, 3, 6. Love is in the truth (v. 1). God's blessings toward us are confined within ("in") the boundaries of truth and love in verse 3. Love is defined as keeping His commandments (v. 6). God's love has definitive boundaries. What many call the "*love of God*" today has no such definitive boundaries, but is a sloppy agape. God's love does not rejoice or participate in "*iniquity*" but "*rejoiceth in truth*" (1 Cor. 13:6). Today many claim common love and experience is the basis for unity! However, they are defining "*love*" with all the characteristics found in 1 Cor. 13:4-8 with the exception to, and outside the boundaries of common truth. That is counterfeit love, as true love is always found within the boundaries of truth.

⁸ **"I rejoiced"** – In the third epistle John says that he has "*no greater joy*" than to know that his children walk in the truth (3 Jn. 3). Truth characterizes Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:6) not emotions, feelings, supernatural experiences. Truth characterizes the Spirit and His primary work (Jn. 16:15) not emotions, feelings or supernatural experiences. Truth characterizes the institutional house of God (1 Tim. 3:16) not emotions, feelings or supernatural experiences. Truth characterizes true liberty (Jn. 8:32) not emotions, feelings or supernatural experiences. Truth characterizes the Word of God (Jn. 17:17), not emotions, feelings or supernatural experiences. Indeed, all emotions, feelings and supernatural experiences are to be subjected to the objective truth of God's Word (Isa. 8:19-20). There is no greater joy than to be able to walk in the truth because that privilege is evidence you have a relationship with Christ and His Spirit in connection with and through the Word of God, as taught and practiced within the institutional house of God. That is a matter of great rejoicing which fewer and fewer Christians can participate in the day we live.

⁹ **"Walking in truth"** – The term "walking" refers to the daily conduct of your life. You cannot go any place without your feet. Your daily life is where you go, what you say and how you act. The congregation and its members were living their lives and conducting their worship services "*in truth*" or according to God's Word. One cannot walk "*in the Spirit*" apart from "*walking in truth*" as the Spirit is not the author of confusion and will never lead you to walk in error. Those who claim they are "*filled*" with the Spirit but are embracing and practicing the very things condemned in Scripture are liars and their supernatural experiences are "*lying wonders*" which have their source in the flesh and in many cases demons (1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:6). Truth is the basis for true unity and fellowship, as the Old Testament prophet said, how "*can two walk together except they be agreed*" (Amos 3:3).

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7 For many deceivers¹⁰ are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.¹¹ This is a deceiver and an antichrist.¹²

THE ANTICHRIST

All past and current “antichrists” are but preceding types of the coming eschatological antichrist in Revelation 12-13. The very same “spirit” at work in all preceding antichrists is the very same spirit that will be empowering the coming antichrist. All Old Testament types that foreshadow the eschatological antichrist were Gentiles not Jewish antichrists (Cain, Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, etc.). They were all received by the Jews due to force never willingly received. Likewise, the future eschatological antichrist will be a Gentile that will be received by deceived Christians (2 Thes. 2:3-12) as “God” and who will attempt to force himself upon Israel by gathering all nations against Israel in the force of armies. Israel and true Christians will be delivered by the coming of Christ from the eschatological antichrist. The “house of God” in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 cannot be the true house of God but only the perceived house of God by apostate professed Christians (2 Thes. 2:9-12).

¹⁰ “**Many deceivers**” Most of the apostles were dead when this was written. The apostles particular office and mission was to establish the faith within the congregations by their personal ministries and then through the inspired written records that formed the majority of the New Testament. With the majority of apostles now removed from the scene to act as restrainers of false doctrine and deception, gave opportunity for “*many deceivers*” to arise among the congregations just as Paul predicted to the Ephesian congregation (Acts 20:29-30). However, there was one last remaining apostle still on earth to serve that function and thus he could address them as “the elder” or senior spokesman for Christ to speak with the full authority of inspiration against such. The Greek term translated “deceiver” is *planos* from where we get the English term “planet.” The ancients could look up into the heavens and see some planets, but they were never in the same spot – they kept on moving, wandering and roving about the universe. Deceivers are not founded upon the solid and immovable Word of truth, but upon the ever changing opinions and traditions of men. Their interpretations of scripture are not founded upon solid hermeneutical principles. Therefore, they are deceived and they promote deception and produce deceivers.

