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Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

PAUL'S EARLIEST STATEMENT CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH: A REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF RESEARCH INTO  
PAUL'S ASSOCIATION OF THE TERM ἐκκλησία  
TO ἐν Χριστῷ IN 1 THESSALONIANS

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by  
Roberto Pereyra  
January 1995

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Roberto Pereyra

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**ABSTRACT**

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**by**

**Roberto Pereyra**

**Adviser: Jon Paulien**

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

**Title:** PAUL'S EARLIEST STATEMENT CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH: A REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF RESEARCH INTO PAUL'S ASSOCIATION OF THE TERM ἐκκλησία TO ἐν Χριστῷ IN 1 THESSALONIANS

**Name of researcher:** Roberto Pereyra

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**Date completed:** January 1995

The purpose of the dissertation is to develop a deeper understanding of Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian Church as expressed in the context of 1 Thessalonians. This understanding is gained through a review and evaluation of research into Paul's association of the term ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif in the context of 1 Thessalonians.

Chapter 1 reviews literature on the topic and introduces the study. Chapter 2 examines introductory issues of 1 Thessalonians such as authorship, date and place of writing, recipients, general situation, and

purpose. Chapter 3 deals with the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16, a literary question of Paul's relating of the terms. The study reviews and evaluates historical, theological, and form-critical arguments raised on this issue. Chapter 4, after a concise overview of scholarly research regarding the ἐν Χριστῷ motif, explores Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church as expressed in the term ἐκκλησία in connection to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thess 1:1; 2:14. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of the study and suggests implications for further research.

The main thesis of the dissertation is that, in the context of 1 Thessalonians, Paul is redefining the term ἐκκλησία by a theological and christological hermeneutic. Particularly in 1 Thessalonians, the phrase (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is not found to be an expression of mystical or individual piety, nor just a statement to designate any Christian community, to express ownership and spiritual union with Christ, to differentiate the Christian assemblies from other ones, or to emphasize the unity of Christians everywhere. Rather, it is an ecclesiological formula that confirms God's saving work through Jesus and recognizes the significance of Jesus' messiahship as the Christ of the OT predictions.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>ABD</u>	<u>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</u>
<u>AdvRe</u>	<u>Adventist Review</u>
<u>Ang</u>	<u>Angelicum</u>
<u>ANRW</u>	<u>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</u>
<u>ATJ</u>	<u>Ashland Theological Journal</u>
<u>ATR</u>	<u>Anglican Theological Review</u>
<u>AusBR</u>	<u>Australian Biblical Review</u>
<u>AUSS</u>	<u>Andrews University Seminary Studies</u>
<u>Bib</u>	<u>Biblica</u>
<u>BibLit</u>	<u>Bibel und Liturgie</u>
<u>BibOr</u>	<u>Bibbia e oriente</u>
<u>BibRe</u>	<u>Biblical Research</u>
<u>BibT</u>	<u>The Bible Translator</u>
<u>BibTo</u>	<u>The Bible Today</u>
<u>BibZ</u>	<u>Biblische Zeitschrift</u>
<u>Bij</u>	<u>Bijdragen</u>
<u>BJRL</u>	<u>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</u>
<u>BNBED</u>	<u>Biblische Notizen Beiträge zur Exegetische Diskussion</u>
<u>BS</u>	<u>Bibliotheca Sacra</u>
<u>BTB</u>	<u>Biblical Theological Bulletin</u>

<u>BZNW</u>	<u>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</u>
<u>CalTJ</u>	<u>Calvin Theological Journal</u>
<u>CBO</u>	<u>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</u>
<u>CBTJ</u>	<u>Calvary Baptist Theological Journal</u>
<u>CJ</u>	<u>Concordia Journal</u>
<u>CJT</u>	<u>Canadian Journal of Theology</u>
<u>Coll</u>	<u>Colloquium</u>
<u>Conci</u>	<u>Concilium</u>
<u>CTM</u>	<u>Concordia Theological Monthly</u>
<u>CTR</u>	<u>Concordia Theological Review</u>
<u>DD</u>	<u>Dor Le Dor</u>
<u>DTT</u>	<u>Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift</u>
<u>EB</u>	<u>Estudios Bíblicos</u>
<u>EQ</u>	<u>Evangelical Quarterly</u>
<u>ETL</u>	<u>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</u>
<u>EvJ</u>	<u>Evangelical Journal</u>
<u>EVT</u>	<u>Evangelische Theologie</u>
<u>Exp</u>	<u>The Expositor</u>
<u>ExpTim</u>	<u>The Expository Times</u>
<u>ForF</u>	<u>Forschung und Fortschritte</u>
<u>Foun</u>	<u>Foundations</u>
<u>FZPT</u>	<u>Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie</u>
<u>GTJ</u>	<u>Grace Theological Journal</u>
<u>HBT</u>	<u>Horizons in Biblical Theology</u>
<u>HTR</u>	<u>Harvard Theological Review</u>

<u>HTS</u>	<u>Hervormde Teologiese Studies</u>
<u>IBS</u>	<u>Iris Biblical Studies</u>
<u>Int</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
<u>JAAR</u>	<u>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</u>
<u>JAOS</u>	<u>Journal of the American Oriental Society</u>
<u>JATS</u>	<u>Journal of the Adventist Theological Society</u>
<u>JBL</u>	<u>Journal of Biblical Literature</u>
<u>JETS</u>	<u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u>
<u>JQR</u>	<u>Jewish Quarterly Review</u>
<u>JRH</u>	<u>Journal of Religious History</u>
<u>JRTR</u>	<u>Journal of Reformed Theological Review</u>
<u>JSNT</u>	<u>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</u>
<u>JSS</u>	<u>Journal of Semitic Studies</u>
<u>JTS</u>	<u>Journal of Theological Studies</u>
<u>Jud</u>	<u>Judaism</u>
<u>LTP</u>	<u>Laval théologique et philosophique</u>
<u>MMon</u>	<u>Moody Monthly</u>
<u>NedTTs</u>	<u>Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift</u>
<u>NGTT</u>	<u>Nederduiste Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif</u>
<u>NIDNTT</u>	<u>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</u>
<u>NKZ</u>	<u>Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift</u>
<u>NovT</u>	<u>Novum Testamentum</u>
<u>NRT</u>	<u>Nouvelle Revue Théologique</u>
<u>NTrans</u>	<u>Notes on Translation</u>
<u>NTS</u>	<u>New Testament Studies</u>
<u>OJRS</u>	<u>Ohio Journal of Religious Studies</u>

<u>Pres</u>	<u>Presbyterion</u>
<u>RB</u>	<u>Revue Biblique</u>
<u>RE</u>	<u>Review and Expositor</u>
<u>Rég</u>	<u>Revue des études grecques</u>
<u>RevB</u>	<u>Revista Bíblica</u>
<u>RevBI</u>	<u>Revista Biblica Italiana</u>
<u>RevExp</u>	<u>Review and Expositor</u>
<u>RevQ</u>	<u>Revue de Qumran</u>
<u>RHR</u>	<u>Revue de l'histoire des religions</u>
<u>RO</u>	<u>Restoration Quarterly</u>
<u>RTR</u>	<u>The Reformed Theological Review</u>
<u>SBLSP</u>	<u>Seminar Biblical Literature Seminar Paper</u>
<u>SEÅ</u>	<u>Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok</u>
<u>ScEccl</u>	<u>Sciences ecclésiastiques</u>
<u>Scr</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
<u>Sem</u>	<u>Semitica</u>
<u>SIG<sup>3</sup></u>	<u>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</u>
<u>SJT</u>	<u>Scottish Journal of Theology</u>
<u>ST</u>	<u>Studia Theologica</u>
<u>SWJTh</u>	<u>Southwestern Journal of Theology</u>
<u>TDNT</u>	<u>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</u>
<u>TDOT</u>	<u>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</u>
<u>ThSt</u>	<u>Theological Studies</u>
<u>TLZ</u>	<u>Theologische Literaturzeitung</u>
<u>TJ</u>	<u>Trinity Journal</u>
<u>TSFB</u>	<u>The Theological Student' Fellowship Bulletin</u>

<u>TSK</u>	<u>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</u>
<u>TV</u>	<u>Theologia Viatorum</u>
<u>TWAT</u>	<u>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</u>
<u>TyndB</u>	<u>Tyndale Bulletin</u>
<u>TZ</u>	<u>Theologische Zeitschrift</u>
<u>TZT</u>	<u>Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie</u>
<u>UCSCP</u>	<u>The University of Chicago Studies in Classical Philology</u>
<u>VoxEv</u>	<u>Vox Evangelica</u>
<u>VS</u>	<u>La Vie Spirituelle</u>
<u>VT</u>	<u>Vetus Testamentum</u>
<u>WdW</u>	<u>Word &amp; World</u>
<u>WTJ</u>	<u>Westminster Theological Journal</u>
<u>WW</u>	<u>Wissenschaft und Weisheit</u>
<u>ZAW</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</u>
<u>ZNW</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</u>
<u>ZTK</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</u>

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose and Scope of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church as expressed in the context of 1 Thessalonians. This understanding is gained through a review and evaluation of research into Paul's association of the term ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif in the context of 1 Thessalonians.

This connection appears in the salutation of the epistle (1:1), where in reference to the community of Christians in Thessalonica τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ is qualified by Paul with ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. This association is also present in the extended thanksgiving of the letter (2:14), where in relation to the Christians in Judea τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν is qualified theologically and christologically with τοῦ Θεοῦ ... ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

The study has important implications. It is the first major exploration that makes a review and evaluation

of research into Paul's connection of ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif in the context of 1 Thessalonians. Since this Pauline usage precedes the other occurrences of ἐκκλησία in the New Testament, it is necessary to define the meaning Paul assigns to this original association.

Second, this review may have implications for further research into the Pauline ecclesiological trajectory in its entire scope. For example, it is commonly accepted that *the body of Christ* is the principal designation of the Church in the Pauline corpus.<sup>1</sup> However, Paul's characteristic expression "*in Christ Jesus*," being probably the first statement in Christian literature, appears earlier than the "body of Christ" motif. Thus, the question one might legitimately ask would be: To what extent does the ἐν Χριστῷ phrase in 1 Thessalonians prepare the way for the "body of Christ" metaphor in Paul's later letters? Although it is difficult to see already in 1 Thessalonians the role that the ἐν Χριστῷ formula will later assume in Paul's writings, this idea emerges here in a way that will eventually form the basis of Paul's ecclesiology.

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<sup>1</sup>See Ernest Best, One Body in Christ: A Study in the Relation of the Church in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul (London: S.P.C.K., 1955); George E. Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 545.

Third, the purpose, the mission, the organization and essential marks of the Church have been the subject of much inconclusive debate in recent years, due in part to the ecumenical movement. These issues revolve around the critical question of the church's nature. In view of this fact, one might ask: to what extent does the use of ἐκκλησία with the ἐν Χριστῷ formula in the context of 1 Thessalonians define the nature of the Christian church?

#### Review of Literature

Although the last two decades have been characterized by a revival in Thessalonian studies,<sup>1</sup> these studies have often been marked by an interest in the sociological/cultural setting of the letter or in isolated passages or theological themes within them. Seldom does the letter itself receive attention as a serious witness to Paul's theological<sup>2</sup> or ecclesiological

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<sup>1</sup>This is very clear from Raymond F. Collins's compilations (Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1984]; idem, The Thessalonian Correspondence [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990]), and Earl Richard ("Contemporary Research on 1 (and 2) Thessalonians," BTB 20 [1990]: 107-15).

<sup>2</sup>Notable exceptions are Collins, Studies; idem, The Thessalonian Correspondence; Robert Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986); and, particularly Jouette M. Bassler, ed., Pauline Theology, vol. 1, Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991).

perspective.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the implications of 1 Thessalonians for Paul's ecclesiology are rarely noted, although there are two trends that run through much of the current literature on the church in Thessalonica. One of these trends emphasizes Paul's preaching as the foundation of the church in Thessalonica;<sup>2</sup> the other the eschatological situation of the Thessalonian church.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Good examples are Harold J. Ockenga, The Church in God: Expository Values in Thessalonians (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1956); R. F. Collins, "The Church of the Thessalonians," in Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians, ed. R. F. Collins (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1984), 285-298.

<sup>2</sup>See Béda Rigaux, "Evangelium im ersten Thessalonicherbrief," Wissenschaft und Weisheit 35 (1972): 1-12. Many significant thoughts on the topic of Paul's preaching are also contained in the articles written by Louis M. Dewailly, "Une communauté naissante: Thessalonique. I. Naissance en vie Chrétienne," VS 104 (1961): 359-76; idem, "Une communauté naissante: Thessalonique. II. Saint Paul Apôtre," VS 105 (1961): 254-69, and his popular book La Jeune Église de Thessalonique, Lectio Divina, 37 (Paris: Éditions Du Cerf, 1963); M. Chattuvakulam, "The Efficacy of the Word of God According to St. Paul" (S.T.D. thesis, Gregorian University, 1974, Freiburg), 39-47; and Helmut Koester, "Apostel und Gemeinde in den Briefen an die Thessalonicher," in Kirche: Festschrift für Günther Bornkamann zum 75. Geburtstag, ed. D. Lührmann and G. Strecker (Tübingen: FS G. Bornkamm, 1980), 287-98.

<sup>3</sup>Useful discussions are found in Ernst Bammel, "Judenverfolgung und Naherwartung. Zur Eschatologie des ersten Thessalonicherbriefs," ZTK 56 (1959): 294-315. P. Jovino has expressed that the church is the prototype for the eschatological glory in heaven, gathered around the Son of Man ("L'Église communauté des saints dans les 'Actes des Apôtres' et dans les 'Épîtres aux Thessaloniciens'," RevB 16 [1968]: 495-526). On "eschatological existence," see Franz Laub, Eschatologische Verkündigung und Gestaltung nach Paulus: Eine Untersuchung zum Wirken des Apostels beim Aufbau der Gemeinde in Thessalonika. Biblische Untersuchungen, 10

The ecclesiology of Thessalonians is handled mainly as a subsidiary theme under the discussions of New Testament ecclesiology in dictionary and journal articles, fundamental theological textbooks, and New Testament commentaries—most of them indirectly.

There is also a relative lack of literature dealing with Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians. References to this particular construction are conspicuously absent from dictionary articles.<sup>1</sup> Some of them give only a general and

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(Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1973); Joseph Plevnik, "The Parousia of the Lord According to the Letter of St. Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation" (Ph.D. thesis, University, 1971); Richard N. Longenecker, "The Nature of Paul's Early Eschatology," *NTS* 31 (1985): 85-95; and Bruce N. Kaye, "Eschatology and Ethics in First and Second Thessalonians," *NovT* 17 (1975): 47-57.

<sup>1</sup>See E. Power, "Église," *Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplément II. Chypre-Exode*, 10 vols., ed. L. Pirot (Paris: Libraire Letouzey et Ané, 1934), 2:487-755; Rudolf Schnackenburg, "Kirche," *Lexicon Für Theologie und Kirche*, 11 vols., ed. J. Höfer and K. Rahner (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1957), 6:168-72; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, (1960), s.v. "Church"; J. Schmid, "Kirche," *Handbuch Theologischer Grundbegriffe*, 2 vols., ed. H. Fries (Munich: Kösel-Verlag KG, 1962), 1:790-800; J. J. O'Rourke, "Church, I (In the Bible)," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, (1967), 3:678-83; P. Ternant, "Church," *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, (1967), 58-64; Viktor Warnach, "Church," *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, (1970), 1:101-16; Ernest Best, "Church," *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, (1985), 168-70; Ralph P. Martin, "Church," *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, (1986), 199-200; G. W. Bromiley, "Church," *The New International Dictionary of the Bible: Pictorial Edition*, (1987), 218-20; E. Hill, "Church," *The New Dictionary of Theology*, (1987), 185-201; Edmund Clowney, "Church," *New Dictionary of Theology*, (1988), 140-43; H. S. Songer, "Church," *Holman Bible Dictionary*, (1991), 259-61.

incomplete treatment of this concept.<sup>1</sup> The following brief survey of scholars who have taken a specialized interest in Pauline and/or New Testament Ecclesiology seeks to uncover whatever contributions they may have made to the topic of the study.

Karl Ludwig Schmidt suggests that "practically the only attribute which Paul applies to the ἐκκλησία by way of definition is the genitive 'of God'."<sup>2</sup> According to Schmidt God works "in Christ," "and so here and there the two names are both mentioned, the most perfect example being 1 Thess 2:14: 'the churches of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus'." What distinguishes ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ "is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in the New Covenant in the experience

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<sup>1</sup>According to Paul S. Minear the church is "a community gathered by God through Christ" ("Church," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia, [1990], 1:608); after F. X. Lawlor, "the ecclesia of God the Father is the ecclesia of God in Jesus Christ (1 Thes 2:14)" ("Church, II [Theology of]," New Catholic Encyclopedia, [1967], 3:685). Lothar Coenen asserts that "the ekklesia can only be understood in relation to the Lord, as the ekklesia tou theou, the congregation of God (1 Cor. 1:2; 11:16, 22; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:4)" ("ἐκκλησία," The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, [1971], 1:299). W. Smith holds that "the phrase 'in God' is a modifier to describe the kind of assembly in question" ("Church," The New Smith's Bible Dictionary, [1966], 67).

<sup>2</sup>Karl L. Schmidt, The Church, trans. from the first edition, Stuttgart, 1938, and with additional notes by J. R. Coates (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1950), 10.

of a definite number of the disciples of Jesus, who have received special powers as witnesses of his resurrection."<sup>1</sup>

R. Newton Flew offers a contribution toward "the elucidation of the essential idea of the Ecclesia."<sup>2</sup> He argues that the first task in that elucidation is to break down the widespread doubt as to whether there is room for the idea of "the Ecclesia" in the teaching of our Lord or not. According to him, "the roots" of the phrase "in Christ" are to be "discovered in the action of Jesus, who, as the Messiah, gathered His followers as the nucleus of the true Israel."<sup>3</sup> Flew, however, makes no comment on Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif in 1 Thessalonians.

George Johnston, on linguistic grounds, hold that in Paul ἐκκλησία is a wholly religious term, and that it was never used to denote (1) civic gathering or (2) the meetings of the κοινά. He contributes to the present discussion by concluding that "the Ecclesia is God's People in Christ, crucified and risen."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup>R. Newton Flew, Jesus and His Church: A Study of the Idea of the Ecclesia in the New Testament, 2d ed. (London: Epworth Press, 1960), 12.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 153.

<sup>4</sup>George Johnston, The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament (London: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 80.

Lucien Cerfaux challenges Deissmann's mystical explanation of the "in Christ" formula<sup>1</sup> by saying that "in the letters to the Thessalonians," the words "in Christ" "never have this mystical inference. . . . There is no development of any mystical thought."<sup>2</sup> Cerfaux believes that Paul's expressions in 1 and 2 Thessalonians "define either the sphere of 'Christian' teaching, or, in a more general way, the connection between Christ and Christians

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<sup>1</sup>G. Adolf Deissmann held that the formula "in Christ" in the New Testament must be understood in a mystical sense, and that we have here an expression of the "Christ-mysticism" of Paul. See G. Adolf Deissmann, Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesus" (Marburg: N.G. Elwersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1892). Deissmann found that the term "in Christ" (or some cognate expression, such as "in the Lord," "in Him," "in Christ Jesus," etc.) occurs 196 times in the New Testament and 164 are found in Paul, not counting Ephesians, Colossians and the Pastorals, which he regarded as spurious. Deissmann carried out a thorough examination of the use of ἐν with a personal dative in Greek literature in general and in the Septuagint in particular, and came to the conclusion that Paul "was the originator of the formula," not indeed as being the first to employ ἐν with a personal singular, but in the sense that he used an already existing idiom to create a new technical term of religion. He argued that the "in Christ Jesus" formula had both a local and mystical meaning in which Christ, as a kind of universal spirit, was the very atmosphere in which believers lived. See also his lectures delivered in February and March 1923 in the Weoley Hill Church, published without any essential alteration, in The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul, trans. W. E. Wilson (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), particularly pp. 153-278. For an extended criticism to Deissmann, see E. H. Wahlstrom, The New Life in Christ (Philadelphia, PA: Muhlenberg Press, 1950), especially 89-94.

<sup>2</sup>Lucien Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul. 2d ed., trans. G. Webb and A. Walker (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959), 211, 13.



in the Church. In these epistles this connection never appears with its deep 'mystical' repercussions."<sup>1</sup>

Even though Rudolf Schnackenburg discusses the theme of the church in the New Testament,<sup>2</sup> he does not explore the Pauline association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians. These texts are not even mentioned in his work.

Earl D. Radmacher provides an extremely useful background discussion of ἐκκλησία.<sup>3</sup> He makes an "inductive study of the usages of ἐκκλησία by the New Testament writers" holding that "theological classifications" were "developed after the time of the New Testament writers."<sup>4</sup> Based on this methodological approach, he refers to three usages of this word in the New Testament according to literary classifications rather than theological

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 211.

<sup>2</sup>Rudolf Schnackenburg, The Church in the New Testament, trans. W. J. O'Hara (London: Burns and Oates, 1974).

<sup>3</sup>Earl D. Radmacher, What the Church Is All About: A Biblical and Historical Study (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1978).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 133-34.

categorization: *Nontechnical*,<sup>1</sup> *technical*<sup>2</sup> and *metaphorical*<sup>3</sup> usage.

Radmacher argues that some usages would be on the "borderline of the nontechnical use, or in what may be called the subtechnical use."<sup>4</sup> As *subtechnical* he classifies passages in which ἐκκλησία "had not taken on a very definitive Christian content."<sup>5</sup> This author considers four occurrences of this kind in the Thessalonian Correspondence (1 Thess 1:1; 2:14; 2 Thess 1:1, 4). He suggests that the term ἐκκλησία in these earliest Pauline texts "had not yet come to be identified definitely with a Christian assembly."<sup>6</sup> In his opinion, "Paul's modifying descriptions of the ἐκκλησία were of necessity added because the word ἐκκλησία had not yet become a technical Christian word."<sup>7</sup> In that way, Paul is intentionally changing the kind of ἐκκλησία he had in mind.

Radmacher has advanced the discussion of Paul's ecclesiology, but there seem to be serious weaknesses in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 134-38.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 142-61.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 136.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

his work related to 1 Thessalonians. The most important is in the area of methodology. He builds his procedure on literary exegesis rather than on a program of contextual interpretation. Thus his analysis of the Thessalonian texts does not take account of the circumstantial framework of the discussion between Paul and his congregation. Furthermore, the scope of his work on 1 and 2 Thessalonians is not broad enough.<sup>1</sup> He has left out of account a comprehensive view of the meaning of "Paul's modifying descriptions" of ἐκκλησία. Such exhaustive information is necessary. As we noted earlier, if Paul is changing the kind of ἐκκλησία he had in mind by using these "modifying descriptions," this requires special investigation.

A more significant fact for this study is that Radmacher understands "that in Paul's later epistles *ekklēsia* is not characterized by these extensive qualifying phrases in order to define its content. This seems to be assumed."<sup>2</sup> If the word ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians was becoming defined by these "extensive qualifying phrases," thus marking the starting point of a new meaning for this word in Pauline thinking, one wonders if more attention to this particular Pauline construction

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<sup>1</sup>He devotes only pp. 137-38 to this discussion.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 138.

in its historical, literary and theological contexts should not be given. What is most important here is not so much the fact of the literary presence of these qualifiers as their contextual function.

Daniel J. Harrington's book attempts "an exercise in biblical theology," "a biblical-theological study of the Church as the people of God." His "basic thesis is that the Church's claim to be God's people rests entirely on the person of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup> This work provides a appropriate starting point, although Harrington offers only a concise and partial study of Paul's ecclesiology.

Edmund Clowney, in his article "Toward a Biblical Doctrine of the Church," argues that Paul speaks of our being "in Christ" *representatively*. He affirms that the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ carries "a fuller meaning." Quoting 1 Thess 1:1 and 2 Thess 1:1, he remarks that unless "the phrase conveyed more than representation, the Father could not be joined with Christ as its object." We are not only in Christ "representatively, but also vitally." This vital union with God in Christ "is not merely representational or legal, but vital, spiritual, and

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel J. Harrington, God's People in Christ: New Testament Perspectives on the Church and Judaism (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980), xvii, 2.

personal."<sup>1</sup> In that way, Clowney is particularly close to Deissmann's interpretation.

Raymond F. Collins briefly alludes to the geographical and christological use of ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians. He discusses concisely the Greek understanding of ἐκκλησία, the Hebrew קָהָל (qā-hāl), and the notions of loving God, election, calling, and brotherhood. He also includes the eschatological quality of the Thessalonian church in his study. Collins concludes his article by saying: "Each of the points upon which I have touched can and should be considered in still greater depth."<sup>2</sup>

His article is useful as a starting point for the ecclesiology of 1 Thessalonians. Collins does not specifically discuss Paul's connection in the letter, but he contributes to the study of this theme.

Clearly, all of these scholars have made a relevant contribution to New Testament ecclesiology as a whole and offer also a positive starting point for Paul's ecclesiology. However, they do not provide in-depth analysis of 1 Thessalonians where the ἐν Χριστῷ motif

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund Clowney, "Toward a Biblical Doctrine of the Church," in Readings in Christian Theology, vol. 3, The New Life, ed. Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 3:281.

<sup>2</sup>Collins, "The Church of the Thessalonians," 298.

appears connected to ἐκκλησία in its historical, literary and theological contexts.

The same is true with most authors of New Testament theologies. Relevant examples are Rudolf Bultmann,<sup>1</sup> Ethelbert Stauffer,<sup>2</sup> Frank Stagg,<sup>3</sup> Joseph Bonsirven,<sup>4</sup> Hans Conzelmann,<sup>5</sup> George E. Ladd,<sup>6</sup> Karl Hermann Schelkle,<sup>7</sup> and, Donald Guthrie.<sup>8</sup> Special attention has been given to motifs like "people of God," "the body of Christ," "the koinōnia of the spirit," "flock," "Israel of

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<sup>1</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, trans. K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1951), 1:311.

<sup>2</sup>Ethelbert Stauffer, New Testament Theology, trans. J. Marsh (New York: Macmillan Company, 1955), 153.

<sup>3</sup>Frank Stagg, New Testament Theology (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1962), 171, 181.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Bonsirven proposes three different meanings for the expression ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ corresponding to three aspects of the church, however, he does not include 1 Thess in his exegesis (Theology of the New Testament, trans. S. F. L. Tye [London: Burns and Oates, 1963], 318-20).

<sup>5</sup>Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, trans. J. Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 208-12.

<sup>6</sup>George E. Ladd does not mention 1 Thessalonians in his discussions about the church (342-356) and the "in Christ" formula (481-83).

<sup>7</sup>Karl H. Schelkle, Theology of the New Testament, English version by W. A. Jurgens (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1978), 4:180-82.

<sup>8</sup>Donald Guthrie, New Testament Theology (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 647, 651.

God," "elect race," "royal priesthood," "holy nation," "God's own people," "temple of God," and "seed of Abraham." However, no comprehensive study of this singular Pauline association in the context of 1 Thessalonians has been attempted.

Exhaustive studies of Paul's connection of the terms in 1 Thessalonians are also explicitly absent from leading commentaries on the Thessalonian letters. Generally, commentators interpret the ἐν Χριστῷ formula as (1) designating the Christian community,<sup>1</sup> or, (2) expressing ownership and spiritual union with Christ,<sup>2</sup> or, (3) differentiating the Christian communities from Gentile and Jewish assemblies,<sup>3</sup> or, (4) emphasizing the

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<sup>1</sup>William Hendriksen, Exposition of I and II Thessalonians (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1955), 70. However, this meaning is somewhat controverted. For these discussions, see Friedrich Büchsel, "'In Christus' bei Paulus," Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 42 (1949): 141-58; Fritz Neugebauer, "Dab paulinische 'In Christo'," New Testament Studies 4 (1957-58): 124-38; idem, In Christus: Eine Untersuchung zum Paulinischen Glaubensverständnis (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1961); Michel Bouttier, En Christ: Étude D'Éxégèse et de Théologie Pauliniennes (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962); Werner R. Kramer, Christ, Lord, Son of God, trans. B. Hardy (Naperville, IL: A. R. Allenson, 1966), 139-44; Conzelmann, 208-12; and, Werner G. Kümmel, The Theology of the New Testament (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1973).

<sup>2</sup>Raymond C. Kelcy, The Letters of Paul to the Thessalonians (Austin, TX: R. B. Sweet Co., 1968), 51-52.

<sup>3</sup>Charles J. Ellicott, A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul Epistles to the Thessalonians, with a Revised Translation (Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper,

unity of Christian communities.<sup>1</sup> Thus the inevitable question arises: What is the real meaning of this special Paul's formula in connection to ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians? Is it a technical term designating any Christian community, expressing ownership and special union with Christ, differentiating the Christian assemblies from other ones, emphasizing the unity of Christians everywhere, or all of these simultaneously? Is there a way of removing the ambiguity of this perplexing expression, or must we conclude that the ambiguity was intentional on Paul's part?

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1876), 43; James Everett Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 69; Béda Rigaux, Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956), 442; William Neil, The Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), 49; George Milligan, St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), 4; Leon Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians. The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. E. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959); 90; I. Howard Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1983; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 78; Peter T. O'Brien, "Church," in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, (1993), 124. On arguments against it, see Traugott Holtz, Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher, EKKNT (Zürich: Benzinger, 1986), 100).

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 114. See also Frederick F. Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 45 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 45-6.



The most sensitive aspect of the exegesis of Paul's connection of the term ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ that scholars we have investigated, almost without exception, have considered as "difficult to interpret,"<sup>1</sup> "controversial,"<sup>2</sup> and, a "traditional crux interpretum,"<sup>3</sup> has to do primarily with the apparent anti-semitism of 2:14-16. Most of the research into 1 Thess 2:13-16 has been concentrated on the historical polemic between

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<sup>1</sup>For examples, Charles E. B. Cranfield held that 1 Thess 2:14-16 "includes two very puzzling and difficult verses" ("A Study of 1 Thessalonians 2," IBS 1 [1979]: 215). Bruce believed that "some critical questions are certainly raised by 2:13-16" (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 42). Jon A. Weatherly concluded that "1 Thess. 2:13-16 remains a difficult passage for interpreters of Paul" ("The Authenticity of 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: Additional Evidence," JSNT 42 [1991]: 98).

<sup>2</sup>See Karl P. Donfried, "Paul and Judaism: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 as a Test Case," Int 38 (1984): 242-53; J. Christiaan Beker, "The New Testament View of Judaism," in Jews and Christians: Exploring the Past, Present, and Future, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990), 60-75; and Peter J. Tomson, who estimated 1 Thess 2:14-16 as "the much-disputed text" (Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990], 59).

<sup>3</sup>Collins, Studies, 18, 113; idem, The Thessalonian Correspondence, xiii; John S. Pobee, Persecution and Martyrdom in the Theology of Paul (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1985), 88. According to Daryl Schmidt, "The peculiarities of 1 Thess 2:13-16 . . . have caused biblical scholars to offer a variety of explications" ("1 Thess 2:13-16: Linguistic Evidence for an Interpolation," JBL 102 [1983]: 269).

Judaism and Christianity.<sup>1</sup> In that framework, it is often argued that 1 Thess 2:13-16 is a later addition, not part of the original text.<sup>2</sup> However, there is considerable lack of agreement among these scholars evidenced both in their starting points and contradictory conclusions. It should be mentioned that most contemporary New Testament scholars have rejected this later addition theory as founded upon pre-suppositions that are quite inadequate or even baseless. They hold that attempts to prove the inauthenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16 have not been convincing. Abraham J. Malherbe affirms: "That 2:13-16 is an interpolation, is the minority position."<sup>3</sup> In any case,

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<sup>1</sup>It is impossible to list here all the witnesses of this trend. The following names are given as representative examples: Johannes Munck, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, trans. Frank Clarke (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1959), 131; Nils A. Dahl, Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977), 137; Ralph P. Martin, Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1981), 130; Ingo Broer, "'Antisemitismus' und Judenpolemik im Neuen Testament: Ein Beitrag zum besseren Verständnis von 1 Thess 2,14-16," BNBED 20 (1983): 59; Christopher Rowland, Christian Origins: From Messianic Movement to Christian Religion (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), 225.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Birger A. Pearson "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation," HTR 64 (1971): 79-94; and Schmidt, "1 Thess 2:13-16."

<sup>3</sup>Abraham J. Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," in Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung, II, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin and New York: W. de Gruyter, 1992), 26: 290, n. 109.

my interest in the passage does not seek to duplicate the work of those who have examined it with another purpose in mind.

At least forty doctoral dissertations have been written on 1 Thessalonians since 1948. Of particular significance is the fact that no dissertation exploring the ἐν Χριστῷ formula or the word ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians has been written. Only one, authored by John W. Simpson, deals indirectly with the theme of this study.<sup>1</sup>

Simpson's dissertation examines the historical relationship between 1 Thess 2:15-16 and Rom 9-11 related to what they say about non-Christian Jews. The first chapter explores how the relationship between Israel and the Gentiles was viewed in Jewish apocalyptic eschatology. Two succeeding chapters deal with the two Pauline passages. The final chapter builds on this basis to set out the probable framework for the differences between the two passages. Simpson concludes that fundamental to Jewish apocalyptic eschatology was belief in Israel's eschatological salvation. He also concludes that despite the form-critical, historical, theological, and linguistic

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<sup>1</sup>John W. Simpson, Jr., "The Future of Non-Christian Jews: 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16 and Romans 9-11" (Ph.D. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology, 1988).

difficulties of 1 Thess 2:13-16, these verses were most likely an original part of Paul's letter.

Simpson pays special attention to the difference between the fate assigned to "the Jews" in 1 Thess 2:16 and the salvation of "all Israel" in Rom 11:26.

Simpson's analysis does not consider the ecclesiological implications of 1 Thessalonians. This omission,<sup>1</sup> understandable in view of the particular perspective he has chosen, not only leaves the field open for the present investigation but in fact calls for it.

This survey of New Testament scholarship leads to the conclusion that no comprehensive study has been attempted on Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in its historical, literary and theological context in 1 Thessalonians.

Where scholarly essays relate directly to this topic, they contain abundant references to biblical materials, both Old and New Testaments, as well as historical sources spanning from the church's fathers to contemporary theologians, including several pages on the meaning of ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians in their discussions, but they do so only in general terms. At best they discuss the probable meaning and implications of

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<sup>1</sup>Simpson does not include 1 Thess 2:13-14 in his analysis.

the expression ἐν Χριστῷ within the Pauline corpus,<sup>1</sup> but they do not study its meaning in context. Although scholars have acknowledged the presence of this motif, they have not given enough attention to its nature.

The study of the meaning of this "exceptional"<sup>2</sup> Pauline construction in the context of 1 Thessalonians is, therefore, a neglected element in Pauline and New Testament ecclesiology. This neglect is particularly critical in Pauline studies, where Paul's explicit discourse about the church is a subject to which much attention has been paid.

Given that no major exegetical work has been written on Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in context of Paul's supposed earliest letter, the subject of this proposed study remains an issue worth investigating. It is in the light of this consideration that I propose to arrive at an understanding of Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church as expressed in the context of 1 Thess 1:1; 2:14.

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<sup>1</sup>The development of scholarship on Paul's expression seems to have proceeded from a personal "mystical" conception (communion with Christ) to a more "objective" emphasis (Judicial or ecclesiological or eschatological) to an interest in corporate personality. For a history of the scholarship, see, for example, Ladd (480-83); Best (One Body in Christ, 8-19), and Guthrie (647-53).

<sup>2</sup>Weatherly, 97.

### Statement of Thesis

The main thesis of this dissertation is that in the context of 1 Thessalonians, Paul is redefining the understanding of the term ἐκκλησία by a theological and christological hermeneutic. Particularly in 1 Thessalonians, the phrase (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is not an expression of mystical or individual piety; it is an ecclesiological formula.

### Limitations of the Study

A study of this kind implies limitations. This investigation should be viewed as a preliminary study which provides the foundation for future research.

While including aspects of the context of 1 Thessalonians, this study does not provide a comprehensive coverage of the entire scope of Pauline thought in his letter. Similarly, although an analysis of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in the letter can hardly avoid mentioning 1 Thess 2:13-16, a thorough examination of the complex Pauline thought expressed in these texts remains beyond the scope of this research. These passages are important for this analysis only as they shed light on Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church.

This review may help to provide the proper starting point for understanding the trajectory of Pauline

ecclesiology and the centrality of Christ in defining the nature of the church. However, the proposed study does not provide a comprehensive coverage of this Pauline trajectory in its entire scope. This remains as a challenge to further research.

#### Methodology of the Study

As a review and evaluation of research into Paul's association of the term ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif in the context of 1 Thessalonians, this study is historical because it reviews research regarding the original setting in which 1 Thessalonians was written. It is literary because it reviews and evaluates literary-critical arguments raised over the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16, so that Paul's connection of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ can be explored in its specific literary and theological context. It is exegetical because it attempts to explore the meaning of the Pauline association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians, making a brief review of the scholarly research regarding the ἐν Χριστῷ motif, and a lexicographic, grammatical, and contextual analysis of the word ἐκκλησία in connection to ἐν Χριστῷ.

This review proposes evidences that show that the theological-christological interpretation emerges from the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17 as an arguable view

for the understanding of Paul's connection of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ as an ecclesiological formula. The study of the text is made on the basis of the critical Greek text, paying particularly close attention to the word usage that Paul employs in context.

Chapter 2 reviews introductory issues of 1 Thessalonians so that the Pauline association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ can be explained in its historical context. This chapter contributes to the dissertation by (1) providing a general overview of the entire document; (2) specifying the historical background of the letter that occasioned the construction of the term ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ; and (3) giving a historical basis for exploring the meaning of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif.

Chapter 3 reviews and evaluates literary-critical issues of 1 Thessalonians so that Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ can be explored in its specific literary and theological context. This chapter contributes to the dissertation by (1) providing evidence of the authenticity and integrity of 1 Thess 2:13-16; (2) defining as nearly as possible the Pauline character of 1 Thess 2:13-16; (3) specifying the literary context and the theological setting that occasioned the content of 1 Thess 2:13-16; and (4) giving a literary and theological



basis for exploring the meaning of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif.

Chapter 4 attempts to guide the reader through a study of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians. This chapter contributes to the dissertation by (1) reviewing the scholarly research regarding the ἐν Χριστῷ motif; (2) exploring Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church as expressed in the term ἐκκλησία in connection to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians; (3) suggesting evidences that show that the theological-christological interpretation emerges from the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17 as an arguable view for the understanding of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ as an ecclesiological formula; and (4) contributing to the discussion of the "in Christ" motif.

Finally, chapter 5 summarizes the findings of the study and suggests implications for further research.

#### Definition of Terms

In the entire body of this dissertation the term "atonement" designates the death of Jesus as a divine act of redemption. By the saying "sacrificial death for our sins" is understood the death of Jesus instead of the sinner's death.

"Second Temple Judaism" makes reference to the Judaism which Jesus and the first Christians knew. By "anti-Judaism" is meant theological *disagreement* with Judaism; while "anti-Semitism" refers to the *modern phenomenon of racial hatred* of the Jews.

"Theological-christological hermeneutic" defines Paul's basic hermeneutical principle. For Paul, the OT Scriptures talk about Christ. Jesus Christ is the key that unlocks the mystery of the Scriptures. The presuppositional background to Paul's interpretation is the christological exegesis of Scripture.

"Eschatology" means the doctrine of the last things. By "History" is meant relevant events that are objects of reporting and research.

The expression "apocalyptic eschatology" carries the idea of expecting the end soon.

"Deuteronomistic" refers to the book of Deuteronomy and designates the ideas and ideals that are expressed there. The adjective "deuteronomistic" makes reference to the works of Joshua through Kings, which are built upon the deuteronomistic materials.

