

**‘DOWN-TO-EARTH, LOVE FROM ABOVE’**  
***(A Good Shepherd’s Love Letters to Straying Sheep)***  
**Studies in 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> John**

**“Shortly - face to Face”**

When you read those words in a letter or email from somebody or when a phone conversation ends with a similar salutation, what inner feelings are stirred? You could be elated that soon you’ll be with him or her! On the other hand, you might dread the coming encounter. It’s also possible that you feel motivated to get everything as good as possible before the ‘*shortly, face to face*’ interim of time elapses.

I think all these options were probably true of all those who read or heard Apostle John’s two brief follow-up letters, **2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John**. Both follow-up letters to **1<sup>st</sup> John**, the general epistle, closed in very similar ways – “...*hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full*” (**2<sup>nd</sup> John 12**); and “...*hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face*” (**3<sup>rd</sup> John 14**). Both letters, the first to a Christian lady and the second to a Christian leader included commendations, criticisms and corrective measures from John, the Spirit-filled author. Although it would have been natural to expect compliance in response to what he wrote, he also promised a coming personal visit, just to be sure and hold them accountable. On a broader application, the whole Bible is God’s love letter to His people and similarly, the Lord affirms three times in the book of **Revelation** “*Behold, I am coming quickly!*” (**Revelation 22:7, 22:12, 22:20**). I wonder, how does that triplicate salutation from God affect you as we await the Savior’s imminent **face to Face** return?

**‘Shortly’ or ‘quickly’** Although we cannot know precisely the exact moment of Jesus’ return to the clouds above earth to close the **Church Age** with an evacuation (*rapture*) of all truly *born again* believers before He vents His wrath upon the earth, it is certain we are getting very, very close to departure time (**1 Corinthians 15:50-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, Revelation 6:16-17**). It may not be long ‘til we go to our ‘face to Face’ appointment with the One Who has been speaking to us through His love letter, the Bible. We will be accountable for what we did with our Christian life (**2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Cor. 3:11-17**)?

**How ‘soon’ ‘til we see Him?** According to Jesus in **Matthew 24:32-34** in accord with **Daniel 9:24**, the generation that sees Israel flourishing as a nation again with Jerusalem as capital can know for sure “...*His coming in near – at the doors!*” (**Matthew 24:33**) and that that generation (*70 years – Psalm 90:10*) will see “...*all these things (last days events) take place*” (**Matthew 24:34**). This year, 2018, is 70 years since Israel became a nation. It is also the 1<sup>st</sup> year after Jerusalem’s 50th year/ Jubilee when all things return to their original Owner. In addition to other signs of the times, like Noah’s finishing of the ark in 120 years (*correlating with Zionism’s 120-year existence this year*), other factors make it very likely that Jesus is coming very soon to evacuate us before the coming 7-year Tribulation wrath of God (**Revelation 7 & 8**).

**‘Face to Face’** This ‘**face to Face**’ appointment with the Lord always seems more imminent than usual this time of year. Today, Sunday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 is the first of the three Jewish holidays of the fall season in Israel. Today at 6 pm in Israel (*their days begin at sunset*) the annual **Feast of Trumpets** begins. Traditionally, this signaled the end of the harvest and the summoning of all the workers in the field to come in and celebrate. Will this coincide with the biblical ‘*last trumpet*’ of the Church Age signaling the end of the spiritual harvest and gathering together of believers into ‘*the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*’? We shall see, but since Jesus, at His first coming, literally fulfilled the spring festivals of Israel (**Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits/ 1 Corinthians 5:5-8 & 15:20**), we presume He will probably be consistent in doing likewise with the fall festivals of Israel when He comes again (**1 Cor. 14:40**). Whenever He comes and whenever it happens, we will give account ‘*face to Face*’ for what we did with all ‘*time, talent & treasure*’ benefits He gave us after repenting of sin and trusting Christ as Savior and Lord (**Matthew**

25:14-30, John 12:48, Hebrews 6:9-12). After the accountability and awards assembly in the clouds (2 Corinthians 5:10), the Savior will take us on to heaven for *safe harbor* from the awesome 7-year Tribulation (symbolically seen in the second fall festival 'Yom Kippur' / Day of Atonement or Day of the LORD) on earth (John 14:1-6). We will return with Jesus at His second coming at the end of the Tribulation (Revelation 19) to serve under His rule and reign on earth for 1000 years (*the Millennial Kingdom/ Revelation 20:1-6*) which is seen in the third and final Jewish feast of fall, 'Sukkot' or 'Tabernacles' celebrating God's presence and reign with His people on earth. What an exciting future followers of Christ have in the imminent future! No wonder Titus 2:11-14 refers to the *rapture of believers* as '**the blessed hope**'!

In 2<sup>nd</sup> John, he says '*I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full*' (v 12) I am confident that Jesus feels that way about seeing you '*face to Face*' real soon (Revelation 3:10-11). I hope you feel that way about seeing Him '*face to Face*' too. May His coming motivate and inspire us all to heed 2 Peter 3:14: "*Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless...*" "**Maranatha!**" (*our Lord comes*) (1 Corinthians 16:22). PtL

**'The Lady Who Loved Too Much'**  
(Lessons in settling strife among the Savior's sheep)  
2 John / The Master's Menu for Confrontation

**'Salutations!' In Love**  
(*'Well begun; half done'*)  
The Appetizer

*"The Elder, to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us for-ever: **Grace, mercy and peace will be with you** from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, in truth and love."* Vs. 1-3

**'Speaking the Truth in Love'**  
(*'A little bit of sugar helps medicine go down'*)  
The Entrée

*"I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. **This is love - that we walk according to His commandments.** This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it."* Vs. 4-6

*For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we **do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.** Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. **If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine do not receive him** into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds."* Vs.7-11

**'See You Soon!' in Love**  
(*'Sweet fellowship with the brethren' / follow-up*)  
The Dessert

*"Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but **I hope to come to you and speak face to face that our joy may be full.** The children of your elect sister greet you. **Amen.**"* Vs. 12-13