¹¹ “**Jesus Christ is come in the flesh**” – During this period when John wrote his epistles and the book of Revelation, there was a certain Gnostic enemy of John named “Cerinthus.” Christian Gnostics arose from within the Jewish community unto which John primarily ministered (Gal. 2:9). Christian Jewish Gnostics accepted that “*Jesus*” came in the flesh, but denied that “*Christ*” or the *aeon soter* (savior) came in the flesh. Gnosticism was primarily the belief that evil was inseparable from the material universal, and therefore physical flesh was evil. Good was all spiritual or non-material. Hence, their view of salvation was bound up in how to be delivered from the material universe. They believed that the true God was manifested by a combination of *aeons* emanating from his being which they called the *pleroma* (“*fullness*” – Col. 2:9). They believed that “*Christ*” was but one of these *aeons* named *soter* (savior) who came to earth to reveal how to be delivered from the evil material universe. They believed that this “*Christ*” took possession of the earthly material Jesus at his birth and worked in and through him to reveal the truth about God and true way of deliverance from materialism which consisted of how to become “*spiritual*.” They believed that at the cross just before his death, that Christ left Jesus hanging on the cross, and laughed at Satan because Satan thought he had killed the Christ, when in fact, according to Gnosticism he had only killed the human Jesus. In response, Paul and John refuted this doctrine. They claimed that Jesus Christ was one person, and thus Christ came in the flesh. They claimed that Jesus Christ was the *pleroma* or “*the fullness of the Godhead bodily*.” All “Christian” denominations today that attempt to separate Jesus from the Christ, or deny the absolute humanity and deity of Jesus Christ is “*an antichrist*” or one who is opposing the truth about Christ.

¹² “**An antichrist**” – There have been and there are many antichrists. All who are led by the demonic spirits to oppose the true nature of Christ are true antichrists. It is true that there is only one coming eschatological antichrist that fits the description of Revelation 12-13. This eschatological Antichrist is the climax or epitome of all previous antichrists.

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FULL REWARD

Jesus said that all who simply give a cup of cold water in the name of the Lord will be rewarded. Every day obedience by Christians is saved in the form of rewards, as that time with its efforts of obedience are “*redeemed*” (Eph. 4:16).

However, the institutional congregation of Christ has to do with ones public service and public worship in addition to one’s private service and worship. Whatever we do privately in the name of the Lord or in keeping with his revealed will shall be rewarded. However, to receive a “*full*” reward requires more than private service and worship but upon persevering in “*the truth*” in regard to the “*pillar and ground of the truth*” or the institutional way of acceptable service. Those Christians who are removed from membership in New Testament congregations by discipline (1 Cor. 5:6-13) are no longer in a position to obtain “*full*” reward. Those Christians who depart from “*the faith*” are no longer in a position to obtain “*full*” reward.

It is not only unbiblical, but irrational to think that a Christian can receive a “*full*” reward if they are disobedient to the obvious command of Christ to serve Him through the New Testament congregation.

Revelation chapters two through three has nothing to do with maintaining salvation but with “*I know thy works*” and how works determine “*full*” reward in heaven or to partake of those things having to do with the New Jerusalem or home of the Bride. There will be multitudes (“*nations*”) of “*saved*” persons living outside the New Jerusalem upon the new earth (Rev. 21:24) after the millennium and Great White Judgment Seat have past (Rev. 20) and after God has created a new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1). The eschatological bride is all about “*having made herself ready*” (Rev. 19:6) or as John says here “*look to yourself*” that you lose not a “*full*” reward.

Each congregational body of Christ is a metaphorical “*chaste virgin*” that may or may not be “*presented*” unto Christ (2 Cor. 11:2) depending upon their continuation as a metaphorical “*chaste virgin*.” A “*chaste virgin*” can be “*corrupted*” (2 Cor. 11:3) by false doctrine (2 Cor. 11:4) and cease to be a metaphorical “*chaste virgin*.”

Obtaining a “*full*” reward has nothing to do with salvation as that is assumed already. Obtaining a “*full*” reward has to do with fighting a “*good fight*” and having “*kept the faith*” and finished your course or calling (2 Tim. 4:6-7). The full reward is the “*crown of life*” rather than the “*gift*” of life. It has to do with your whole Christian life being lived out for the Lord in keeping with the revealed will of God for both your private and public service for God. If you finish your course but have failed to serve through a New Testament congregational body of Christ you have failed to fight a “*good fight*”. If you fail to serve through the congregational body of Christ, you have failed to have “*kept the faith*.” To imagine that one can “*forsake... the assembling of yourselves together*” as the vast majority do (Heb. 10:25), and still receive a “*full*” reward is simply irrational and unbiblical.