When the expression is not a direct quotation of the other sources, "Pauline corpus" indicates the NT documents which explicitly claim Pauline authorship: The letter to the Romans; the Corinthian Correspondence; and the letters to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians,

Colossians; the Thessalonians Correspondence; the letters to Philemon, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. By "critical Pauline Corpus" only the seven undisputed letters commonly attributed to Paul by the standard critical view in NT scholarship are included: The letter to the Romans; the Corinthians Correspondence, and the letters to the Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

## CHAPTER II

### INTRODUCTORY ISSUES RELATED TO PAUL'S ASSOCIATION OF THE TERM ἐκκλησία TO ἐν Χριστῷ IN 1 THESSALONIANS

#### A General Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

Since this study focuses on a section of 1 Thessalonians, some attention to the historical situation of the letter is warranted, basically in view of the circumstantial nature of the Pauline letters.<sup>1</sup>

Introductory issues of 1 Thessalonians are examined so as to be able to place Paul's association of the terms in its historical context. Analysis must be made of some peculiar issues and circumstances within which this letter was written, such as authorship, date and place of writing, recipients, general situation, and purpose.

Three purposes regulated the investigation reported in this chapter. They were: (1) to provide a general overview of the entire document; (2) to specify the historical background of the letter that occasioned the association of the term ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ; (3) to

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<sup>1</sup>The circumstantial character of this epistle means that not all aspects of Pauline theology are found in it.

give a historical basis for exploring the meaning of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif.

#### Authorship

"Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy" are named as senders of the epistle (1:1; 2:18). Although some verbs used in this letter are in the plural, apparently implying multiple authorship,<sup>1</sup> Paul is clearly the primary author (2:17-20; 3:1-5; 5:27).<sup>2</sup> No serious objection has been raised regarding Paul's authorship of 1 Thessalonians. However, from the modern critical period of Pauline studies—particularly from Karl Schrader,<sup>3</sup> Ferdinand C.

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<sup>1</sup>The use of the plural might refer to Silvanus and Timothy mentioned in 1:1, but it is also characteristic of Paul to use it editorially to refer to himself (2 Cor 4:1-2). See K. Dick, Der Schriftstellerische bei Paulus (Halle: Niemeyer, 1900), 4-14; Rigaux, Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens, 77-79; C. E. B. Cranfield, "Changes of Person and Number in Paul's Epistles," in Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett, ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (London: S.P.C.K., 1982), 280-89. Willi Marxsen suggests that the plural use in 1 Thessalonians is due to the author's reflection on the work of himself and his colleagues among the Thessalonians (Der erste Brief an Die Thessalonicher, Zürcher Bibelkommentare 11,1 [Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1979], 53).

<sup>2</sup>For a more detailed account of Paul's use of the singular number in this letter, see particularly Collins, Studies, 178-80, and Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 26-29.

<sup>3</sup>Schrader seems to have been the first to question the genuineness of the letter from internal grounds (Karl Schrader, Der Apostel Paulus, 5 [Leipzig: Christian Ernest Rollmann, 1836], 23-25).

Baur<sup>1</sup> and his Tübingen School of NT criticism with its particular conception of Paul's person and ministry, it has been questioned whether one part or another of this letter is actually Paul's. Nevertheless, the authenticity and the integrity of 1 Thessalonians are admitted today by practically all Pauline scholars. The vocabulary of the letter,<sup>2</sup> its style,<sup>3</sup> tone and character,<sup>4</sup> as well as the ideas put forward in it are Pauline.<sup>5</sup>

It is often argued that 1 Thess 2:13-16 is a later addition, not part of the original text. The brevity of the present introduction does not permit discussion here of the arguments presented by literary criticism

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<sup>1</sup>See especially, Ferdinand Christian Baur, Paul: The Apostle of Jesus, His Life and Works, His Epistles and His Doctrines, a Contribution to the Critical History of Primitive Christianity, trans. A. Menzies (London: Williams and Norgate, 1875), 2:80-87.

<sup>2</sup>Frame has made a detailed analysis of the words and phrases in 1 and 2 Thessalonians and shows conclusively that the language suggests Paul as author of both. He maintains this by the examination of what he calls the "Personal Equation," indications of the personality behind the words (28-37). See, also, Hendriksen, 20; Arthur L. Moore, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, The Century Bible (London: Thomas Nelson, 1969), 8; Kelcy, 14; and Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 25.

<sup>3</sup>George G. Findlay, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), 32.

<sup>4</sup>Milligan, lxxv; Ronald A. Ward, Commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1973), 9.

<sup>5</sup>Morris, 27; D. A. Carson, D. J. Moo, and L. Morris, An Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 344.

supporting this hypothesis. However, a careful investigation would be helpful as a literary and theological basis for exploring Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in context. For this reason, a comprehensive study of this issue is provided in the following chapter.

#### Date and Place of Writing

Scholars have generally recognized that the Pauline letters are the earliest written documents of the New Testament,<sup>1</sup> 1 Thessalonians being the earliest extant document among Paul's letters.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For examples, see Willi Marxsen, Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to Its Problems, trans. G. Buswell (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1968); Leon Morris, New Testament Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986).

<sup>2</sup>This view is held by Abraham J. Malherbe, Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), 2; Wayne A. Meeks, ed., The Writings of St. Paul (New York: Norton, 1972), 3; Helmut Koester, History and Literature of Early Christianity, Introduction to the New Testament, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982), 2:112; Collins, Studies, 10-12; D. Edmond Hiebert, The Pauline Epistle: An Introduction to the New Testament (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1977), 2:39; John A. T. Robinson, Redating the New Testament (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1979), 50; James M. Reese, 1 and 2 Thessalonians (Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier, 1979), xii; Marxsen, Der erste Brief an Die Thessalonicher, 15.

For a series of closely related chronological issues for dating this letter, see Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence, 3-18, 49-60; Calvin J. Roetzel, The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context, 3d ed. (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1991), 50. Cf. the discussion in Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 7-13.

In the epistle, the names of Silvanus, Timothy, and Paul are associated (1:1). On the basis of Luke's reports of the arrival of Timothy and Silas to Corinth (Acts 18:5), and Paul's mention of Timothy's recent arrival (1 Thess 3:6), the evidence seems to point to Corinth as the place from which the epistle was written.<sup>1</sup>

It is likely that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians during his missionary preaching in Corinth on his second missionary journey, not very long after his activity in Thessalonica (2:17-3:13; Acts 17:1-18:11).

The epistle can be dated with considerable accuracy because of a letter written by Claudius, which appeared in the Delphi inscription.<sup>2</sup> This letter makes

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Several objections have been offered against this proposal. For a brief review of the major questions relating to the early dating of 1 Thessalonians, see W. G. Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. H. Clark Kee., rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975), 257-60. A few scholars, however, argue that 2 Thessalonians was written by Paul before 1 Thessalonians. Others support the hypothesis that Galatians was the first letter written by the apostle. A few other scholars believe that James is the oldest extant New Testament document.

<sup>1</sup>Scholars, however, have discussed since the early colophons of manuscripts whether Paul wrote this letter in Athens or in Corinth. Cf. the note under "subscriptio" in Greek-English New Testament, 26th ed., ed. Kurth Aland and others (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990), 538.

<sup>2</sup>It was found in 1905 at Delphi. SIG<sup>3</sup> ii<sup>3</sup>, 801. See A. Brassac, "Une Inscription de Delphes et la Chronologie de Saint Paul," RB 10 (1913): 36-53; 207-17; Wilhelm Larfeld, "Die delphische. Gallioinschrift und die paulinische Chronologie," NKZ 34 (1923): 638-47; W. Rees, "Gallio the Proconsul of Achaia," Scr 4 (1951): 11-20; and E. Mary Smallwood, Documents Illustrating the Principates



reference to Gallio,<sup>1</sup> proconsul of Achaia, who must have entered upon his proconsulship at Corinth in the early summer of A.D. 51.<sup>2</sup> Claudius dated the letter as "in the 12th year of his tribunicial power, acclaimed Emperor for the 26th time."<sup>3</sup> The twelfth year of his tribunicial power was from January 25, A.D. 52 to January 24, 53,

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of Gaius, Claudius and Nero (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1967), § 376.

<sup>1</sup>Before whom Paul was brought in Corinth (Acts 18:12). It is not known at what stage of his proconsulship Paul appeared before him, nor is it known how long Paul had been there prior to the arrival of Gallio.

<sup>2</sup>This date is widely accepted today. See Jack Finegan, Light from the Ancient Past (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946), 282; Frederick F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of Acts, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 346; Werner Keller, The Bible as History: A Confirmation of the Book of Books (New York: William Morrow, 1956), 386; Merril F. Unger, Archaeology and the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), 245; John McRay, Archaeology and the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 226-27. See also Dixon Slingerland, who argues that Acts 18:1-18 "would permit no more precision than that Paul arrived in Corinth sometime between 47 and 54 CE" ("Acts 18:1-18: The Gallio Inscription, And Absolute Pauline Chronology," JBL 110 [1991]: 449); and the reaction of Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Paul and Gallio," JBL 112 (1993): 315-17.

<sup>3</sup>For the text of the inscription and discussion, see Frederick J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, eds., The Beginnings of Christianity (London: MacMillan and Co., 1920; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1966), 5:460-64; Charles K. Barrett, The New Testament Background: Selected Documents (New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1961), 48-49; G. Adolf Deissmann, Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History, trans. W. E. Wilson (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), App. 1, and Plate 1; Jack Finegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), 316-22; idem, Light From the Ancient Past, 282.

while his twenty-seventh acclamation as emperor was before August 1, A.D. 52. Thus the inscription locates Gallio in Corinth between January 25 and August 1, A.D. 52. As Paul had exercised his ministry in Corinth before Gallio's arrival (Acts 18:11-17), the apostle most likely came to Corinth early in A.D. 50.<sup>1</sup> According to a well-established consensus, Paul wrote the letter around A.D. 50 or 51,<sup>2</sup> though an even earlier date has some proponents.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Finegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, 316-22.

<sup>2</sup>For example Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 24-26; Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, xxxiv; Marxsen, Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher, 14; Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 21; Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 11; Dieter Lührmann, "The Beginnings of the Church at Thessalonica," in Greek, Romans, and Christians, ed. D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson, and W. A. Meeks (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 238. Among New Testament introductions, this view is shared by Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction: The Pauline Epistles (London: Tyndale, 1961), 181-82; Robert A. Spivey, and D. Moody Smith, Anatomy of the New Testament: A Guide to Its Structure and Meaning, 2d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 302; Ralph P. Martin, New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students, vol 2. The Acts, the Letters, the Apocalypse (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 2:161; Koester, Introduction to the New Testament, 2:112; Robert H. Gundry, A Survey of the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 364; Howard Clark Kee, Understanding the New Testament, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983), 400; Luke T. Johnson, The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), 249; Carson, Moo, and Morris, 347.

<sup>3</sup>Gerd Lüdemann dates 1 Thessalonians in the early 40s (Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology, trans. F. Stanley Jones [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984]), and Karl P. Donfried considers it "about 43 AD"

### Recipients

This letter is addressed to the Thessalonian Christian church, which was established by Paul's preaching as a further carrying out of the commission he received at Troas to work in Macedonia (Acts 16:8-10).

Scholars disagree as to whether Paul stayed in the city longer than three weeks (Acts 17:2). Most commentators solve this difficulty by suggesting that the three Sabbaths make reference to the period of Paul's activities in the synagogue.<sup>1</sup> Joseph B. Lightfoot argues

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("1 Thessalonians, Acts and the Early Paul," in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990], 4-8). Charles Buck and Greer Taylor date 1 Thessalonians in A.D. 46 because of 2:16. According to them, it refers to the famine in Judea of that year (Saint Paul: A Study of the Development of His Thought [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969], 146-47). Benedikt Schwank argues that 1 Thess cannot be dated after 50 A.D. ("Der sogenannte Brief an Gallio und die Datierung des 1 Thess," BibZ 15 [1971]: 265-66). He based his conclusion on earlier studies by André Plassart, "L'inscription de Delphes mentionnant le Préconsul Gallion," in Rég 80 (1967): 372-75; and, idem, École Française d'Athènes, Fouilles de Delphes, Tome III épigraphie, Fascicule IV, Nos. 276 à 350, Les inscriptions du temple du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris: de Boccard, 1970), 26-32. See Alfred Suhl, Paulus und seine Briefe: Ein Beitrag zur paulinischen Chronologie, Studien zum Neuen Testament, 11 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1975), 96-102, 342. R. E. H. Uprichard studied the issue of the early dating of the letter and its problems ("An Examination of the Early Date Hypothesis for the Writing of 1 Thessalonians, with Particular Reference to Development in Paul's Theology" [Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, 1976]).

<sup>1</sup>Frame accepts a temporal period "no longer than three weeks," although allowing the possibility of a longer stay (7). According to Malherbe, when compared with 1 Thessalonians, this report "presents several difficulties," although they "are not insuperable." There

for a more extensive ministry in Thessalonica, apart from the synagogue, because of growing Jewish opposition.<sup>1</sup> Since Paul says nothing to indicate the length of his stay in their city, the problem remains, by and large, unresolved.

However, Paul made reference to the subject of his missionary preaching among the Thessalonians. He alluded to what they *knew* (1:5; 2:1, 2, 5, 11; 3:3, 4; 4:2), what they *remembered* (2:9), what he told them *beforehand* (3:4; 4:6), what they *received* (2:13; 4:1), what he gave them as *instructions* (4:2, 11), and what they *suffered* (1:6; 2:14; 3:3-4). He referred also to *his preaching in Thessalonica and the results* among them (1:5, 9; 2:1, 9-12; 3:3-4; 4:1-6, 10-12). Paul announced (2:2), shared (2:8), and preached (2:9) *the gospel of God*, and what the Thessalonians received and accepted was *the word of God* (1:6; 2:13). The "gospel came" to the

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is no need to take Acts 17:2 as meaning that Paul stayed only three weeks in Thessalonica. It means simply that he preached only three Sabbaths at the synagogue. After that, he was forced to go into Jason's house (Paul and the Thessalonians, 13). For more detailed discussion of these "difficulties" on the correlation of Luke's and Paul's accounts of the foundation of Christianity in Thessalonica, see Jewett (The Thessalonian Correspondence, 114-18), Donfried ("1 Thessalonians, Acts and the Early Paul"), and Cris U. Manus, ("Luke's Account of Paul in Thessalonica [Acts 17,1-9]," in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990], 27-38).

<sup>1</sup>See the argumentation in his work, Joseph B. Lightfoot, "The Church of Thessalonica," in Biblical Essays (London: Macmillan and Co., 1893), 259.

Thessalonians "not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1:6). Thus "the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" was founded on Paul's message, which he defined as "the word of God" (2:13), or "the word of the Lord" (1:8), "the gospel of God" (2:2,8, 9), or "the gospel of Christ" (3:2).

What was its central content to be "received" and "accepted" as the word of God, which still "is at work" in them, "the believers" (2:13)?

#### Paul's Preaching as the Foundation of the Church in Thessalonica

What Paul preached to the Thessalonians is suggested not merely by Luke in Acts but also by Paul himself. Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct the original Pauline message proclaimed in the city of Thessalonica, one can see some glimmers in the written correspondence.<sup>1</sup> For example, from the introductory form "we believe" in 1 Thess 4:14, one may infer that the concept "Jesus died and rose again" is

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<sup>1</sup>Dewailly remarks that "nos deux épîtres ne contiennent pas une citation proprement dite de l'A.T., mais elles en utilisent plusieurs expressions facilement reconnaissables" (La Jeune Église de Thessalonique, 33, note 1). This view is also shared by Lührmann, who states: "That Paul nowhere in this letter quotes the OT is of minor importance: we do find allusions to it, and Paul's language here, as elsewhere in his letters, is the language of the Jewish Greek tradition" (239).

common to Paul and the Thessalonians.<sup>1</sup> That Jesus had died and was raised was indeed the core of Paul's message preached in Thessalonica (Acts 17:3) and part of the kerygma of the Christian church as well (Acts 3:15; 4:10; Gal 1:1; Rom 4:24; 10:9; 1 Cor 15:1-4). Furthermore, the fact that "Christ died for us" (5:10)<sup>2</sup> is mentioned "as

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<sup>1</sup>Although various models of interpretation were applied to Jesus' death, these were not mutually exclusive but complementary. Paul incorporates two of these conceptions in 1 Thessalonians, which are found in the oldest strata of traditional Christian material: [1] the interpretation of Jesus' death as that of an envoy of God rejected by Israel (2:14-15); and [2] the view of Jesus' death as a death for others (5:9-10). In his missionary preaching in Thessalonica, according to Acts, Paul makes use of a third model. He interprets Jesus' death as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises (17:2-3; cf. Rom 1:2-3; 1 Cor 15:3-4).

<sup>2</sup>The dying formula can be found explicitly in the following texts of the New Testament: 1 Thess 5:10; 1 Cor 5:7; 8:11; 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14, 15, 21; Rom 5:6, 8; 14:9, 15; Gal 1:4; 2:20-21; 3:13 (Cf. Rom 5:7; 9:3; Phil 1:29); 1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:14; Heb 2:9; 5:1; 10:12; 1 Pet 2:21; 3:18; Mark 14:24 (Luke 22:19, 20); John 11:50, 51; 18:14. The phrase is never explained. In the case of Paul, he assumes his readers would understand what it means. However, Paul offers at least a suggestion about where to look for answers to such questions: Israel's Scriptures. The dying formula has a parallel in the Old Testament and in the sacrificial system. On the other hand, the more proximate background of the dying formula may be found in the interpretative sayings spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (Mark 14:24). This is a passover-covenantal typology in the very sayings of Jesus. The days of messianic expectation had ended and the Messiah had come. Thus, the new covenant established by the Lord, confirmed in the Pentecost by the Holy Spirit, was the old one restored, fulfilled, and renewed. So, Jesus' death is interpreted as a vicarious sacrifice by the dying formula ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν and its synonyms or even by the use of the αἵμα motif. On the importance of the preposition ὑπὲρ in the formula, see R. E. Davies, "Christ in Our Place: The

something known to the readers" of the letter in Thessalonica.<sup>1</sup> It means that Paul could have emphasized this christological content as part of the gospel preached in that city. According to the testimony of the Macedonian and Achaian believers, Paul knew that the Thessalonians were waiting "for His Son from heaven, Whom He (God) raised from the dead" (1:9-10). So, if one takes 1:9-10, 4:14, and 5:9-10<sup>2</sup> as a summary of Paul's original preaching in Thessalonica, the evidence suggests that the central content of Paul's message could well have been the passion, the atoning death, and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

Of particular significance is the fact that Paul's language in 1 Thessalonians is very similar to the kind of language Luke uses to describe Paul's missionary preaching in Thessalonica. From his account in Acts 17:1-10, one infers that Paul "argued" with the Thessalonians "from the scriptures, explaining and proving" two principal points. First of all, he presented before his audience the

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Contribution of the Prepositions," ThSt 21 (1970): 71-90.

<sup>1</sup>Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 114.

<sup>2</sup>For a detailed survey of New Testament scholarship about 1:9-10; 4:14 and 5:10 as "fragments of credal formulae," see Collins, Studies, 20-3.

<sup>3</sup>This view is shared by Rigaux, "Evangelium im ersten Thessalonicherbrief," 11; André Viard, "L'Évangile de Jésus Christ dans la première Épître aux Thessaloniens," Ang 56 (1979): 415-18; and Dewailly, La Jeune Église de Thessalonique, 31-3.

incredible realities concerning the promised Messiah:<sup>1</sup> it was necessary for the Messiah "to suffer, and to rise again from the dead."<sup>2</sup> This emphasis could have been very strange for Paul's Jewish listeners, because it involved considerable tension between Jesus the Christ and the traditional messianic figure that was part of Jewish eschatological scriptural exegesis. In the light of all our present knowledge, the Jewish traditional teaching of the first century A.D. did not connect the Messiah with suffering and dying but with the glorious conqueror and deliverer of Israel. For a Jewish audience, the confession "the Messiah died for us" must have been an "unprecedented novelty," indeed "a scandal which . . . contradicted the prevailing popular messianic expectation."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For a renewed examination of messianic ideas in the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament, Philo, the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, etc., see James H. Charlesworth, ed. The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1987); Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest S. Frerichs, eds., Judaism and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Andrew Chester, "Jewish Messianic Expectations and Mediatorial Figures and Pauline Christology," in Paulus und das antike Judentum, ed. M. Hengel and U. Heckel (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991), 17-89; and Sean Freyne, "The Early Christians and Jewish Messianic Ideas," Conci (1993): 30-41.

<sup>2</sup>For the insistence on Messiah's suffering and subsequent exaltation as the two basic facts of the gospel, cf. Paul (1 Cor 15:3-4; Acts 26:23); Peter (1 Pet 1:11; Acts 3:18); Luke (Luke 24:26, 46).

<sup>3</sup>Martin Hengel, The Atonement: A Study of the Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament (London: S. C. M. Press, 1981), 40. See also Charlesworth,



The lack of a pre-Christian Jewish concept of a suffering Messiah provided, therefore, one of the first points of study for this small circle of believers in Thessalonica. Second, in acknowledging the special signs and characteristics of the Messiah according to the Scriptures, Paul associated Jesus with the Messiah. For Paul, indeed, Jesus "is the Christ." The meaning is precise: Jesus is the Messiah Who was to suffer and rise again.

According to Luke, therefore, the content of Paul's message in Thessalonica could have also been the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ—the typical theme of the primitive kerygma. The essence of this preaching was derived ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν. That is, from selected passages of the Scriptures, Paul demonstrated that "the historic facts accomplished in the ministry, death, and exaltation of Jesus" were a clear fulfillment of the prophecies.<sup>1</sup>

From the terms employed to describe the synagogue presentation, it is evident that there was lively participation. Discussion and even disputation took place

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particularly pp. 79-115, 276-295, and 365-422; and Nicholas T. Wright, The New Testament and the People of God (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 307-20.

<sup>1</sup>See Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament, vol. 1. Gospels-Acts (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1974), 407.

as Paul opened the Scriptures to prove that the death and resurrection of the Messiah was scriptural. No doubt, the dispute grew most violently when Paul declared that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed this promised Messiah.

As a result of this presentation of the gospel, Paul made a great impact on his Jewish and Greek hearers: "Some of them (Jews) were persuaded, and joined Paul and Silas; as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women" (Acts 17:4). Members of the synagogue, like Jason and Aristarchus (cf. Col 4:10; Phlm 24; Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2), accepted Paul's message. Those who were "persuaded" by the scriptural evidence provided by Paul's preaching, and "received the word in much affliction" (1 Thess 1:6), constituted the nucleus of "the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1). It is clear that the immediate consequence of Paul's message was not only the establishment of the Christian church in Thessalonica, but also the abrupt hostility from the Jews toward Paul and the new Christian church in Thessalonica (1:6; 2:2, 13-16, Acts 17:1-9). A further discussion of this fact follows later in this study.

Let us now examine in more detail how Paul describes his readers in Thessalonica.

Characterization of the Christian Believers in Thessalonica

Paul characterizes the Christian believers in Thessalonica as those who were loved,<sup>1</sup> chosen,<sup>2</sup> and called<sup>3</sup> by God. The recipients of his letter responded positively and joyfully, despite persecution, to the Word of God. Because of this proclamation of God through Paul, the Thessalonian Christians (1) have "turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God" (1:9), (2) became "the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1), and (3) must "wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, Jesus Who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1:10).<sup>4</sup> Paul describes the

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<sup>1</sup>The vocabulary of being loved by God, ἠγαπημένοι, appears once in the letter (1:4).

<sup>2</sup>The terminology of election occurs two times in the epistle (ἐκλογήν, 1:4; ἔθετο, 5:9): the latter term also connotes establishing or laying down the foundation.

<sup>3</sup>The expression of calling appears three times in the epistle (καλοῦντος, 2:12; ἐκάλεσεν, 4:7; καλῶν, 5:23-24).

<sup>4</sup>The character of this credal formula as a early Christian hymn was anticipated by L. Cerfaux (Christ in the Theology of St. Paul, trans. Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker [New York: Herder and Herder, 1959], 76-7) and Bédard Rigaux ("Vocabulaire chrétien antérieur à la première épître aux Thessaloniens," in Sacra Pagina: Miscellanea Biblica, ed. J. Coppens, A. Descamps, É. Massaux, 380-89, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 12 [Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1959], 380-89); analyzed by Paul É. Langevin ("Le seigneur Jésus selon un texte prépaulinien, 1 Thess 1,9-10," ScEcc1 17 [1965]: 263-82; 473-512; and, idem, Jesus seigneur et l'eschatologie: Exegesis de Texts Prepaulinien [Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1967], 43-106); and usually held today. For Collins, "the importance of

behavior of the recipients of this letter in terms of three fundamental dimensions: *ecclesiological*—they became "the church of Thessalonians in God . . . and the Lord Jesus Christ," *ethical*—they "serve a living and true God," and *eschatological*—they "wait for His Son from heaven."

The Thessalonians are commended for their faith (1:3; 3:7), their love (1:3; 4:10), and their hope (1:3; 4:13; 5:8). Their zeal and faith in God are recognized (1:8). Although those Christians in Thessalonica have suffered attack and persecution for Christ's sake (1:6; 2:14; 3:3-4), they have experienced the joy of the Lord (1:6) and are a source of inspiration to others (2:19-20; 3:9). Their eager expectation of the Lord's return (1:10), shaken by his delay, needed strengthening by additional teaching (4:13-18). They must remain alert and expectant (5:4-11), living and pleasing God more and more (4:1); growing in their love for one another (3:12; 4:10); encouraging and building one another up (5:4-11);

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the Christological affirmation of 1 Thess 1,10, cannot, despite its traditional character, be underestimated" (Studies, 254). Denys E. H. Whiteley considers 1:10 "one of the most important verses in the N.T. It was written some twenty years after the Resurrection and it expresses in a few words much of the essence of Christianity" (Thessalonians: The New Clarendon Bible, ed. H. F. D. Sparks [London: Oxford University Press, 1969] 39); and for Hans H. Schade, 1 Thess 1:10 "ist die beherrschende christologische Aussage in 1 Th" (Apokalyptische Christologie bei Paulus: Studien zum Zusammenhang von Christologie und Eschatologie in the Paulusbriefen, GTA, 18 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1981], 120).

abstaining from immorality (4:3) by work of the Holy Spirit in them (4:8); admonishing the idle, encouraging the fainthearted, helping the weak, and being patient toward all (5:14).

Now, before going to further points in this analysis, let us pause briefly to turn the attention to a subject that recently has provoked a revival of interest, creating "a new consensus" among New Testament scholars. It is the application of sociological perspectives to the study of the New Testament, which helps students of the letter to understand the social context and identity of the early Christians.<sup>1</sup>

Although relatively few studies have been devoted to the social context of 1 Thessalonians itself, from the arguments presented by Edwin A. Judge,<sup>2</sup> Gerd

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<sup>1</sup>The "old consensus," which reigned from at least the end of the nineteenth century past the middle of our own, placed the first Christians among the lower classes. After Abraham J. Malherbe, the "new consensus" situated the first Christians among the higher social level (Social Aspects of Early Christianity, 2d enl. ed. [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983.]). For a recent and specific survey of this topic, see Bengt Holmberg, Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 21-76; and in a general way M. Robert Mulholland, "Sociological Criticism," in New Testament Criticism and Interpretation, ed. D. A. Black and D. S. Dockery (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 297-316.

<sup>2</sup>Edwin A. Judge devotes a chapter to the subject of the social constituency of Christian groups (The Social Patterns of the Christian Groups in the First Century: Some Prolegomena to the Study of New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation [London: Tyndale Press, 1960]); idem, "The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question

Theissen,<sup>1</sup> Abraham Malherbe,<sup>2</sup> Ronald F. Hock,<sup>3</sup> and Wayne A. Meeks,<sup>4</sup> it should now be clear that the first Christians

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of Method in Religious History," JRH 11 (1980): 201-17. He recognizes that the social situation of Paul after Hock's study (Ronald F. Hock, The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980]), must be considered in a different way.

<sup>1</sup>The most positive contribution to the "new consensus" was made by Theissen in a series of articles in which he analyzed the social constituency of the church in Corinth. See Gerd Theissen, "Legitimation und Lebensunterhalt: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie urchristlicher Missionare," NTS 21 (1974/75): 191-221; idem, "Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde," BZNW 65 (1974): 232-73; idem, "Soziale Integration und sakramentales Handeln," NovT 16 (1974): 179-206; idem, "Die Starken und Schwachen in Korinth: Soziologische Analyse eines theologischen Streites," EVT 35 (1975): 155-72. These articles were published in English with the title The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth, trans. and ed. J. H. Schütz (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982). In general, Theissen holds that a minority from the upper classes was a common constituent in the composition of Paul's communities, particularly in Corinth.

<sup>2</sup>Malherbe, after discussing previous sociological work done on the New Testament, concludes: "It appears from the recent concern of scholars with the social level of early Christians, that a new consensus may be emerging. This consensus, if it is not premature to speak of one, is quite different from the one represented by Adolf Deissmann, which has held sway since the beginning of the century. The more recent scholarship has shown that the social status of early Christianity may be higher than Deissmann had supposed" (Social Aspects of the Early Christianity, 31).

<sup>3</sup>Ronald F. Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking and the Problem of His Social Class," JBL 97 (1978): 555-64; and, idem, The Social Context of Paul's Ministry.

<sup>4</sup>Wayne A. Meeks, "The Social Context of Pauline Theology," Int 36 (1982): 266-77. In his description of "the social level of Pauline Christians," Meeks holds that "the 'typical' Christian" of the Pauline communities "is a free artisan or small trader" (idem, The First Urban

came from urban centers. It is recognized that these urban communities "were highly stratified socially, representing a considerable cross section of Roman society."<sup>1</sup>

This hypothesis is surely arguable, but not necessarily so in the case of the Thessalonian Christians. The recipients of the Thessalonian correspondence were chiefly Greeks who "turned to God from idols" (1 Thess 1:9-10), within which there was a small minority of Jewish Christians<sup>2</sup> and an impressive number of upper-class women

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Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983], 73).

<sup>1</sup>Malherbe, Paul and the Thessalonians, 34. See also the judgment expressed by Floyd V. Filson more than fifty years ago in "The Significance of the Early House Churches," JBL 58 (1939): 109-12.

<sup>2</sup>Among the most representative commentators who avoid drawing a conclusion from this Lukan description are Frame, 3; Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, xxii-xxiii; Charles Masson, Les Deux Épîtres de Saint Paul aux Thessaloniens (Paris: Neuchâtel and Niestloe, 1957), 5; Albrecht Oepke, Die Briefe an die Thessalonicher, Das Neue Testament Deutsch 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970), 156; Rigaux, Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens, 22-27; Robert M. Evans, Eschatology and Ethics: A Study of Thessalonica and Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians (Princeton: McMahon Printing Company, 1968), 97-100; Apostolos E. Vacalopoulos, A History of Thessaloniki, trans. T. F. Carney (Thessalonica: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1963), 17. According to Manus, Thessalonica "could aptly be described as a center of Roman administration, a center of Hellenistic civilization, and a center of Jewish influence" (28). The city had a central synagogue for its Jewish community. Commentators have generally conjectured that Jason was a Hellenistic Jew, because this Greek name was often used in the Diaspora for such Hebrew names as Joshua or Jeshua. So Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary, trans. B. Noble and G. Shinn (Philadelphia, PA:

as well (Acts 17:4). Presumably, the church of the Thessalonians was constituted by "a majority of former pagans."<sup>1</sup> Even though the evidence available is fragmentary, the Thessalonian church seems to have been constituted mostly by "the working class,"<sup>2</sup> "manual workers, whether skilled or unskilled."<sup>3</sup> For Jewett "the audience consisted mainly of employees or self-employed laborers."<sup>4</sup> Néstor O. Míguez argues that "al menos para lo

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Westminster Press, 1971), 507; Ernst von Dobschütz, Die Thessalonicher-Brief, ed. O. Merk (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1974), 11; Bruce, Commentary on the Book of Acts, 343; Jürgen Roloff, Die Apostelgeschichte, NTD, 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1981), 250; Gerhard Schneider, Die Apostelgeschichte, HTKNT, 2 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1982), 2:224; Gottfried Schille, Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas, THKNT (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1983), 351; Rudolf Pesch, Die Apostelgeschichte, EKKNT, 2 vols. (Zurich: Benziger, 1986), 2:123; Meeks considers that Jason "is evidently a Gentile, with a good Greek name" (The First Urban Christians, 63). For a close look at the household of Jason, see Malherbe, Paul and the Thessalonians, 12-17.

<sup>1</sup>Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, xxiii. For similar conclusions, see Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 5; Marxsen, Der erste Brief an Die Thessalonicher, 17; and Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence, 119.

<sup>2</sup>Lünemann, 123.

<sup>3</sup>Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 176. For a more detailed account of "the typical or daily experiences of an artisan plying a trade," see particularly Hock, The Social Context of Paul's Ministry, 31-37.

<sup>4</sup>Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence, 120. He also states that "the fragments of available evidence therefore point to a somewhat narrower range of social levels in the Thessalonian church than in other Pauline congregations" (ibid., 121). Jewett insists that "the church in Thessalonica did not contain members of the civic elite. It consisted largely of persons facing the



que hace a Tesalónica, la conformación de la Iglesia cristiana en esa ciudad se origina entre las clases subalternas urbanas (básicamente el artesanado pobre)."<sup>1</sup> Paul characterizes the Thessalonian community together with the other Macedonian believers as of "extreme poverty" (2 Cor 8:2).

To this community Paul writes and calls it ἐκκλησία, which he qualified theologically and christologically with ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (1:1).

Keeping these considerations in mind, it is now possible to turn to the examination of the general situation which caused the writing of this letter by Paul from Corinth.

#### General Situation: Persecution

In 1 Thess 1:4-2:16, Paul makes reference to his first contacts with this group of believers. When the apostle arrived in Thessalonica he "had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, where he came from." Paul declared them "the gospel of God in the face of great opposition" (2:2). At that time on his brief

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straightened circumstances of handworkers and day laborers" (ibid., 166).

<sup>1</sup>Néstor O. Míguez, "La Composición Social de la Iglesia en Tesalónica," RevB -Nueva Epoca, 51 (1989/2): 65-66.

visit, he told them "beforehand that we were to suffer affliction," which "has come to pass" (3:4). So, the persecution which had driven out the apostle from Thessalonica soon also turned against the church (1:6; 2:14; 3:3).

Leaving Thessalonica due to the opposition instigated by the Jews, Paul and Silas traveled to Berea, where they went to the synagogue. Paul's preaching there was again interfered with by charges generated by Jews who came from Thessalonica. This eruption of animosity obliged Paul to leave the city immediately for Athens, while Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea (Acts 17:10-15). When Paul arrived at Athens, he waited for a time for the arrival of Silas and Timothy (Acts 17:15), but they did not meet Paul again before he had arrived in Corinth. Paul "was occupied with preaching, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus" (18:5). At this point, Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia and were witnesses of the first opposition from the Corinthians. Once again the resistance came from Jews because Paul declared Jesus to be the Messiah (18:6). This confrontation was so strong that Paul felt it was time to interrupt his appeal to the Jews. His shaking out his garments is probably to be associated with his parting words to his countrymen, "your blood be upon your heads! I am innocent" (Acts 18:6).

Then Paul was brought before the proconsul of Achaia, Gallio, where he made his own defense (Acts 18:12-16).

Whether Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians before or after his appearance before Gallio is not clear, but what is certain is that he already had faced a strong Jewish opposition from Damascus on (Acts 9:23-24) to Antioch of Pisidia (13:14, 50), Iconium (14:1, 5-6), Lystra (14:6, 19-20), Thessalonica (17:5-10), Beroea (17:13-14) and Corinth (18:6, 12-17) from where he wrote the letter.

At Corinth, Paul received a firsthand report of the condition of the Thessalonian Christians from Silas and Timothy. In his "distress and affliction" (1 Thess 3:7), giving preeminence to the effects of the storm of persecution on his newly founded church in Thessalonica (2:17-20), and fearing that his young community would dissolve under the pressures of persecution, he sent Timothy, their "brother and co-worker for God," back to Thessalonica "to establish" in their faith and to exhort them "that no one be moved by these afflictions" (3:1-5).

It would seem that the immediate occasion for writing 1 Thessalonians must have been the return of Timothy with his account of the spiritual condition of the Thessalonians under attack and their personal attitude toward Paul, Silas, and Timothy (3:6-8).<sup>1</sup> The account

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<sup>1</sup>Abraham J. Malherbe argues for the possibility of a written letter brought by Timothy from the Thessalonians to Paul ("Did the Thessalonians Write to Paul?" in The

brought by Timothy generated Paul's final satisfaction (3:9-10) and prayer (3:11-13). Their work had not been in vain. The church, in spite of persecution and trial, continued steadfast and unshaken in the faith (1:6; 2:14).

One cannot help but agree with Collins, who following Willi Marxsen,<sup>1</sup> holds that "references to the persecution of the Thessalonians are scattered throughout the letter, so much so that one can hardly escape the conclusion that persecution was the epistolary *stasis* of our letter."<sup>2</sup> Through a careful exegesis, Donfried comes to the conclusion that Paul wrote to the Thessalonians "to

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Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn, ed. R. T. Fortna and B. R. Gaventa [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990], 246-57). This hypothesis has already been suggested by J. Rendel Harris ("A Study in Letter-Writing," The Exp, 5th Series, 8 [1898]: 161-80) and Chalmer E. Faw ("On the Writing of First Thessalonians," JBL 71 [1952]: 217-25). This theory was accepted by Frame, 9, 106-07; Masson, 7-8, 66; Ernest Fuchs ("Hermeneutik?" TV 7 [1960]: 44-60); regarded as possible by Milligan, xxx, 126; Kirsopp Lake (The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul: Their Motive and Origin, 2d ed. [London: Rivingtons, 1919], 86-87); Best, (A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 14-16, 180); Bruce C. Johanson (To All the Brethren: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to I Thessalonians [Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1987]); and Raymond F. Collins (The Birth of the New Testament [New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993], 115-16); held as improbable by Dobschütz, 19; and Rigaux (Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens, 55-56).

<sup>1</sup>W. Marxsen, "Auslegung von 1 Thess 4:13-18," ZTK 66 (1969): 25-26.

<sup>2</sup>Collins, The Birth of the New Testament, 110 (emphasis in the original). This view is shared by Frame, 82-83; and Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 15-6.

console them and to encourage them to stand firm during continued persecution."<sup>1</sup> It was in that original context of "much affliction" (1:6) and "great opposition" (2:2) that the Thessalonians "became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia" (1:7).

The question is now about the cause that generated this situation of "much affliction" and "great opposition."

#### Cause of the persecution

Scholars have made their own suggestions about the Christians' persecution in Thessalonica.

For Meeks,

the reasons for this hostility are not too difficult to imagine. . . . The Christians were exclusive. . . . Furthermore, Christian initiation was a rite of passage in which the whole hierarchy of identities seemed to be dissolved: here there was no longer Jew or Greek, slave nor free, even male and female. . . . Old ties of kinship were dissolved, and a new, fictive kinship was established. This all seemed terribly subversive to the basic institutions of society.<sup>2</sup>

According to John M. G. Barclay, "the most plausible explanation of the harassment of Paul's

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<sup>1</sup>Donfried, "The Theology of 1 Thessalonians as a Reflection of Its Purpose," 243. Donfried does not find only external witnesses to this letter (ibid., 244-47) to argue "that 1 Thessalonians is a church under attack," but he also analyzes the "explicit" (ibid., 248-51) and "implicit" (ibid., 251-56) terminology of persecution in 1 Thessalonians "which point to a situation which affected the Christian church in that city" (ibid., 248).

<sup>2</sup>Meeks, "The Social Context of Pauline Theology," 691.

converts is their offensive abandonment of common Greco-Roman religion."<sup>1</sup> Donfried, for his part, holds that "the situation of affliction and suffering" was "produced in all likelihood by political opposition."<sup>2</sup>

Collins infers that

the expectation of the 'parousia-coming,' which would have evoked the image of the return of a triumphant conqueror in the Hellenistic world and the idea of a coronation on that occasion, might well have caused no small amount of fear and antagonism, indeed outright opposition, to be directed toward the Christians who spoke in this fashion."<sup>3</sup>

Without denying the value of these provocative assumptions, it must be admitted that confirming evidence is not readily available. While several passages may be understood as implicitly speaking of such circumstances, neither Paul nor Luke explicitly said so. Even though one can only assess hypotheses with relative degrees of probability about what generated this state of affliction to the Thessalonian Christians, the most plausible

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<sup>1</sup>John M. G. Barclay, "Conflict in Thessalonica," CBO 55 (1993): 514; see also, idem, "Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity," JSNT 47 (1992): 53.

