

2 Corinthians 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (NIV)

1. This closing verse of the epistle of 2 Corinthians is a doxology, and is typical of how Paul closes his epistles. Galatians, Philippians and both Thessalonian epistles close with “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The close of Ephesians includes “love with faith from God.” There is no reason to conclude that a closing doxology would not incorporate three wonderful attributes: the love of God, the grace of Christ and the fellowship of the spirit.

2. There is no presentation of the Trinity in this verse. Three different things are mentioned, but they are never said to be “one,” or “of one substance,” or “making up one God,” or anything like what would be needed for a Trinitarian formula. There are many times that three things are mentioned together in the Bible, yet Trinitarians do not make them “one” just because they are mentioned together. For example, “Peter, James and John” are often mentioned together, but that fact does not make them “one.” Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are often mentioned together also, and that fact does not make them “one.” If three things are actually “one,” there must be a clear verse that says so, and as even Trinitarians will admit, there is no such verse that articulates that God, Jesus and the spirit equal “one God.”

3. Although this verse is used by some to support the Trinity, a careful reading shows that it actually contradicts it. The three mentioned in the verse are “God,” “Jesus Christ” and the “Holy Spirit” (which we believe should be accurately translated as “holy spirit”). Yet the Trinitarian position is that “God” is composed of the Father, Christ and the Spirit. So the fact that the verse mentions “God” *separate from* Christ and the holy spirit is strong evidence that they are indeed separate from “God” and that there is no Trinity (see also the note on 1 Cor. 12:4-6).

4. This verse does not mean that we have fellowship with the “person,” the Holy Spirit, who is part of the Trinity. It refers to the fellowship that Christians have with each other because of the presence of God’s gift, holy spirit, in each of us. The “fellowship of the spirit” is a phrase that is also used in Philippians 2:1, and the text note on this verse in the *NIV Study Bible* is fairly accurate. It says: “The fellowship among believers produced by the Spirit, who indwells each of them.” We would replace “Spirit” with “spirit,” (because we believe it refers to God’s gift) and translate “who” as “which” (“spirit” is neuter in the Greek text), but the point is made beautifully. The fellowship of the spirit is the fellowship Christians enjoy with other believers because of the presence of the spirit in each of us (For more on God’s gift of holy spirit, see the notes on Acts 5:3 and 4).

Dana, pp. 213 and 214

Morgridge, pp. 101 and 102

Snedeker, pp. 115-118

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