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8 Look to yourselves,¹³ that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

9 Whosoever transgresseth,¹⁴ and abideth not in the doctrine¹⁵ of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth [continually resides] in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.¹⁶

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house,¹⁷ neither bid him God speed:

11 For he that biddeth [Gr. lego – to verbally say] him God speed¹⁸ is partaker of his evil deeds. [Rev. 18:4]

¹³ “**Look to yourselves**” – The “*full*” reward can be lost. He is speaking of the ultimate reward of being in the bride of Christ, as not all true believers will be in the bride (Rev. 18:4; 19:8-9; 21:24). Personal rewards for things already accomplished in your daily life cannot be lost, as God is not an Indian giver and does not replay time and reverse rewards for what you have already obeyed. However, the bridal reward is based upon being faithful until the end (2 Tim. 4:6-7) within a true congregation of Christ. That can be lost by being placed outside of the congregation by church discipline. Those whom the church fails to place under discipline, you can be sure Christ won’t fail to remove from this reward. Whole congregations can have their candlestick removed (Rev. 2:5). The congregation is metaphorically a “*chaste virgin*” (2 Cor. 11:2) which can be metaphorically “*corrupted*” (2 Cor. 11:3) through false doctrine (2 Cor. 11:4). A metaphorical “*corrupted*” chaste virgin is a metaphorical “*harlot*”, just as the false institutional religion is a metaphorical “*harlot*” (Rev. 17:5; 18:4). We are in a great apostasy today from “the faith” (1 Tim. 4:1) and many are losing a “*full*” reward.

¹⁴ “**Transgresseth**” – The “eth” suffix found in the King James English conveys the present tense of continuing action. This does not refer to past, present or future mistakes. This refers to a continuing state of being. This person by character is a transgressor of the “*doctrine of Christ*.” He is one who is wholly committed to the belief that Jesus Christ is either merely a man or merely God, but who denies he is God manifested in the flesh. In other words, he is a believer and/or teacher in “another Jesus.” One may not understand fully the truth of the person of Jesus Christ, or may be ignorant, but willing to be taught, but if at the time of their professed salvation their view of Jesus Christ is a denial of either his humanity or divinity, then they are not saved and cannot be saved (Jn. 17:3). Saving faith is only as valid as the correct object of your faith. If you are trusting in the wrong object for salvation, then you are not trusting in the Jesus of the Bible, but in an idol constructed in your mind.

¹⁵ “**The Doctrine of Christ**” – This refers to more than merely the doctrinal truth about the Person of Christ (Heb. 6:1-3). It refers to the whole system of faith and practice handed over to the apostles to establish in the congregations. However, in this passage it is referring to the truth about the Person of Jesus Christ.

¹⁶ “**Hath not God....hath both the Father and the Son**” – God consists of more than one Person. The Father and the Son are “*both*” included as “*God*” by John. Omission of any mention of the Holy Spirit is not a denial that the Holy Spirit is not inclusive as God. The subject matter here is the right concept of the Person of Jesus Christ. Gnostics denied that Jesus was God and Christ was not fully God. John’s point is that Jesus Christ is one Person and is God in the flesh.

¹⁷ “**Receive him not into your house**” - There were no buildings specially set apart for the congregation to meet in during the apostolic period. The congregation usually met in someone’s house (see Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Phm 1:2; Col. 4:15). This is being addressed to the metaphorical lady or a New Testament congregation. This is a direct command not to “*receive*” false teachers into the public meeting as public speakers or teachers. You cannot keep false teachers or preachers from attending the service, but you can keep them silent in the congregation and show them the door if they don’t remain silent. Once “*deceivers*” are identified, they should be marked as such and avoided. Christians should refuse to allow them into their personal homes for public or private worship (Rom. 16:17-18).

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12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

13 The children of thy elect sister¹⁹ greet thee. Amen.

¹⁸ “**Godspeed**” Many find themselves in an awkward situation when a representative of a cult wishes you a good day or God bless you when they leave your church or home door. Perhaps a good response is “*I hope the Lord blesses you with salvation and/or knowledge of the truth.*” To wish them “*Godspeed*” is to place God’s blessing on their false doctrine and ministry. When they leave your congregation or home they are going to your next door neighbor to lead them astray. So even wishing them “*Godspeed*” or “*have a good day*” is to “**partake of their evil deeds.**” Those who are members within corrupted Christian public institutions are partakers of their evil deeds and will be partakers of the temporal judgment (Rev. 18:4) passed upon the Great Harlot (Catholicism) and her harlot daughters (Reformed Catholicism).

¹⁹ “**Thy elect sister**” - Here is strong evidence that the phrase “*elect lady*” and “*elect sister*” are metaphors for letters between New Testament congregations. This is particular seen in the fact that it is “*the children*” of the elect sister that is sending this “*Lady*” and her children greetings. No husband for either is mentioned. The fact that this letter originates from an “*elder*” in connection with an elect “*sister*” with children strongly indicates this is a sister congregation, or a “*chaste virgin*” (2 Cor. 11:2). In 1 John these “*children*” are called “*my little children*” by the writer, indicating that all of these terms are to be taken metaphorical instead of literally.