<sup>2</sup>Karl P. Donfried, "The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonians Correspondence," NTS 31 (1985): 347. See a brief discussion on the political situation in Thessalonica in Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence, 123-25.

<sup>3</sup>Collins, The Birth of the New Testament, 112 (emphasis in the original).

conjecture is that it was connected with the content of Paul's message.<sup>1</sup>

Judging from what is said in 1 Thessalonians, it can be perceived that the general situation was that of a church of recent converts who had suffered (1:6; 2:2, 14) and probably were still suffering for their faith in the gospel they had recently accepted (3:3-4).<sup>2</sup> The Thessalonians' new faith was being tested through persecution provoked by "your own countrymen" (2:14).<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Donfried holds that "if the Acts account of Paul's initial visit to Thessalonica is correct, as 1 Thess 2:13-16 would indicate, then it is clear that Paul's message had as its consequence immediate hostility from the Jews" ("The Theology of 1 Thessalonians as a Reflection of Its Purpose," in To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., ed. Maurya P. Horgan and P. J. Kobelski [New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989], 248).

<sup>2</sup>F. Laub argues that two elements cannot be separated from one another: the church in Thessalonica stands under the gospel and in the face of affliction ("Paulus als Gemeindegründer (1 Thess)," in Kirche im Werden: Studien zum Thema Amt und Gemeinde im Neuen Testament, ed. J. Hainz [München: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1976], 29).

<sup>3</sup>Best understands that "with fellow-countrymen Paul refers primarily to the Gentile fellow-citizens of the Thessalonians but Jews may also be included. In Acts 17.1ff, as often in Acts, the Jews incite the Gentiles against the young church in Thessalonica and the indefinite nature of the word would cover this" (A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 114). Bruce holds that "according to Acts 17:5 the opposition to the missionaries in Thessalonica was fomented by members of the local Jewish community, but from the present reference [1 Thess 2:14] it appears that persecution of the converts was the work of their fellow-Thessalonians" (emphasis in the original), 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 46. Donfried argues that "the Jews, in their anger, get some local Greeks from the

believers felt themselves under pressure to give up their new faith, which Paul interpreted as Satanic opposition placing the results of his mission in danger (3:5).

The theme in 1 Thess 1-3 is "imitation" in a context of "affliction" provoked by religious persecution. In 1:6, the imitation is "of us and of the Lord"; in 2:14 it is "of the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea." Supporting this conclusion Paul exposes immediately the nature of imitation to which he makes reference: "*You became imitators . . . having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit*" (1:6). Paul specifies particularly the points of imitation: the Thessalonians received and accepted God's Word "in much affliction," but "with joy of the Holy Spirit" as others did in the past.<sup>1</sup>

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marketplace to help them find Paul and his associates so that they can be exposed and brought before the authorities. Jews, together with Greeks, turn 'the city into an uproar' against the Paulinists. From the perspective of this account "your own countrymen (*tōn idiōn sumphuletōn*) in I Thessalonians 2:14 is used 'in a local rather than racial sense . . . and need not therefore exclude all reference to those Jews by whom . . . the persecution at Thessalonica was first instigated'" ("Paul and Judaism," 248).

<sup>1</sup>See David M. Stanley, "'Become Imitators of Me': The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Traditions," *Bib* 40 (1959): 859-77; Koester, "Apostel und Gemeinde in den Briefen an die Thessalonicher"; Laub, *Echatologische Verkündigung und Gestaltung nach Paulus*, 80-4; Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, 48-49; Pobee, 69-70; and Mary Ann Getty, "The Imitation of Paul in the Letters to the Thessalonians," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. R. F. Collins (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 277-83.



The parallel themes of "receiving the word," "imitation," and "affliction-suffering" in 1:6, being expanded in 2:13-14, refer to the same experience at the beginning of the Thessalonians' faith. There is evidently a repeated situation of persecution in the church similar to the one Paul experienced at its foundation. Knowing this special condition of his beloved Thessalonians, Paul affirms in 1:6 and 2:14-16 that there is a commonality in their suffering. This experience is not unique to the Thessalonian Christians. Rather, they are walking in the footsteps of Paul, his companions, the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea, the Lord, and the prophets.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Paul is considering the Thessalonian Christians as part of a process of explicit historical continuity with the prophets, the Lord, the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

Furthermore, Acts gives no more information about Paul's preaching in the synagogue over three Sabbath days, but it does reveal conflict, opposition, and persecution in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9). This account makes

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<sup>1</sup>Donfried holds that "the theology of 1 Thessalonians is about a God who is present among His elected and suffering people and about a God who is leading them to their promised salvation. The theological themes found in the letter are a response to a situation created by persecution and martyrdom as well as to the problem of living the Christian life in the midst of a pagan culture" ("The Theology of 1 Thessalonians as a Reflection of Its Purpose," 244).

reference to the story of the Jewish attack, which provoked the brusque departure of Paul from Thessalonica to Berea (Acts 17:5-15), Athens (Acts 17:16-21), and Corinth (Acts 18:1-11). The "jealous Jews" (Acts 17:5) reacted to the success of the Christian mission with violence, charging the Christians with "saying that there is another king, Jesus" (Acts 17:7). Paul's proclamation of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah seems to have been the offense that aroused such wrath.<sup>1</sup> It is not a coincidence that the preaching of Jesus as Messiah in Jerusalem (2:22-40; 3:11-4:3; 5:14-42); Damascus (9:20-24); Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:14, 50), Iconium (Acts 14:1, 5-6), Lystra (Acts 14:6, 19-20), Berea (Acts 17:13-14) and Corinth (Acts 18:6, 12-17) provoked violence from the Jews. Similar commotion had been caused in Thessalonica by the same preaching (Acts 17:5-10).

Why was this message so offensive? Paul connects the Thessalonians' tribulations with the facts of Jesus' trial (1:6) and the persecution of Jesus' disciples or

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<sup>1</sup>Although it has been asserted that the Christian proclamation of the Messiahship of Jesus was not a reason for the Jewish persecution in general, it certainly presented to the Jews a great difficulty, a serious religious stumbling block (1 Cor 1:23). See particularly Rudolf Bultmann, "Paulus," in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. H. Gunkel and L. Zscharnack, 2d ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1927-1932), 4:1021; Günther Bornkamm, Paul, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1971), 38; and Wolfgang Schrage, "'Ekklesia' und 'Synagoge'. Zum Ursprung des urchristlichen Kirchenbegriffs," ZTK 60 (1963): 197-98.

early Christians (2:14-16), in seeking an answer to such a question, one must first give some thought to the historical background of the Thessalonians' persecution.

The case of Jesus' trial. One must take very seriously the fact that Jesus was a Jew and that early Christianity started as a movement within Judaism. Jesus, according to the literary evidence of the Gospels, was finally condemned to crucifixion on the charge of claiming to be king of the Jews (Matt 27:37 || Mark 15:26 || Luke 23:38; cf. John 19:19).

A growing number of scholars regard the Sadducees, the priestly class,<sup>1</sup> as the primary and most severe opponents of Jesus<sup>2</sup> in connection with His arrest, trial,

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<sup>1</sup>The Sadducees, or sacerdotal class, were associated with the Temple cult. Although many of them were not priests, many others belonged to the upper ranks of the hierarchy. The Sadducees cooperated with the Romans to protect this essential attribute of Jewish life and to preserve their own status. They were theologically conservative and of very significant influence in their national life because they were connected with the highest offices in the Temple and the State. In the description of Josephus, they are wealthy (Ant. XIII, 298) people of high social standing (Ant. XVIII, 17) and harsh and severe in the administration of justice (Ant. XX, 109). For more information on the Sadducees, see Joachim Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 193-94; and E. P. Sanders, Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE-66 CE (London: SCM; Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1992), 317-40.

<sup>2</sup>Robert M. Grant stresses the view that Jesus' activity was neither social nor political, but rather religious ("The Trial of Jesus in the Light of History," Judaism 20 [1971]: 40). See also Morton S. Enslin, "The

and final execution (see table 1 in the Appendix). Furthermore, this situation seems also to be true concerning the first persecution of Jesus' disciples, "the Churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea" (1 Thess 2:14). According to the evidence of the book of Acts, the persecutors of the young church were "the priests and the captain of the Temple and the Sadducees" (4:1); "Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family (4:5-6); "the high priest and all who were with him, that

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Temple and the Cross," Judaism 20 (1971): 24-31; David Flusser, "A Literary Approach to the Trial of Jesus," Judaism 20 (1971): 32-6; Josef Blinzler, "The Trial of Jesus in the Light of History," Judaism 20 (1971): 49-55. Gerard S. Sloyan concludes: "The gospels in the form in which they reach us are convinced that Jewish religious leadership, specifically priestly leadership, contrived the death of Jesus by having him brought to trial on political charges sufficiently persuasive to have Pilate sentence him to death." He also holds that "Jesus' historical opponents. . . were certain of the chief priests and their associates" (Jesus on Trial: The Development of the Passion Narratives and Their Historical and Ecumenical Implications [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1973], 128, 131). See also Joseph B. Tyson, The Death of Jesus in Luke-Acts (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1986), 169. James D. G. Dunn holds that "so far as the passion narratives themselves are concerned, on the Jewish side the chief actors in bringing about the death of Jesus were the high priests" (The Partings of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity [London: S. C. M. Press; Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1991], 51). In his recent and exhaustive investigation, Raymond E. Brown argues that "the Gospels attribute the Sanhedrin action against Jesus largely to the chief priest(s), the elders, and the scribes" (The Death of the Messiah from Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels, The Anchor Bible Reference Library, 2 vols. [New York: Doubleday, 1994], 1:352).

is, the party of the Sadducees" (5:17); and "the captain of the Temple and the chief priests" (5:24).<sup>1</sup>

Why was this persecution of Jesus and His disciples, the early Christian church, apparently instigated by the priestly class?<sup>2</sup>

Although it is not the purpose here to discuss the question fully or to arrive at a firm conclusion, my proposal at this point, coming from the New Testament literary tradition, is neither novel nor bold; it is the modest suggestion that this constant opposition of the Sadducean party to Jesus and to the early Christian church might best be explained by the proclamation of Jesus' messianic actions, which were perceived and interpreted as a threat not only against them, the Temple authorities, but also, which is of special significance, against the Temple itself.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Acts 4:23; 7:1; 9:1-2, 14, 22; 22:4-5, 30; 23:2-5, 14; 24:1; 25:2-3, 15; 26:10, 12. E. P. Sanders puts the matter well: "The enduring hostility was that of the chief priests against the followers of Jesus, and that supports the view that they were the prime movers in the death of Jesus" (Jesus and Judaism, Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 286.

<sup>2</sup>See the fascinating and clear discussion presented by J. Louis Martyn (History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel, 2d ed., rev. and enl. [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979]), particularly his chapter entitled "He Is Excluded from the Synagogue and Enters the Church," 37-62. On the issue why Jews persecuted Christians, see what is proposed by Wright, 450-52.

<sup>3</sup>According to Ben F. Meyer, the Temple of Jerusalem was "imposing in dimension, dazzling in beauty, charged with meaning for Israel. The Temple was central not only

It is evident that Jesus' allusions to the Temple, His intervention in the Temple market,<sup>1</sup> and His predictions of the future destruction of the Temple were interpreted as a prophecy and a threat against the Temple and its

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to the cultic but to the political, commercial, financial, and social organization of national life. . . . To evoke, even conditionally, the destruction of 'this temple' was to touch not just stone and gold and not only the general well being but history and hope, national identity, self-understanding, and pride" (The Aims of Jesus [London: S. C. M. Press, 1979], 182, 183). In the words of Enslin: "In the eyes of the priests and their retainers, attacks upon the Temple were an attack upon God. The Temple was God's residence, the embodiment of His presence" (29). For a description of the Temple role in Israel's life, see particularly, Wright, 224-26; and Dunn, 31-35. On the religious significance of the temple, see the dissertation of David D. Edwards, in which he attempts to "explore the degree of continuity between the temple ideology, Jesus' messianism, and the church's interpretation through a study of temple motifs in the Synoptic Gospels" ("Jesus and the Temple: A Historico-Theological Study of Temple Motifs in the Ministry of Jesus" [Ph.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, 1992], 3).

<sup>1</sup>Edwards explains that "Jesus' interaction with the Jerusalem temple did not begin when he cast out the moneychangers and overturned their tables. These actions occurred at the culmination of his ministry. Yet, according to the Lukan and Matthean traditions, Jesus not only entered the temple earlier in life, but he also compared himself with the house of God. If their accounts are historically reliable, Jesus understood himself as the Messiah in direct relationship with the temple years before he entered it for the final time" (78).

authorities.<sup>1</sup> Particularly, Jesus' cleansing of the Temple (Matt 21:12-13 || Mark 11:15-17 || Luke 19:45-46 || John 2:13-17)<sup>2</sup> must have provoked them, because by this action

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<sup>1</sup>At this point I am persuaded by the literary interpretation made by Donald Juell, who has argued that "the temple charge can be interpreted properly only on the literary level" ("Messiah and the Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark," SBL Dissertation Series 31, ed. H. C. Kee and D. A. Knight [Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977], 57). Juell argues that the temple charge provides further evidence to Jesus as the Messiah and defines his Messiahship. He is not only the Messiah who must suffer and die; he is also the Messiah who will build the eschatological temple "not made with hands." Sanders holds that the symbolism of Jesus' action must indicate the destruction of the temple. He argues at length that "Jesus' activity in the temple" was "the crucial act which led to his execution, though were contributing causes" (Jesus and Judaism, 334). "The gun may have already been cocked, but it was the temple demonstration which pulled the trigger" (ibid., 305). See also, idem, Judaism, 54, 289-98. For his part, Dunn suggests: "The reason why Jesus was put to death is not much clearer. It could simply have been the result of a fierce (unnecessarily fierce) priestly reaction to what was perceived (rightly or wrongly) as a threat to their prerogatives and power. It does not follow that Jesus had actually rejected the Temple as such" (56). The major works dealing with aspects of this interpretation and of the Temple are: Jürgen Roloff, Das Kerygma und der irdische Jesus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1969); R. J. McKelvey, The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); Lloyd H. Gaston, No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels, Supplements to Novum Testamentum, 23 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 65-243; Georg Klinzing, Die Umdeutung des Kultus in der Umringemeinde und im Neuen Testament, Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments, 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1971); and Meyer. Against Sanders' view, see Craig A. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?" CBO 51 (1989): 237-70.

<sup>2</sup>For the relationship of the Synoptic version of the cleansing of the Temple to John's account, see François M. Braun, "L'expulsion des vendeurs du temple (Mt., xxi. 12-17, 23-27; Mc., xi. 15-19, 27-33; Lc., xix. 45-xx. 8; Jo., ii. 13-22)," RB 38 (1929): 178-200; Robert

Jesus seemed to be proclaiming His authorization from God to interrupt or even to terminate the functioning of the Temple as a religious institution.<sup>1</sup> According to the Markan narrative, Jesus' intervention in the Temple market was the act that precipitated the leaders' wrath and brought His rapid arrest and death.<sup>2</sup> The chief priests and scribes conspired against Jesus "and sought a way to destroy Him" (Mark 11:18 || Luke 19:47-48).<sup>3</sup> By these deeds

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H. Lightfoot, The Gospel Message of St. Mark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 70-79; and Ivor Buse, "The Cleansing of the Temple in the Synoptics and John," ExpTim 70 (1958-59): 22-24.

<sup>1</sup>See Lynn Allan Losie, who has made an analysis of the interpretation of the cleansing of the temple by each of the Gospel writers. His study has attempted to show that the cleansing of the temple was soon interpreted as a negative critique in which Jesus became the messianic judge of Judaism (Mark), brought a divine visitation which was rejected by the Jews (Luke), and superseded the temple as the merciful Son of David (Matthew) and as the locus of God's glory (John) ("The Cleansing of the Temple: A History of a Gospel Tradition in Light of Its Background in the Old Testament and in Early Judaism" [Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology, 1985]).

<sup>2</sup>Leonhard Goppelt has held: "During His entire public activity Jesus forced the Jews to a decision about Him; His final move in this direction was *His entry into Jerusalem*, which was not necessarily His only encounter with the city. . . . More decisive than His entry was the *cleansing of the Temple* (Mk 11.15-19 par.; cf. Jn 2.13-17)" (Jesus, Paul and Judaism: An Introduction to New Testament Theology, trans. Edward Schroeder [New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964], 86) (emphasis in the original).

<sup>3</sup>Meyer holds: "The cleansing of the temple triggered a sequence of events which brought Jesus to his death on a cross outside the city wall" (170). Josef Blinzler sees in the cleansing of the Temple the major reason for the hostility of the leading religious



and words of messianic significance,<sup>1</sup> Jesus seems to have been judged (Matt 27:11 || Mark 15:2 || Luke 23:3 || John 18:33) and finally executed as the "King of the Jews" (Matt 27:22, 37 || Mark 15:12-13, 26 || Luke 23:38 || John 19:14-15, 19).<sup>2</sup>

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authorities against Jesus (The Trial of Jesus: The Jewish and Roman Proceedings Against Jesus Christ Described and Assessed from the Oldest Accounts, trans. from the 2d ed., rev. and enl. Isabel and Florence McHugh [Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1959], 53). See also Neill Q. Hamilton, "Temple Cleansing and Temple Bank," JBL 83 (1964): 365-72. William L. Lane holds that "Jesus' legitimate censure of the priestly authorities for their misuse of the Temple is presented as the immediate occasion for the fateful decision which leads directly to his arrest and crucifixion" (The Gospel of Mark, The New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974; repr., 1990], 407).

<sup>1</sup>According to John P. Meier, "Two symbolic acts performed by Jesus were meant to press home the issue with the authorities: the 'triumphal entry' into Jerusalem and the 'cleansing' of the Temple. . . . Both acts fit in with the tradition of prophecy-by-action practiced by the Old Testament prophets. The entry into Jerusalem implied but did not define some sort of messianic claim over the ancient Davidic capital. More crucial was the 'cleansing' of the temple, which was probably not a call for reform but a prophecy that the present Temple would be destroyed. Various sayings of Jesus point in that direction and cohere with Jewish apocalyptic thought of the time. The 'cleansing' had much more ominous implications than the 'entry.' An attack on the Temple, however figurative, would have alienated not only the priests but also many pious Jews, even those opposed to the Jerusalem hierarchy" ("Reflections on Jesus-of-History Research Today," in Jesus' Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus within Early Judaism, ed. James H. Charlesworth [New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1991], 101).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. the charges brought against Jesus (John 11:45-48; Matt 26:59-64 || Mark 14:55-64; Matt 27:40 || Mark 15:29) and the ones brought against Stephen (Acts 6:11-14) and Paul (Acts 21: 28; 24:6).

Very little is known about the circumstances in which Jesus' trial arose, and one should be cautious in reconstructing its *Sitz im Leben*.<sup>1</sup> However, according to the literary evidence of the Gospels, the connection between the charges brought against Jesus and His messianic confession (Matt 26:59-65 || Mark 14:57-64<sup>2</sup> || Luke 22:66-71) is striking.<sup>3</sup> That Jesus, the Messiah, was considered a specific threat against the Temple and its leaders is directly implied in the charges brought against

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<sup>1</sup>Recent scholarship has emphasized the need for caution about forming an understanding of the Sanhedrin on the basis of an ideal picture of this coming from the later Jewish documents. Some even doubt that such a standing body even existed at the time of Jesus' execution. However, according to Josephus, the three categories of persons mentioned in Mark 14:53 constituted the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem. See particularly, Albertus F. J. Klijn, "Scribes, Pharisees, Highpriests and Elders in the New Testament," *NovT* 3 (1959): 259-67; Hugo Mantel, Studies in the History of the Sanhedrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); and J. Spencer Kennard, "The Jewish Provincial Assembly," *ZNW* 53 (1962): 25-51.

<sup>2</sup>For the exegesis of Mark 14:62, and the significance of the use of Dan 7:13, see R. T. France, Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1971; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), 103, 140-42.

<sup>3</sup>For a recent discussion, see Darrel L. Bock, who concludes that "the saying about the Son of Man seated at the right hand of God was the key utterance that offended the Jews. If one keeps the view of the Holy of Holies as analogy for heavenly session, one can see why this remark was offensive, especially given the leadership's past tensions with Jesus over issues related to who has authority to reveal God's way" ("The Son of Man Seated at God's Right Hand and the Debate over Jesus' 'Blasphemy'," in Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ, ed. J. B. Green and M. Turner [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994], 191).

Him before the Sanhedrin (Matt 26:61; Mark 14:58;<sup>1</sup> cf. John 2:19; 11:48-52)<sup>2</sup> and in His crucifixion (27:40; Mark 15:29). The connection between the charge of the Temple rebuilding and the High Priest's question might presuppose an exact knowledge of the prophecy of Nathan, in which God promises to David that his son "shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son . . ." (2 Sam 7:12-14).<sup>3</sup> The original connection of several

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<sup>1</sup>See Juel, 138-39, 211. The view that Jesus expected a new temple finds support in Sanders (Jesus and Judaism, 75); Roloff (Das Kerygma und der irdische Jesus, 97); Gaston, (229-43); Klinzing, 205; Meyer, 168-70, 181-85, 197-202; and I. Howard Marshall ("Church and Temple in the New Testament," TyndB 40 (1989): 203-22). On the three major interpretations of the expression "another not made by hand," see the summary made by Brown, 1:440-44.

<sup>2</sup>For a general view of the recent literature on "Jesus before the Sanhedrin," see Joel B. Green, The Death of Jesus: Tradition and Interpretation in the Passion Narrative, WUNT 2.33 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1988), 276 n. 184. One recent work dealing with the various positions on Jesus' trial, which was not available to me, is that of M. Myllykoski, Die Letzten Tage Jesu: Markus und Johannes, ihre Traditionen und die historische Frage, vol. 1 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1991).

<sup>3</sup>Craig A. Evans, in his concluding remarks, says: "The Marcan scene is probably also accurate in reporting that Jesus acknowledged his divine sonship and described that sonship in terms of Daniel 7 and 2 Samuel 7" ("In What Sense 'Blasphemy'? Jesus before Caiaphas in Mark 14:61-64," in Society of Biblical Literature 1991: Seminar Papers, ed. Eugene H. Lovering [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991], 233). For his part, E. Earle Ellis holds: "The high priest asks about Jesus' identity with the anticipated royal Messiah, with an allusion to Ps 2:7 and/or to 2 Sam 7:13-14. Jesus answers affirmatively but proceeds to define the titles 'Messiah' and 'Son of Man' in terms of 'the Son of Man.' He incurs the charge of blasphemy not by affirming that he was the Messiah, which

elements in this prophecy is attractive: The "son" of David (royal Messiah) will build a Temple, and be considered as His own son by God. Hence, the son of David would be the Son of God,<sup>1</sup> Who would build a Temple for Him.

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in Judaism was not a blasphemous claim, but by his further definition of his messiahship in terms of a combination of Dan 7:13-14 (the Son of Man) and of Ps 110:1 (David's Lord seated at God's right hand)." He also suggests: "If the trial proceedings are fairly summarized by the Synoptic tradition, they reflect a biblical dispute over the nature of Jesus' messianic claims. Indeed, for a *theological* verdict against Jesus they had to address questions of scriptural interpretation. . . . The charge of blasphemy at the trial is fully understandable if the Sanhedrin understood Jesus to interpret Dan 7:9-14 via Ezek 1:26ff. as a theophany applied to himself and thus to assert his divine status and role" ("Deity-Christology in Mark 14:58," in Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ, ed. J. B. Green and M. Turner [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994], 195-96) (emphasis in the original). That the Son of Man motif connected with Messianism reflects Daniel's context is held by a well-established consensus of many exegetes and scholars, such as Arthur J. Ferch ("The Son of Man in Daniel 7," AUSS 6 [1979]: 4-39); idem, "The Son of Man in Daniel 7," Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, 6 [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983]); George R. Beasley-Murray ("The Interpretation of Daniel 7," CBQ 45 [1983]: 44-58); Gillis Gerleman (Der Menschensohn, Studia Biblica, no. 1 [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983]; Seyoon Kim ("The 'Son of Man'" as the Son of God [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1983]; Wolfgang J. Bittner ("Gott-Menschensohn-Davidsson: Eine Untersuchung zur Traditionsgeschichte von Daniel 7, 13f.," FZPT 22 [1985]: 343-72); William Horbury, "The Messianic Associations of 'The Son of Man'," JTS 36 [1985]: 34-55); Chrys C. Caragounis (The Son of Man: Vision and Interpretation, WUNT, 38 [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986], 1-33); and I. Howard Marshall ("The Synoptic Son of Man Sayings in Recent Discussion," in Jesus the Saviour: Studies in New Testament Theology [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990], 73-99).

<sup>1</sup>In Jewish literature contemporary with the New Testament the term is understood in a messianic sense. Ps 2 and 2 Sam 7:14 are interpreted messianically in 1QSa ii. 1ff., and 4QFlorilegium i:10-11, which reads: "I will

Assuming this scriptural background, the high priest seems to force Jesus to give an answer: "What is it that these men testify against you . . . Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14:60-61).<sup>1</sup> Dunn stresses this point.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, "the claim to destroy the temple and build another one, or at least the idea of replacing the temple with a better one, was a messianic claim"<sup>3</sup> that

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be his father and he shall be my son. That is the Branch of David." Cf. Ps. Sol 17:27 with Ps 2:8; Ps. Sol 17:36; 18:6, 8 with Ps 2:2. The description of royal Messiah as Son of God is cited in the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1QSa 2.11f; 4QpsDan A<sup>a</sup>; cf. T. Levi 4.2; IV Ezra 7:28f. On the Messianic Sonship and the Temple in the first century, see Edwards, 90-4.

<sup>1</sup>For a discussion regarding the reason Jesus was put to death, see Wilhem C. Van Unnik, "Jesus the Christ," NTS 8 (1961-62): 101-16.

<sup>2</sup>Dunn suggests: "In the light of this, the High Priest's question becomes a most natural one - 'Are you (accused of saying you would rebuild the Temple, therefore) the (royal) Messiah, the son of the Blessed?' According to our accounts this exchange is the core of the case against Jesus" (52). For Edwin K. Broadhead, "the trial of Jesus locates the clearest christological confession within the context of Jesus' death. In one brief and dramatic phrase set upon the lips of Jesus the whole of his identity is unveiled: he is the Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the true teacher and prophet of God. Drawing upon various elements of Jesus' life story to fill out the content of these images, Mk 14.53-65 proclaims the true identity of Jesus in the shadow of the cross" (Prophet, Son, Messiah: Narrative Form and Function in Mark 14-16, JSNT Supplement Series, 97 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994], 142).

<sup>3</sup>For this particular point, see Gaston, 65-205; J. Jeremias, "Die Drei-Tage-Worte der Evangelien," in Tradition und Glaube: das fruhe Christentum in seiner Umwelt. Festgabe fur Karl Georg Kuhn zum 65, ed. G. Jeremias, H. W. Kuhn, and H. Stegemann (Göttingen:

could have been perceived as a claim to royal messiahship and divine sonship by the priestly class.<sup>1</sup> There is good reason, then, to think that "the primary issue" in Jesus' trial "would have been the Temple and Jesus' perceived challenge to it."<sup>2</sup> This hypothesis might find support in 2 Sam 7:12-14 and in the Jewish messianic expectations in connection to a renewed Temple as it is revealed in Jewish literature.<sup>3</sup> From these traditions, it must have seemed

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Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1971), 221-29; and McKelvey, 67-68. This has already been suggested by Maurice Goguel (The Life of Jesus, trans. O. Wyon [New York: Macmillan, 1949], 510); Alan H. McNeile (The Gospel According to St. Matthew: The Greek Text [London: Macmillan, 1928], 339-40); and Vincent Taylor (The Gospel According to St. Mark [London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1959], 563, 567).

<sup>1</sup>According to Frederick F. Bruce, "The claim to be Messiah would not be blasphemy in itself, if it constituted a claim to be no more than the son of David. But in replying to the high priest's question Jesus went on to use language drawn from the judgment scene of Daniel 7, where 'one like a son of man' comes with the clouds of heaven to receive universal and everlasting dominion from the Ancient of Days. His judges took this to mean that He claimed much more than Davidic sonship—that He claimed, in effect, to be the peer of the Most High. This was blasphemy indeed, in their eyes" (The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968], 81).

<sup>2</sup>Dunn, 53. He argues also "that if high priests rather than Pharisees were most responsible on the Jewish side for Jesus' death, that clearly implies that the crucial issue was the Temple and not the law" (ibid., 51). Furthermore, "it becomes very probable that there was a hearing before the leading members (high-priestly faction) of the Sanhedrin, in which Jesus' challenge to the Temple, however it may have been perceived, was the central issue" (emphasis in the original), ibid., 52.

<sup>3</sup>Sanders (Jesus and Judaism, 77-90) and Joachim Jeremias (The Eucharistic Words of Jesus [Philadelphia:

evident to the evangelists that an intimate connection exists between the Temple-saying and the death of Jesus. So, Jesus was condemned as a messianic pretender<sup>1</sup> by the messianic connotations of the Temple charge.<sup>2</sup> Later on,

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Fortress Press, 1966], 217) support the general view that the Temple-saying is well-suited to contemporary Jewish eschatological expectation.

<sup>1</sup>Particularly on this, there are important points of agreement among the scholars I investigated. See, for instance, Aanthony E. Harvey, Jesus and the Constraints of History (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1982), 120-51; James D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry Into the Character of Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1977), 41; I. Howard Marshall, The Origins of New Testament Christology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976), 85-91; Green, 283; and Nils A. Dahl, Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine, ed. D. H. Juel (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 36-7, 40, 43, 58. For Rudolf Bultmann, however, Jesus was condemned and executed not as Messiah but as a messianic prophet. The concept that Jesus died as Messiah belongs to "the faith of the Christian Church," that "brought the whole Passion under the regulative idea that Jesus suffered and died as the Messiah" (The History of the Synoptic Tradition, trans. J. Marsh [New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1963], 284; cf. 272-73).

<sup>2</sup>This hypothesis has been argued particularly by Otto Betz, who has held that the widespread modern denials of Jesus' messianic consciousness cannot be sustained. The early church regarded Jesus' resurrection as proof that He was the Davidic Messiah (and hence Son of God, Lord, and Savior). This conviction was rooted in Jesus' own self-consciousness, in which the prophecy of Nathan also played a central role. Jesus' intention to "build the temple" (Mark 14:57f., Jn. 2:19) as a new community of faith comes from 2 Sam 7:12-13, while His kingdom proclamation, exorcisms, journeys in Galilee and Jerusalem, and His suffering, are all similarly rooted in OT and late Jewish ideas concerning the Messiah, son of David ("Die Frage nach dem Messianischen Bewusstsein Jesu," NovT 6 [1963]: 20-48; and idem, What Do We Know About Jesus? trans. M. Kohl [London: S. C. M., 1968], 88-91); Kim ("The 'Son of Man'" as the Son of God, 79-80, 83-84); Donald Senior (The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of

Stephen's (Acts 6:8-14) and Paul's (Acts 21:28; 24:5-6; 25:7-8) messianic preaching was interpreted as a real threat against the Temple as well. Charges brought against them by their messianic confessions were understood also in connection with the Temple.

Furthermore, as was said in advance, the persecution of Jesus' disciples and that of the early Christian church both at Jerusalem and in "foreign cities" (Acts 26:11) constituted a clear reaction of the Jewish religious leaders to the Christian proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah.

The case of the early church's persecution. One may take, for example, the case of Paul, the persecutor of "the church of God" (Gal 1:13; cf. Acts 8:3; 22:4-5; 26:9-11), who, before his conversion, was doubtlessly familiar

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Mark [Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984], 93); James D. G. Dunn, "The Messianic Secret in Mark," in The Messianic Secret, ed. C. Tuckett [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press; London: SPCK, 1983], 125-26); Taylor, 566-67; Meyer, 179-80; Rudolf Pesch (Das Markusevangelium, 3d ed. [Freiburg im Breisgau; Basel; Wien: Herder, 1984], 2:434-35) and Detlev Dormeyer (Die Passion Jesu als Verhaltensmodell: literarische und theologische Analyse der Traditions- und Redaktionsgeschichte der Markuspassion [Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1974], 160). On the other hand, it is regarded as improbable by John R. Donahue ("Temple, Trial and Royal Christology (Mark 14:53-65)," in The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14-16, ed. W. H. Kelber [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1976]; 62, 66-71); Eta Linnemann, Studien zur Passionsgeschichte [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970], 125-27) and Dieter Lührmann ("Markus 14,55-64: Christologie und Zerstörung des Tempels im Markusevangelium," NTS 27 [1981]: 457-74).



with the early church at Jerusalem, knowing that she believed and confessed Jesus as the Christ.<sup>1</sup> His death and resurrection were affirmed repeatedly and constituted the content of the apostolic proclamation from the very beginning.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Paul could have known that this proclamation resulted in much resistance from the Jews, especially from their leaders (Acts 4:1-21; 5:17-31, 40, 42; 7:52-57), and provoked the Christian reaction: "This Jesus . . . you crucified and killed . . . God raised up" (Acts 2:23-24; 3:13-15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:39-40; 13:29-30). Paul, being a witness of Stephen's proclamation and of his death, was well informed of what the content of this

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<sup>1</sup>For Vernon H. Neufeld, "the earliest form" of the Christian confession is not "Jesus is Lord" but "Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν Χριστός" (The Earliest Christian Confessions [Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1963], 142). This view is also shared by Nils A. Dahl, who holds that "in the kerygma and confession it is not 'Jesus is the Son of Man' or 'Jesus is the Servant of God,' but always 'Jesus is the Messiah,' and further, 'Jesus is the Son of God' or 'Jesus is the Kyrios'" (The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays [Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1974], 25).

<sup>2</sup>According to Broadhead, in the early Christian preaching, Jesus is typically "identified in relation to various events: 1. the past of Israel (Acts 2.16-22, 25-28, 29-31; 3:13, 18, 22, 24-25; 13:17-23); 2. his mighty deeds (Acts 2.22; 10.38); 3. his rejection and crucifixion (Acts 2.23, 36; 3.13-15; 4.10-11; 10.39; 13.27-38); 4. his resurrection at the hands of God (Acts 2:31, 32; 3.15, 26; 4.10; 10.40; 13.30, 33-37); 5. his appearance to witnesses (Acts 2.32; 3.15; 10.40-42; 13.31); 6. his exaltation (Acts 2:33; 10-42); 7. his return (Acts 3.21); 8. a call to repentance and salvation (Acts 2.38; 3.19, 26; 4.12; 10.42-43; 13.23, 26, 38-39)" (251-52).

message was.<sup>1</sup> Because of this messianic proclamation, Paul fought against and persecuted the church in Jerusalem (Acts 7:58; 8:1-3, 22:4-5; 26:9-11). His experience on the road to Damascus, however, convinced him that this proclamation was correct.<sup>2</sup> Dunn is probably right in concluding with reference to the Temple that "it was precisely as agent of the cult and the power represented by the cult that Paul was both persecutor and convert."<sup>3</sup>

As stated above, Acts preserves fragments of such messianic preaching. Of particular interest here might be the synagogue sermon preached by Paul in Pisidian Antioch. It reflects the essence of his messianic thought in expounding and defending the gospel (13:16-41). He not only refers to major events from the biblical history of

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<sup>1</sup>In the words of L. Cerfaux: "Tradition maintains that he was present at the martyrdom of Stephen, and thus it is likely that he knew that Christians considered Christ as the one who took them into the glory of God. Nor did Paul persecute the Church without having some idea of its character. . . . He shared the Jewish revolution for Christ's crucifixion" (Christ in the Theology of St. Paul, 5).

<sup>2</sup>Dahl believes that "on the road to Damascus, Paul was convinced that the crucified Jesus was really the Messiah" (The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays, 42). See the exceptional contribution made by Seyoon Kim, who argues at length that in the Christophany on the Damascus road Paul not only received his call to the Gentile mission and God's gospel, but also perceived Jesus as the Christ. Paul indeed realized that "Jesus of Nazareth was not dead but alive, not cursed but exalted by God, and therefore that the Christian proclamation of him was correct" (The Origin of Paul's Gospel, 2d ed., rev. and enl. [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1984], 105).

<sup>3</sup>Dunn, The Partings of the Ways, 72.

Israel (13:17-22), but also quotes from the Psalms (13:33, 35) and the Prophets (13:34, 41). Paul narrates the history of Israel leading to the divine election of David. It is from David's seed that "God has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus, as he promised" (13:23). Paul reminds the promise made to the fathers and declares that God "has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second Psalm: 'Thou art my son, today I have begotten thee'" (Acts 13:32-33).

For Paul, then, the central and scriptural truth was not about Israel and its special election by Yahweh, its land and institutions, neither its national future, but rather about Jesus, Whom "God has brought to Israel" as "Savior" (Acts 13:23), "the Christ" (Acts 9:20, 22; 17:3; 18:5), His "Son" (1 Thess 1:10); Who "died for our sins, according to the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3), bringing "salvation" (1 Thess 5:9-10); Whom God "raised from the dead" (1:10); Who gathers "the church of God" in Thessalonica and in Judea (1:1; 2:14) and for Whom those "wait" from "heaven" (1:10) "with all His saints" (3:13; Acts 1:9-11); Who "delivers" from "the wrath to come" (1:10).

Doubtless, central to Pauline theology and his teaching is the confession that "Christ died for us" (1 Thess 5:10), "for our sins, according to the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3). Implicit in this confession

there seems to be a sacrificial frame of reference, which shows that Paul could have reached an understanding of the death of Jesus Christ which included the sacrificial motif. He died "for us" (1 Thess 5:10). This brief sentence is amplified to some extent by two other sayings: "God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:9); "Jesus Who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1:10). So, Paul understood that salvation is directly related to the death of Jesus, which is freedom from divine wrath.<sup>1</sup>

Acts 17:3 and 1 Cor 15:3 suggest the centrality of the Old Testament to the very foundation of Pauline thought.<sup>2</sup> One may expect that Paul's use of sacrificial imagery in connection with the death of Jesus is rooted in

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<sup>1</sup>According to Rom 5:9 and 8:2, salvation is freedom from the power of sin, death, and divine wrath.

<sup>2</sup>See the surveys by Joseph Klausner, The Messianic Idea in Israel: From Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah, trans. W. F. Stinespring (New York: Macmillan Company, 1955), and Sigmund Mowinckel, He That Cometh, trans. G. W. Anderson (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956). For Paul's use of the OT to support his teaching, see particularly Herman Ridderbos, Paul and Jesus: Origin and General Character of Paul's Preaching of Christ, trans. by David H. Freeman (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1958), 59-62, and E. Earle Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957). See also, Frederick F. Bruce, ed., "Promise and Fulfillment in Paul's Presentation of Jesus," in Promise and Fulfillment: Essays Presented to Professor S. H. Hooke in Celebration of His Ninetieth Birthday (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), 36-50; idem, "Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Acts," in Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament, ed. G. F. Hawthorne with O. Betz (Grand Rapids and Tübingen: 1987), 71-79.

his understanding of the sacrifices of the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup>  
 The key in his conception is in the connection between  
 Christ's death and the forgiveness of sin.<sup>2</sup> Even though no  
 explicit theory of expiation is offered in the letter,

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<sup>1</sup>Although Bradley H. McLean argues that "an honest and critical understanding of OT sacrifice on the one hand, and of Paul's letters on the other hand, prohibits a sacrificially based interpretation of Christ's atoning death." He concludes that "no theological or textual justification can be found for a sacrificial interpretation of atonement passages in Paul's letters. The treatment of OT sacrifice by NT scholars is often characterized by inexact generalizations which serve to project Pauline soteriology onto Levitical theology" ("The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul's Soteriology," NTS 38 [1992]: 531, 552). However, according to Jacob Jocz, "the whole Pauline system of theological thinking is inconceivable without the O.T., and the O.T. only, is the source of the Pauline teaching about the Cross. Without the sacrificial system as a background, the whole concept of vicarious suffering, which is the basis of N.T. theology, is inexplicable" (A Theology of Election: Israel and Church [New York: Macmillan Company, 1958], 32). For attempts made recently to explain the atoning death of Christ, see particularly Charles B. Cousar (A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990]; James D. G. Dunn ("Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus as Sacrifice," in Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology, ed. S. W. Sykes [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 35-56; idem, The Partings of the Ways, 53-5; 77-81); Green; Anthony J. Tambasco (A Theology of Atonement and Paul's Vision of Christianity [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991]); Stephen H. Travis ("Christ as Bearer of Divine Judgment in Paul's Thought about the Atonement," in Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and the New Christology, ed. J. B. Green and M. Turner [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994], 332-45); and Hugh D. McDonald (New Testament Concept of Atonement: The Gospel of the Calvary Event [Cambridge, England: Lutterworth Press, 1994]).

