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A Fond Farewell

13: 11-14



The final lines of **Paul's** letter shift from stern warning to a more affectionate tone. The shift in tone is no less sudden than the one between **Chapters 9** and **10**. Those who claim that **Second Corinthians** consists of more than one letter must decide to which letter this closing originally belonged. Some commentators claim that such a mild, gentle, and loving conclusion following such a menacing onslaught (**to see link click Cf - A Stern Warning**) does not fit, so it must have been originally the salutation of **Chapters 1-9**. But we can see a similar switch in mood in **Second Thessalonians 3:10-15** and **3:16-18**. As a result, we reject the premise that a shift in tone and subject matter is a reliable indicator that a letter has been doctored by a later editor.²⁹⁹

In closing, Paul issues a final appeal couched in general terms. **And now, brothers, shalom! Put yourselves in order** (Greek: *katartizo*), **pay attention to my advice** to break with all idolatry (see **Bi - Do Not be Unequally Yoked with Unbelievers**), **be of one mind (First Corinthians 1:10), live in shalom (12:20) - and the God of love and shalom will be with you (13:11)**. Taken as a whole, these summarize the preparation **Paul** hoped **the Corinthians** would make for **his** visit.

Greet one another with a holy kiss (13:12). Evidently the early church invested the kiss, a common form of salutation in the Orient, with a special and sacred significance (**Romans 16:16; First Thessalonians 5:26**). It expressed **love (First Peter 5:14)** as well as union and fellowship with the family of **God** and

perhaps also a sign of mutual forgiveness and reconciliation that was exchanged before the **Lord's** Supper was celebrated (**Matthew 5:23-24; First Corinthians 16:20b** and **22**). In addition, **the holy kiss** exhibited freedom in Messiah – the transcending of divisions based on gender, race, and status – for **the kiss** was exchanged by male and female, Jew and Greek, and slave and free (**Galatians 3:28**).

All God's people send greetings to you (13:13). The believers referred to here may well have been the Philippians, but the reference could be to believers throughout Macedonia, including those in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Or again, **all God's people** may signify the Church as a whole (**Romans 16:16**). In his capacity as **apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)**, Paul was not reluctant to speak about, and on behalf of, **all the churches (First Corinthians 7:17** and **14:33; Second Corinthians 8:18** and **11:28)**. In any case, **he** was reminding **the Corinthian** believers that **he** was not alone in seeking **their** welfare and that there were others to whom **they** were accountable.³⁰⁰

The grace of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, the love of God and the fellowship of the Ruach Ha'Kodesh be with you all (13:14). The final greeting mentions all three **Persons of the Trinity**. The emphasis falls on **grace, love, and fellowship** experienced by believers rather than on Trinitarian theology itself. **The grace of the Lord Yeshua Messiah** is summarized earlier: **For you know the grace of our Lord Yeshua Messiah, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich (8:9)**. **The love of God** is expressed and seen most clearly in **Messiah's** sacrificial death. And when Paul mentions **the fellowship of the Ruach Ha'Kodesh, he** wishes for **the Corinthians** to deepen **their** relationship with **Him**, and the unity which **the Spirit** gives to the Church.³⁰¹

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for the great gift of relationship with you! How wonderful to have **You** as my **Father, the King** of the universe who **loves** me. It is so wonderful to **love You! You** indwell me and give **Your Presence** to me.*

Yeshua answered and said to him: If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him (John 14:23).

*I am so grateful that not only are my **sins** forgiven, but I know that because of my **love** for **God** and Messiah 's death as my **sin** offering, I will go to live with **You** in heaven forever! **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering***

*on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21). What peace and comfort to run to **You** knowing that **Your Spirit** is always with me to guide and to comfort me. I **love** to both praise **You** and to ask for **Your** help, which **You** have promised to give. **For God Himself has said, “I will never leave you or forsake you,” so that with confidence we say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. (Hebrews 13:5c-6a).** Having a relationship with **You** is so fantastic. I want to cultivate that relationship by living a life following right after **You**. **Love to You** always dear **Father!** In **Yeshua’s** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

At the end of this letter, we recognize that in **Second Corinthians, Paul** offered a profoundly **God**-centered solution to the problems at **Corinth**. Ultimately, the church’s struggle with their **apostle** revealed an underlying dysfunction in their relationship with **God**. The answer, then, for them and for us, has to do with being restored to a right relationship with **God** through a proper understanding of the Gospel which changes us and our relationships with believers and unbelievers alike, but ultimately, it changes our relationship with **God**. Perseverance in the faith always stems from the clarity that we see in **Yeshua** and what **He** has accomplished on our behalf. If we lose that clear picture, we lose a grasp of the Good News, and that leads to chaos in the community of believers. As **Paul** demonstrated, **ADONAI** uses genuine shepherds to project a clear picture of **Messiah** and the Gospel, through both their words and their lives.

In closing, dear readers, I echo **the apostle**:

**The grace of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah,
and
the love of God,
and
the fellowship of the Ruach Ha’Kodesh
be with you all.**³⁰²