

There are those who insist that everything must be taken exactly and only as the Bible says. Thus, bidding God speed is not the same as bidding Christ speed. Saying that Christ will speed your plans is not the same as saying God will speed your plans therefore the prohibition applied by the Holy Spirit in context cannot be extrapolated onto other expressions. This is a very artificial and limiting approach to scripture and should not find favour with those who are looking for the meaning that God claims is to be found in His inspired word. You cannot escape the prohibition of scripture by changing the wording to avoid such! Saying God bless to someone instead of saying God speed does not lessen the endorsement of a faulty position that a lack of discernment brings upon the faithless!

I would suggest that those who argue such do so not with a high sense of awe and acceptance of the Bible doctrine on any point and anxious for a literal document but are motivated by a desire to avoid the condemnation of Biblical teaching by any means possible. Do such extreme views engender a literal obedience to the exact wording? No, it does not. Do those who advocate such cut off the offending hand or foot? No, they do not! That is metaphorical language they will say which needs to be interpreted.

*"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed for him that bids him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds". 2 John v 9-11*

As the Bible student genuinely wishes to understand the Holy Spirit here, it is important to glean as much information from the context as possible and to cross reference other passages of scripture in any analysis.

First, which doctrine is at issue here? Is the doctrine of verse 10 the same as the doctrine of Christ mentioned in verse 9, is it any doctrine or teaching of Christ, or is it the teaching that abiding in or not abiding in any other doctrine has consequences? The main emphasis of the Letter is not any definition of Christ as the Son of God not God the Son, or as Jesus as a representative not a substitutionary sacrifice, or that Jesus was not only human but more than mere man. The main issue of the Letter is the need to walk in Truth and take appropriate actions, as faith without works is dead being alone! This is done by not forsaking any teaching of Christ, all his doctrines are important, those he personally taught himself and those delegated through his Apostles after his departure.

The Letter does mention those who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and this element of the doctrine about Christ is specifically censured with the language of “*a deceiver and an antichrist*” a separate condemnation from the specifics of our verse under consideration, but nevertheless a horrible thing to see in others who care not for Truth because they so easily espouse error.

Being a partaker of evil deeds is less an issue of false beliefs, such as a misunderstanding the doctrine of Christ, so much as becoming tainted with the same negative actions by association. The idea of sin by association is often resisted by those keen to evade the consequences of their silence or inaction. Not speaking out against sin and evil is not acceptable to the God-fearing. There is a common saying which expresses this concept “All it takes for evil to prosper is for good men to stay silent”. This encapsulates the issue succinctly. Not speaking out against openly manifest sin is to diminish its condemnation in the eyes of others, which is very dangerous. An innocent may then become infected with the same sin not being morally repelled by it with the intensity that they should because others have compromised the situation in their minds.

Evil deeds are understandable in the context of transgression. Transgression is personal failure to adhere to Christ commandments, which form part of his doctrines. The requirement to avoid adultery by not remarrying is one such. Evil deeds, adultery, follow from a non-adherence to Christ's doctrine on the subject of divorce and remarriage. However evil deeds, blasphemy, do also follow from those who abandon Truth to the lies of false doctrines.

Is the penalty for disobedience limited to the exact language only of the verse? If you take such into your house, do you escape participation in their evil deeds because the next phrase only lists bidding him God speed? If you take him into your Ecclesia or church but not your house is that Ok because it is not specified? The astute reader will do everything to avoid censure and will seek to understand such censure in the generic sense, not sidestep the issue by neglecting the requirement that under divine inspiration no holes are left in Christ's legislation so any interpretation with holes is suspect. If there are any apparent holes it probably means that our preferred understanding is incorrect.

Sin needs to be called out for what it is. Ignoring it is dangerous and will lead to personal calamity. This should be self-evident. That many think otherwise is not just poor reasoning but a deliberate attempt by the old man to escape the consequences of his compromise with sin. The language of the Holy Spirit is emphatic. Such people "hath not God"! Abiding in the doctrine of Christ is the only way to ensure that we have both the Father and the Son, as they two are one in beliefs and doctrines and are seen as such, therefore so should the disciples of Christ be as one, in their beliefs and doctrines, in order that they may emulate the relationship which Christ enjoys with his Father, John 17v20-22.

Who are those that come making such claims? Is the language used here such that it is OK if any already amongst the "elect lady and her children" have this false doctrine and so do not literally come to them?

It would be a sad and absurd day if the limitations of those anxious to mitigate for sinners reasoning thus, became accepted in the ranks of the faithful! Any coming unto you is not limited by the specifics of the Letter. It applies in other places not just the place to which the Apostle first wrote, by the establishment of an argument of association. *“He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds”* is a universal principle unless the context requires it to be specifically limited. It is possible for a principle to be limited and the surrounding language will indicate this “for the present distress” and “to the Jew” come to mind as examples of this.

True believers then will avoid the casual endorsement of those who misunderstand Christ’s fleshly presence. They will also avoid any who transgression any of Christ’s teachings which constitute that form of doctrine which was delivered to the early Ecclesia. This includes those who negate the doctrine that those that do not abide in the doctrine lose their association with God, “hath not God”.

Are there any other passages which teach a similar theme as we have discovered here? Even the Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge has listed some

Psalm 50v18

Ephesians 5v11

1 Timothy 5v22

Revelation 18v4

No doubt regular Bible readers will also be able to add more passages of their own to this list.

A Voice from the Altar

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