<sup>2</sup>For this connection, see 1 Thess 5:10; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:21 (cf. Eph 1:7; Col 1:14, 20).

1 Thessalonians emphasizes His death, which is implied in 1:10, stated in 2:15 and 4:14, and interpreted in 5:9-10: Christ's death "for us" obtains salvation.

Later on, Paul compares Christ's death to at least three types of Old Testament sacrifices: the passover (1 Cor 5:7); the sin-offering (Rom 8:3);<sup>1</sup> and the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement (Rom 3:25). Paul points to Christ's blood as representing His sacrifice for our sins. Through His blood<sup>2</sup> the believer is justified (Rom 5:9) and has redemption (Eph 1:7). Because Jesus' death could be interpreted in terms of sacrifice, and because the sacrifices of the Old Testament could be interpreted as prefigurations of Christ's sacrifice, Paul could have seen in the theme of sacrifice an evidence of the reality of God's salvation of His people in Jesus, the Messiah, Who died vicariously, taking upon Himself the curse of the law and making the Temple obsolete as a place of atonement<sup>3</sup> for

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<sup>1</sup>For Paul's understanding of what sacrifice signified from his references to Christ's death as sacrifice, see Dunn, "Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus as Sacrifice"; and Nicholas T. Wright, The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 220-25.

<sup>2</sup>The statement that the new covenant is to be founded through the shedding of Christ's blood (Matt 26:28 || Mark 14:24 || Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11: 25; cf. Exod 24:6-8; Jer 31:31-34) points to the sacrificial character of His death.

<sup>3</sup>Indeed, the New Testament evidence—from Paul to the Johannine corpus, interprets Christ's atoning death for us as a self-sacrifice, and our salvation as redemption through His blood. For this, a great variety

the sins of Israel. For Paul, then, the Temple and its ritual law would have lost their importance as an indispensable legal system for salvation. The focus of his attention would have been no longer the Temple of Jerusalem and its cultic service, but rather Jesus and those gathered around him.<sup>1</sup>

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of terms and images related to the sacrificial system of the temple are used. The New Testament evidence is reviewed by Colin Brown ("Sacrifice," The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology, ed. C. Brown [Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978], 3:415-36) and S. W. Sykes, ("Sacrifice in the New Testament and Christian Theology," in Sacrifice, ed. M. F. C. Bourdillon and M. Fortes [London; New York: Academic Press, 1980], 61-83); and summarized and related to later developments by Frances M. Young (Sacrifice and the Death of Christ [London: SPCK, 1975]); and Marie L. Gubler (Die frühesten Deutungen des Todes Jesu: eine motivgeschichtliche Darstellung aufgrund der neueren exegetischen Forschung [Freiburg: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1977]).

<sup>1</sup>I gladly acknowledge my indebtedness to the treatment by Dunn in his chapter "A Temple 'made without hands'," in The Partings of the Ways, 75-97. From his studies there he concludes: "The teaching of the NT documents is therefore uniform on this issue. As far as these writers were concerned, and those for whom they spoke, one of the major characteristics and underpinnings of second Temple Judaism had been left behind as *passé*, no longer appropriate for the eschatological people of God, including, not least, the idea of a sacred space requiring the mediation of a special priestly order offering sacrifices on behalf of the rest. That which the sacred space represented and sought to protect—the presence of God among His people—was now something focussed in Christ in such a way as to render the idea and continuation of such a protected sacred space unnecessary. There was no need for Temple. The presence of God could be known by individual and body of believers in a direct and unmediated way. Grace could and should be mediated and experienced through every member of the body of believers. While there was every need or a multiplicity of ministry, and for leadership, there was clearly felt no need for a special order of priesthood. The cleansing and forgiveness of God could be known directly through the

The presence of this sacrificial element at the heart of the Pauline christology-theology could have caused problems in the proclamation of Paul's Christian message to a Jewish audience. It could have sounded foreign to the Jewish mode of thought (1 Cor 1:23).<sup>1</sup> This Pauline soteriological interpretation of the death of Jesus,<sup>2</sup> in fact, could have generated a more profound break with the sacrificial system of the Temple and with the later teaching system of the synagogue.<sup>3</sup> Jesus' death as

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mediation of Christ, the only priest. There was no need for bloody sacrifice or altar; Christ himself is the once for all and final sacrifice" (ibid., 95).

<sup>1</sup>Precisely because Christ's death was the great scandal for Jews and Gentiles, the apostles insisted that this death was pre-announced (Acts 3:13-16; 4:27-30; 5:30-31; 8:32-35, 10:39-43; 13:27-34; 17:3; 18:5; etc.) in the Old Testament (Ps 2:2; Isa 53; Dan 9:26). For an excellent exposition of the important role of the suffering-servant motif as played in New Testament, see David M. Stanley, "The Theme of the Servant of Yahweh . . ." CBO 16 (1954): 385-425.

<sup>2</sup>Based on the typological application of the Old Testament references to sacrifices, which Paul connected with eschatological and christological proofs from the Scriptures (Acts 17:3; 26:22-23; 1 Cor 15:3-4; Rom 1:1-3; 3:21-26) to Jesus' death (Rom 5: 2, 8-9; 1 Cor 5:7; 11:23-25; cf. Exod 29:18; Eph 5:2).

<sup>3</sup>Although Wright suggests that "the beginning of the break between mainline Judaism and nascent Christianity came out not with AD 70, not with some shakily reconstructed decree promulgated by the historically dubious 'Council of Jamnia', but with the very early days in which a young Pharisee named Saul believed it his divine calling to obtain authority to attack and harry the little sect" (The New Testament and the People of God, 452), it is already possible to place the starting point of this break in the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus' ministry.



saving event for all brought the atonement prefigured by the sacrificial system of the Temple of Jerusalem to its end, and at the same time, to its fulfillment. It is possible that not only Hellenistic Christians but also many Jewish Christians in Judea, based on Jesus' death as an universal saving event and as a supreme act of a new covenant, no longer ascribed atoning effect to the sacrifices in the Temple. Its cult was "not only superfluous but positively objectionable."<sup>1</sup> "The Temple was no longer relevant."<sup>2</sup>

Given this possible background and context, the "zeal" of the "persecutor of the church" (Phil 3:6) and

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<sup>1</sup>Kim, The Origin of Paul's Gospel, 45.

<sup>2</sup>Dunn, The Partings of the Ways, 255. Sykes remarks that "a most obvious feature of the New Testament is the way in which the language of the Jewish cult--sacrifice, offering, temple and priesthood--rapidly came to be redeployed. In due course members of the early Christian groups ceased to participate in the worship of the Jewish synagogues. . . . This process of refocussing starts, of course, with Jesus himself, and contains as part of its outcome the focussing of attention upon Jesus himself" (emphasis in the original), 68. For his part, Ingolf U. Dalferth holds: "Christians stopped sacrificing and instead proclaimed Jesus to be the Christ. The significance given to Jesus and his atoning death led to the rapid devaluation of the language of the sacrificial cult in the Christian world of meaning. It was still, to some extent, employed to communicate the Christian experience of salvation and the atonement achieved by Christ" ("Christ Died for Us: Reflections on the Sacrificial Language of Salvation," in Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology, ed. S. W. Sykes [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 304). Although Jewish sacrifices continued after Christ's death, it were not regarded as legitimate and valid in God's sight (Heb 7:11; 8:13; 9:25, 26; 10:8, 9).

his biographical confession in Gal 1:13-14 and Acts 26:9-11 might find clearer explanation. The Christian kerygma could have been considered, interpreted, and understood as a real attack against the Temple and the Law, as an attempt to shake the foundations of Israel's existence and hope.<sup>1</sup> In view of all these, it is not at all unlikely

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<sup>1</sup>As was indicated earlier, Jesus was condemned and crucified as 'king of the Jews' and messianic pretender, but vindicated by God, Who raised Him from the dead. The early church seems to have understood this kind of vindication as election and establishment of Jesus, the Messiah, as the Lord. Authors such as David L. Tiede, Dahl, and Jon Paulien and others have argued that in view of messianic expectations, in the context of the Jewish apocalyptic view of the end, it is no wonder that most Jews found faith in a crucified Messiah to be offensive. Tiede considers that "the persistence of the question of Jesus' messiahship and Luke's assurance that 'the holy and sure blessings of David' are bestowed on Jesus (Acts 13:34), it may well be that the narrative is offering a response to disturbing hermeneutical objections raised from within or without the Christian community. How can a crucified Galilean be identified as God's anointed ruler? Where are the manifestations of the fulfillment of those Davidic promises? Such questions did not find obvious answers in the late first century A.D." (Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980], 102). Dahl remarks: "As a zealous Pharisee, Paul had himself persecuted those who held this faith. Only a revelation of the risen Christ convinced Paul that he had been wrong and that Peter and the other disciples were right: Jesus was indeed the Christ, who had died and risen in accordance with the Scriptures" (Jesus the Christ, 66). For his part, in the analysis of "messianic apocalypticism" in the context of Jewish apocalyptic view, Paulien argues: "If most of the Jews who encountered Jesus held a view such as this, it is understandable why the cross presented a major problem to them. In their way of thinking, if Jesus were truly the Messiah, His death should have brought the old age to an end and the new age into public view. But in spite of the death of this supposed Messiah, it was obvious that the old age was still very much present, with all its evil and frustration. Instead of becoming a restored Eden, Palestine was still visibly under Roman occupation."

that the Christian kerygma was so offensive to the Jewish religious leaders in every place that it provoked an immediate reaction in defense of Israel's distinctiveness: the Christian persecutions.

Thus, this proposal makes the modest suggestion that this constant opposition of the Sadducean Priesthood and of the Synagogue to the Christians in Judea and beyond, might best be explained by the implications of the proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah—the King of David's line, the Son of God—Who "died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3).

There is one further aspect that needs to be briefly pursued. The question is: How does this proposal illumine the persecution in Thessalonica? Is there evidence for Sadducean concerns there as well?

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Paul, having "grown up with this perspective, . . . had every reason to oppose Christianity. As he rode toward Damascus amid his armed guard, apocalyptic thoughts must have been swirling in his mind: *It can't be! It just can't be! If Jesus were the Messiah, the new age would already have come. These Christians must be frauds. Can't they see that the old age is still with us? Can't they see that if the new age has not come, their claims regarding Jesus are false? I must put a stop to this nonsense*" (Jon Paulien, What the Bible Says About the End-Time [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1994], 76) (emphasis in the original). To make it clearer, according to Hans K. LaRondelle, "the Jews misinterpreted the mission of the Messiah and the deep, religious nature of His kingdom or reign" (The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983], 15).

The case of the Thessalonians' persecution. It is not the purpose here to discuss the question fully. It is, perhaps, sufficient to observe that "the Jewish communities of the Dispersion bore a family relationship to each other."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, "the Diaspora was . . . a religious and cultural unity."<sup>2</sup> The diaspora synagogues were governed by a council composed of elders, who managed the synagogues and carried out judgments.<sup>3</sup> The new moon, the ceremonial law, and the regulation regarding food were observed punctiliously.

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<sup>1</sup>W. H. C. Frend, The Rise of Christianity (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 33.

<sup>2</sup>A. Thomas Kraabel, "The Diaspora Synagogue: Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence since Sukenick," in ANRW II.19.1, ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 477.

<sup>3</sup>For a more detailed account on the Synagogue in general, see Jakób Jocz, The Jewish People and Jesus Christ: A Study in the Controversy between Church and Synagogue (London: SPCK, 1962), 12-65; Bo Reicke, The New Testament Era: The World of the Bible from 500 B.C. to A.D. 100, trans. David E. Green (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1968), 119-124; Eduard Lohse, The New Testament Environment, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1976), 158-67; Jakob J. Petuchowski, "The Liturgy of the Synagogue: History, Structure, and Contents," in Approaches to Ancient Judaism, ed. William S. Green (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 4:10-64; Donald E. Gowan, Bridge Between the Testaments: A Reappraisal of Judaism from the Exile to the Birth of Christianity, 3d rev. ed. (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1986), 218-24; Everett Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 456-62; Paul V. McCracken-Flesher, "Palestinian Synagogues before 70 C.E.: A Review of the Evidence," in Approaches to Ancient Judaism, vol. 6, Studies in the Ethnography and Literature of Judaism, ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 6:67-81; and McRay, 65-72.

Furthermore, according to Philo, Jerusalem was the capital not only of Judea, but of "most other countries also,"<sup>1</sup> wherever there were Jews.<sup>2</sup> Rodney Stark suggests that "in all the major centers of the empire were substantial settlements of diasporan Jews who were accustomed to receiving teachers from Jerusalem."<sup>3</sup> It is not without significance that "the Diaspora Synagogues placed the Torah shrine on the wall closest to Jerusalem, thus orienting the building toward the Holy city."<sup>4</sup>

Since the rituals and sacrifices of the temple were not performed in the service of the synagogue, thousands of Jews went to Jerusalem yearly to take part in the great feasts, especially in the Passover (Acts 2:5-12). The importance of this matter follows from the fact

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<sup>1</sup>Philo *Embassy* 36.281.

<sup>2</sup>A. Thomas Kraabel recognizes "that Palestine had been the centre of Jewish religious activity for centuries" ("The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions," in Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel, ed. J. Andrew Overman and Robert S. MacLennan [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992], 10).

<sup>3</sup>Rodney Stark, "Jewish Conversion and the Rise of Christianity: Rethinking the Received Wisdom," in Society of Biblical Literature 1986: Seminar Paper, ed. K. H. Richards (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 323 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>4</sup>A. T. Kraabel, "Unity and Diversity among Diaspora Synagogues," in Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel, ed. Andrew Overman and Robert S. MacLennan (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 27.

that "the great majority of the Dispersion Jews were loyal to their traditions" and that "there was still a sense of belonging to a special community."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the diasporan Jews were likely to have family and friendship connections within Jerusalem, which might have served to perpetuate the significance of Jerusalem as center of the Jews' loyalty through the synagogues of the Diaspora.

Although there is no explicit evidence for Sadducean concern in Thessalonica, certainly a knowledge of this centrality (of cultural and religious power and authority) emanating from Jerusalem for the Jews in the dispersion helps one to understand such references to the persecution in Thessalonica. In the book of Acts and in the Pauline epistles, one can follow the gradual advance of such centralism manifested in the pressure of Judaism upon the Christians in Judea (1 Thess 2:14) and beyond that as well (Acts 17:1-9). Throughout the apostolic period, the relationship between Jews and Christians was always a controversial problem for both. "This controversy was of a theological nature and centred round the significance of Jesus of Nazareth."<sup>2</sup> This was so not

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<sup>1</sup>Frend, 34.

<sup>2</sup>Jocz, The Jewish People and Jesus Christ, 10. For James W. Parkes, "the origin of the profound difference which exists between Judaism and Christianity must ultimately be related to the teaching of Jesus, although He Himself lived and died a Jew." He holds that "the Law and the Cross, these are the two rocks on which Christianity and Judaism divided" (The Conflict of the

only in Judea, but also in the missionary regions. The preaching of Jesus as Messiah in Jerusalem (2:22-40; 3:11-4:3; 5:14-42); Damascus (9:20-24); Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:14, 50), Iconium (Acts 14:1, 5-6), Lystra (Acts 14:6, 19-20), Beroea (Acts 17:13-14) and Corinth (Acts 18:6, 12-17) provoked violence from the Jews. Similar commotion had been caused in Thessalonica by the same preaching (Acts 17:5-10).

In the framework of this historical context, then, one may have an ecclesiological indicator of some significance for the question at hand, the way the Thessalonians reacted to the content of Paul's message in Thessalonica. This reaction had to do not only with the nature of the persecution, which provoked "much affliction" and "great opposition," but also with the constitution of the ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ in Thessalonica, gathered "around" this scriptural Messiah. We are here confronted, then, with one key concept and one

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Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism [Cleveland, OH: World Publication Company, 1961], 34, 47). Jocz, being a Christian Jew, held that "in the Synagogue the Messiah is the Unknown, he is the one without a name though constantly expected; in the Church he has a name: Jesus of Nazareth, the one who was, who is, and who is to come. The Church is Church and the Synagogue is Synagogue because of that knowledge" (A Theology of Election, 5). In his opinion, "the Synagogue has created her own particular concept of the Messiah. This stands in direct contradiction to that of the Church. The Jewish Messiah and the Christian Christ are totally different both with regard to function and to position" (ibid., 15).

which is crucial for understanding Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church. The fourth chapter examines this in more detail.

This ἐκκλησία of the Thessalonians, which suffered physically from its fellow citizens under the religious instigation of the unbelieving and "jealous" Jews (1 Thess 1:6; Acts 17:5-9; 1 Thess 2:14; cf. 2 Thess 1:4, 7), was renowned for its orthodoxy (1:1-10) and steadfastness (2:13-14; 3:6-13) in the succeeding period.

As we continue, some additional references are considered to explore the purpose that motivated the writing of this letter.

#### Purpose

Jewett makes clear that "the letter is misunderstood when taken to mean that there are no serious problems in the congregation, that the extended thanksgiving reveals a thoroughly positive, unproblematic situation."<sup>1</sup> While insisting that "this is a fallacious inference drawn from a misunderstanding of the rhetoric of 1 Thessalonians," Jewett infers "from the literary evidence," or "from the argument of the first letter,"<sup>2</sup> the

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<sup>1</sup>Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence, 91.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 91, 93.



"situation in the Thessalonian congregation"<sup>1</sup> that explains the reason or purpose for sending this epistle.

According to his studies of the literary evidence, the Thessalonian Christians were: (1) "surprised or perturbed that persecution would be a part of their life in the new age" (1 Thess 1:6; 3:3-4); (2) perplexed or hopeless because some of their members died before the parousia (4:13-18); (3) reluctant "to live with the ambiguity of an incalculable parousia" (5:1-11), tending instead toward a radical kind of realized eschatology; (4) marked with conflicts stemming from ecstatic manifestations of the Spirit (1 Thess 1:5,6; 5:6-8, 19-22); (5) critical of Paul's own lack of charismatic qualities (1 Thess 2:1-12) and of the leadership that Paul had left in charge during his absence (1 Thess 5:12-13); (6) agitated with internal difficulties caused by the ἀτακτοί, described as "obstinate resisters of authority" (1 Thess 5:12; 2 Thess 3:6-15); (7) challenged in their "sexual ethics" (1 Thess 4:1-12); and (8) confronted with an "anthropological trichotomy" (1 Thess 5:23).

Since 1 Thessalonians is a circumstantial letter, dealing with situations that developed in the Thessalonian church between the time Paul left the city and the writing

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 91-109. See Best's criticism to Jewett in this point (A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 19-22).

of the letter a few months later, the difficulty in determining the nature of the situation that originated its writing is intrinsic to the text itself. An examination of Paul's letter seems to suggest that there was a threefold purpose in the writing of this letter. First of all, 1 Thessalonians was not written only to record the faithfulness and example of the Thessalonians as they faced affliction and persecution,<sup>1</sup> but rather as an encouragement to this suffering congregation,<sup>2</sup> which generated the triple thanksgiving to God in the letter.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William P. De Boer affirms that "the heart of the matter was the effect the persecutions, afflictions, and pressures might be having on the Thessalonians" (The Imitation of Paul: An Exegetical Study [Amsterdam: J. H. Kok N. V. Kampen, 1962], 94). See also Donfried ("The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonians Correspondence," 347-50). According to I. Howard Marshall, "the elements that receive special emphasis in this letter contribute to a fuller picture of Paul's thought and to demonstrate especially his pastoral concern for a congregation undergoing affliction and persecution" ("Pauline Theology in the Thessalonian Correspondence," in Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett, ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson [London: SPCK, 1982], 181).

<sup>2</sup>Jeffrey A. D. Weima considers that "a major concern of Paul in 1 Thessalonians is to provide comfort and encouragement for believers in their struggle" (Neglected Endings: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings, JSNT, Supplement Series 101 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994], 181).

<sup>3</sup>After the initial salutation, the thanksgiving is (1) for the faith and the example of the Thessalonians (1:2-10); (2) for their acceptance of the Word of God (2:13-16), and (3) for all the joy provoked in Paul by their Christian experiences (3:9-10). On this thanksgiving section, see especially Paul Schubert, "The Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings," BZNW 20 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1939); Jack T. Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in

Second, Paul wrote this letter to refute implicit and false charges that were leveled against himself and the content of the gospel preached originally in Thessalonica.<sup>1</sup> These attacks caused Paul's reaction as we

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the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," JBL 81 (1962): 348-62; Peter T. O'Brien, "Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul," Novum Testamentum Supplements 49 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 141-166; Jan Lambrecht, "Thanksgivings in 1 Thessalonians 1-3," in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 183-205; and Peter Arzt, "The 'Epistolary Introductory Thanksgiving' in the Papyri and in Paul," NovT 36 (1994): 29-46.

<sup>1</sup>This view is shared by Walter Schmithals, who holds that "there can be no doubt" ("The Historical Situation of the Thessalonian Epistle," in Paul and the Gnostics, trans. J. E. Steely [Nashville: TN; New York: Abingdon Press, 1972], 137). Richard N. Longnecker affirms that "what concerned Paul principally in writing 1 Thessalonians was what he speaks of in chapters 2 and 3: a defence of his and his companions' conduct while at Thessalonica, against certain charges made against them, and a message of encouragement to his converts who were facing some type of persecution" ("The Nature of Paul's Early Eschatology," 88). See also George A. Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1984), 142. Scholars have made their own suggestion about the origin and nature of these charges. Such accusations or attacks could have come from such distinct origins. It was attributed to Judaizers (Baur), libernist and spiritualist enthusiasts (Lütgert, Jewett), gnostics (Schmithals), and Jews (Frame, Milligan). See this special discussion in Best, who suggests that "instead therefore of looking for one definite group which Paul was attacking in Thessalonica we must see present a number of ideas from Hellenistic atmosphere which were foreign to Christianity's Jewish cradle and which Paul had to refute" (A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 22). In particular see Johanson, with theories' evaluation and additional contributions (52-54). However, viewed from the paraenetic perspective of the letter as Malherbe suggests, "Paul's description of himself (2:1-8) is therefore not to be viewed as a personal defence" but to remind "his μιμηται of the

find it recorded in chaps. 2 and 3. And finally, it was written to deal with specific problems and weaknesses of the Christian community in Thessalonica; this is evident in the exhortations presented in chaps. 4 and 5.

Thus 1 Thessalonians was the response of Paul to Timothy's report "as an interim communication until the prayer is answered and a reunion takes place,"<sup>1</sup> perhaps trying to "supply what is lacking" in the Thessalonians' faith (3:10).<sup>2</sup> It is time for Paul to give "practical

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qualities they should imitate in their model, and he does so in the antithetical style used by philosophers-preachers to describe themselves, a style that is appropriate to the paraenetic use of historical examples." Malherbe adds that "Paul here (1 Thess 2) presents himself as a model to be followed" ("Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," 2, 26: 290, 294). Malherbe, concerned to show how Paul functioned as a pastor, attributes the problems in the Thessalonian church more to the impact of conversion than to the rise of later persecution, which one finds less convincing. See also, idem, "'Gentle as a Nurse': The Cynic Background to 1 Thess ii," in NovT 12 (1970): 203-17; and his Paul and the Thessalonians; George L. Lyons, Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1985), 117-208. For his part, Donfried argues that Paul makes a defense of the gospel and of his behavior ("The Theology of 1 Thessalonians as a Reflection of Its Purpose," 256-60).

<sup>1</sup>Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 66. In this context, Best affirms that Paul wrote on the basis of "(i) what he has heard from Timothy; (ii) experience he knows faces young Christian communities; (iii) what he knows the condition of the Thessalonians was when he left them" (A Commentary on the First and the Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 15).

<sup>2</sup>Johanson, 58.

advice for hard-pressed Christians"<sup>1</sup> in Thessalonica. Thomas H. Olbricht argues that "the larger purpose of 1 Thessalonians" is "to reconfirm the young congregation in the matters on which it had been taught."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps for that reason, Paul commands that this letter be read "to all of the brothers and sisters" of the assembly (5:27), probably in a worship setting.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Guthrie, The Apostles (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975) 161.

<sup>2</sup>T. H. Olbricht, "An Aristotelian Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Thessalonians," in Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe, ed. D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson, and W. A. Meeks (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 227. One can see the same description but different terminology in Marxsen, "to strengthen the first steps in the Christian life against attacks and against doubt" (Introduction to the New Testament, 36); John W. Beauden ("Gospel, Word of God, and Community: Theology of Preaching in First Thessalonians," in "Paul's Theology of Preaching," NABPR, Dissertation Series, Number 6, ed. J. Wm. McClendon [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988], 31); Moore, "to strengthen his converts in their tribulations" (5); Daniel Patte, "strengthening further in their faith. Paul simply addresses a young church which is still taking its first steps in the Christian life and needs to be guided and strengthened" (Paul's Faith and the Power of the Gospel: A Structural Introduction to the Pauline Letters [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983], 126); Boers, "to spur them on to a way of life pleasing to God" (158); Johanson, "a delicate combination of consolation and correction without reproof" (189); and Barclay, "positive reinforcement, not rebuke or correction" ("Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity," 51).

<sup>3</sup>John L. White supposes that Paul "envisioned the worship setting as he composed his letters" ("Saint Paul and the Apostolic Letter Tradition," CBQ 45 [1983]: 437). See also Lars Hartmann "On Reading Others' Letters," HTR 79 (1986): 137-46; especially Johanson, who stresses the subject of "intertextuality and a worship-setting of reception" (175-87); and Collins, The Birth of the New

Summary

To sum up briefly the results of the investigation in this section:

First of all, although some verbs used in this letter are in the plural implying a joint authorship, one still finds evidence that Paul is the original author. No serious objection has been raised to Paul's authorship of 1 Thessalonians. Even though modern critical scholars have questioned whether one part or another of this letter is actually his, the authenticity and the integrity of 1 Thessalonians are admitted today by practically all Pauline scholars.

Second, Paul wrote the letter around A.D. 50 or 51 from Corinth, during his missionary preaching on his second journey.

Third, 1 Thessalonians is addressed "to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," a church established and founded by Paul's preaching of "the word of God." Based upon the Old Testament Scriptures, Paul presented before his audience the realities concerning the promised Messiah, identifying Jesus with Him. The content of Paul's message in Thessalonica could have been the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ, which provoked violence from the Jews (Acts 17:5-10). This christological content

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Testament, 109.

of the Pauline message could have been interpreted as a real attack against the Temple and the Law, as an attempt to shake the foundations of Israel's existence and hope. It was so offensive to the Jewish religious leaders in every place that it provoked an immediate reaction in defense of Israel's distinctiveness: the Christian persecutions. By the same preaching, similar commotion had been caused from the Jews in Jerusalem (2:22-40; 3:11-4:3; 5:14-42); Damascus (9:20-24); Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:14, 50), Iconium (Acts 14:1, 5-6), Lystra (Acts 14:6, 19-20), Beroea (Acts 17:13-14) and Corinth (Acts 18:6, 12-17) from where he wrote the letter.

The church of the Thessalonians was constituted mostly by former pagans, and even though the evidence available is fragmentary, it seems to have been composed in its majority by working class and manual workers.

Fourth, the immediate occasion for writing 1 Thessalonians seems to have been the return of Timothy with his information about the spiritual condition of the Thessalonians in a context of "much affliction" and "great opposition" provoked by religious persecution.

Fifth, 1 Thessalonians seems to be a pastoral letter to the ἐκκλησία ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ in Thessalonica, addressed to the actual situation of affliction in which it found itself.

Having established the basic setting in which

1 Thessalonians was written, however, the issue posed by literary criticism regarding 1 Thess 2:13-16 still needs to be addressed. The nature and function of this passage in the letter have been understood in different and even opposite ways throughout the last two centuries. Its authenticity has been challenged, particularly since the nineteenth century. A brief exposition of its literary context, the subject of the following chapter, should provide an adequate background for the understanding of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif in the context of 1 Thessalonians.



## CHAPTER III

### THE AUTHENTICITY OF 1 THESS 2:13-16

With introductory issues regarding the Pauline construction of ἐκκλησία το ἐν Χριστῷ addressed in chapter 2, attention can now be given to the literary questions of 1 Thess 2:13-16, a crucial passage in which the connection of the term ἐκκλησία το ἐν Χριστῷ appears. A main concern of scholars is the authenticity of the text; therefore, analysis must be made of the historical, theological, and form-critical arguments raised over this issue.

Five purposes guided the research reported in this chapter. They were: (1) to review and evaluate literary-critical arguments regarding the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16; (2) to provide evidence of the authenticity and integrity of 1 Thess 2:13-16; (3) to define as nearly as possible the Pauline character of this passage; (4) to specify the literary context and the theological setting behind it, and (5) to give a literary and theological basis for exploring Paul's association of ἐκκλησία το ἐν Χριστῷ motif.

Redactional Hypotheses Regarding  
1 Thess 2:13-16

As was mentioned in chapter 2, the nature and function of 1 Thess 2:13-16 have been challenged, particularly from the nineteenth century onwards. The basic problem is the attribution of the text. Three types of interconnected evidence are often mentioned to argue that 1 Thess 2:13-16 is un-Pauline. First, there is the historical argument that 2:16 contains a reference to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. For Ferdinand C. Baur, who established the basis for the interpolation theory, "wrath" in 2:16 makes reference to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. This interpretation was part of his argumentation, by which he concluded that 1 Thessalonians could not have been written by Paul.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, 1 Thess 2:13-16 fits very well with the post-A.D. 70 attitude of the church toward Judaism. It is argued that the earliest documents that present this "systematic and pervasive anti-Judaism" belong to a date posterior to the Jewish revolt and the destruction of the Temple. This, in turn, has led to a perception of a vehement anti-Semitic polemic in the text. It is argued that in the other Pauline letters "Paul's attitude toward Judaism both theologically and autobiographic stands in

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<sup>1</sup>Baur, 2:80-87.

sharp contrast to the sentiment expressed" in this passage.<sup>1</sup>

Based on these assumptions, two different redactional hypotheses have been suggested in an attempt to explain the problems associated with 1 Thess 2:13-16. While most compilationist scholars consider this passage to be authentically Pauline, interpolationists take it as un-Pauline. A brief exposition of these hypotheses should provide an adequate background for understanding the issue.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Compilation Theory

In general terms, compilation is a literary tool of form-critical analysis that builds upon the paradigms of source, form, literary, and, particularly, redaction criticism. Redaction criticism seeks to reveal the theology and setting of a particular literary work by exploring the methods, techniques, or strategies used by the author or editor in his literary composition or redaction. Compilation, as the goal of redaction criticism, centers upon the editorial process by which the

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<sup>1</sup>Hurd, 22.

<sup>2</sup>For a complete analysis of the various arguments presented to support these two types of explanatory theses, see particularly Collins, Studies, 96-135, and Jewett, 33-46. For the earlier discussion, see Carl C. Clemen, Die Einheitlichkeit der paulinischen Briefe an Hand der bisher mit Bezug auf die aufgestellten Interpolations un Compilationshypothesen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1894).

author or editor combined his material, which resulted in a final literary production. Compilationists conjecture that there is a "normative form adopted by Paul" in the composition of his letters, including "length" and "smooth-flowing" of thought without "repetitions or doublets."<sup>1</sup>

Whereas 1 Thess 2:13-16 is considered Pauline by most compilationists, we make reference only to the somewhat ingenious work of Walter Schmithals,<sup>2</sup> which "impresses the reader with its imaginative qualities and its thorough research."<sup>3</sup>

Schmithals, based on the presence of formal doublets and apparent conflict of content, proposed that 1 and 2 Thessalonians contain four separate authentic letters.<sup>4</sup> These are: *Thess A*: 2 Thess 1:1-12 + 2 Thess

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<sup>1</sup>Collins, Studies, 133.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Schmithals, "Die Thessalonicherbriefe als Briefkompositionen," in Zeit und Geschichte: Dankesgabe an Rudolf Bultmann zum 80. Geburtstag, ed. Erich Dinkler (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1964), 295-315.

<sup>3</sup>Jewett, 33. On more complex hypotheses that combine compilation and interpolation theories, "whose plausibility is on rather problematic level" (ibid., 42), see Jewett's analysis on pp. 42-45.

<sup>4</sup>On apparent conflicts of content and formal doublets, see particularly Walter Schmithals' work Paul and the Gnostics, trans. J. E. Steely (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1972), 125-26 and 128-29, 133 respectively. Cf. Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," 348-62; and Robert W. Funk, Parables and Presence: Forms of the New Testament Tradition (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982), 97, n. 17.

3:6-16; *Thess B*: 1 Thess 1:1-2:12 + 1 Thess 4:3-5:28;  
*Thess C*: 2 Thess 2:13-14 + 2 Thess 2:1-12 + 2 Thess 2:15-  
 3:5 + 2 Thess 3:17-18; and *Thess D*: 1 Thess 2:13-4:2.

For Schmithals, then, 1 Thessalonians is a composite Pauline letter. He argues that letters B and D have been combined redactionally by an editor to produce our current 1 Thessalonians. For him, the thanksgiving formula of 1 Thess 2:13 is the beginning of an independent Pauline letter, that is, Thess D.<sup>1</sup>

Since Paul's theology is the focus of this dissertation, the compilationist argument does not affect the dissertation one way or the other. My major concern, therefore, is to analyze the hypothesis of the interpolationist scholars, who consider 1 Thess 2:13-16 un-Pauline.

### The Interpolation Hypothesis

Interpolation, being also a literary tool of form-critical-literary studies, proposes the insertion of certain materials into a particular text by later editors.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For observations on the Schmithals' redactional hypothesis, see Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, 261-62; for a discussion of the evolution of his thinking from earlier to later publications, see Collins, Studies, 118-24; and Jewett, 33-36.

<sup>2</sup>The question of interpolation in the Pauline letters continues to provoke debate. Recent years have seen numerous attempts to identify particular passages as non-Pauline. Considerable attention has been given to Rom 1:19-2:1; 3:24-26; 5:7-6; 13:1-7; 16:25-27; 1 Cor 2:6-16; 11:3-16; 13; 14:33b-36 (or only vss. 34-35); 2 Cor 6:14-

Interpolationists presuppose a somewhat rigid norm of consistency in Pauline thought and language.<sup>1</sup>

Baur and the Tübingen School probably were the ones who established the basis for the interpolation theory. Baur remarked that 1 Thess 2:14-16 "is particularly noticeable. . . . This passage has a thoroughly un-Pauline stamp," reflecting a period when accommodation was sought with the Jewish Christianity Paul had so vehemently opposed.<sup>2</sup> In 1847, Albrecht Ritschl suggested excising 1 Thess 2:16c as a scribal gloss post-A.D. 70, referring to the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> A few years later, Heinrich J. Holtzmann included vs. 14 in the interpolation<sup>4</sup> and Paul Schmiedel extended it to vss. 15 and 16<sup>5</sup> as Baur already had.

The twentieth century has seen prolific debates concerning 1 Thess 2:13-16. Rudolf Knopf suggested in 1905 that 1 Thess 2:16c was a marginal gloss, included in  


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 7:1; 1 Thess 2:13-16 (or only vss. 14b-16) and 5:1-11.

<sup>1</sup>Collins, Studies, 126.

<sup>2</sup>Baur, 2:87-88.

<sup>3</sup>In an article in Halle'sche alleg.Lit-Ztg. (1847), cited by Paul Schmiedel, Die Briefe and die Thessalonicher und an die Korinther, 2, verb. und verm. Aufl. (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1892), 21.

<sup>4</sup>James Everett Frame, 109, citing Hernich J. Holtzman, Lerbuch der Historisch-Kritischen Einleitung in das Neue Testament (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1886), 214.

<sup>5</sup>Schmiedel, 21.

the text after A.D. 70, at a time when Christians viewed the fall of Jerusalem as divine revenge, the wrath of God poured out on his enemies.<sup>1</sup> This proposal was later accepted and developed by scholars such as James Moffatt,<sup>2</sup> Alfred F. Loisy,<sup>3</sup> and Maurice Goguel.<sup>4</sup>

Karl Gottfried Eckart questioned the authenticity of 2:13-16 based on arguments of a literary nature. He took 2:13-16 as a doublet, since it initiates a thanksgiving which has reference to Paul's mission in Thessalonica as did 1:2-10. Second, he saw that the

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<sup>1</sup>Rudolf Knopf, Das nachapostolische Zeitalter: Geschichte der Christlichen Gemeinden vom Beginn der Flavierdynastie bis zum Ende Hadrians (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1905), 139, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Moffatt, however, did not admit that 1 Thess 2:14-16 was an interpolation. He held that "it is unnecessary to suspect 2:14-16 as a later interpolation, but 2:16b must be admitted to have all the appearance of a marginal gloss, written after the tragedy of A.D. 70" (An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, International Theological Library, 3d ed. [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1912], 73).

<sup>3</sup>Alfred F. Loisy considered 2:1-12; 2:13-16; and 3:3-4 as redactional insertions (Les Livres du Nouveau Testament [Paris: Noury, 1922], 135-37). Later on, Loisy argued that this passage is inconsistent with the literary context of the epistle and that it was full of conventional terminology. His two principal arguments against the authenticity of the passage were (1) that the invective against the Jews must be dated to a time after 70 A.D., and (2) the Pauline apology (vss. 1-12) is one piece with the anti-Jewish pericope (idem, Remarques sur la Littérature Épistolaire du Nouveau Testament [Paris: Librairie Émile Noury, 1935], 85-86).

<sup>4</sup>Goguel considered 2:14-16 to be suspect by reason of its sharp anti-Jewish polemic (Maurice Goguel, Introduction au Nouveau Testament [Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1922], 3:305-7).

parallelism of vss. 15 and 13, together with its lack of concrete detail, recalls elements of common and programmatic anti-Jewish polemic. Finally he observed that 2:17-3:4 contains a presentation of concrete issues, while it makes no reference to 2:13-16. Thus Eckart, assuming a consistency of Pauline thought, concluded that 2:13-16 constitutes a foreign body within 1 Thessalonians. He excluded 2:13-16 from the epistle because its content cannot be readily harmonized with other passages in the critical Pauline corpus.<sup>1</sup>

This century-long debate received new impetus in the 1970s and 1980s with the publication of significant studies. These studies have challenged the integrity of the letter and the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16 with more argumentation in favor of the interpolation theory.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Karl Gottfried Eckart, "Der Zweite echte Brief des Apostels Paulus an die Thessalonicher," ZTK 58 (1961): 30-44. His proposal was immediately rejected by Werner G. Kümmel, "Das literarische und geschichtliche Problem des ersten Thessalonicherbriefes," in Neotestamentica et Patristica, Suppl NT, 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 213-337; and Karl Thieme, "Die Struktur des ersten Thessalonicher-Briefes," in Abraham Unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch über die Bibel. Festschrift für Otto Michel zum 60. Geburtstag, ed. O. Betz, M. Hengel, and P. Schmidt (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 450-58; cf. Jewett, 42-44.

<sup>2</sup>Pearson has considered 1 Thess 2:13-16 as an "important passage," with "historical and theological difficulties," an interpolation "reflecting a situation in the church post-70" (79, 81). See also Ebba Refshauge, "Literaerkritiske overvejelser til de to Thessalonikerbreve," DTT 34 (1971): 1-19; Gerhard Friedrich, Der erste Brief and die Thessalonicher (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1976); Koester,



There is little doubt that one of the leading figures in this debate, Birger A. Pearson, has played a significant role. Although his "thesis has not found universal acceptance,"<sup>1</sup> his work is considered by many as providing a carefully worked-out argument regarding the interpolation of the entire passage. Even though an analysis of all the exegetical considerations developed by Pearson lies beyond the purpose of this dissertation, a report of his main arguments for interpolation is necessary.

#### Arguments for Interpolation

This section is limited to a descriptive presentation of the arguments suggested by proponents of the interpolation theory, keeping the more analytical comments for a later section of the chapter.

Pearson proposes, based on "the insights of previous scholars" and his "own historical, theological, and form-critical observations," "that there is, indeed, an interpolation in 1 Thessalonians 2 as it now stands, reflecting a situation in the church post-70, and that

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"1 Thessalonians," 38; idem, Introduction to the New Testament, 2:113; Clemens Thoma, A Christian Theology of Judaism, ed. and trans. H. Croner (New York: Paulist, 1980), 156; and John G. Gager, The Origins of Antisemitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 255.

<sup>1</sup>Frank D. Gilliard, "The Problem of the Antisemitic Comma Between 1 Thess 2:14 and 15," NTS 35 (1989): 485.

this interpolation extends from v. 13 through v. 16."<sup>1</sup> Pearson builds on Baur's hypothesis that the reproach "against the Jews in 2:14-16 reflects a later period," at a time when "the Jews were regarded on all sides as enemies of the gospel."<sup>2</sup> According to Pearson's working presupposition, the text reflects a historical situation that did not pertain prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.

His arguments for interpolation, coming from historical, theological, and form-critical observations, follow:

#### Historical observations

Pearson presents two historical observations as evidence for his thesis. First of all, he begins his analysis by taking the aorist ἔφθασεν in 2:16c "as referring to an event that is now past, and the phrase εἰς τέλος" as emphasizing "the finality of the 'wrath' that has occurred." He argues that the only "event in the first century" that "was of such magnitude as to lead itself to such apocalyptic theologizing" is "the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Pearson, 81 (emphasis added).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 80, 81, 84, 91, 92-94.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 82-83.

Second, Pearson believes that "there was no significant persecution of the Christians in Judea" as seems to be implied in 2:13-16. He makes clear that there is no historical evidence for such a persecution. It is argued that "the Christians in Judea, at least up till 62 A.D., were living in harmony with their fellow-Jews."<sup>1</sup>

#### Theological anachronisms

Pearson also seeks support for his interpolation hypothesis in the alleged incompatibility of 2:15-16 with what is known of Paul's theology. First of all, he finds "some incompatibilities between 1 Thessalonians 2:15f. and Paul's thought as expressed elsewhere in his epistles." For example, he argues that Paul "never attributes the death of Jesus to the Jews." Based on 1 Cor 2:8, he holds that "Jesus was brought to his death by the demonic 'rulers of this age' who did not know that by so doing they would defeat themselves in the process."<sup>2</sup>

Second, Pearson finds it "virtually impossible to ascribe to Paul the ad hominem fragment of Gentile anti-Judaism in v. 15."<sup>3</sup> He notes that the idea expressed --that the Jews are categorically excluded from any possibility but the "naked wrath of God"--is absent in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 86-87.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 82.

similar Pauline passages (Rom 9-11, Gal 1-2, and Phil 3:5-6). Pearson contends that the idea "that God's wrath has come upon the Jewish people with utter finality (v.16) is manifestly foreign to Paul's theology."<sup>1</sup>

Third, Pearson remarks that "not only is it improbable that Paul would cite the Judaeans Christians as examples for his Gentile congregation, but also "the mimesis usage" in 2:14 "does not cohere with Paul's usage elsewhere" in that "he uses it with reference to the imitation of himself."<sup>2</sup> In Pearson's view, "the mimesis motif that occurs in I Thessalonians I:6" is "a secondary extension on the part of a later editor."<sup>3</sup>

#### Form-critical arguments

Through an analysis of the redactional process behind these passages Pearson seeks to strengthen his suggestion of interpolation. First of all, he observes that "much of the material in the interpolation is traditional and formulaic."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 85-86.

<sup>2</sup>The lexical evidence for Pauline and NT use of this motif is noteworthy. The verb μιμέομαι appears in the NT only in 2 Thess 3:7, 9; Heb 13:7; and 3 John 11. The noun μιμήτης is found in 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; Eph 5:1; and Heb 6:12.

<sup>3</sup>Pearson, 87-88.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 83, 92.

Second, in Pearson's view the phrase *καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίω* (vs. 15) "picks up a theme from Graeco-Roman anti-Semitism." He considers that "it is somewhat surprising to find the characteristic Gentile charge of 'misanthropy' against the Jews reflected in the Pauline correspondence."<sup>1</sup>

Third, Pearson affirms that 2:13-16 is an unexpected and inappropriate additional thanksgiving in the letter.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he asserts that the "apostolic parousia" of 2:17-3:13 "is introduced formally," "naturally," not by vss. "13-16 at all, but by the apostle's remarks in vv. 11-12." In consequence, "vv. 13-16 do not belong to Paul's original letter at all, but represent a later interpolation into the text."<sup>3</sup>

And fourth, Pearson makes mention of what he believes to have been the *modus operandi* and historical

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 83.

<sup>2</sup>Pearson considers that there is an "apparent anomaly" in that 1 Thess "as now constituted contains two 'thanksgiving sections' (cf. 1:2; 2:13); "or even three, if one counts 3:9 as a further instance" (89).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 90. Schubert already noted the lack of a transition from 2:16 to 2:17 judging that 2:17 "follows most naturally upon the reminiscences of [Paul's] former relations to the church (2:1-12)" (23). Samuel G. F. Brandon also saw that "there is no obvious connection between this passage [2:13-16] and the verse which precedes it" (The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church: A Study of the Effects of the Jewish Overthrow of A.D. 70 on Christianity [London: S.P.C.K., 1957], 92). Cf. Eckart, 33-34.

motivation of the interpolator: "The method of our hypothetical interpolator is . . . to use Pauline words and phrases from a genuine letter in order to provide a putative 'Pauline' framework for a new message." The analysis shows the close correlation between those thanksgivings (1:2; 2:13) in "words and phrases" used in this hypothetical interpolation. This new message "has as its purpose, in circumstances of persecution, to encourage the readers with reference to the embattled Christians of Palestine." The interpolator thus underscored "'the unity front' of all Christians against the Jews who have at least suffered in the destruction of their city and temple the ultimate rejection and judgment from God."<sup>1</sup>

Pearson's arguments have been reinforced by the literary and form critical studies of Hendrikus Boers,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Pearson, 91.

<sup>2</sup>Boers argues that the elimination of 2:13-16 as an interpolation brings about a virtual metamorphosis of 1 Thess, resolving most of the problems in connection with the form and function of the letter. Boers concludes that considering 2:13-16 an interpolation "the structure of I Thess. finds a simple resolution" and "the letter has a completely normal form" ("The Form-Critical Study of Paul's Letters: 1 Thessalonians as a Case Study," New Testament Studies 22 [1975-76]: 151-52). Reacting against Boers's suggestion, Simpson considers that "it is not clear, however, what norm is assumed by this conclusion. Although Boers includes components of a form-critical comparison of 1 Thessalonians without 2:13-16 with other letters of Paul, he does not do so in a straightforward enough fashion to make it clear that a structural norm exists by which he can argue for the exclusion of 1 Thess 2:13-16" (75).

Helmut Koester,<sup>1</sup> and Daryl Schmidt. Schmidt has advanced an even more serious challenge than Pearson's thesis, suggesting that "that the linguistic evidence favors the interpolation hypothesis." By syntactical analysis, Schmidt attempts to show "some features not typical of Paul" in 2:13-16.<sup>2</sup>

His first linguistic argument has to do with the use of the conjunction καί in the sentence καὶ διὰ τοῦτο in vs. 13, which establishes structural differences among the forms of thanksgiving used by Paul. According to Schmidt, "nowhere else in 1 Thessalonians is καί used to connect two matrix sentences, and no other undisputed letter of Paul uses the construction καὶ διὰ τοῦτο (although it is imitated in 2 Thess 2:11)."<sup>3</sup>

Schmidt's second evidence consists of the number of levels of "embedding" in 1 Thess 2:14-16. He detects "more embeds than any other sentence in the whole section" (1:2-3:10)<sup>4</sup>: seven embeddings in 2:13-14 compared to five for any other part of 1:2-3:10.

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<sup>1</sup>Koester, History and Literature of Early Christianity, 2: 113.

<sup>2</sup>Schmidt, 269.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 273.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Schmidt's third observation makes reference to "the separation of the nouns κύριον and Ἰησοῦν by the participle" ἀποκτεινάντων (2:14). Schmidt considers this break un-Pauline, because "in Paul" these nouns "always appear together."<sup>1</sup>

Schmidt's fourth assertion, given as "linguistic evidence" for interpolation, is more directly related to this study. He argues that τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is an un-Pauline combination of "three different Pauline constructions." As "a possible explanation" of this association, Schmidt believes "that in the process of imitating Paul, someone has put together here an overly Pauline construction."<sup>2</sup>

Schmidt's fifth possible proof for interpolation is "the position of ἀδελφοί" in 2:14. He argues that the separation of τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν from its head noun μιμηταί with the vocative ἀδελφοί is not characteristic of Paul. The argument is that Paul always uses the vocative ἀδελφοί at a natural syntactical break in a sentence and never separates a genitive from its head noun as in 2:14.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 274.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 274-75.



At first sight Pearson's arguments for interpolation, reinforced by further literary and form-critical studies coming from Boers and Schmidt, seem weighty. A closer examination shows, however, that there are a number of problems with the interpolation hypothesis.

#### An Analysis of the Arguments

The examination which follows does not seek to evaluate every objection made by Pearson and Schmidt in connection with 1 Thess 2:13-16, this has already been done by others. The purpose is to define as nearly as possible whether this text is Pauline or not. For this purpose, reference will be made to the main reactions of certain New Testament scholars to the arguments presented by the interpolation hypothesis.

The three areas to be considered are: historical observations, theological anachronisms, and form-critical arguments. Within each of these areas, authors are cited chronologically.

#### Historical observations

Two issues related to history must be addressed if we are to rightly evaluate the arguments of Pearson, the matter of the persecution of Christians in Judea and the significance of the phrase ἔφθασεν-ὄργή.

Persecution of the Christians in Judea. While not indulging in an exhaustive study, Pearson appeals to the testimony of Douglas R. A. Hare regarding the experience of the early Christians in Judea.

Hare's major hypothesis is that the Christians in Judea did not suffer judicial persecution at the hands of the Jews, that could have resulted in a complete tragedy. Although the principal intention of his argumentation is to show that the Jews' animosity did not generate an extensive murder of Christians in Palestine, Hare does not deny that the early Christian church suffered severe persecution from the Jews. He admits that the Christians were condemned from the very beginning.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, considering that ἐπ' ἄθετε in 1 Thess 2:14 may refer to "public insults, social ostracism and other kinds of non-violent opposition,"<sup>2</sup> he assumes that

the Thessalonian Christians, like those in Judea, are experiencing various kinds of abuse, some of it perhaps physical, but there is not sufficient evidence to support the view that the reference in I Thessalonians 2:14-16 is to a serious outbreak of violent persecution.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas R. A. Hare, The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel According to St. Matthew, ed. Matthew Black, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 62, note 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 64.

By way of contrast, Johannes Munck suggests that here contemplated "more probably were Jesus' words about persecution preserved and developed from early times by the Jewish Christians in Palestine because of persecution by unbelieving fellow-countrymen."<sup>1</sup>

One must recognize that although some events "had occurred almost 20 years prior to the time of the writing of I Thess.,"<sup>2</sup> the Christians suffered persecution in Jerusalem (Acts 4:1-31; 5:17-41; 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 11:19; 12:1-5; 26:10-11; 2 Cor 11:24, 26; Gal 1:13) as well as in the rest of Judea (9:13-14; 26:11).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Johannes Munck, Christ and Israel: An Interpretation of Rom 9-11, trans. I. Nixon (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1964), 55. From the Synoptic Gospels Munck alludes to "texts such as Matt. 5:10, 11-12; Luke 6:22-23, 27. Matt. 10:16-39; Mark 13:9, 11-13; Luke 12:2-9, 11-12; 21:12-16; 12:51-53; 14:26-27; 17:33. Matt. 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-9:1; Luke 9:23-27. Matt. 23:29-37; Luke 11:47-51; 13:34. Matt. 24:9-13; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17-19" (ibid.).

<sup>2</sup>Pearson, 86, n. 45. And still, as Simpson has pointed out, "the fundamental response to the argument that 1 Thess 2:14 is anachronistic in speaking of Jewish persecution of the Judean churches must, however, be this: Nothing in the wording of the references to this persecution in 1 Thess 2:14 requires that it occurred only shortly before the composition of the letter" (122).

<sup>3</sup>Despite the tendency of some scholars to tone down the Jewish responsibility in persecuting Christians or instigating persecution, it is essential to take seriously the very suggestive essay written by Charles F. D. Moule, "The Church under Attack," in his well-known book The Birth of the New Testament, 3d ed., rev. and rewritten (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1981), 152-76. His conclusion is that "the New Testament as a whole reflects plenty of attack from antagonists, but little that was official or state-organized. What can be identified is mainly Jewish rather than imperial; and the manner and

Paul affirms that the Thessalonians "became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea, because you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews" (2:14). "At first sight," according to Martin Hengel, "one might think here of the persecution under Agrippa I, but could Paul also not have had in mind the persecution which he himself carried out?"<sup>1</sup> It is reasonable to assume that Paul is making reference to his own experience when he "persecuted the church of God." As Gal 1:13 suggests, Paul could presuppose a knowledge of the stages of his life among his readers, even in Thessalonica. One may also assume that Paul could have personally mentioned these periods of his life to the Thessalonians during his earlier stay among them.

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degree of it varies from place to place and from situation to situation" (ibid., 176). Specifically, of the eighteen confrontations recorded in Acts between Paul and opponents, fourteen represent some form of Jewish opposition. According to these passages "the Jews" are jealous (13:45, 17:5); they are liars (18:12; 24:9; 25:7); they are treacherous (14:2; 23:12, 20); they are clamorous (17:5); they incite crowds to riot (13:50; 14:2; 17:5, 13; 21:27); they plot violence and murder (13:50; 17:5; 21:11; 23:30). The curious exception is Acts 17:11, where the writer expresses a favorable opinion of the Jewish people of Berea. So, the Pauline section of Acts leaves the reader with the impression that opposition to Paul arose almost solely from Jewish sources.

<sup>1</sup>Martin Hengel, The Pre-Christian Paul, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1991), 73.

Meaning of ἐφθασεν - ὀργή in 2:16. As has been noted above, Pearson supports the interpretation suggested by Baur that 1 Thess 2:16c refers "to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D."<sup>1</sup> That is to say, the divine wrath has come upon the Jews on the occasion of the destruction of their city.

The question here is the particular historical identification of the destruction of Jerusalem with the action described by the aorist ἐφθασεν in its strict temporal conjugation. The difficulty with such an interpretation is that it conditions the whole explication of the text, moving its original setting to a time after A.D. 70, and originates the hypothesis of an interpolator working with the text. The historical assumption is imposed upon the passage.

Others, however, have taken ἐφθασεν in the sense of present (with respect to the author of the text). They have thought that the death of the Jewish King Agrippa in A.D. 44;<sup>2</sup> the revolt of Theudas in 44-46 (Acts 5:36);<sup>3</sup> the famine in Judea in 46-47 (Acts 11:27-30);<sup>4</sup> the riot and

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<sup>1</sup>Pearson, 83.

<sup>2</sup>Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 120.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Robert Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," NTS 17 (1970-71): 205, note 5.

<sup>4</sup>Benjamin W. Bacon gives a list of "current events" to which he believes Paul is alluding ("Wrath unto the

massacre of Jews in the Temple court in Jerusalem between 48-51;<sup>1</sup> and the expulsion of the Jews from Rome under Claudius in 49 (Acts 18:2)<sup>2</sup> were historical events, which Paul could have had in mind when he wrote this letter around A.D. 50-51.

These historical suggestions, however, seem to go beyond what the textual and biblical evidence allows. They are questionable by reason of the very nature of the passage in its context. The use of several biblical motifs, particularly of God's Word and the killing of the prophets, is a clear indication that the main motivation

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Uttermost," Exp, series 8, 24 [1922]: 356-76). See also Buck and Taylor, who argue that "there is really only one event in this period that completely satisfies the requirements of the case . . . the famine that occurred in Judea in the year 46" (148).

<sup>1</sup>Sherman Johnson, "Notes and Comments," ATR 23 (1941): 173-76; and Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," 205, note 5. As Jewett did, Bo I. Reicke argues convincingly—against Pearson, Douglas R. A. Hare, Samuel G. F. Brandon, and Leonhard Goppelt—that the persecution in the Judean churches did occur in the prewar period ("Judaean-Christianity and the Jewish Establishment, AD 33-66," in Jesus and the Politics of His Day, ed. E. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984], 145-52). G. E. Okeke holds the same position on general grounds ("1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: The Fact of the Unbelieving Jews [Compared with Rom 9-11]," NTS 27 [1980]: 129).

<sup>2</sup>Bammel, 295, 306. See also Otto Michel, "Fragen zu 1 Thessalonicher 2,14-16. Anti-jüdische Polemik bei Paulus," in Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament? Exegetische und systematische Beiträge, ed. W. Eckert, N. P. Levinson, M. Stöhr. Abhandlung zum christlich-jüdischen Dialog, 2, (Munich: Kaiser, 1967), 50-59; Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 120; and Brown, 1:380.

behind this passage is theological rather than strictly historical.<sup>1</sup>

The best known and most widely accepted solution to the interpretation of ἐφθασεν, though not without variations in detail, sees it as a "prophetic" or "proleptic" aorist predicting the destruction of Jerusalem or the eschatological judgment of God.<sup>2</sup> It is argued that the Greek aorist indicative is used under the influence of the Hebrew prophetic perfect to portray a future event as if it has already happened. With this background in mind, some hold that 2:16 may fit into two types, one more consistent in its pattern than the other. On the one

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<sup>1</sup>Neil comments that Paul "is speaking in terms of ethical values, not of historical events" (54).

<sup>2</sup>Ellicott, 46; Dobschütz, 16, 117; Frame, 114; Gustav Wohlenberg, Der erste und zweite Thessalonicherbrief, 2. durchgesehene, vermehrte Auflage (Leipzig: Deichert, 1909), 62-63; Neil, 54-55. Morris holds that the use of the aorist "does not refer to the imminence of the punishment. It refers rather to its certainty, for Paul is thinking of wrath in an eschatological setting" (The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 92). See also Hiebert (120); Rigaux (Saint Paul: Les épîtres aux Thessaloniens, 453-54); Ward, who perceives it as "present fact and prophetic anticipation" (77); Bruce, who discussing textual issues on 2:16, holds: "Whichever reading be adopted [he is referring to the aorist ἐφθασεν and the perfect ἐφθακεν], it may reflect the OT prophetic perfect." Bruce believes that "the language of v 16c implies rather that the end-time judgment has come upon them ahead of time" (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 42, note d); Randolph O. Yeager (The Renaissance New Testament [Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1985], 16:177); and Buist M. Fanning (Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990], 273-74).

hand, ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοῦς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος seems to fit the sense of the prophetic *perfect of confidence*: events that have not yet started or, having started, have not been completed but the circumstances are inevitable or secure (e.g., Luke 1:51-55; John 13:31).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοῦς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος seems to indicate the meaning of an *aorist of divine decree* which sees a future event as certain because of the divine judgment and providence (e.g., Rom 8:30; Rev 11:2; perhaps Mark 11:24; 13:20).<sup>2</sup>

The question then arises, To what does ὀργή refer? This question must be answered from the particular perspective of the textual and Pauline evidence.

It is no coincidence that the author of the passage connects the subject of the sentence, ἡ ὀργή (2:16), among others, with the passion of Jesus (2:14-15), "Who died for us" (5:10) and "delivers us from the wrath to come" (1:10).<sup>3</sup> In 5:9, "wrath" and "salvation" are in

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<sup>1</sup>Reginald H. Fuller, The Mission and Achievement of Jesus: An Examination of the Presuppositions of New Testament Theology (London: S. C. M. Press, 1954), 26.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Headland and Henry B. Swete held that the aorist is a "prophetic past, looking upon the future as already settled and completed in the counsels of God" (The Epistles to the Thessalonians [London: Hatchar, 1863], 58); and Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 119.

<sup>3</sup>ἐρχομένης is a present participle, "coming," which suggests that the wrath, which is definitely in the



opposition and contrast, describing a culminative process. The same "day of the Lord," which "will come like a thief in the night" (5:2), will be wrath-destruction for some—"sudden destruction will come on them" (5:3) and salvation-preservation for others—"whether we wake or sleep we might live with him" (5:10). What makes the difference between the two is the "Lord Jesus Christ" and His death (1:9-10): the Christ event.

To interpret this eschatological Pauline contrast, some scholars suggest that we recognize Paul's potential OT background for understanding the wrath and salvation motifs.<sup>1</sup> Based on God's holy righteousness and electing love, the OT characterizes the idea of God's wrath by the facts that: (1) in Israel, there was only one God; and (2) Israel had a particular relation with its unique God.<sup>2</sup>

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future in the events accompanying Christ's parousia (cf. Rom 2:5, 8; 5:9), is proleptically revealed and already active in the death of Christ (Rom 1:18).

<sup>1</sup>For example, Anthony T. Hanson stresses that "we need look no further (than the Chronicler's impersonal view of wrath) for the origin of Paul's doctrine of wrath of God" (The Wrath of the Lamb [London: SPCK, 1957], 23). On the theological aspects of wrath in the Old Testament see, *ibid.*, 1-40, and particularly Bruce E. Baloyian, whose study covers both human and divine anger ("The Aspect of Anger in the Old Testament" (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1988). Cf. Johannes Fichtner, "The Wrath of God," TDNT, 5:395-409; Jan Bergman and Elsie Johnson, "ἔμνη," TDOT, 1:348-60; and Gary A. Herion, "Wrath of God," ABD, 6:989-96.

<sup>2</sup>Fichtner, 397.

The first mention of God's displaying wrath in the OT is connected with God's purpose to deliver the Israelites from Egypt. The wrath of Yahweh is against Moses because he seems to reject His special calling as deliverer (Exod 4:13-14). Later on, "Moses and the sons of Israel sang" a song of victory "to Yahweh" (Exod 15:1-21), in which Yahweh's wrath is celebrated "as the force that simultaneously consumed the pursuing Egyptians and delivered the fleeing Israelites" (Exod 15:7-8).<sup>1</sup> The wrath of God therefore, seems to be a clear reaction of God toward all attempts to obstruct His plan to free His people. The same action of God appears to be wrath-destruction for the Egyptians and salvation-preservation for His people.<sup>2</sup>

Israel, after its deliverance from Egyptian slavery—having entered into a covenantal relationship with God and seen His glory—is also the object of God's wrath (Num 11:10; 12:9; 22:22; 32:10, 13, 14). The wrath comes because Israel has broken its covenantal relationship with God (Deut 29:18-28; Josh 23:16; Judg 2:20-22; Ezra 9:13-14; Dan 9:4-17).<sup>3</sup> Israel provoked God

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<sup>1</sup>Herion, 993.

<sup>2</sup>It would be going too far afield to attempt to substantiate this biblical motif here.

<sup>3</sup>Fichtner holds that "the consistent linking of nouns for wrath with Yahweh, the covenant God, is of supreme theological significance. It shows that the idea of wrath is closely bound up with belief in the covenant"

by its idolatry (Exod 32:7-14; Deut 4:25-28; 9:7, 8, 19; Judg 2:10-14; 1 Kgs 11:9-13; 14:9, 15; 2 Kgs 17:16-20), by its syncretistic cult (Isa 1:10-17; Jer 6:20; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21-27); by its deliberate rebellion (1 Kgs 8:46); by its unbelief (Num 11:33; 14:11, 13; Pss 78:22, 32; 95:10-11); and by its indifference for love, justice, righteousness, and holiness (Exod 22:23; Isa 1:15-17; Amos 5:7, 10-12; Mic 3:1).<sup>1</sup>

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(396). Bergman and Johnson state that "in most cases the anger of God is brought about by the actions of men. Thus, his anger must be understood within the framework of the covenant relationship" (357).

<sup>1</sup>In his study of all pericopes of the Old Testament containing direct mention of divine wrath, Baloian reveals that of "281 pericopes, 157 of them refer to the covenant" (114). His analysis indicates that "of 173 pericopes where anger is expressed against Israel, 78% [135] refer to some type of covenant violation." On most other occasions wrath was "brought about by disregard of some existential command from Yahweh" (ibid., 115). According to Baloian's investigation, the highest concentrations of association of the covenant with divine wrath are found "throughout the Former Prophets, Daniel, the Chronicler, Deutero-Isaiah and most of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and the minor prophets" (ibid.). The corporate aspect dominates the wrath passages against Israel as a nation. "There are 173 of the 281 [almost 62%] pericopes, that have designations of his wrath, which are aimed at the nation." Of the 173 pericopes, 96 contain "explicit mention of a military reversal or else one is clearly implied." The nation's defeat usually involves "pestilence, famine, captivity, shame, or one that would indicate the perishing of life" (ibid., 180-81). Compare this list with the declaration of the covenant conditions: blessings (Deut 28:1-14) and curses (28:15-68). Both blessings and curses are tied to the land. The land will generate life for Israel according to their obedience. Yahweh will bless Israel with prosperity and conquest on the same principle: conditioned to their obedience. (Thus the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles were the covenant curses taking effect.)

Thus the wrath of Yahweh was not only executed against the nations who had rebelled against God's sovereignty (Exod 15:7; Ps 2:1-6; Jer 10:25; Obad 1-15; 2:1-3; Amos 1:2-2:5), but also against Israel for breaking the covenant that Yahweh had established with its as a "priestly kingdom and holy nation" (Exod 19:6), a "nation chosen" (Exod 32:10; Num 11:1, 33; Amos 2:6-3:13). This manifestation of God's wrath against Israel was considered a "strange deed of God" (Isa 28:21), a "day of wrath" (Zeph 1:15, 18; 2:2-3). Israel and Judah were removed from Yahweh's presence as an expression of His judgment because of their covenantal infidelity.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Pentateuch, salvation for Israel seems to have been a personal and national deliverance made possible only by the mighty work of God in a process of conquest: choosing it to be His people; giving it a new and prosperous land; conquering new territory for it; freeing it from all their enemies; governing it with mercy and justice; and forgiving it all their sins. Thus God would give it the hope and the promises of blessing,

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<sup>1</sup>Richard C. H. Lenski holds that "long, long ago this punitive, retributive wrath arrived upon the Jews. Among the notable manifestations of this wrath is the deportation and the total disappearance of the ten tribes in the Assyrian captivity, also the Babylonian captivity of the other two tribes. Paul tells us why God did not abolish the Jews once for all in Rom 9:22 . . . and in a number of other places" (The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon [Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961], 269).

prosperity, and victory for the nation to be realized in the promised land.

Although the curses of the covenant had come on the people, the land had been devastated, and the people exiled, a Davidic king yet remained (according to a divine promise which would not be revoked [2 Sam 7:14-16]).<sup>1</sup> This promise of a royal Davidic-Messiah<sup>2</sup> had been central in the historical contexts of the prophets Amos (9:11),<sup>3</sup> Hosea

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<sup>1</sup>The oracle of Nathan to David has been considered by scholars as "the root of the royal messianic hope" (John L. McKenzie, "Royal Messianism," CBO 19 [1957]: 27; and Roland E. Murphy, "Notes on Old Testament Messianism and Apologetics," CBO 19 [1957]: 6); the "Magna Carta of the messianic expectation" (McKenzie, 31; and Murphy, 7); "one of the key elements in the deuteronomic history" (Dennis J. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomic History," JBL 84 [1965]: 134); the "theological highlight of the Books of Samuel . . . the matrix of later messianic expectations" (Arnold A. Anderson, 2 Samuel, Word Biblical Commentary, 11 [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989], 112, 123); the "charter of the Davidic covenant" (Michael D. Guinan, "Davidic Covenant," ABD, 2:69-72); and "crucial for covenantal studies" (Lyle Eslinger, House of God or House of David: The Retic of 2 Samuel 7 [Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1994], 1).

<sup>2</sup>Klaus D. Schunck considers several preexilic and postexilic OT texts to refer to a monarchical figure or Messiah. He argues that the "messianic idea" probably originated with Isa 8:23b-9:6; appears in Isa 11:1-5; Mic 4:14-5:5; Jer 23:5-6; Zech 9:9-10; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:21-23; Hag 2:21b-23; and Dan 7:13-14. Accordingly, the attributes of the Messiah are peace, justice, and righteousness, close relationship to Yahweh, empowering by the spirit of Yahweh, shepherd and prince of God's people, David redivivus, Yahweh's Servant, shoot of David, suffering, dying, rising savior and apocalyptic son of man ("Die Attribute des eschatologischen Messias," TLZ 111 [1986]: 641-52).

<sup>3</sup>In his prophecy about "the tabernacle of David" (9:7-11), Amos announces that the godly remnant would be gathered from among the nations (9:9) to "raise up the

(3:4-5),<sup>1</sup> Micah (5:1-2),<sup>2</sup> Isaiah (7:1-17);<sup>3</sup> 9:2-7; 11:1-16;<sup>4</sup>

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booth of David" (9:11-12).

<sup>1</sup>Hosea sees a covenant fellowship (2:18-19), and the believing remnant returning from everywhere; west, Egypt and Assyria (11:10-11). The coming of this faithful people from distant regions would imply more than redemption (2:15). It would involve a new covenantal relationship between God and His people (2:23; cf. Rom 9:25; 1 Pet 2:10).

<sup>2</sup>Micah anticipates the renewal of Jerusalem and the picture of "many nations" along with that of the faithful remnant coming to the Lord's house for instruction (4:1-8; cf. Isa 2:2-4), which would result in "a strong nation," and the Lord would "reign over them" forever (4:8).

<sup>3</sup>In the midst of the Syro-Ephraimitic conflict, a vision of victory is presented after a period of affliction and defeat. The sign of this victory is the birth of a child, Immanuel (7:14; cf. Matthew's interpretation, 1:23), who shall sit upon the throne of David and over his kingdom (9:6-7). See Erling Hammershaimb, "Immanuel Sign," ST 3 (1951): 124-142; and Edward J. Young, "The Immanuel Prophecy: Isaiah 7:14-16," WTJ 15 (1953): 97-124; 16 (1953): 23-50. Antti Laato argues that "Isaiah's faith in Yahweh as the governor of the course of history was based on two themes of joyful expectation: David's dynasty, and the election of Zion. As a Jerusalemite, Isaiah was well familiar with God's promise to David of an eternal dynasty (2 Sam 7) and with the theology of the royal psalms, according to which the Davidic king enjoys Yahweh's protection and shares the mighty power of Yahweh" (Who Is Immanuel? The Rise and Foundering of Isaiah's Messianic Expectations [Åbo: Åbo Academy Press; Pargas: Distribution, Tidningsbokhandeln, 1988), 327-28). See also, idem, "Immanuel—Who Is with Us—Hezekiah or Messiah?" in "Wunschet Jerusalem Frieden": Collected Communications to the XIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, ed. M. Augustin and K. D. Schunck (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1988), 313-22; and Ronald E. Clements, "The Immanuel Prophecy of Isa 7:10-17 and Its Messianic Interpretation," in Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65, ed. E. Blum, C. Macholz, and E. W. Stegemann (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukircher Verlag, 1990), 225-40.

<sup>4</sup>See the study by Gerhard F. Hasel, The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis

55:3-5<sup>1</sup>; Jeremiah (23:5-6;<sup>2</sup> 30:8-9 [cf. Amos 9:11 and Hos 3:5]); 31:1-10; 33:15, 17);<sup>3</sup> and Ezekiel<sup>4</sup> (34:11-31; 37:15-28).<sup>5</sup>

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to Isaiah (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1972), particularly his conclusions, 396-403.

<sup>1</sup>A disputed subject that cannot occupy us here is whether Isa 55:3 refers to David's steadfastness to God or to God's steadfastness toward David. André Caquot ("Les 'grâces de David': À propos d'Isaïe 55,3b," Sem 15 [1965]: 45-59), and Win A. M. Beuken ("Isa. 55, 3-5: the Reinterpretation of David," BiJ 35 [1974]: 49-64) have argued for the former. However, Hugh G. M. Williamson considers arguments from the ancient versions, grammar, and context to refute their position ("'The Sure Mercies of David': Subjective or Objective Genitive?" JSS 23 [1978]: 31-49). Walter C. Kaiser, from a consideration of the part played by Deuteronomic theology in the background of Isa 55:3, reexamines the context of the chapter and the mention of David in this verse as a subjective genitive. He concludes that the promise to David in Isa 55:3-6 is not transferred to Israel but shared with Israel in the inception of the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7 ("Unfailing Kindnesses Promised to David: Isaiah 55.3," JSOT 45 [1989]: 91-8).

<sup>2</sup>Yahweh will raise up a royal figure similar to this described in Isa 11:1-9, who would come from the family of David (Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5); would have the hand of Yahweh upon himself (Isa 11:2; Jer 23:5); would rule wisely, with justice and righteously (Isa 11:2-5; Jer 23:5); who would deliver the people (Isa 11:11; Jer 23:6) and give them security during his rule (Isa 11:6-9; Jer 23:6). This king will be called "Yahweh is our righteousness."

<sup>3</sup>See W. J. Wessels, "Jeremiah 33:15-16 as a Reinterpretation of Jeremiah 23:5-6," HTS 47 (1991): 231-46.

<sup>4</sup>See the analysis made by André Caquot, "Le messianisme D'Ézéchiél," Sem 14 (1964): 5-23; and David C. Greenwood, "On the Jewish Hope for a Restored Kingdom," ZAW 88 (1976): 376-85.

<sup>5</sup>According to A. Laato, "The use of the term *melek* seems to show that the coming Messiah described in 37:15ff is in fact a royal figure, not only representative from

The coming of this Davidic-Messiah would be a decisive act of God in His historical interaction with Israel.<sup>1</sup> The Pentateuch had presented only a partial

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the House of David" (Josiah and David Redivivus: The Historical Josiah and the Messianic Expectations of Exilic and Postexilic Times [Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1992], 186).

<sup>1</sup>The Christian understanding of this related group of Davidic OT testimonia seems to have been pivotal in the interpretation of the Christ event in the New Testament. It recognizes Jesus as the "Son of David," in Whom the promises made to David find a complete fulfillment. For example: (1) The Davidic covenant is central in the nativity story (Luke 1:27-32, cf. Matt 1:20-23; Luke 2:4, 9-11). On this, see particularly Morton S. Enslin ("The Christian Stories of the Nativity," JBL 59 [1940]: 317-38); Evarist Pinto ("Jesus as the Son of God in the Gospels," BTB 4 [1974]: 75-93); Jeffrey G. Sobosan ("Completion of Prophecy: Jesus in Lk 1:32-33," BTB 4 [1974]: 317-23); D. Moody Smith ("An Exposition of Luke 1:26-38," Int 29 [1975]: 411-17); Edgar Conrad ("The Annunciation of Birth and the Birth of the Messiah," CBO 47 [1985]: 656-63); Richard D. Nelson ("David: A Model for Mary in Luke?" BTB 18 [1988]: 138-42); and Raymond E. Brown ("The Annunciation to Mary, the Visitation and the Magnificat (Luke 1:26-56)," Worship 62 [1988]: 249-59). (2) The Davidic descent of Jesus is clearly admitted by Matthew and Luke in their genealogies (Matt 1:1, 6, 17; Luke 3:23, 32). (3) John the Baptist announced the arrival of the kingdom of God (Matt 3:2). (4) Jesus Himself not only preached the arrival of the kingdom (Matt 4:23; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43; 10:10), but He also identified Himself with the "son of David" and "the kingdom of God" when "all the people were amazed" asking: "Is not this the son of David?" (Matt 12:22-30; cf. Luke 11:20; 5:23-26). Jesus answered the question of the Pharisees saying that "the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20-21). (5) John reports a dispute in the temple court about the origin of the Messiah. He does not come from Galilee. The Scripture has predicted that the Messiah is to be of David's house and town (John 7:40-44; cf. Mic 5:2). (6) On His entrance into Jerusalem before His passion, when the crowd and even children welcomed Him as "the Son of David . . . Who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matt 21:9, 15; cf. Zech 9:9), Jesus did not reject the salutation. (7) In the exposition on the messiah as David's Lord, the last of Jesus' temple debates



fulfillment of the promise to the people of God. Its ultimate fulfillment would come from the Davidic house (Matt 1:1, 6, 17<sup>1</sup> || Luke 3:23, 32;<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam 7 || 1 Chr 17 || Ps 89) and from the seed of Abraham (Matt 1:1; Gal 3: 6-14, 29; Gen 12; 15; 17; 22).<sup>3</sup> His death and resurrection would

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and His final public controversy with the religious leaders in Jerusalem, the pharisees and scribes understood and said that the Messiah is to be the son of David (Matt 22:41-46 || Mark 12:35-37 || Luke 20:41-44). (8) On the basis of what has been mentioned in chapter 2 of this dissertation, the prophecy of Nathan could have played a central role in Jesus' trial. (9) Peter, in his first recorded discourse, presented the concept that from David God would set up the Messiah, who he identified as Jesus (Acts 2:29-32). (10) At the Council of Jerusalem, James, interpreting Jesus' resurrection and exaltation, applied Amos 9:11-12 (the restoration of David's fallen dwelling) to the new Christian community, constituted by Gentile and Jews believers (Acts 15:16-18). (11) The author of the letter to the Hebrews (1:5), in reference to the Sonship of Christ, put together 2 Sam 7:14 (cf. 1 Chr 17:13) and Ps 2:7. (12) In Revelation, Jesus is "the ruler of kings on earth" (1:5), who "has the key of David" (3:7) as ruler of the house. He "is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" (5:5; cf. Gen 49:10 and Isa 11:1, 10). Jesus Himself is "the root and the offspring of David" (22:16).

<sup>1</sup>See James M. Gibbs ("Purpose and Pattern in Matthew's Use of the Title 'Son of David'," NTS 10 [1964]: 446-64). Jack D. Kingsbury argues that Matthew employs the title "Son of David" to characterize the earthly Jesus as the royal Messiah from the house of David promised and sent specifically to Israel ("The Title 'Son of David' in Matthew's Gospel," JBL 95 [1976]: 591-602). See W. Barnes ("The Origin of Jesus Messiah' (Matt 1:1, 18a): Matthew's Use of the Infancy Traditions," JBL 96 [1977]: 523-35); Dennis C. Duling ("The Therapeutic Son of David: An Element in Matthew's Christological Apologetic," NTS 24 [1978]: 392-410).

<sup>2</sup>See George E. Rice, "Luke 3:22-38 in Codex Bezae: The Messianic Title," AUSS 17 (1979): 203-8.

<sup>3</sup>For an emphasis on the divine-royal-sacral motif see particularly Ernest W. Hengstenberg (Christology of

finally and fully unite the mercy and judgment of God. In its widest sense, salvation would be sealed with a final, eschatological event: the coming of the Messiah.

According to Paul's speech in Acts 13, from David's "posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised" (Acts 13:22-23). In Jesus, the blessing promised in the covenant with Abraham (Gen 22:18) finds fulfillment (Gal 3:8-9). However, this Savior, in

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the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions, trans. T. Meyer and J. Martin [Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1956]), 1:130-52); Arthur G. Hebert (The Throne of David: A Study of the Fulfillment of the Old Testament in Jesus Christ and His Church [London: Faber and Faber, 1956]); Aage Bentzen (King and Messiah [London: Lutterworth Press, 1955]); Mowinckel (10-186); Helmer Ringgren (The Messiah in the Old Testament [London: S. C. M. Press, 1956]); McKenzie ("Royal Messianism," 25-52); Aubrey Johnson (Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel, 2d ed. [Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967]); Bruce (The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes, 68-82); Joseph Coppens (Le Messianisme Royal: Ses origines. Son développement Son accomplissement [Paris: Les Editions Du Cerf, 1968], 129-98; idem, Le Messianisme et sa Relève prophétique: Les anticipations vétérotestamentaires Leur accomplissement en Jésus, rev. ed. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989); Leonhard Rost (The Succession to the Throne of David, trans. M. D. Rutter and D. M. Gunn, with a introduction of E. Ball [Sheffield, England: Almond Press, 1982]); and Sherman E. Johnson ("The Davidic Royal Motif in the Gospels," JBL 87 [1968]: 13-150). Other scholars, such as Tryggve N. D. Mettinger (King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite King [Lund: LiberLaromedel/Gleerup, 1976]) and Roger N. Whybray (The Succession Narrative [London: S. C. M. Press, 1968]) have focused on the actual court setting of David and Solomon. See Gerard Van Groningen, who guided by a conservative view of biblical inspiration and inerrancy, attempts to demonstrate that the messianic concept has its "origin . . . in divine revelation" (Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990], 939.

Whom "all nations" would "find blessing," was precisely the historical Deliverer Who "those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers" (Acts 13:27) "the Jews . . . killed" (2:14). The great mistake of those in Jerusalem and their rulers was that, failing to recognize Christ, they fulfilled prophecy by condemning Him (Acts 13:27).<sup>1</sup>

The unbelieving Jews did not receive the Savior and the salvation offered by God in Christ (Acts 13:27-29) in fulfillment of His covenant with Abraham and David. Christ, having been made sin "for our sake" (2 Cor 5:21), took upon Himself the "wages of sin" (Rom 6:23) in His atoning death "for us" (1 Thess 5:9-10) on the cross. Thus, the liberation from the wrath to come was already reached in His eschatological and expiating death.

Later on, Paul would say that the believer, in this mighty work of God in Christ, is justified and saved from the wrath of God by Christ's blood, reconciled by His death and no longer an enemy of God (Rom 5:9-10). For Paul, indeed, salvation means to be saved from destruction (Phil 1:28), from death (2 Cor 7:10), and from judgment (5:10). Salvation is freedom from the power of sin, death (Rom 8:2), and divine wrath (Rom 5:9). The unbelieving

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<sup>1</sup>For a full discussion about the structure, form, content, and language of this sermon preached by Paul in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41), see Marcel Dumais, Le Langage de L'Évangélisation: L'annonce missionnaire en milieu juif (Actes 13, 16-41) (Tournai: Desclée, 1976).

Jews seem to have ignored this divine plan of salvation (Rom 9:30-10:4). They asked for the crucifixion of the son of Abraham and David, the Messiah.

Thus, in the literary context of 1 Thessalonians and in Pauline theology, ὀργή seems to refer to the event of the cross, to Jesus' death as the Messiah of God, His final act to deliver His people. His death, like other saving events of God in the OT and Israel's history, was a terrible fact for unbelievers, but a fantastic possibility for believers. For unbelievers, it was wrath-destruction, *lack of salvation*, the revelation of God's wrath. For believers it was salvation-preservation, the revelation of God's saving event. The difference between the two groups depended upon the acceptance or rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, the anointed one of God.

According to Paul, the unbelieving Jews filled their cup with their determined and historical hostility to the prophetic word. To this followed their rejection and crucifixion of the Deliverer-Messiah. Finally, their deliberate opposition to the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles—which displeased God and opposed all men (2:15)—seemed to be a clear evidence of their spiritual condition under the wrath of God. They seemed to have been blind like the ungodly described in Rom 1:18-32 and hard like those in 9:18-24. God's plan with them seems to have come to an end, culminating with the cross.

The skeptical Jews were placed under the wrath of God, which in 1 Thess 2:16 is *lack of salvation*, εἰς τέλος.<sup>1</sup> Although former threatenings were not final (Jer 4:27; 5:10, 18; 29:10-12; 30:4-11; 31:35-37; 32:26-44; 33:20-22; 46:28), they are so now.<sup>2</sup> God's wrath has come upon those unbelieving Jews in an intensive way ("completely," "entirely," "to the uttermost," "to an end")<sup>3</sup> or a temporal way ("finally," "at last," "at the end"),<sup>4</sup> because they obstinately rejected the gospel

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<sup>1</sup>Marshall provides the options for this phrase as follows: (1) "at long last" or "finally"; (2) "completely," "to the uttermost"; (3) "for ever," "to the end," i.e., "lasting for ever"; and (4) "until the end" qualifying "wrath," i.e., "the wrath (that leads up) to the end." Marshall rather prefers "a combination of nuances," namely "fully and finally" (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 81).

<sup>2</sup>Take also the theological cycle of judges stories: description of Israel's infidelity, Yahweh's reaction and handing over of Israel to oppression by its enemies, the raising up of a judge by Yahweh to deliver Israel, and subjugation of the enemy during the days of the judge. Yahweh sent the final Judge to "his own, but his own did not receive him" (John 1:11). From this historical rejection, there is no more deliverance for the unfaithful nation of Israel. God sent His unique and exclusive Deliverer. There is no other plan.

<sup>3</sup>As supported by Bammel, 308; Peter R. Ackroyd, "ΠΛΗ-εἰς τέλος," ExpTim 80 (1968-69): 126; Schade, 127-28; and Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 49.

<sup>4</sup>As held by Frame (114); Coppens ("Miscellanées Bibliques," 91); Ulrich B. Müller (Prophetie und Predigt im Neuen Testament: Formgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur urchristlichen Prophetie, SNT, 10 [Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1975], 177); and Lüdemann (Paulus und das Judentum, 51, n. 95).

brought by God to them in the work of the prophets and the ministry of the Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

As is also clear in the predictions and sayings of Jesus and in other NT passages, ὀργή, in 1 Thessalonians, has both a present and eschatological connotation.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, when the non-Christian Jews, represented by

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<sup>1</sup>Theologically speaking, this Messiah is the eschatological "judge," "priest," "prophet," and "king" of Israel. The New Testament is in substantial agreement with this view. Jesus is considered by Peter "as judge of living and the dead" (Acts 10:42). For the author of Hebrews, Jesus was "designated by God to be high priest to distinguish good from evil" (Heb 5:10), "a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God" (Heb 2:17; cf. 3:1), "for ever, like Melchizedek" (6:20). The One Who "meets our need," although, "exalted above the heavens" (7:26), "sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven," serving "in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man" (8:1), which "is not a part of this creation" (9:11). People held that Jesus was a prophet (Matt 21:11; cf. vs. 46; Mark 6:15; Luke 7:16, 39; 13: 33; 24:19; 7:52; Matt 13:57 || Mark 6:4 || Luke 4:24; cf. John 4:44), the Prophet "Who is to come into the world" (John 4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17). Jesus was also expected (Matt 21:5, cf. Zech 9:9; John 18:37), judged (Matt 27:37 || Mark 15:26 || Luke 23:38, cf. John 19:19-22) and pictured as eschatological king (Matt 25:34, 40).

<sup>2</sup>Paul seems to be building his theological reflection on the theological perspective of the teachings of Jesus. He could have been familiarized with these traditions as reported in the Gospels (John 3:36; Matt 21:43 || Mark 12:9; 23:36-38 || Luke 13:34-35; Luke 21:23-24; Matt 26:63-64 || Mark 14:61-62), which he could have interpreted, developed, and applied with the same meaning (1 Thess 1:10; 2:16; 5:9; Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8; 9:22). For Hendriksen, Paul "was well acquainted with the words which Jesus had spoken while still on earth" (73). Cf. Hiebert, who believes that "Paul must have been acquainted with Christ's predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem (Mt 24:1-2; Lk 19:43-44) and from the course of events realized that the fulfillment could not be long delayed" (120).

their high priests in the final decision before Pilate, chose Caesar as their "king" (John 19:12-15) in place of Israel's God (and His salvific acts in Christ), they rejected God and ceased being His theocratic community.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Not all agree with the synthesis given above. However, there are some scholars who hold this point. For example, Flew considers that "those who rejected Jesus had thereby ceased to be Israelites. . . .It was the rebellious sons of Israel who forfeited their covenant by rejecting Christ" (101). Lucien Cerfaux holds that "the immediate consequence of their unbelief and God's anger is that they lose their privileges. They have failed to live up to their appointed end as the chosen race" (The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, 73). Goppelt has expressed: "In the Jews' rejection of Him Jesus saw not only the logical end to His controversy with them, but at the same time the consistent conclusion of *the conflict between God and Israel* that had existed ever since the establishment of their covenant relationship. Jesus Himself was this conclusion. He was the last in a long line of messengers sent by God. His coming marks the end of God's patient waiting. But even more than this, everything He did made Him the 'finisher and perfecter,' the One who fulfilled what had existed up until then by replacing it with something new. . . . Giving the vineyard to others meant that after Jesus was rejected God would take another people and make them His covenant people" (emphasis in the original), 93-94. George R. Beasley-Murray is in substantial agreement with this view. In the context of John 19:15, he comments: "The high priests state their response in terms reminiscent of their earlier declaration to Pilate (v. 12): 'We have no king except Caesar.' The implications of this statement are to be weighed. In the context of the trial of Jesus, of the Man who proclaimed to the nation the kingdom of God, and manifested it in his deeds, and called on Israel to repent and believe, it is nothing less than the abandonment of the messianic hope of Israel. For it is not Jesus alone whom they reject; any claimant to the messianic office is excluded on the basis of the slogan, 'No king but Caesar.' Their repudiation of Jesus in the name of a pretended loyalty to the emperor entailed their repudiation of the promise of the kingdom of God, with which the gift of the Messiah is inseparably bound in Jewish faith, and Israel's vocation to be its heir, its instrument, and its proclaimer to the nations" (George Beasley-Murray, John, Word Biblical Commentary, 36 [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987], 343). For his part, Hans

As God established His covenantal relationship not with persons but with the entire nation of Israel, this critical decision of the leaders of the nation seems to have affected the entire nation not only in its religious condition, but also in its political aspects. The divine election and promise would have been taken from Israel and given "to others" (Mark 12:9).<sup>1</sup> The unbelieving Jews "have stumbled over the stumbling stone" because of their unbelief (Rom 9:32-33). In Pauline thought, Christ's cross and Israel's stumbling and fall are always connected (Rom 9:32-33; 11:12; cf. 1 Cor 1:18-24; 2:6-8; Gal 5:11; 1 Thess 2:15-16).

On the other hand, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to gather His people (1 Thess 4:13-17) is called "the day of the Lord" (5:2). His coming is to deliver "us from the wrath to come" (1:10), to bring "salvation" to His people (5:8-10)<sup>2</sup> and judgment "upon those who do not

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Küng sees in the fall of Jerusalem "the end of theocracy" (Judaism: Between Yesterday and Tomorrow [New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1992], 123-26). The crisis of this theocratic community was already seen before by John the Baptist and Jesus, who anticipated its consequences.

<sup>1</sup>See the commentary on Mark 12:1-9 by Odil H. Steck, Israel und das Gewalttame Geschick der Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des Deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum, und Urchristentum (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchen Verlag, 1967), 273; cf. Hanson, 70.

<sup>2</sup>Note in particular that in 1 Thess 1:10 wrath has a Gentile context, in 2:16 has a Jewish background, and in 5:9-10, has a Christian framework.



obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thess 1:7-10, cf. Rom 2:16).<sup>1</sup>

In the theological context of 1 Thess 2:14-16, then, Paul seems to show why the wrath of God has already been discharged upon those unbelieving Jews, who were the persecutors of the Christians at Jerusalem and Thessalonica. They have accumulated sin after sin in their history for which the wrath that "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness" (Rom 1:18)<sup>2</sup> came upon them. Not only they already are under the "wrath of God," which "rests upon" the unbelievers (John 3:36), but they have been "storing up" wrath for "the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed" (Rom 2:5).<sup>3</sup>

All that ἔφθασεν seems to say in the context of 1 Thess 2:16 then, is, that the wrath has come upon the unbelieving Jews by their incessant and historical

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<sup>1</sup>Interestingly enough, the wrath concept is necessarily one of the dominant eschatological motifs in "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him" (Rev 1:1). The word ὀργή appears first in Rev 6:16-17 when the wrath is poured out with the breaking of the sixth seal (6:12-17, cf. also Joel 2:11, Mal 3:2) in the context of the "last day," the day of the eschatological judgment. From there, it may be seen that this motif is central in the whole book. The wrath is present in the last trumpet (11:18), in each of the seven plagues (15-16) and in the parousia of the Lord and Judge (19:15, cf. Rev 14:14-20; also Isa 63:3, Joel 3:13).

<sup>2</sup>Note here the Gentile context.

<sup>3</sup>Note here the Jewish context.

rebellion, like that of Israel and Judah in the past. However, now it is final. Since the cross, those who have rejected Jesus as Messiah no longer seem to have a Savior or salvation, because they crucified the last prophet, David's son, the Messiah. They have lost the divine election and the promise of a covenantal relationship with God.

All that remains is a consequence of the particular condition of those who were removed from the presence of Yahweh: their inevitable judgment. Jerusalem will be "forsaken and desolated" (Matt 23:38)<sup>1</sup> as was indicated beforehand (1 Kgs 9:1-9 || 2 Chr 7:11-22; Jer 22:1-9). The destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple revealed by Gabriel's explanation to Daniel (Dan 9:26), interpreted and prophesied again by Jesus in His eschatological discourse (Luke 21:23) and trial as the final judgment of God (Matt 26:63-64 || Mark 14:61-62 || Luke 22: 67-69; cf. Dan 7:13), will come upon them.

Since 1 Thess 2:16 was built upon the framework of salvation history, it could have had explicit implications for the suffering Thessalonian church: Those Jews, who provoked the persecution against those who were "in the

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<sup>1</sup>In this respect the interpretation of Matt 23:38 by Goppelt seems particularly insightful as well as quite apropos. He has written: "The destruction of the Temple which Jesus envisioned in connection with this was simply an expression of this *removal of God's gracious presence*" (emphasis in the original), 95.

Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1) in Thessalonica, are under the same wrath of God as were those who persecuted "the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judaea" (2:14). Taking, then, the aorist ἔφθασεν in 2:16c as referring to an event that is now in the recent past, and the phrase εἰς τέλος as emphasizing the finality of the wrath that has occurred in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D, would be contrary to the literary and theological context of the passage and of the Pauline evidence in general.

God has offered explicit conditional prophecies of preservation or destruction in His covenantal relationship with Israel. Based on Israel's decisions, Jesus emphasized the negative aspects of these conditions, clearly implied in His teachings and actions. It is more than probable that Paul was only interpreting the scriptural relationship expressed in the covenantal language and sayings of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, what was

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<sup>1</sup>The study of the sayings of Jesus in Pauline thought is one aspect of a much larger debate about "Jesus and Paul." Although no one disputes that Paul had some knowledge of Jesus' teachings, it is hotly discussed among scholars how extensive it was. For the history of this discussion see Victor P. Furnish, "The Jesus-Paul Debate: From Baur to Bultmann," BJRL 47 (1964-65): 342-81; Friedemann Regner, "Paulus und Jesus" im neunzehnten Jahrhundert: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Themas "Paulus und Jesus" in der neutestamentlichen Theologie, Studien zur Theologie und Geistesgeschichte des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, 30 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1977); Werner G. Kümmel, "Jesus und Paulus," NTS 10 (1964): 163-81; idem, Heilsgeschehen und Geschichte:

already written and emphasized conjecturally, finally, was a certain and historical reality for Israel in its relationship with God. From the perspective of Paul, then, there is justification for taking his words in context as reference to an event that had already taken place in history. Paul has interpreted and applied the covenantal language of the Old Testament and teachings of Jesus in the same historical and theological perspective.

Pearson is correct in the interpretation of the aorist, but he is wrong in his premise and in the identification of the event described by ἔφθασεν-ὄργη in 2:16. There is no reason to take this aorist as intentionally used after A.D. 70 by some editor working with the text of 1 Thessalonians to underscore "the unity front" of all Christians against the Jews who have at least suffered in the destruction of their city and temple

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Gesammelte Aufsätze 1933-1964, Marburger Theologische Studien, 3 (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1965); Hans Rollmann, "Paulus Alienus: William Wrede on Comparing Jesus and Paul," in From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare, ed. P. Richardson and J. C. Hurd (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University, 1984), 23-45; and Frans Neiryck, "Paul and the Sayings of Jesus," in L'apôtre Paul: Personnalité, Style et Conception du Ministère, BETL, 73, ed. Albert Vanhoye (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 265-321. See particularly the collected essays by Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, whose main theme is the connection between Paul's thought and practice and those of Jesus (Paul and Jesus: Collected Essays. JSNT, Supplement 37 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989]); and David Wenham ("The Story of Jesus Known to Paul," in Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ, ed. J. B. Green and M. Turner [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994], 297-311).

the ultimate rejection and judgment from God."<sup>1</sup> This is mere speculation without textual evidence. By doing as Baur has done, Pearson<sup>2</sup> imposes a historical vision upon the original meaning of the text. (One wonders if this kind of reading of the New Testament evidence is not a form of "eisegesis"--to read into the text ideas not intended by the original author.) Charles A. Wanamaker holds that placing "the historical setting in the period after A.D. 70 suggested by Pearson is unnecessary."<sup>3</sup>

Since Paul's view of the divine ὀργή is based on the theological perspective of the deuteronomistic tradition and of Jesus' teachings, ἔφθασεν is pointing out a past event<sup>4</sup> from the perspective of Paul, with some future consequences: Because the unbelieving Jews rejected and killed Jesus, the last prophet and Deliverer, the wrath of God has come upon them. They have again thwarted

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<sup>1</sup>Pearson, 91.

<sup>2</sup>See Simpson's criticism of the "relevance" of some references to early Christian literature given by Pearson "as evidence for the Christian interpretation of Jerusalem's destruction as punishment for the killing of Jesus." Simpson argues that "the relevance of some of these references is questionable" (91).

<sup>3</sup>Charles A. Wanamaker, The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1990), 30.

<sup>4</sup>In Marshall's view, "the verb is in the past tense and in no way can it be turned into a future" (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 80).

the present salvation of God within the covenantal framework.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of these facts, one may agree that "present eschatological realities anticipate a future eschatological consummation,"<sup>2</sup> the final judgment of God—salvation or wrath, which is part of the Pauline theology elsewhere.

#### Theological anachronisms

The argument for interpolation rests more on Paul's theological discrepancies than on historical considerations. Four theological contradictions argued by interpolationist scholars are examined.

Anti-Semitism in 1 Thess 2:13-16. As was mentioned in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, the most sensitive aspect of the exegesis of 1 Thess 2:13-16 has to do primarily with the apparent anti-semitism of vs. 14-16, which seems to be a complex problem in Christian theology and exegesis.

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<sup>1</sup>Cranfield, commenting 2:16c, asserts that "the most likely meaning of the sentence as a whole in view of what Paul says elsewhere is, in our opinion, that God's wrath has already come upon the Jews to the uttermost in the event of the Cross. In that event the disobedience of God's people reached its climax, and God showed it up in its true character with final and absolute clarity" (218-19). See particularly Donfried's analysis, "Paul and Judaism," 249-51. Marshall regards this interpretation as "over-subtle" (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 81).

<sup>2</sup>Beasley-Murray, John, 54.

Most of the research on 1 Thess 2:13-16 has concentrated on the historical polemic between Judaism and Christianity. In that context, vss. 15-16 are considered "one of Paul's most bitter attacks on the Jews,"<sup>1</sup> in sharp contrast<sup>2</sup> with Paul's expectation of the eschatological salvation of Israel (Rom 11:25-26).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Buck and Taylor, 236. Peter Richardson holds that in 1 Thess 2:14 "judgment falls upon the Jews" (Israel in the Apostolic Church, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 10 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969], 174). Hiebert, considering 1 Thess 2:15-16, declares: "At the mention of 'the Jews' Paul launches into a strong denunciation of their activities" (114). Herman Ridderbos sees 1 Thess 2:14-16 as a "Paul's sharp condemnation of the Jews" (Paul: An Outline of His Theology, trans. John R. de Witt [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975], 519). David R. Adams expresses that 1 Thess 2:15-16 is Paul's "outburst against the Jews" ("The Suffering of Paul and the Dynamics of Luke-Acts" [Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1979], 211). E. P. Sanders judges 2:14-16 as a striking "charge against the Jews" (Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1983], 184). Walter D. Davies holds that in 1 Thess 2:14-16 Paul "presents the bitterest indictment of the Jews" (Jewish and Pauline Studies [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984], 124). Hans Conzelmann and Andreas Lindemann have considered vs. 14 as "a sharp attack against the Jews (the parallelism with Acts 17 is not to be ignored)." They believe that this "sharp criticism of the Jews in 2:14-16 raises a special theological issue" (Interpreting the New Testament: An Introduction to the Principles and Methods of NT Exegesis, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann [Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1988], 163, 164).

<sup>2</sup>Hans Hübner, Gottes Ich und Israel: zum Schrifgebrauch des Paulus in Römer 9-11, FRLANT, 136 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1984), 129-30. Cautiously, H. M. Lübking, Paulus und Israel im Römerbrief: Eine Untersuchung zu Römer 9-11 (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 23, Theologie, 260, 1986), 129-32; particularly 131, "veränderte Auffassung."

<sup>3</sup>For example, Norman A. Beck (Mature Christianity: The Recognition and Repudiation of the Anti-Jewish Polemic

Scholarly discussion has raised the crucial issue of the identification of τῶν Ἰουδαίων in 2:14. I cannot here summarize all the solutions suggested. Instead, I shall mention only two major proposals made for this identification. For the first suggestion, a certain degree of consensus has been reached. On the second, opinions still differ greatly.

As far as one can detect, most commentators, although with some slight variations, hold that τῶν Ἰουδαίων in 1 Thess 2:14 is used as an ethnic term to designate the Jews in general as a nation, with racial and religious connotations. That is to say, Paul in this text is speaking against all Jews.<sup>1</sup>

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of the New Testament [London: Associated University Presses, 1985]) proposes to excise 1 Thess 2:13-16 from the Christian canon as "an embarrassment" (ibid., 46). These verses are "by far the most vitriolic anti-Jewish segment of the entire Pauline corpus" (ibid., 40), a "virulent defamation" (ibid., 43) and a "bitter invective" (ibid., 90). Thus, vss. 14-16 appear "to be . . . contrary theologically to what Paul wrote elsewhere in the New Testament collection" (ibid., 45).

<sup>1</sup>The bibliography here is extensive. For example, Frame, 110; Neil, 50-55; Milligan, 30; Hendriksen, 20-27; Rigaux, Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens, 444; Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 90-98; Kelcy, 53; Hiebert, 114-21; Best, Paul's Theology of the Corporate Life of the Local Church, 114; Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 46; Paul N. Tarazi, 1 Thessalonians: A Commentary, Orthodox Biblical Studies (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press), 1982, 108-14; Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 83; Broer, "'Antisemitismus' und Judenpolemik im Neuen Testament," 73-77; idem, "'Der ganze Zorn ist schon über sie gekommen': Bemerkungen zur Interpolationshypothese und zur Interpretation von 1 Thess. 2,14-16," in The Thessalonian



On the other hand, Malcolm Lowe, on semantic and historical grounds, has given evidence for the geographical use of the expression Ἰουδαῖοι in the first century. Accordingly, τῶν Ἰουδαίων in 2:14 "means the inhabitants of ἡ Ἰουδαία. . . . Thus here the correct translation is 'Judeans' (and upon them ἔφθασεν ἡ ὀργή, ii 16)."<sup>1</sup> The evidence to support this view is strengthened later on by other scholars.<sup>2</sup>

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Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 137-59; Donfried, "Paul and Judaism," 247-48. Donald A. Hagner holds: "The statement is thus a generalizing one applied to the Jews as a whole, rather than just to those who killed Jesus or hindered Paul's mission" ("Paul's Quarrel with Judaism," in Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith, ed. Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993], 133).

<sup>1</sup>Malcolm Lowe, "Who Were the ἸΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ?" NovT 8 (1976): 130 n. 89.

<sup>2</sup>A consensus has not been reached regarding this geographical understanding; however, with a few changes this view is confirmed by Marxsen (Der erste Brief an Die Thessalonicher, 48-50); Davies, who suggests that Paul's reaction was "not to the Jewish people as a whole but to Jews who were violently opposing the preaching of the gospel" (Jewish and Pauline Studies, 127); Traugott Holtz ("The Judgment on the Jews and the Salvation of all Israel: 1 Thess 2,15-16 and Rom 11,25-26," in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990], 284-94); and particularly Weatherly (79-98). See also Daniel J. Harrington (Paul on the Mystery of Israel [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992], 23-24); Kraabel ("The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions"); and Ross S. Kraemer ("On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," in Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel, ed. Andrew Overman and Robert S. MacLennan [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992], 311-29). Against this view see Broer, "'Antisemitismus'

The geographical view is provocative and seems to play a special role in the attempt to defend the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16. Weatherly, a recent figure in this contemporary debate, has argued that "the association of τῶν Ἰουδαίων with the crimes of vss. 15-16b is an accusation, not against the Jewish nation as such, but against the Judaeen persecutors in particular."<sup>1</sup> In his view, besides, the text "implicitly contrasts the faithful Ἰουδαῖοι—who experience persecution but, by implication, have escaped wrath (1.10)—with the unfaithful Ἰουδαῖοι—who persecute the faithful and are the object of wrath."<sup>2</sup>

In his analysis, the killing-of-the-prophets motif "is readily employed to refer to the actions of an unfaithful segment of Israel and to relate the present situation to Israel's history." In that way, the "opponents are linked to the actual persecutors of the prophets in the past," maintaining a historical continuity of unfaithful people. Thus "the use of the killing-of-the-prophets motif does not in itself indicate condemnation of Israel as a whole."

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und Judenpolemik im Neuen Testament"; and idem, "'Der ganze Zorn ist schon über sie gekommen:' Bemerkungen zur Interpolationshypothese und zur Interpretation von 1 Thess. 2,14-16."

<sup>1</sup>Weatherly, 86-87.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 87.

If this geographical interpretation emphasizing the unfaithful segment of the nation is correct, then the adverb πάντοτε would indicate "that this generation of persecutors, like those of the past, fills up its own measure of sins." In that way, 2:16b "with πάντοτε an integral element, further emphasizes the continuity between the persecutors of the Christians and past persecutors of God's people."<sup>1</sup>

Weatherly argues that this understanding is "consistent with the initial themes of these verses."

1 Thess 2:14 connects the experiences of persecution of the Christians in Thessalonica

to that of the Judaeen Christians, so do vv. 15-16 link both groups to the experience of Jesus, the prophets and Paul. Correspondingly, the solidarity of the persecutors is implied in the direct ascription of the killing of the prophets to the present generation and in the reference to the filling up of sins.<sup>2</sup>

The implication of this association is clear: "those who persecute the Thessalonians are subject to the same wrath as those who persecute the Judeans." Likewise, 2:13-16 "serves to assure the Thessalonian Christians of the authenticity of their Christian experience and of the certainty of their vindication over their opponents."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 87-88.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Weatherly's arguments must be seriously considered and evaluated. If his "additional evidence" is correct, "then it is entirely possible that these verses came from the pen of a Jewish Christian like Paul."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the controversial language in 1 Thess 2:14-16 seems to reveal a Pauline interpretation of acts of violence "committed against Christ and the early Christians by some Jews, and thus is not even a form of anti-Judaism, much less anti-Semitism."<sup>2</sup> There is no

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World: A Comparative Study in New Testament Eschatology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 100. Given the ambiguity of these ideas and the intensity of the scholars' discussion of these concepts, they must be defined. It is generally agreed among scholars that there are anti-Judaic statements in the New Testament, particularly in the Pauline letters. However, these statements are not a manifestation of anti-Semitism. I conclude, in agreement with Hagner, 128-29, that "anti-Judaism is theological *disagreement* with Judaism, and . . . this disagreement can become polemical in tone. Anti-Semitism, by contrast, is nothing less than racial hatred of the Jews, a hatred that can take a variety of forms such as prejudice, injustice, slander, abuse, and even physical violence. It cannot be denied that there are clearly anti-Judaic passages in the letters of Paul and elsewhere in the New Testament. There is of course a sense in which the expression 'anti-Judaism' is itself totally inappropriate, since the Jewish Christians responsible for the New Testament, including Paul, regarded Christianity as the fulfillment of Judaism. Rather than being disloyal to the faith of the patriarchs and the Bible in their new-found Christian experience, they believed they had encountered what the promises had pointed toward. It was thus not a new religion they joined but the true and perfect manifestation of their ancestral faith. What they opposed in their polemicizing was in their eyes not truly Judaism, but only a truncated version of it, which tragically rejected its Messiah and which thus remained incomplete." Here one may agree with

"racial hatred here. The language, harsh as it is, is spoken by a Jew to Jews and reflects the polemical idiom of an in-house debate on matters of essential importance and of great consequence."<sup>1</sup>

In evaluating this point it must be kept in mind that the concept of anti-semitism is a relatively modern phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> Broer emphasizes that at the date when this letter was written, Christianity was not considered a separate entity from Judaism. For that reason, 1 Thess

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Hagner's thesis: "The anti-Judaic passages of the New Testament are in my opinion an essential component of New Testament Christianity; anti-Semitism, in contrast, is not" (emphasis in the original), *ibid.*, 129. See especially Rosemary Ruether, who is convinced that anti-Judaism "constantly takes expression in anti-Semitism" (Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism [New York: Seabury Press, 1974], 116). For his part, Ulrich Wilckens concludes that the anti-Judaic theme in the New Testament is "in essence Christian-theological" and has as its intent the profiling of the Christian faith rather than the defaming of Jewish faith ("Das Neue Testament und die Juden," EvT 34 [1974]: 602-11).

<sup>1</sup>Hagner, 134.

<sup>2</sup>Dunn cautiously points out that the "critique of Paul is part of a wider reassessment of the attitude towards the Jews within the New Testament, itself part of the continuing revulsion among Christians and students of the period against the Holocaust. A feature of this reassessment has been the increasing awareness, and increasingly uncomfortable awareness of the extent to which subsequent anti-semitism is rooted in the NT itself; though most today prefer to speak of anti-Judaism, since 'anti-semitism' is a more explicitly modern phenomenon, more appropriate to describe the powerful blending of ideas of race and of nationalism which reached their nadir in Nazism" (The Partings of the Ways, 140-41). Cf. Samuel Sandmel, Anti-Semitism in the New Testament (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978), xix-xx. Cf. Küng, 354.

2:14-16 is "an example of inner-Jewish polemics."<sup>1</sup> In the words of Walter D. Davies, "the discussions of Judaism and Jews in Paul's letters are intramural."<sup>2</sup>

Otto Michel holds that this text reflects certain experiences Paul had in his mission to the Jewish diaspora.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Davies states that "here the Apostle castigates the opponents of his mission in the context of a Gentile church suffering persecution directly or indirectly from Jews."<sup>4</sup> 1 Thess 2:14-16 is indeed "the first response" of Paul "to the Jews who were violently opposing the preaching of the Gospel to Gentiles and thus

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<sup>1</sup>Broer, "'Antisemitismus' und Judenpolemik im Neuen Testament," 87-89. Cf. Luke T. Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic," JBL 108 (1989): 419-441.

<sup>2</sup>Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," 19.

<sup>3</sup>Michel, 58. Johannes Munck declares that in 1 Thess 2:14-16 "Paul can describe the Jews as the enemies of the Gospel" and "persecutors" (Paul and the Salvation, 131, 202).

<sup>4</sup>Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," 7. Lünemann holds: "As we learn from the Acts, it was, indeed, the heathen magistrates by whose authority the persecutions against the Christian church at Thessalonica proceeded, but the proper originators and instigators were here also the Jews; only they could not excite the persecution of the Christians directly, as the Jews in Palestine, but hemmed in by the existing laws, could only do so indirectly, namely, by stirring up the heathen mob. This circumstances, united with the repeated experience of the inveterate spirit of opposition of the Jews, which Paul had in Asia at a period directly preceding this Epistle (perhaps also shortly before its composition at Corinth), is the natural and easily psychologically explanatory occasion of the polemic in vv. 15, 16" (emphasis in the original), 481.

hindering the divine purpose."<sup>1</sup> In its context, 1 Thess 2:14-16 may well be considered "an attack on the Jews of Thessalonica for obstructing the proclamation of the Christian gospel."<sup>2</sup> J. Christiaan Beker is emphatic in his interpretation: "to be sure, 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 is a contingent polemical expression. . . . In the Pauline letters it stands as an exceptional statement."<sup>3</sup> Patte

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<sup>1</sup>Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ernest W. Hunt, Portrait of Paul (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1968), 108. Robert Jewett has suggested that "in 1 Thess 2:16 there is a reference to an act of Judgment which Paul felt had befallen his Jewish adversaries" (A Chronology of Paul's Life [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1979], 34). Johanson comments that "the attack on the Jews here hardly qualifies for the characterization of Paul as 'holding an unacceptable anti-Semitic position,' but is aimed at Jews only as they had been and continued to be hostile towards and obstructive of the gospel" (97). This view is also shared by Marxsen, who holds that an anti-Semitic interpretation can only be maintained if 2:15-16 is disconnected from its context (Der erste Brief an Die Thessalonicher, 48-49). See also Donfried, "The Cults of Thessalonica," 245-47; and Lyons, 205-7.

<sup>3</sup>Beker, "The New Testament View of Judaism," 67 (emphasis added). Zahn, referring to Baur, remarked: "It is possible to speak of the vague polemic against the Jews (Baur, 97, 347) only when the fact is overlooked that the persecution of the Thessalonians began with the attack of the Jews upon the missionaries, and that shortly after the arrival of Timothy and Silas in Corinth, i.e. about the time 1 Thess. was written, Paul was compelled by the opposition of the Jews to separate himself from the synagogue (Acts xviii. 5f.)" (Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. from the 3d German edition by John M. Trout, et al. [Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publication, 1953], 1:249). Hiebert asserted that "surely Paul's words are not merely an understandable, although unjustified, outburst of momentary exasperation. Paul spoke from long and bitter experience. In his missionary labors he had been hounded from place to place by the unrelenting hostility and cunning opposition of the Jews. Perhaps at no other time during his missionary career did

argues that 1 Thess 2:13-16 "is not an anti-Semitic but an 'anti-persecutor' statement."<sup>1</sup>

That throughout his ministry Paul had met opposition from the Jews may be seen in the historical references in Acts. It is also reflected in 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Philippians. In passages such as Gal 5:12; Phil 3:2, 18-19; 2 Cor 11:13-15, 24-26; Rom 2:17-29; 9:22-24, 32-33; 10:1-3, 21; 11:8-10 and 16:17-18, Paul engages in harsh denunciation of his opponents, non-Christian or Christian. According to Peter Stuhlmacher, "the unfortunately formulated polemic in 1 Thess. 2:14f., can, in my opinion, be explained as a direct result of this situation of personal conflict and suffering."<sup>2</sup> Stuhlmacher is probably right in concluding that "as long as the apostle is criticized for harboring anti-Judaistic tendencies, without taking into account his

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he suffer more from the hostility of the Jews than during the period when this letter was written" (114-15).

<sup>1</sup>Patte, 127, 145. Harrington remarks: "Paul certainly says very different things about the Jews in 1 Thessalonians ("they displease God and oppose everyone," 2:15) and Romans ("all Israel will be saved" 11:26). But is the difference due to the development of Paul's thinking or the different situation that he addressed?" (Paul on the Mystery of Israel, 19).

<sup>2</sup>P. Stuhlmacher and R. Lapide, Paul: Rabbi and Apostle, trans. L. W. Denef (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 16.



situation and his teaching, I consider Paul to have been misinterpreted and unrefuted."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the language in 1 Thess 2:14-16, rude as it is, is not an anti-semitic declaration at all. It is rather a controversial argument integrally related to the specific situation and immediate context of Paul's mission. Faced with persistent opposition which occasioned "much affliction" to the Thessalonian Christians, according to a well-established consensus as is seen in more detail later, Paul in writing 1 Thess 2:14-16 "takes over traditional ideas, common in Early Judaism<sup>2</sup> and found in the NT tradition as well."<sup>3</sup>

The death of Jesus and other charges attributed to Jews. From a grammatical point of view, ἔφθασεν in 2:16 is an aorist indicative, which describes a past point of action, a historical event. While Paul did not elaborate on this motif in his letter, he connects the verb with ἡ ὀργή,<sup>4</sup> its subject. In its context ὀργή makes reference

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 61. Lapedes concludes also that Paul "was neither an anti-Semite nor an anti-Judaist" (ibid., 54).

<sup>2</sup>The critique of early Judaism found in 1 Thess 2:15-16 is very similar in style and content, for example, to Isa 29-30 (in particular 30:12-14); Jer 5-8; Amos 2:6-3:8.

<sup>3</sup>Holtz, "The Judgment on the Jews and the Salvation of all Israel," 285.

<sup>4</sup>For a detailed survey of the theme of the wrath of God in the New Testament, see Gustav Stählin, "ὀργή,"

to the Jews, who (1) killed the prophets and the Lord Jesus; (2) hinder the proclamation of the gospel in the Gentile mission; (3) fill up the measure of their sin; and (4) receive God's wrath εἰς τέλος. Each of these phrases can be found in the Gospels, as is seen in Table 2 in the Appendix of this dissertation. Presumably a common situation, already a clear component of the oral tradition, is reflected.

The concept that the prophets were killed by their own people was common in the Old Testament and ancient Judaism in general.<sup>1</sup> The persecution of the prophets finds substantial support in New Testament times (cf. Rom 11:3, where Paul quotes 1 Kgs 19:10, 14).<sup>2</sup>

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TDNT, 5:422-47.

<sup>1</sup>See Henry A. Fischel, "Martyr and Prophet," JOR 37 (1946/7): 265-80, 363-86; and Steck, who gives a complete documentation. Albert M. Denis describes the prophets throughout as martyrs of their own people (Introduction aux Pseudépigraphes Grecs d'Ancien Testament, SVTP, 1 [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970], 85-90).

<sup>2</sup>In trying to reconstruct the situation that Paul addressed in 1 Thess 2:15 regarding the killing of the prophets, see a new interpretation suggested recently by Frank D. Gilliard, who argues that there is "good reason" to identify the prophets of vs. 15 with "the prophets of Jesus," and not "with the prophets of the Jews." He identifies as prophets of Jesus to John the Baptist, Stephen, and James the son of Zebedee, who suffered premature deaths at the hands of Jews ("Paul and the Killing of the Prophets in 1 Thess. 2:15," NovT 36 [1994]: 259-70). At this point I am unpersuaded by his formal arguments.

Although the charge made by interpolationists that the concept of the Jews as killers of the Lord Jesus is unique in Paul, this accusation is also present in the tradition of the primitive church.<sup>1</sup> The question one might legitimately ask is: To what extent does Paul's affirmation correspond to the account of church tradition that the Jews carry upon themselves the responsibility of the Lord Jesus' death?

The survey in the last chapter reveals at least four important concepts: First, on the Jewish side, the major responsibility for Jesus' death is attributed to the high priests. Second, the central issue in Jesus' trial would have been the Temple and Jesus' perceived challenge to it. Third, Jesus was condemned as a messianic pretender. Finally, the persecution of the primitive Christian church at Jerusalem and in the "foreign cities" (Acts 26:11) constituted a clear reaction of the Jewish religious leaders to the Christian proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah.

That the Jewish religious authorities were responsible for Jesus' death seems to be corroborated by

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<sup>1</sup>See also Acts 2:23, 36; cf. Matt 27:35 || Mark 15:24 || Luke 23:33; John 19:16; Acts 3:14-15; 4:10; 5:30; 7:51-52; 10:39. Acts 13:27-29 attributes this idea to Paul. (Cf. Matt 27:22-23 [observe the unique Matthean material in vss. 24-25: how people accept upon themselves and future generations the responsibility] || Mark 15:13-14 || Luke 23:21-25 [note this important, unique Lucan material in vs. 25: Pilate "delivered up" Jesus "to their [people's will]" || John 19:15]).

the facts that they premeditated His death (Matt 26:1-5 || Mark 14:1-2 || Luke 22:1-2); arrested Jesus by order of the high priest and took Him directly to his house (Matt 26:57 || Mark 14:53 || Luke 22:54; cf. John 18:12-14); tried Jesus before the Sanhedrin presided over by the high priest (Matt 26:57-68 || Mark 14:53-65 || Luke 22:54-71);<sup>1</sup> delivered Jesus over to Pilate by order of the high priest (Matt 27:1-2 || Mark 15:1); were hostile and demanded His crucifixion (Matt 27:22-23 || Mark 15:13-14 || Luke 23:20-23); condemned Jesus to crucifixion on the charge that he claimed to be a king of the Jews (Matt 27:37 || Mark 15:26 || Luke 23:38; cf. John 19:19); and mocked His royal claim as Jesus hung on the cross (Matt 27:39-43 || Mark 15:29-32 || Luke 23:35-37).<sup>2</sup> However, God the Father, disproving

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<sup>1</sup>On the circumstances of this situation, three major descriptions were proposed: (1) Blinzler (The Trial of Jesus) and Betz (What Do We Know About Jesus?), based on Mark and Matthew, support that a night trial was held before the Sanhedrin, presided over by Caiaphas the high priest. This session either lasted until dawn or was followed by a brief session at dawn; (2) David R. Catchpole, based on Luke's presentation, argues for an early morning session (The Trial of Jesus: A Study in the Gospels and Jewish Historiography from 1770 to the Present Day [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971]); and (3) Paul Winter, from John's account, holds that an informal hearing was carried out by some Jewish official, perhaps Annas, but no formal trial took place before the Sanhedrin (On the Trial of Jesus, 2d ed., rev. and ed. T. A. Burkill and Geza Vermes [New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1974]).

<sup>2</sup>In his sensitive treatment of the trial of Jesus, Brown argues at length that "all the Gospels agree that the Jewish authorities, particularly the priests, disliked Jesus and that there were earlier attempts to stop his teaching. All agree on a judicial action by the Sanhedrin, and (if we join Acts to Luke) all agree that

that special situation of the unbelievers and in fulfillment of His purpose, three days after His death, raised Him.

Through this process, Jews were at the vanguard: the high priest, scribes and elders, the Sanhedrin, the hostile crowd calling for crucifixion. At the same time, the people were mocking His royal claim while Jesus was dying on the cross.<sup>1</sup>

If Jesus had been arrested with the help of Roman soldiers, he would certainly have been taken to a Roman prison and not, as the Gospels all testify, brought before

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one of the issues against Jesus was the threatened destruction of the Temple sanctuary. All agree that the Jewish authorities gave Jesus over to Pilate, who sentenced him to death" (1:382).

<sup>1</sup>J. Bradley Chance concludes that "the narrative of Lk-Acts posits the idea that the passive spectator of evil actions is just as guilty as the active aggressor. While the rulers may have been the ones to kill Jesus, the verdict falls on all the inhabitants of Jerusalem" ("The Jewish People and the Death of Jesus in Luke-Acts: Some Implications of an Inconsistent Narrative Role," in Society of Biblical Literature 1991: Seminar Paper, ed. Eugene H. Lovering [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991], 80). Richard P. Carlson judges that "the people themselves become active partners in the Jewish triumvirate that not only willed Jesus' death before Pilate but also carried out that death. The chief priests, rulers and (by the time they get to the Skull, some of) the people made up the death squad and not the Roman soldiers. Yet Luke does not exclude Pilate and the Romans" ("The Role of the Jewish People in Luke's Passion Theology," in Society of Biblical Literature 1991: Seminar Paper, ed. Eugene H. Lovering [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991], 101).

the Sanhedrin.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the declaration "I was daily with you in the Temple (Mark 14:48-49 || Matt 26:55 || Luke 22:52-53) demonstrates that His captors were Jews.

The statement that the Sanhedrin passed a formal death sentence has frequently been disputed on linguistic and historical grounds. It is argued that the council expressed a judicial opinion (i.e., they regarded Him as deserving death) or that an official accusation was drawn up, but that there was no concrete death sentence.<sup>2</sup> Mark, however, unequivocally reports such a sentence, using accepted legal terminology: "they all condemned Him as deserving of death" (Mark 14:64 || Matt 26:66: "He deserves death"). A legal judgment took place and a death sentence was delivered.

That the Synoptic Gospels convey a real death sentence is indicated clearly (Matt 20:18-19 || Mark 10:33-34 || Luke 18:31-32). Jesus predicts that the chief priests and scribes will "condemn" Him to death (Mark 14:64). It is of greatest significance to the evangelists that Jesus is condemned to death as the Messiah by His contemporaries (Matt 26:63-64 || Mark 14:62 || Luke 22:67-70). In a parallel affirmation, now before Pilate, Jesus

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<sup>1</sup>For a careful treatment of the proceedings before the Sanhedrin, see Blinzler (The Trial of Jesus, 81-163) and Brown (1:429-560).

<sup>2</sup>See E. Bickermann, "Utilitas crucis: Observations sur les récits du procès de Jésus dan les Évangéles canoniques," RHLR 112 (1935): 169-99; and Winter, 227-34.

acknowledges that He is king (Matt 27:11 || Mark 15:1-2 || Luke 23:1-3). Therefore, the Synoptics insist on the fact that as King and Messiah of the Jews Jesus was sentenced to be crucified (Matt 27:37 || Mark 15:26 || Luke 23:38; cf. John 19:19-22).

Clearly, then, Paul's declaration seems to agree with the report of the Gospels and with the theological evidence of the New Testament that some Jews carried upon themselves the responsibility of having killed the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God.<sup>1</sup>

That this might be true may be confirmed by another consideration. Serious attention should be given to whether, from a scriptural perspective, the aorist ἀποκτείναντων in 1 Thess 2:15 could have been used deliberately by Paul. The fact that he never uses the expressions "cross" (1 Cor 1:17, 18; Gal 5:11; 6:12, 14; Phil 2:8; 3:18 (cf. Eph 2:16; Col 1:20; 2:14), or "crucify" and its cognates (1 Cor 1:13, 23; 2:2, 8; 2 Cor 13:4; Gal 3:1; 6:14) in 1 Thessalonians tends to imply

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<sup>1</sup>According to Jewett, "in light of recent studies of the crucifixion, it is inappropriate to deny complicity on the part of Jewish authorities" (The Thessalonian Correspondence, 38). See Ernest Bammel, "The Trial before Pilate," in Jesus and the Politics of His Day, ed. E. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 415-51.

that the verb ἀποκτείναντων (killed) in 2:15 is Paul's intentional choice.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, according to Dunn, "the reference to 'the Jews' is quite specific."<sup>2</sup> The Jews in Judaea killed Jesus and the prophets, and persecuted the churches of God in Judaea. There is good reason to think that Paul "had in mind those Jews whom he would have known very well"<sup>3</sup> --"those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers" (Acts 13:27), according to Paul's preaching at Antioch of Pisidia.

The notion that "the Jews killed the Lord Jesus" is already present in the Christian tradition and Paul

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<sup>1</sup>As was suggested by Rhys R. Lloyd, "The Historic Christ in the Letters of Paul," BS 58 (1901): 282. Although this verb is found nowhere else in the Pauline corpus in relation of Jesus' death, of the 74 New Testament occurrences, 4 are found in Paul. One of these, Rom 11:3, is an Old Testament quote. The verb also appears in Rom 7:11; 2 Cor 3:6 (cf. Eph 2:16). For Heinz E. Tödt, "It is particularly evident from I Thess. 2.15 how in the primitive community in connection with the killing of Jesus the killing of the prophets (looked for in the Scriptures) was now also thrown into the controversy as a proof of the Jews' permanent rebellion against God's will. Here 'to kill' seems to be almost a technical term. It surely is a technical term in the announcements of suffering where, contrasting with the variants in the formulation of all other statements, it invariably recurs. Obviously this term pertains to the sphere of the controversial discourses (in the broadest sense) between the primitive community and the legitimate Jewish authorities" (Heinz E. Tödt, The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition, trans. D. M. Barton [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1965], 175-76).

<sup>2</sup>Dunn, The Partings of the Ways, 146.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



could have received it as such.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, it is reasonable to think that Pearson's statement that Paul "never attributes the death of Jesus to the Jews" is a matter of his personal interpretation.

While acknowledging the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:14-16, some scholars before Pearson have noted Paul's use of traditional material. Scholars as diverse as Martin Dibelius (1925),<sup>2</sup> J. Bernard Orchard (1938),<sup>3</sup> Hans J. Schoeps (1943),<sup>4</sup> Charles H. Dodd (1947),<sup>5</sup> Karl H. Schelkle

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<sup>1</sup>Take into consideration the fact that the verb ἀποκτείνω used by Paul in 2:15 is used by the Synoptics as Jesus foretells His passion (Matt 16:21 || Mark 8:31 || Luke 9:22; Matt 17:23 || Mark 9:31), and in the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matt 21: 38-39 || Mark 12:7 || Luke 20:14, 15). It also appears in reference to the killing of the prophets in the discourse against the Pharisees and lawyers (Luke 11:47-48). John uses this particular verb with relation to persecution (John 16:1-4). These additional references merit serious consideration.

<sup>2</sup>Dibelius holds that "das erste Glied dürfte eine Formel ältester Judenpolemik bei den Christen und in Anlehnung an das A.T. gebildet sein" and makes reference to Matt 23: 34, 37; Luke 11:49; 13:34; Acts 7:52; Justin Dial. 6,4, and 1 Kgs 10:10, 14 (Martin Dibelius, An die Thessalonicher I-II: An die Philipper, HNT, 11, 2d ed. [Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1925], 10).

<sup>3</sup>Orchard suggests that in 1 Thess 2:14-16 Paul is "not original but is drawing upon some primitive source, which may well be the same source used by Matthew in 23:31-39 (J. Bernard Orchard, "Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels," in Bib 19 [1938]: 22-23).

<sup>4</sup>Hans J. Schoeps, "Die jüdischen Prophetenmorde," in Aus frühchristlicher Zeit: Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950), 126-43.

<sup>5</sup>Charles H. Dodd, remarking on the parallelism between Matt 23:32 and 1 Thess 2:16, notes: "Without any verbal resemblance, the inner affinity of the two passages

(1949),<sup>1</sup> Charles Masson (1957),<sup>2</sup> Ulrich Wilckens (1961),<sup>3</sup> Werner G. Kümmel,<sup>4</sup> Rein Schippers (1966),<sup>5</sup> Otto Michel (1967),<sup>6</sup> and Odil H. Steck (1967)<sup>7</sup> agree, in general terms,

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is close" ("Matthew and Paul," ExpTim 58 [1946-1947]: 297).

<sup>1</sup>Karl H. Schelkle, Die Passion Jesus in der Verkündigung des Neuen Testaments: Ein Beitrag zur Formgeschichte und zur Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Heidelberg: Kerle, 1949), 31-32.

<sup>2</sup>Masson considers that "Paul reprend une accusation formulée par Jesus (Mat. 23.37; Luc. 13.34) et par Etienne (Act. 7.52)" (34).

<sup>3</sup>Wilckens concludes, "das Paulus sich an dieser Stelle eines traditionellen Motivs bedient" (Ulrich Wilckens, Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte: Form- und traditions-geschichtliche Untersuchungen, WMANT, 3. überarb. u. erw. Aufl. [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag d. Erziehungsvereins, 1974], 120). He thought it possible to find its source.

<sup>4</sup>Kümmel makes reference to "traditionelle christliche Vorwürfe" ("Das literarische und geschichtliche Problem des ersten Thessalonicherbriefes," 220).

<sup>5</sup>Schippers comments that "from a formal viewpoint it is striking that in the passage Matt. xxiii 29-38, which is directed against the Jews, the same key words appear which are also used" in 1 Thess 2:13-16. "Paul thus stands here in a Pre-synoptic tradition" (Rein Schippers, "The Pre-synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16," NovT 8 [1966]: 232-33).

<sup>6</sup>Michel, 50-59.

<sup>7</sup>Steck has made an efficient study showing that in 1 Thess 2:15-16 Paul could have used materials from the earlier prophetic critique of Israel and the Jesus tradition. He particularly compares Mark 12:1b-5 to 1 Thess 2:15 [(Ἰουδαίων) τῶν... ἀποκτεινάντων... τοῦς προφήτας], Mark 12:7 to 1 Thess 2:16 [κωλυόντων ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἔθνεσιν λαλῆσαι ἵνα σωθῶσιν, also vs. 15: καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων], Mark 12:8 to 1 Thess 2:15 [τῶν... τὸν κύριον ἀποκτεινάντων Ἰησοῦν] and Mark 12:9 to

that "Paul has made use of a Pre-Synoptic tradition dependent on traditional biblical motifs in his writing of the four verses in question."<sup>1</sup>

This pattern can be found with a few variants in other scholars after Pearson. Good examples are Niels Hyldahl (1972),<sup>2</sup> David Wenham (1981, 84),<sup>3</sup> I. Howard

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1 Thess 2:16 [εἰς τὸ ἀναπληρῶσαι αὐτῶν τὰς ἀμαρτίας πάντοτε. ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος] (274-76).

<sup>1</sup>Collins, Studies, 103.

<sup>2</sup>While not specifically examining the issue of Paul's use of Pauline tradition in 1 Thess 2:14-16, Hyldahl has pointed to the influence of early Christian tradition on the passage (Niels Hyldahl, "Jesus og jøderne ofølge 1 Tess 2:14-16," SEA 37-38 [1972-73]: 238-54).

<sup>3</sup>Wenham, dealing with the "Jews' persecuting activities," under the parallels of 1 Thess 2:14-16 and Matt 23:29-38, remarks that "although these parallels are not all very close and need not be regarded as significant, it is impressive how much of 1 Thess 2:15,16 can be paralleled in Matt 23:29-38 (or even in the shorter 23:32-36)" (David Wenham, "Paul and the Synoptic Apocalypse," in Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels, ed. R. T. France and D. Wenham [Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1981], 2:361); see also his thinking in the work The Rediscovery of Jesus' Eschatological Discourse (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1984), 351-52.

Marshall (1983),<sup>1</sup> Karl P. Donfried (1985),<sup>2</sup> Ernest Best (1987),<sup>3</sup> and Christopher Tuckett (1990).<sup>4</sup>

The emergent scholarly consensus in favor of the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:14-16, based on the use of traditional material, is significant.<sup>5</sup> While Paul does

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<sup>1</sup>Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 82.

<sup>2</sup>Donfried remarks that "a careful examination" of 1 Thess 2:15-16a "shows they contain a tradition which is remarkably close to the Q text found in Luke 11:47-52. The Matthew parallel to Luke 11:47-48 adds the following: 'Thus you witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up (*plērosate*), then the measure of your fathers.' The similarity of this *plērosate* to I Thessalonians 2:16a is obvious and it is fully possible that Paul may have been aware of this element of the tradition from his experience with the Antiochene church" (emphasis in the original), "Paul and Judaism," 248-49.

<sup>3</sup>Best holds that it is "probable that Paul and Matthew are using the same piece of tradition" (A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 121-22).

<sup>4</sup>Tuckett concludes that "there is thus no clear link between Paul and the synoptic tradition beyond the common use of a motif which was widespread in Judaism and Christianity. Paul's language can thus be adequately explained on the basis of this background. . . . Both Paul and the gospel tradition share a common fund of ideas and terminology from OT and Judaism, and this common background seems quite adequate to explain any overlaps in language which exist here. There seems little reason to postulate any clear link between Paul and the synoptic tradition at this point" (Christopher M. Tuckett, "Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians?" in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990], 167).

<sup>5</sup>The use of traditional material seems to be a common aspect of Paul's literary style. On the use of tradition by Paul in 1 Thessalonians, one might also refer to Walter Grundmann ("Überlieferung und Eigenaussage im eschatologischen Denken des Apostels Paulus," in NTS 8 [1961-62]: 12-16); Béda Rigaux ("Tradition et rédaction

not repeat the tradition exactly, he implies thorough familiarity with it.

That Paul was conscious of his dependence on materials preserved in the oral evangelical tradition of the early community for his preaching and literary production is clear from a statement he makes to the Thessalonians: "So then, brothers, stand firm and hold the traditions which you have learned either by our word or by letter" (2 Thess 2:15).<sup>1</sup> He affirms that he preached the traditional gospel which had emanated from the apostolic community. He declares explicitly that "there is no other gospel" than that which he preached (Gal 1:7-9) and "also received" (1 Cor 15:3-5; 11:23) by "revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12).<sup>2</sup> Thus, the apparently non-Pauline

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dans 1 Th. v.1-10," NTS 21 [1975]: 318-40); Traugott Holtz ("Traditionen im 1 Thessalonicherbrief," in Die Mitte des Neuen Testaments: Einheit und Vielfalt neutestamentlicher Theologie: Festschrift für Eduard Schweizer zum siebzigsten Geburtstag, ed. U. Luz and H. Weder [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1983], 55-78); and E. Springs Steele ("The Use of Jewish Scriptures in 1 Thessalonians," BTE 14 [1984]: 12-17). See the specific approach of Simpson in his thesis (93-98); and more generally the commentaries of Rigaux (Saint Paul: Les épîtres aux Thessaloniens, 444-56); Best (A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 114-23); Bruce (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 46-49); and Broer, "'Antisemitismus' und Judenpolemik im Neuen Testament."

<sup>1</sup>Note also what may be an allusion to traditions of Jesus' sayings in 1 Thess 4:15: "by the word of the Lord."

<sup>2</sup>See Ronald Y. K. Fung, who seeking to reconciliation of Gal 1:12 with 1 Cor 15:3, discusses the relationship between revelation and tradition in Paul. What Paul received by tradition—the form of the kerygma—only served to confirm what he had already

character of 1 Thess 2:15-16 can be adequately explained by the assumption that Paul has taken up an earlier tradition.

The context of 1 Thess 2:13-16 gives some evidence that a tradition is being used. In 2:13, Paul considers the Thessalonians as παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς, which can be understood as referring to their reception of tradition.<sup>1</sup> Paul emphasized the importance of this λόγος ἀκοῆς as λόγος θεοῦ, much as he later stressed that the παράδοσις contained in 1 Cor 15:3-7 as τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.

The transition to the traditional material apparently occurs when Paul points out the similarity between the Thessalonians' situation of persecution and that of the churches of God in Christ which are in Judaea in 2:14. In 2:15, a change of person takes place. The second-person address to the readers no longer appears, and the Judaeans Christians are no longer spoken of in the third person, καθὼς καὶ αὐτοῖ, but in the first person, ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων; κωλυόντων ἡμᾶς. Paul was not a member of τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν ὁσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Indeed, during at least part of time when these churches were under persecution, Paul was among the

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received by revelation ("Revelation and Tradition: The Origins of Paul's Gospel," EQ 57 [1985]: 23-41).

<sup>1</sup>Schippers, 229-30.

Ἰουδαῖοι who were doing the persecution. The source of this tradition thus appears to be τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. The mention of the Gentile mission in 2:16 indicates that the Hellenists in the Judaeian church were the ones involved. The ἐκδιώκειν in 2:15 may well suggest the great persecution mentioned in Acts 8:1, "an event which at the time when he (Paul) was writing had happened twenty years previously."<sup>1</sup>

In addition, 1 Thess 2:15-16 seems to reveal a precise covenantal language<sup>2</sup> in an explicit deuteronomic style,<sup>3</sup> which constitutes a living stream of tradition

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<sup>1</sup>M. Goguel, The Birth of Christianity, trans. H. C. Snape (London: Allen and Unwin, 1953), 123.

<sup>2</sup>The most important concept to describe the relationship between God and His people in the Old Testament was the covenant. It appears in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12; 15; 17) and the Mosaic covenant (Exod 19). Covenant also becomes the principal idea in the period of the monarchy to describe the relationship of God with His people through the Davidic kingship (2 Sam 7; Ps 89). Later, the prophets use it to picture God's relationship with His people (Hos 6:7; 8:1; Isa 33:8; Jer 11:8, 10; 34:13), and Jeremiah employs this notion for what God will do after the judgment that is coming (Jer 31:31-34).

<sup>3</sup>The deuteronomic style presupposes the detailed covenant obligations of Deuteronomy, which itself implies a definition of Israel and places the people of God's very existence under the stipulations of covenant. On the definition of Israel based on Deuteronomy, see E. Theodore Mullen, who argues that the "ideal 'Israel' is created by the 'choice' of its deity, and its continuation is determined by Yahweh's mercy and by covenantal ideals." In the exile, the "distinctiveness of Israel would be defined by the ways in which the people fulfilled the commands of the covenant that formed the basis of the

through the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> For example, the deuteronomic prophetic warning from Yahweh<sup>2</sup> is now applied to the Christian church.<sup>3</sup> The rejection of Jesus and the persecution of His church are expressions of Israel's persistent infidelity and rebellion against God.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, more than that, they constitute the ultimate climax of

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nation's ethnic identity" (E. Theodore Mullen, Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993], 63, 284). See specially James M. Scott, who examines a pervasive Deuteronomic tradition and indicates how Paul appropriates this tradition in 1 Thess 2:15-16 ("Paul's Use of Deuteronomic Tradition." JBL 112 [1993]: 645-665).

<sup>1</sup>Many scholars recognize that the covenant motif provides the basis for the interpretation of the actions of Israel and Judah with respect to God in history, and this concept functions as one of the central themes of the Old and New Testaments.

<sup>2</sup>The structure of the deuteronomic prophetic warning may be outlined as follows: Yahweh sends a word of warning through "his servants the prophets," the prophets call for repentance in order to avert disaster, Israel rejects the prophetic word. For a survey of deuteronomism in the Old Testament, Judaism, and the New Testament, see James A. Williams, "A Conceptual History of Deuteronomism in the Old Testament, Judaism, and the New Testament" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1977).

<sup>3</sup>For a thorough study of this theme, see the works of Steck (Israel und das Gewalttame Geschick der Propheten) and Schoeps ("Die jüdischen Prophetenmorde").

<sup>4</sup>Rebellion against God is the major point of the deuteronomic history of the exile period. In the exilic deuteronomic tradition, Israel's unfaithfulness was characterized as infidelity to the central Jerusalem cult (2 Kgs 14:23-24) or to the Davidic dynasty (2 Kgs 17:21-23). For the exilic deuteronomists, the major offense was worship of other deities (2 Kgs 17:7-14).



rebellion, which incites divine judgment on Israel: God's determined wrath.<sup>1</sup>

Perceiving the meaning and function of the tradition in the process of Paul's redaction is particularly relevant for the interpretation of 2:13-16. In consequence, as has been suggested by Collins, given the fact that Paul has made use of traditional material in the writing of 1 Thessalonians, it is best to give

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<sup>1</sup>Israel's rejection of the prophets was the finishing stroke. Yahweh' wrath came and Israel was "removed" from Yahweh's presence" (2 Kgs 17:18). The defeat and exile of Israel from the land symbolized exclusion from Yahweh's presence. The greatest tragedy of Israel's history is given a theological explanation. This judgment does not mean that Yahweh has been unfaithful to his covenant promise; rather, Israel has been unfaithful (1 Kgs 14:15-16; 2 Kgs 17:7-23); cf. the parallel phraseology in Judg 2:11-23. It is worth noting the repeated pattern of Israelite apostasy from the Judges to the Monarchy, under the prophets and kings. Exactly the same can be said for Judah (2 Kgs 17:19; 21:10-15; 22:16-17). "Repeatedly," not just occasionally (Jer 7:21-29), Yahweh had spoken to Judah through His "servants the prophets," but the people had not responded. The consequence of this state of rebellion was exile: exclusion from Yahweh's presence (2 Chr 30:6-9; Jer 25:1-11; 26:4-8; 29:18-19; 35:12-17; 44:1-6; Dan 9:4-19 abounds in deuteronomic phraseology; Zech 1:1-6). Thus, the national catastrophes, the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel under the Assyrians in 722 B.C., and the fall of the southern kingdom of Judah and destruction of Jerusalem under the Neo-Babylonians forced a century and a half later, were consequences of the unfaithfulness of Israel and Judah to the covenant stipulations and the fulfillment of divine threatenings (Deut 28:63-68; 31:20-22; Lev 26:3-33). According to the repeated prophetic word of God, this continued disobedience resulted not only in the loss of the land, but also in the withdrawal of Yahweh's presence.

consideration to the distinction between tradition and redaction.<sup>1</sup>

In the context of 1 Cor 2:8, the identity of "the rulers of this age" must be determined. In trying to answer this question, interpreters often fail to reach consensus over "whether 1 Cor 2:6, 8 refers to human or to spiritual powers."<sup>2</sup> A few consider them as political figures, that is, earthly rulers.<sup>3</sup> However, many thinkers

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<sup>1</sup>Collins, Studies, 130.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel G. Reid, "Principalities and Powers," in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, ed. G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 748.

<sup>3</sup>For example, Trevor Ling, "A Note on 1 Corinthians ii:8," ExpTim 68 (1956-57): 26. Wesley Carr, bringing together lexical evidence, contextual considerations and a form-critical argument, interprets "rulers" in 1 Cor 2:6, 8 as referring to Roman and Jewish authorities responsible for Jesus' crucifixion ("The Rulers of This Age-- 1 Corinthians II.6-8," NTS 23 [1976-77]: 20-35; idem, Angels and Principalities: The Background, Meaning, and Development of the Pauline Phrase *hai archai kai exousiai* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 91, 118-20). See also Gordon D. Fee (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, NICNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987; reprint 1989], 104, 106 n. 36); and Cousar (26).

agree that the "rulers" are demonic powers,<sup>1</sup> or at least demonic powers working behind earthly rulers.<sup>2</sup>

Weatherly has made a relevant point here. He observes that both 1 Thess 2:15 and 1 Cor 2:8

belong to the same writer. The Gospels and Acts provide a case in point. All four canonical Gospels and Acts ascribe responsibility for Jesus' death to Jews and Romans (e.g., Mk 10.32 and parallels; Lk. 22.3; Acts 4.27-28), and there is little reason to think that Paul's view was necessarily more narrow.

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<sup>1</sup>This view is by far the most dominant one among scholars in this century, particularly since the work of Martin Dibelius, Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1909). Supporting this opinion are, among others, Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1:259; George H. C. MacGregor, "Principalities and Powers: The Cosmic Background of St. Paul's Thought," NTS 1 (1954/55): 17-28; Cerfaux, Christ in the Theology of St. Paul, 98-106; Heinrich Schlier, Principalities and Powers in the New Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1961); Charles K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, HNTC (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 68-72; Jung Y. Lee, "Interpreting the Demonic Powers in Pauline Thought," NovT 12 (1970): 54-69; Hans Conzelmann, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, trans. J. W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), 61; Meeks, The First Urban Christians, 96; and Reid, 748.

<sup>2</sup>This view is held by MacGregor; George B. Caird, Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 16-17; W. J. Peter Boyd, "I Cor. 2:8," ExpTim 68 (1957): 158; Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History, trans. Floyd V. Filson, rev. ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1964), 191-206; idem, The State in the New Testament (London: S. C. M. Press, 1975), 95-114; Peter T. O'Brien, "Principalities and Powers: Opponents of the Church," in Biblical Interpretation and the Church: Text and Context, ed. D. A. Carson (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1984), 118; Frederick F. Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 118; and Clinton E. Arnold, Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 101-4.

Thus, 1 Thess. 2.15 and 1 Cor. 2.8—whether the 'rulers' in the latter text refer to demoniac powers, Roman officials in general (including Jewish officials)—can be regarded as contradictory only at a superficial level.<sup>1</sup>

There is yet another possibility in this reconstruction of Pauline thought. While Paul could have emphasized "the rulers of this age" in 1 Cor 2:8 on one special occasion, it would not exclude the fact that he has stressed the Jewish responsibility in 1 Thess 2:15 in the context of a different occasion and with a special purpose in mind.<sup>2</sup>

The notion that the Jews hinder the proclamation of the gospel in the Christian mission is clearer with the usage of the participle of ἐκδιώκω (vs. 15). Why is this participle here? It is that it not only expresses the idea of persecution, but also that of "driving out" by using the prefix ἐκ. Here, Paul would not only be referring to the "great persecution" of Acts 8:1, but also possibly to his own experience in Damascus (Acts 9:23-24), Antioch of Pisidia (13:14, 50), Iconium (14:1, 5-6),

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<sup>1</sup>Weatherly, 83.

<sup>2</sup>The New Testament indicates the cosmic, supernatural dimensions of Jesus' death by pointing out that His death appears as an act of God, Who allowed the adversaries to act according to His design and predetermination (Acts 2:23; 4:28). It is argued that the plot against Jesus is attributed to Satan (John 13:27; 14:30; cf. Luke 22, 3, 53), and that the earthly rulers are the executors of His death by crucifixion (1 Cor 2:8). This situation, however, does not contradict the fact that the crucifixion was a human act.

Lystra (14:6, 19-20), Thessalonica (17:10), Berea (17:14), and Corinth (18:5-6).<sup>1</sup> Paul considers that this Jewish action makes them displeasing to God as well as puts them in opposition to all men. God reacts because, by persecuting His church and messengers, the Jews are hindering His purpose of saving all people by the proclamation of the gospel (1 Thess 2:16; 1:4-5; 2:1-2, 13; cf. 2 Thess 2:13-14; Rom 1:16; 9:24; Gal 6:15).<sup>2</sup>

Luke Timothy Johnson, holding that 1 Thess 2:16 "is not an interpolation," finds that "the statement concerning the Jews who 'are preventing us from speaking to the Gentiles *hina sōthōsin*' corresponds exactly with the missionary language employed by Paul in Rom 11:11-14."<sup>3</sup>

The sins of the unfaithful Jews appear to have been accumulating until they went beyond measure (cf. Gen 15:16 and Matt 23:32-33). The adverb πάντοτε reflects the idea that the apostles' preaching of Jesus as the Messiah

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<sup>1</sup>According to Richardson, from Thessalonica on to Corinth, Paul has had a time of almost "unrelieved opposition" by the local synagogues. This "antipathy . . . is reflected in 1 Thessalonians 2: 14 ff," where "judgment falls upon the Jews" (102, 174).

<sup>2</sup>The use of the present participle κωλυόντων in vs. 16, without the conjunction καί before it, might indicate that Paul is here explaining the preceding content: "thus displeasing God and opposing all men."

<sup>3</sup>Luke T. Johnson, "The Social Dimensions of Sōtēria in Luke-Acts and Paul," in Society of Biblical Literature 1993: Seminar Papers, ed. Eugene H. Lovering (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 534.

is the last essential stage in the life of the Judeans regarding their relation with God. With this announcement, the last chance has gone and their sins are fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, Simpson deals persuasively with Pearson's objection of "misanthropy" from two main perspectives. In the first place, he argues that "the Gentile world was not unanimous with regard to the Jews." In the Greco-Roman world, the attitudes toward them were "varied and often sympathetic." His second observation, dealing with "the Gentiles' statements which are offered as parallels to 1 Thess 2:15c-d," leads to the conclusion that "not all parallel statements are alike." However, "Paul uses phrases associated with ancient Gentile statements about the Jews because of their suitability to the occasion."<sup>2</sup>

The final rejection of the Jews. Pearson's suggestion that Paul never assumed the final rejection of the Jews implied in 2:16 and that it contradicts the

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<sup>1</sup>Lünemann sees that πάντοτε "involves the notion of time, always, that is, the Jews before Christ, at the time of Christ, and after Christ, have opposed themselves to the divine truth, and thus have been always engaged in filling up the measure of their iniquities" (emphasis in the original), 484.

<sup>2</sup>See Simpson's complete response to this matter in his dissertation (105-11, 140-41).

theology expressed by Paul himself in Rom 9-11, Gal 1-2, and Phil 3:5-6 is debatable as well.<sup>1</sup>

On the one hand, as Donfried has shown, Pearson misunderstands ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοῦς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος.<sup>2</sup> Donfried makes clear that in 1 Thessalonians and Romans ὀργή has present (1 Thess 2:16; Rom 1:18-3:20; 9:22-24) and future references (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 2:5, 8; 5:9). That is, one should not infer from 1 Thess 2:14-16 that Paul excludes the possibility that God may be

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<sup>1</sup>In his dissertation, Simpson examines the relationship between 1 Thess 2:15-16 and Rom 9-11 in regard to what they say about non-Christian Jews. Simpson argues that fundamental to Jewish apocalyptic eschatology was belief in Israel's eschatological salvation. He pays special attention to the difference between the fate assigned to "the Jews" in vs. 16 and the salvation of "all Israel" in Rom 11:26. Simpson concludes that in 1 Thess 2:15-16 Paul departs from the fundamental belief of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology. The apostle "holds out no hope for the 'Jews,' whose curse will soon be consummated by God's wrath in final judgment. In Romans, Paul responds to tendencies among some Gentile Christians and to his own perception of the existence of non-Christian Jews as that which calls into question the faithfulness of God. The heart of his response is his understanding of God's mercy that works by a principle of reversal. He believes that this principle will finally become effective for non-Christian Jews, leading to their salvation. This is not a simple return to belief in Israel's salvation; it is only by speaking of Israel's destruction in Romans that Paul is able to speak there of its salvation. The basis of the differences between the two passages is not an accommodation to the 'non-fulfillment of the parousia' so much as an expansion of Paul's understanding of his own mission—and of the present as the time of the Gentiles' salvation—and a lessening need for him to place distance between himself and the community from which he had come" (i-ii).

<sup>2</sup>Donfried, "Paul and Judaism," 249-52.

gracious to the believing Jews, implying that now they have no hope. Centering the whole discussion on εἰς τέλος in 1 Thess 2:16c, Donfried considers that the wrath has come upon the Jews "until the end." It does not imply that the "finality of the wrath" has come upon them, as understood by Pearson. There is, says Donfried, hope for the believing Jews.<sup>1</sup>

For that reason, Paul's desire and prayer to God for Jewish people "is that they may be saved" (Rom 10:1). For that reason also, everywhere Paul went, he went first to the synagogue and preached to the Jews to bring them to faith in Jesus Christ, their Messiah. They could hear and respond to the apostolic proclamation of the gospel.<sup>2</sup> Paul

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<sup>1</sup>Stählin argues that 1 Thess 2:16 actually does not contradict Rom 11. He says that εἰς τέλος means "for ever, yet with no implication of the eternity of this wrath" ("ὀργή," 434). Similarly Gerhard Delling affirms that ἀναπληρῶσαι αὐτῶν τὰς ἀμαρτίας does not mean "to the extreme limit of God's patience after the attainment of which his wrathful judgment will break on pious Judaism" ("πληρής, κτλ.," *TDNT*, 6:306). Cf. idem, "τέλος, κτλ.," *TDNT*, 8:56.

<sup>2</sup>Acts gives a vivid description of Paul's preaching to the Jews in an attempt to convince them from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. After his conversion, in the synagogues of *Damascus* Paul "proclaimed Jesus," "proving that Jesus was the Christ" (9:20, 22). In *Antioch of Pisidia*, Paul presented Jesus as the promised Savior, as the offspring of David, as the object of the prophetic utterances, as crucified, buried, and raised by God from the dead. God has fulfilled His Old Testament promises through Jesus (13:16-41). In the synagogue of *Thessalonica*, during three Sabbaths Paul "argued with them from the Scriptures; explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus, Whom I



himself in 1 Cor 9:20 emphasizes that he "became as a Jew, in order to win Jews" to Christianity. Thus, Jews are hopeless in their present situation, but they are not unable to find salvation ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. It is clear that Paul allows the Jews a historical priority in the history of salvation, though not a national or ethnic superiority.

On the other hand, as Pearson seems to presume, Rom 9-11 is not an established form of Pauline thought nor a theology which Paul held always in his ministry. To the contrary, acknowledging the value of the historical context, Rom 9-11 responds to a specific determined situation when the gospel was being spread faster among Gentiles than among the Jews.<sup>1</sup> Thus, there is a close

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proclaim to you, is the Christ'" (17:2-3). In Corinth, "when Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with preaching, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus" (18:5). In Caesarea, he testified before Agrippa II, "saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (26:22-23). In Rome also, Paul tried "to convince" "local leaders of the Jews" "about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets" (28:17, 23). In all of these narratives, the content of Paul's preaching was determined by his Jewish audience. To the Jews, Paul proved that Jesus was the Messiah promised in their Scriptures.

<sup>1</sup>In general, the presupposition of Paul's conceptual and stylistic consistency on which Pearson built his formulation has been decisively disarmed by Coppens ("Miscellanées Bibliques") and Collins (*Studies*, 124-35). Particularly Collins has disqualified the rigid norm of consistency, showing the fact that there is not a

correlation between 1 Thessalonians and Romans. The analysis of the relationship between 1 Thessalonians and Romans and of the Pauline conception of Israel finds its more relevant aspect when one considers these problems in connection to their historical, proper, and particular settings.<sup>1</sup> Thus, such a relationship is not one of inconsistency or discrepancy, but one of complementation and expansion. According to Donfried's estimation,

in Romans Paul does not negate what he said in his first letter but augments it: 1 Thessalonians does not contain the last word concerning Israel. Because of a specific problem in the Roman congregation . . . Paul needs to deal with the issue of the relation of Jews and Gentiles in connection with the question of Israel's future. Therefore, while not denying what he said previously, he adds some new information in Rom 11:25ff., namely, that at the end God's mercy will be extended to Israel in a mysterious way and all Israel will be saved."<sup>2</sup>

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reflexion of general "anti-Judaism" in 1 Thess 2:13-16, in view of the occasional character of Paul's letters and the fact that his thought "proceeds dialectically and in almost quantum leaps. His thought was, moreover, in function of the circumstances in which he was writing" (ibid., 128). The flexibility with which Paul wrote his letters is generally acknowledged among scholars today, except maybe those who hold to compilation and interpolation theories. See Boers, 142-43.

<sup>1</sup>What modern Pauline scholarship in fact has discovered is that Paul's style and vocabulary is situational; the variations are comprehensible when one takes the unique circumstances of each letter into account. See particularly Robert Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971); and J. Christiaan Beker, Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980).

<sup>2</sup>Donfried, "Paul and Judaism," 252.

The future salvation of the Jews is not excluded in 1 Thess 2:16. The "vituperation is aimed at those Jews in particular who specifically opposed and hindered the gospel."<sup>1</sup> For his part, Gregory Baum, dealing with the theological annotations to Rom 9-11, considered 1 Thess 2:14-16 as "the strongest outburst against the Jews, which has no parallel in the epistles," although "this language is not unfamiliar to us."<sup>2</sup>

James D. G. Dunn has observed that

the sharp comment that Paul goes on to make at the end of v. 16 ('God's wrath has come upon them at last') is consistent with the belief more fully articulated in Rom. 1 and 9-11: most Jews by their attitude to the covenant, their presumption regarding the law, and their unwillingness to recognize that their God accepted people through faith, were now putting themselves under the wrath of God (cf. Rom. 1-3).<sup>3</sup>

In a comparison of 1 Thess 2:15-16 and Rom 9-11, Holtz holds that

these passages—to the extent that they deal with the same topic—really concur without the slightest doubt that the members of the synagogue who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ have fallen to Judgment. This is, and nothing else is!, what Paul wants to proclaim in 1 Thess 2.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Johanson, 170.

<sup>2</sup>Gregory Baum, Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic? A Re-examination of the New Testament, rev. ed. (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press, 1965), 291.

<sup>3</sup>Dunn, The Partings of the Ways, 146.

<sup>4</sup>Holtz, "The Judgment on the Jews and the Salvation of all Israel," 293. Holtz also refutes the view that 1 Thess 2:15-16, in which Paul attacks those Jews who actively oppose the Gospel, contradicts Rom 11:25-27, which affirms the belief in the final salvation of Israel.

In spite of Pearson's objections, why should it be impossible for an inspired author, on the one hand, to reveal a terrible reality as that recorded in 1 Thess 2:16, and yet, on the other hand, to express his own genuine anguish and pain with respect to his own people, as in Rom 9-11?<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, what is said in 1 Thess 2:14-16 does not differ from that which is found in Rom 9:22; 10:21; and 11:22, 25.<sup>2</sup> In consequence, Pearson's observation that Paul could never have written this *ad hominem* attack against his people is questionable.

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For his part, Wright believes that there is "a close link, despite what is often thought, between this passage [Rom 11:25-27] and 1 Thess 2.14-16" (The Climax of the Covenant, 249 n. 44). Considering Rom 9:30-10:21, Wright concludes that "we must note that Paul has made it clear beyond any doubt, and completely in line with Galatians, 1 Thessalonians 2, 2 Corinthians 3, Philippians 3, and the whole of Romans 1-8, that there is no covenant membership for Israel on the basis of racial or 'fleshly' identity. She cannot be the people of God simply by clinging to ancestral privilege" (emphasis added), *ibid.*, 245-46. See particularly in this work the arguments presented to affirm that for Paul "christology" is a means of redefining the people of God and also God Himself.

<sup>1</sup>Hendriksen, 19.

<sup>2</sup>The analysis made by Simpson shows the close correlation between 1 Thessalonians and Romans. Centering the whole discussion on this idea, he gives evidences "that what we have in Rom 10:21-11:10 is Paul's expression through citations of Scripture of what we have in 1 Thess 2:15-16." He also remarks that 1 Thess 2:15-16 "is more historicized, that is, it is more involved in terse narrative of Jewish opposition to God's messengers and the church." He makes clear "that in both 1 Thessalonians and Romans Paul speaks of the condemnation of the 'Jews' or 'Israel' and works from the same traditions in speaking of this fate" (emphasis in the original), 130-31.

Meaning of the mimesis terminology. Paul does not imply that the Thessalonians be imitators of the Christians in Judea, as Pearson seems to assume.<sup>1</sup>

The imitation referred to in 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14 is comparative. The Thessalonian Christians have already become imitators of the churches of God in Judea because of their faithful endurance of persecution provoked by their fellow citizens, just as the Christians in Judea suffered from the Jews.<sup>2</sup> Focusing the discussion on this similarity, it is not strange that *mimesis* in 2:14 "does not cohere with Paul's usage elsewhere." Paul is using this motif with a different meaning than is habitual with him.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Karl O. Sandnes indicates that

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<sup>1</sup>Pearson, 87-88.

<sup>2</sup>De Boer not only argues that "there are various indications that what had happened in Judea may have been quite well known in Thessalonica," but also that it is not at all unlikely that the Thessalonians had been imitating the Christians in Judea "with a large measure of consciousness and intention." De Boer supports this view in the following observations: (1) Paul spoke "freely about his earlier persecution of the church (cf. Acts 22:4ff.; 26:9ff.; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13,23; Phil. 3:6; I Tim 1:13)"; (2) Paul "himself has become the victim of persecution from the Jews" as he himself testifies (1 Thess 2:15-16; 3:4); and, (3) "the collection for the Christian in Jerusalem (cf. Rom. 15:25-27; I Cor 16:1ff.; II Cor 8ff.) gives evidence that the other churches were acquainted with the continued suffering and difficulties of their brethren in Judea" (106).

<sup>3</sup>Simpson considers that the *mimesis* language in 1 Thess 1:6 and 2:14 "is not an imperative as elsewhere in Paul's letters, but a description of what the addressees are already doing" (141). According to Malherbe, the use "of μιμητής here [1:6] and in 2,14 differs from all other

to hold it impossible that Paul could mention the Judean churches as an example to other Christian communities, is only due to the view that Paul and Jerusalem were in constant tension; a view we find arbitrary in the light of the Pauline letters.<sup>1</sup>

#### Form-critical arguments

Two items are considered under this heading: first, the structural argument advanced by Pearson; second, the matter of the linguistic evidence brought out by Schmidt.

The structural argument. The central dilemma with 1 Thess 2:13-16 is its digression in vss. 15-16. Those verses are dealing with another group, "the Jews," rather than with the response of the Thessalonian Christians to

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New Testament occurrences in that Paul does not call his readers to become his emulators, but addresses them as people who had already become his followers in the matters at hand" ("Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," ANRW, 2, 26:290). For David M. Stanley, these first instances [1 Thess 1:6 and 2:14] of Paul's urging of imitation exclude any notion of a deliberate or extrinsic copying of an example: the term denotes a deeply religious Christian experience of conversion to the faith" ("Imitation in Paul's Letters: Its Significance for His Relationship to Jesus and to His Own Christian Foundations," in From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare, ed. P. Richardson and J. C. Hurd [Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984], 133).

<sup>1</sup>K. O. Sandnes, Paul: One of the Prophets? A Contribution to the Apostle's Self-Understanding. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2/43 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991), 193. Wanamaker considers that Pearson's discussion about the mimesis terminology "is misdirected" (32).

the gospel, which is the central concern of the 1:2-3:13 section.

The structural argument has been carefully studied and rejected by some, namely, Joseph Coppens (1975),<sup>1</sup> Ingo Broer (1983),<sup>2</sup> and particularly Karl P. Donfried (1984).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Coppens does not consider that 2:13-16 constitutes a digression in the flow of the argument in 1 Thess 2 ("Miscellanées Bibliques. LXXX. Une diatribe antijuive dans 1 Thess, II,13-16," ETL 51 [1975]: 90-5).

<sup>2</sup>Broer, "'Antisemitismus' und Judenpolemik im Neuen Testament"; idem, "Der ganze Zorn ist schon über sie gekommen," 137-59; idem, "Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament? Versuch einer Annäherung anhand von zwei Texten (1 Thess 2,14-16 und Mt 27,24)," in Salz der Erde-Licht der Welt: Exegetische Studien zum Matthäusevangelium, ed. L. Oberlinner and P. Fiedler Bibelwerk (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991), 321-55. Broer specifically defends the authenticity of the text under consideration.

<sup>3</sup>Donfried sees a special structural, literary, and theological connection between 1:6-9a and 2:13-16, where "the themes of 'imitation' and 'affliction' from those earlier verses are taken up and expanded in 2:13 ff., where the behavior of the Thessalonian converts is contrasted to that of the Jews" ("Paul and Judaism," 246). He also makes clear that "the Thessalonians accepted the word of the apostles as the Word of God and it is therefore at work (ἐνεργεῖται) in them; the Jews in Judea (and the unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica) did not receive the apostolic proclamation as the Word of God but as the word of men. Thus, it is not at work in them, and as result a negative description of these unbelievers is a made in 2:15-16. . . . The believers in Judea and in Thessalonica had become examples of God's salvation which rescues 'from the wrath to come' (1:10) whereas the unbelieving Jews had become objects of God's wrath (2:16). This is summarized at the end of the letter: 'For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .' (5:9)" ("The Theology of 1 Thessalonians," 250).

In addition, Paul Schubert (1939),<sup>1</sup> Robert W. Funk (1966),<sup>2</sup> John L. White (1972),<sup>3</sup> Robert and Carolyn Lee (1975),<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth S. Malbon (1983),<sup>5</sup> Daniel Patte (1983),<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Schubert considers that the end of the thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians might be at 2:16, 3:10, or 3:13, even though he concludes that the three thanksgivings (1:2, 2:13, 3:9) are really one, twice repeated, functioning as the vehicle for conveying the body of the letter (7, 21 ff.).

<sup>2</sup>Robert W. Funk, Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 265, 274.

<sup>3</sup>White, on formal reasons as well, proposes "not only that 1 Thess 2:13-16 is Pauline . . . and that it plays an integral role within 2:1-3:13 . . . but also that it is the applicative portion (Part II) of the body-middle" of the letter (2:5-16) (John L. White, "The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter: A Study of the Letter-Body in the Non-literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle," Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 2 [Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1972], 128). For criticism, see Johanson, 61-65.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Lee and Carolyn Lee, "An Analysis of the Larger Semantic Units of 1 Thessalonians," NTrans 56 (1975): 39.

<sup>5</sup>Elizabeth S. Malbon, "No Need to Have Any One Write? A Structural Exegesis of 1 Thessalonians," Semeia 26 (1983): 57-83.

<sup>6</sup>Daniel Patte, "Method for a Structural Exegesis of Didactic Discourses: Analysis of 1 Thessalonians," Semeia 26 (1983): 85-129. See his structural argument in Paul's Faith and the Power of the Gospel, 127-48, which also affirms: "I view the entire letter as from Paul" (ibid., 127).



John C. Hurd (1986),<sup>1</sup> Traugott Holtz (1986),<sup>2</sup> John W. Simpson (1988),<sup>3</sup> and Charles A. Wanamaker (1990),<sup>4</sup> having studied the structure of the epistle, integrated 2:13-16 into their analysis without any difficulty. The effort to defend the authenticity of the text made on formal grounds by Weatherly is highly persuasive as well.<sup>5</sup> He questions the "apparent interruption of the context" (against Pearson),<sup>6</sup> and the "apparent absence of reference to the preceding or following contexts" (against Boers).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John C. Hurd shows detailed structural similarities between 1:2-10 and 2:13-16 as evidence for the authenticity of the later text. From his structural considerations, Hurd concludes: "From a structural point of view therefore 1 Thess. 2:13-16 is by no means anomalous. While Paul's structures are not so regular that they can be predicted, the type of repetition represented by our passage has numerous parallels at other points in Paul's letters. Recapitulation was one technique used by Paul to develop important arguments" ("Paul Ahead of His Time: 1 Thess. 2: 13-16," in Anti-judaism in early Christianity, ed. Richardson and D. Granskow, 21-36. Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion [Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986]. 30).

<sup>2</sup>Holtz (Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher) finds a close connection between 2:1-12 and 2:13.

<sup>3</sup>Simpson, 70-85.

<sup>4</sup>Wanamaker, 108-19.

<sup>5</sup>Weatherly, 81-82.

<sup>6</sup>Pearson, 90.

<sup>7</sup>Boers, 151.

For Schubert, 1 Thess 2:13-16 is a continuation of the earlier thanksgiving seen in 1:2-10.<sup>1</sup> Funk calls 2:13-16 an "eschatological climax,"<sup>2</sup> suggesting that the message of the theological body of the letter (2:1-3:13) has an eschatological conclusion (3:11-13). He also notes that the three thanksgivings of 1 Thessalonians (1:2 ff., 2:13; 3:9 f.) are "paralleled by three in II Thessalonians" (1:3; 1:11 f., 2:13), and additionally, "the second thanksgiving in I Thessalonians has a double liturgical closing (3:11, 12) as does the second in II Thessalonians (2:16f., 3:5)."<sup>3</sup> White proposes that 2:13-16 is "the applicative (Part II) portion of the body-middle," which is "introduced in 2:13 and extends through 2:16."<sup>4</sup>

Donfried suggests that this text is an "intensification and expansion" of the themes of "imitation" and "affliction" of 1:6-9a. His explanation of what he sees in context is as follows:

In order to understand verses 15-16, we must pay careful attention to verses 13-14. Paul uses the verb *eucharistein* twice for his own personal thanksgiving,

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<sup>1</sup>Schubert, 17-18.

<sup>2</sup>Funk, Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God, 265.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 274. Cf. Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," 359.

<sup>4</sup>White, "The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter," 128, 118. Best considers 1 Thess 2:13-16 a "renewed" thanksgiving (A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 109); and Bruce a "new" thanksgiving (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 43).

in 1:3 and here in 2:13, and he uses the noun *eucharistia* in 3:9 for a further word of thanksgiving. The first reference is very general and refers to their "work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope . . ." as well as to the fact that the gospel proclaimed by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy 'came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.' This is followed by brief references to the integrity of Paul and his co-workers, that the Thessalonians became imitators of them because they received the word in much affliction (*en thlipsei*) and that they have 'become an example (*typos*) to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.' Chapters 2 and 3, especially, are further specifications of this general thanksgiving. I Thessalonians 2:1-12 is an elaboration of the theme of apostolic integrity in the midst of affliction and verses 13-16 are an intensification and expansion of the themes of 'imitation' and 'affliction' in relation to receiving the Word. This further specification is signalled by the repetition of the theme of thanksgiving in 2:13 in a way similar to the function of the thanksgiving in 3:9 where it introduces the theme of supplying 'what is lacking' in their faith, the answer to which is given by Paul in the fourth chapter. Therefore to understand 2:13-16 we need to pay careful attention to 1:6-9a. The themes of 'imitation' and 'affliction' from those earlier verses are taken up and expanded in 2:13ff., where the behavior of the Thessalonian converts is contrasted of the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

This structural understanding of the text finds support in Stanley, Johanson, Wanamaker, and Wilhelm Wuellner. Stanley holds that 2:13-16 "parallels the first (1:6-7) in certain respects and confirms what has already been said about imitation and example."<sup>2</sup> According to Johanson's analysis, "in 2:13 Paul returns to focus on the second aspect of the gospel-event already introduced and

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<sup>1</sup>Donfried, "Paul and Judaism," 245-46.

<sup>2</sup>Stanley, "Imitation in Paul Letters," 135.

developed in 1:6-8 and 1:9b-10."<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker considers that "2:13-16 is a necessary component of the letter" because it "emphasizes the readers' response to Paul's preaching of the gospel as portrayed in 2:1-12, and on the other hand it explains why Paul was so anxious to revisit the Thessalonians, as he recounts in 2:17-20."<sup>2</sup> Thus he considers 2:13-16 as a rhetorical digression with a paraenetic function.<sup>3</sup> Giving preeminence to Greek rhetoric and Pauline argumentation, the analysis presented by Wuellner shows that "digressions in the *argumentatio* of a speech, which in case of Paul's letters would be the 'body', are noted by Lausberg in terms of the use of *loci communes* for the sake of amplification."<sup>4</sup>

Some scholars have employed rhetorical criticism in an attempt to identify the structure and genre of the letter. These recent rhetorical analyses of the arrangement of 1 Thessalonians indicate that the present

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<sup>1</sup>Johanson, 94.

<sup>2</sup>Wanamaker, 32. Cf. Simpson, who holds that "the apostolic parousia (2:17-3:10) might be said to follow naturally after 2:11-12, but a section which begins with a focus on the Thessalonians' response to God's call through the apostles and which builds toward a strong eschatological conclusion (2:13-16) is the more expected sequel of 2:11-12" (78-79).

<sup>3</sup>Wanamaker, 108-19.

<sup>4</sup>Wilhelm Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," in Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition, ed. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 181 (emphasis in the original).

text may well be considered as a unified composition. See the outlines as suggested in table 3 in the Appendix.

An important consequence of these rhetorical studies is that the entire letter, particularly 1 Thess 1-3, seems to be an integrated unit. Jewett argues that the rhetorical genre "most closely associated with 1 Thessalonians is demonstrative/epideictic because it concentrates on praise and blame with a prominent traditional subject being thanksgiving to the gods."<sup>1</sup> Kennedy holds that "praise or blame is taken by Aristotle to be the characteristic feature of epideictic."<sup>2</sup> This kind of rhetoric "used praise and blame in order to urge a group of people to affirm a point of view or set values in the present."<sup>3</sup> George Lyons and Frank W. Hughes also identify the genre of 1 Thessalonians as epideictic,<sup>4</sup> which

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<sup>1</sup>Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence, 71-2. See also his rhetorical analysis of 1 Thessalonians, 72-78. Cf. Heinrich Lausberg, Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft, 2d ed. (Munich: Max Huebner, 1973), 131-32.

<sup>2</sup>Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism, 19.

<sup>3</sup>Craig L. Blomberg, "The Diversity of Literary Genres in the New Testament," in New Testament Criticism and Interpretation, ed. D. A. Black and D. S. Dockery (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 518.

<sup>4</sup>Lyons, Pauline Autobiography, 219-221. See Frank W. Hughes, "New Testament Rhetorical Criticism and Its Methodology," SBL Paper for the Rhetorical Criticism Section (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986). Hughes holds that "given the topics of praise and blame which are standard for epideictic rhetoric, 1 Thessalonians is a fairly clear specimen of the genus of epideictic rhetoric"

explains the unusual, extended narration of the grounds for thanksgiving to God by the congregation (1:6-3:13). This is used by Paul to bring up topics about which the people are confused (4:1-5:22).

A clue to understanding 1 Thess 2:14-16, within the genre of epideictic discourse, is stated well by

Hughes:

In contrast to the praise of Paul and the Thessalonians, the people who opposed Christian mission in "the churches of God which are in Judaea" (2,14) are blamed in that they "killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and are opposed to all, prohibiting us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved, so that they always increase the measure of their sins" (2,16). Instead of understanding 2,14-16 as post-Pauline interpolation, comparison of this passage with the standard epideictic topics of praise and blame shows that it would be not unexpected that an epideictic discourse would include prominent *exempla* of what and who are praiseworthy and blameworthy. In this case, the Jewish Christians who (presumably like the Thessalonian Christians) have suffered some sort of persecution from their countrymen are praised, and their fellow Jews who persecuted them are blamed, primarily through the proclamation of their future divine punishment.<sup>1</sup>

Hughes's interpretation is attractive, for it might help to explain why Paul places such emphasis on this striking text.

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(idem, "The Rhetoric of 1 Thessalonians," in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990], 97). For a discussion of the genus, see particularly Josef Martin, Antike Rhetorik: Technik und Methode, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft (Munich: Beck, 1974), 2:177-210; and G. A. Kennedy, The Art of Persuasion in Greece (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 152-203.

<sup>1</sup>Hughes, "The Rhetoric of 1 Thessalonians," 102 (emphasis in the original).

A widely known sub-genre of the epideictic genre, known as the *paradoxon enkomion*, is suggested by Wuellner as "a better framework for the identification of 1 Thessalonians as a whole and coherent argument."<sup>1</sup> In his view, the paradox of 1:6, *in spite of persecution you received the word with joy*, is the central and essential message that the body of the entire letter amplifies.

Hagner considers that "the argument from formal considerations is a precarious one,"<sup>2</sup> and Davies concludes that "the structural argument is not certain."<sup>3</sup> For his part, based on the evidence of textual and rhetorical coherence, Johanson's survey indicates that Pearson's proposal that, "after deleting 2:13-16, the unity of 2:11-12 provides a more natural, formal introduction to the so-called 'apostolic parousia' of 2:17-3:13 must be judged as

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<sup>1</sup>Wuellner, 126. This author focuses "on the rhetorical structure" rather than "on the rhetorical 'schemes' in 1 Thessalonians" (ibid., 117). His emphasis is given to "the argumentative role which selects rhetorical schemes." Then, the "techniques of argumentation" give to "the letter its argumentative coherence." So Wuellner concludes that "the coherence of Paul's letters is not to be found in his thoughts or the logic of his thoughts, his theology or ethics, his semantic universe or system of convictions which he shares with his readers, but is found rather in the intensity of his pastoral concerns" (ibid., 135). See also Lausberg (241-323), and Theodore C. Burgess, "Epideictic Literature," *UCSCP* 3 (1902): 157-66.

<sup>2</sup>Hagner, 132.

<sup>3</sup>Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," 6.

textually untenable."<sup>1</sup> For Raymond E. Brown, that "1 Thess 2:13 hooks smoothly into 2:17" "is the weakest argument that can be offered, for on almost any passage of the Bible one can omit some verses and find a smooth sequence without them."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, one cannot help but rather agree with Wanamaker that Pearson's structural argument "is a matter of individual opinion."<sup>3</sup>

Let us give consideration to a second form-critical argument for interpolation, the linguistic evidence detected in the text by Daryl Schmidt.

The linguistic evidence. Schmidt's study attempts to show by means of syntactical analysis "some features not typical of Paul" in 1 Thess 2:13-16.<sup>4</sup>

Schmidt's first linguistic argument of the use of the conjunction *καί* in the sentence *καὶ διὰ τοῦτο* in vs. 13, is refuted by Weatherly, who demonstrates that this *καί* is "indisputably Pauline." For Weatherly, the "*καί*" certainly introduces and joins cola and even fuller

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<sup>1</sup>Johanson, 170.

<sup>2</sup>Brown, The Death of the Messiah, 1:380.

<sup>3</sup>Wanamaker, 32.

<sup>4</sup>Schmidt, "1 Thess 2:13-16," 269.



compound sentences elsewhere in the undisputed Epistles of Paul."<sup>1</sup>

Second, from his studies Weatherly has shown "that 2.14-16 includes six levels of embedding, only one more than the five that Schmidt calculates in 1.4-6."<sup>2</sup>

Weatherly argues on the basis of Rom 4:16-17 (containing nine levels of embedding), Rom 15:15-16 (six levels), Phil 1:12-15 (seven), and Phil 1:27-30 (eight) that "the structure of 2.14-16 does not appear to be as anomalous as Schmidt proposes."<sup>3</sup> Jewett, while accepting that "2:14-16 has more imbeds, or subordinate clauses, than adjoining sentences," argues that "it is still less than in the long opening sentence of the thanksgiving (1:2-7), which Schmidt believes is authentically Pauline."<sup>4</sup>

Simpson sees that the levels of embedding in

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<sup>1</sup>Weatherly, 92. See his complete discussion on pp. 91-93. Cf. Johanson, who discusses "the connection and delimitation of 2:13-16" from a rhetorical point of view (94-96). Daryl Schmidt not only sees structural differences among Paul's thanksgiving sections, but also perceives a temporal development between them (273). For a study of this supposed development in the "Pauline thanksgiving form," see Simpson's analysis, in which he judges that "the temporal argument accepted by Schmidt should not, therefore, be considered of strength sufficient to be placed among the genuine form-critical difficulties of 2 Thess 2:13-16 [sic; undoubtedly 1 Thess 2:13-16]" (ibid., 85). Compare Schubert's discussion of the existence of two forms of Pauline thanksgivings and his final conclusion (35-36).

<sup>2</sup>Weatherly, 93.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 94.

<sup>4</sup>Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence, 41.

1 Thess 2:14-16 "are best understood by reference not to grammar but to the logic of the passage."<sup>1</sup>

Third, Schmidt's observation, that "the separation of the nouns κύριον and Ἰησοῦν by the participle" ἀποκτεινάντων (2:15) is an un-Pauline break, has been weakened by other evidence that demands consideration. Weatherly, while accepting that "there is no other instance of the separation of κύριος and Ἰησοῦν anywhere else in the NT," makes clear that "the separation in 2.15 is untypical not only of Paul but of extant early Christian writing in general." Furthermore, "in several instances Paul separates a noun from an attributive adjective with an intervening verb form (1 Cor. 7.7,12; 10.4; 12.24; 2 Cor. 7.5; Phil.2.20)." In that way, "Schmidt's argument is weakened by the observation that the particular syntactical combination represented by κύριον ἀποκτεινάντων Ἰησοῦν is not distinctively un-Pauline."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Simpson argues that "the observation of the levels of embedding highlights what is the greater difficulty, which is the departure from the theme of the thanksgiving, the Thessalonian Christians' receiving of the word (vs. 13) to delve into Jewish aggression against God's messengers. The reason for the syntactic peculiarity of the levels of embedding, whether we are faced with an interpolation or not, is the departure into a new theme, 'the Jews' (who are named in a second-level embed), which is then developed through the use of traditional materials" (96).

<sup>2</sup>Weatherly, 94-95.

Fourth, Schmidt's suggestion, that τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2:14) is an un-Pauline combination of "three different Pauline constructions" is also questionable. Weatherly judges it "possible that Paul himself combined the elements for specific reasons related to the interests of the context." Thus, "the combination of the phrase in 2.14a, though exceptional, is readily explained on the hypothesis of the passage's authenticity."<sup>1</sup> The expression under consideration is, indeed, typically Pauline.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Schmidt's description of 2:13-16, as "built around a conflation of Pauline expressions,"<sup>3</sup> suggests the proper use of this terminology by Paul.

Fifth, Schmidt's suggestion, that the separation of τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν from its head noun μιμηταί with the vocative ἀδελφοί is not characteristic of Paul, is again answered by Weatherly, who, from "relevant data which" Schmidt "does not assess," concludes that "the position of the vocative in 1 Thess 2.14a needs not to be regarded as

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 96-97.

<sup>2</sup>ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ: 1 Cor 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:13 (cf. 2 Thess 1:1, 4; 1 Tim 3:5, 15); ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ: Rom 16:16; Gal 1:22 (cf. 2 Thess 1:1).

<sup>3</sup>Schmidt, "1 Thess 2:13-16," 276.

un-Pauline. The limitations of the syntax explain the unusual construction."<sup>1</sup>

While insisting that the syntax of 1 Thess 2:13-16 and its differences in linguistic patterns with that of the context establish that "the content of 2:13-16 does not fit well into 1 Thessalonians, nor into Pauline thought in general," Schmidt does not examine "a much wider sample of the Pauline corpus to demonstrate that the level of stylistic difference exceeds the normal Pauline range."<sup>2</sup> The present form of 1 Thess 2:13-16 is not so anomalous as to require the theory that text was interpolated--whether in part or in its entirety. Schmidt's conclusions appear at times overstated and not always in harmony with the testimony of the entire literary and theological evidence of the Pauline writings.

Weatherly concludes his analysis of Schmidt's article saying that "1 Thess. 2.13-16 remains a difficult passage for interpreters of Paul," but "at many points the evidence shows positively that the text is consistent with the style and the theology of the undisputed Epistles of Paul."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Weatherly, 98.

<sup>2</sup>Wanamaker, 32.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 98.

### Integrity of the Passage

It might be helpful to summarize some provisional literary and theological evidences for the Pauline character of 1 Thess 2:13-16, coming out of the analysis of the arguments as refined by further reflection. Although the argument from language is never conclusive, the preceding survey reveals at least the following:

First of all, it is clear that while interpolationist scholars acknowledge the historical, theological, and form-critical difficulties of 1 Thess 2:13-16, they do not give serious consideration to the evidence from other quarters of literary criticism.

To begin with, it is obvious that the extant manuscripts of 1 Thessalonians do not offer any support for interpolation in this text. They do not provide direct or indirect evidence in favor of this hypothesis. Not even the questionable 2:16c, whose omission from the Pauline text has been conjectured by Ritschl and Rodrigues,<sup>1</sup> "is found to be missing from the principal manuscripts"<sup>2</sup> of this letter. The question is raised

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<sup>1</sup>According to the Nestle-Aland apparatus, the only concrete evidence is the omission of 2:16c in a single Vulgate MS. From this fact, Ritschl supposed that this part of the text was an addition to the Pauline letter. Later on, Rodrigues, a nineteenth-century Jewish author, argued that vss. 14-15, and perhaps 16, were a later un-Pauline interpolation. See Tjitze Baarda, "1 Thess 2:14-16: Rodrigues in 'Nestle-Aland'," NeTTs 39 (1985): 186-93.

<sup>2</sup>Collins, Studies, 125.

whether Pearson and Schmidt can find support for the proposal of interpolation. One should attempt to explicate the text by means of literary techniques known and used by Paul rather than to work upon a supposition whose argument is not supported by the manuscript evidence.<sup>1</sup> Scholars agree that this textual testimony has much weight.<sup>2</sup>

Second, it is erroneous to assume that a certain epistolary form of thought, language, and style was normative in the literary work of Paul. When one explores Paul's letters one comes to the conclusion that the notion

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Marinus de Jonge comments that it has been "argued that verses 13-16 were wholly or partly interpolated by some later editor of the Pauline epistle. For lack of evidence in the manuscripts, this solution remains conjectural" (Christology in Context: The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988], 217). Frederik W. Wisse has concluded: "There are no good reasons to doubt that the reliability of the text of the Pauline letters is what it appears to be on the basis of the manuscript evidence. Even if by chance it were not, scholarship is in no position to bring order to the matter. Redactional theory that steps outside the bounds of textual evidence and minimizes the burden of proof is counter-productive and a hindrance to Pauline studies" (Frederick W. Wisse, "Textual Limits to Redactional Theory in the Pauline Corpus," in Gospel Origins and Christian Beginnings, ed. J. E. Goehring, C. W. Hedrick, J. T. Sanders with H. D. Betz [Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1990], 178). John Stott holds that "there is no manuscript evidence that they (verses 15-16) were added by a later hand" (The Gospel and the End of the Time: The Message of 1 and 2 Thessalonians [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991], 55). Hagner believes that all of Pearson's arguments "constitute only circumstantial evidence that cannot in the end overcome the total lack of confirming textual evidence" (131). See also Broer, "'Der ganze Zorn ist schon über sie gekommen'," 142-45.

that Paul had adopted a singular epistolary form cannot be defended. While several studies have shown that there was development of thought, vocabulary, and epistolary form, others have indicated evidences of redactional freedom.<sup>1</sup> As Jewett has pointed out, "Paul's syntactical and stylistic range is remarkably broad and varied in every letter."<sup>2</sup> Hagner argues as well that the linguistic evidence "is in itself also hardly compelling. The irregularity of the syntax may well be accounted for in part by the character of the passage as well as the use of traditional materials."<sup>3</sup>

Third, it is reasonably clear that 1 Thess 2:14-16 is not an anti-Semitic declaration, but rather a *contingent polemical statement*. It reveals a Pauline interpretation of acts of violence committed against Christ and the early Christians by *some* Jews, who, in this particular case, provoked much affliction against the Christians in Thessalonica from their very beginning. Paul's language was "in function of the circumstances in which he was writing."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hagner comments: "It is a well known fact that Paul exercised considerable freedom in his letters so far as formal structure is concerned" (132).

<sup>2</sup>Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence, 40-41.

<sup>3</sup>Hagner, 132.

<sup>4</sup>Collins, Studies, 128.

Fourth, the emergent scholarly consensus in favor of the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:14-16, based on the use of traditional material, is significant. The disputed passage fits with the pre-A.D. 70 tradition of the Christian community regarding the unbelieving Jews.

In view of previous investigations, as was noted earlier, it is not at all unlikely that in the composition of this text Paul has used traditional material. On formal and material grounds, a close correspondence between 1 Thess 2:13-16 and pre-synoptic tradition has been argued.<sup>1</sup> Wanamaker suggests that "if Paul took it over as a pre-formed tradition, then a major component of Schmidt's argument would fall away."<sup>2</sup> Donfried holds that Schmidt's evidence can be explained on the hypothesis that Paul used traditional formulations in his literary composition.<sup>3</sup> Thus among the various solutions, the best one seems to be the one that starts by making a distinction between tradition and redaction. Paul is

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<sup>1</sup>For example, as it was noted by Wenham, "if Paul is here quoting [he makes reference to 1 Thess 2:15], then much of his vehement language may be explicable" ("Paul and the Synoptic Apocalypse," 362); or as Lüdemann, who considers that one evidence of the use of traditional material by Paul in 1 Thess 2:15 is the presence of four participial clauses, the fourth having an understood copula, all standing under a single article (Paulus und das Judentum, 22). Simpson asserts that "verse 15 may be anomalous because of the use of traditional materials" (96).

<sup>2</sup>Wanamaker, 32-33.

<sup>3</sup>Donfried, "Paul and Judaism," 245.



interpreting, developing, and applying characteristics of classical deuteronomic tradition and teachings of Jesus in his same historical and theological perspective.

Fifth, most scholars agree that 1 Thess 2:13-16 is a necessary element within 1:2-3:13, the first section of the letter. It is a rhetorical digression for the sake of intensification. Within 1:2-3-13, 2:13-16 is an expansion of 1:6-9, where the behavior of the believing Christians in Thessalonica is being contrasted to that of the unbelieving non-Christian Jews in Judea.

As has been said in advance, the theme in 1 Thess 1-3 is "imitation" in a context of "affliction" provoked by religious persecution. The Thessalonians did receive and accept God's Word "in the midst of many afflictions," but "with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" as others did in the past. Paul presents the Thessalonian Christians in a process of explicit historical continuity with the prophets, the Lord, the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

Based on these historical evidences, Paul finds valid and sufficient proofs that God has loved, chosen, and called the believers in Thessalonica and that they have responded positively and joyfully, despite persecution, to this Word of God. Because of this proclamation of God through Paul, the Thessalonian Christians (1) have "turned to God from idols to serve a

living and true God" (1 Thess 1:9), (2) became "the church of the Thessalonians *in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*" (1:1), and (3) must "wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, Jesus Who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1:10). Thus, as was noted earlier, Paul describes the behavior of the recipients of this letter in terms of three fundamental dimensions: *ecclesiological*—they became "the church of Thessalonians in God . . . and the Lord Jesus Christ"; *ethical*—they "serve a living and true God"; and *eschatological*—they "wait for His Son from heaven."

The central point in 2:13-16 then, is the reception of God's Word by the believing Gentiles of Thessalonica in intentional contrast with the unbelieving Jews in Judea. The Thessalonian Christians "received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (1:6); and "became" more than just "an example to all believers in Macedonia and in Achaia" because "your faith" and "the word of the Lord" were "sounded forth" (1:7-8). They also welcomed the apostles, and "turned to God from idols, to serve" Him as "a living and true God and to wait for his Son" Jesus "from heaven" (1:9-10). In that way, they became "the Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and (in) the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1). All of them are "brethren" (1:4; 2:1, 9, 14), "imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea"

(2:14). They are urged to please God (4:1); to practice brotherhood (4:10); to live in peaceful quietness (4:11); and to live with a good reputation toward those outside the community (4:12). They are praised for their echoing forth the word about the Lord (1:8).

On the other side are the Jews in Judea, the antithesis of the believers in Thessalonica, who oppose in many ways God's Word: they "killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets"; they are driving out the apostles in their preaching to the Gentiles; and they hinder the purpose of God of saving all people by the gospel proclamation (2:14-16). The final contrast between those believers who have received God's Word and those unbelievers who have opposed it is wrath versus salvation (1:10; 2:16; 5:9). The believers have salvation and the unbelievers are under the wrath of God; they lack salvation.

If this analysis is correct, one can perceive from what Paul is saying in his extended thanksgiving that what we find here is not merely historical information, but rather something else of greater importance. It is an explicit ecclesiology centered in the proclamation of God's Word and the Messiah—Whom the Word reveals. The Thessalonians became the ἐκκλησία ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ because they received the Agent of the divine gathering revealed in God's Word, Whom the Jews rejected historically.

Sixth, the aorist ἔφθασεν in 2:16c refers to the divine ὀργή, which has come upon the unbelieving Jews by their chronic and historical rebellion. In its literary context, ὀργή does not refer to the fall of Jerusalem or the destruction of the Temple as having already happened, but rather to the present lack of salvation of the non-Christian Jews who have rejected the work of God in Christ. Those unbelieving Jews were removed from God's presence and the nation lost her covenantal election and promises. The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of its Temple were a mere national consequence of this situation of insubordination, which already had been explicitly foretold in the Old Testament and in the teachings of Jesus. No suggestion is made in 1 Thessalonians that the destruction of Jerusalem will constitute God's final judgment.

Seventh, 1 Thess 2:14-16 does not exclude the future salvation of believing Jews. There is a close correlation of complementation and expansion between 1 Thess 2:14-16 and Rom 9-11. Romans intensifies 1 Thessalonians.

Eighth, the words, phrases, constructions, expressions, and combinations of 1 Thess 2:13-16 are found only in Paul. It is significant that Pearson admits

"Pauline words and phrases" in 1 Thess 2:13-16.<sup>1</sup> For his part, Schmidt also recognizes Pauline "constructions," "expressions," and "combinations" in 1 Thess 2:13-16.<sup>2</sup>

Without taking into consideration some obvious conjunctions, prepositions, articles, adverbs, pronouns and nouns, which are not so crucial in function to the purposes of this analysis, table 4 reveals that the words of 1 Thess 2:13-16 are clearly Pauline. There are only two hapax legomena—συμφυλετήρ (2:14) and ἐκδιώκω (2:15). The frequency of the words used in 1 Thess 2:13-16 in the Pauline corpus in comparison with the rest of the New Testament is significant as well. In the appendix of the dissertation, table 5 makes this clearer as it compares the vocabulary of 1 Thess 2:13-16 with the Pauline corpus. The asterisk (\*) indicates words used in 1 Thess 2:13-16 that appear in some of the four so-called major Pauline epistles: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. Thirty one of the thirty five words studied (88.57 percent) are in the major epistles of Paul. The letters in bold, in the section "Location in Paul's Writings," indicate the presence of these words in more than one of the major Pauline letters.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Pearson, 91.

<sup>2</sup>Schmidt, "1 Thess 2:13-16," 274, 276.

<sup>3</sup>In order to obtain these results I carefully listed in alphabetical order every word chosen from

Ninth, without denying the value of form-critical analysis for the Thessalonian correspondence studies, most scholars have rejected the hypotheses as inadequate or even baseless, considering 1 Thess 2:13-16 as authentically Pauline.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Thess 2:13-16, and using Concordance to the Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland, 26th edition, and the Greek New Testament, 3d ed., ed. Institute for New Testament Textual Research and the Computer Center of Münster University, with collaboration of H. Bachman and W. A. Slaby (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), I verified the use of these words in the Pauline corpus.

<sup>1</sup>Only the most representative authors are listed here. Kümmel, "Das literarische und geschichtliche Problem des ersten Thessalonicherbriefes," 218-22. Hiebert holds that "instead of arbitrarily resorting to interpolation, it is better to seek to understand why Paul wrote as he did" (114). Best (A Commentary on the First and Second Thessalonians, 22-34, 123); Coppens ("Miscellanées Bibliques," 90-95); Marxsen (Der erste Brief an Die Thessalonicher, 47-51); and Okeke (127-36). Meeks judges Pearson's argument as "unconvincing" ("The Social Context of Pauline Theology," 273; idem, The First Urban Christians, 227 n. 117). See Lüdemann (Paulus und das Judentum, 25-27); Broer ("'Antisemitismus' und Judenpolemik im Neuen Testament"); and Marshall (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 8-9). Donfried considers conclusively "that neither all nor part of the text in 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 is a later interpolation" ("Paul and Judaism," 245). See Collins (Studies, 97-114, 124-35); Baarda ("Maar de toorn is over hen gekomen...! 1 Thess. 2:16c," 15-74); Hurd (21-36); Georg Geiger ("1 Thess 2,13-16. Der Initiationstext des christlichen Antisemitismus?" BibLit 59 [1986]: 154-160); Holtz (Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher, 27, 96-113); Jewett (The Thessalonian Correspondence, 36-42); Simpson (65-164; idem, "The Problems Posed by 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16 and a Solution," Horizons in Biblical Theology: An International Dialogue 12, 1 [1990]: 42-72); Wanamaker (29-33, 109); Olbricht (230, n.77); Weatherly (79-98); Sandnes (Paul: One of the Prophets, 191-94); Marinus de Jonge (Jesus: The Servant-Messiah [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991], 92); Johnson ("The Social Dimensions of Sōtēria in Luke-Acts and Paul," 534); Nicholas T. Wright ("Putting Paul Together Again: Toward a Synthesis of Pauline

It may be helpful to mention an interesting comment by Hurd. Hurd holds that "although Pearson's case is probably the best that can be built in favor of the theory of interpolation, his argument has a number of weaknesses in method."<sup>1</sup>

Hurd makes reference to the attempt of "many scholars" of judging whether specific material is Pauline or not based on the axiom of similarity and dissimilarity. That is to say, the non-Pauline character of certain material is attributed to the similarity or dissimilarity between this material and the letters attributed conventionally to Paul. Obviously, these are clearly contradictory. However, Pearson

alternates between the two arguments. Whatever strikes him as unlike the *Hauptbriefe* he lists as evidence for the first. Whatever appears to be Pauline he takes as evidence for the second. These two arguments do not support one another; they pull in opposite directions.<sup>2</sup>

Malherbe affirms that he is "unpersuaded by the formal arguments made by B. A. Pearson," and adds: "That 2:13-16 is an interpolation, is the minority position."<sup>3</sup>

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Theology," in Pauline Theology, vol. 1, Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon, ed. Jouette M. Bassler [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991], 200); and James Ware ("The Thessalonians as a Missionary Congregation: 1 Thessalonians 1,5-8," ZNW 83 [1992]: 129, note 13).

<sup>1</sup>Hurd, 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. (emphasis in the original).

<sup>3</sup>Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," II, 26:290, n. 109.

Collins indicates that there is considerable lack of agreement among interpolationist and compilationist scholars,<sup>1</sup> yet they have reached radically divergent conclusions. While most compilationists accept the authenticity of the text, interpolationists reject it. Collins insists that these "literary theories" are "founded upon pre-suppositions which are quite untenable."<sup>2</sup> In view of these facts, Collins suggests that "the exegete has to recognize that the extant text of 1 Thess still enjoys the *jus possessionis* and that the text must be explicated as it now exists."<sup>3</sup>

Sandnes concludes his excursus on the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16 by stating that "the arguments advanced to prove the inauthenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16 are not convincing. Taken neither one by one nor together can they substantiate the secondary character of 1 Thess 2:13-16."<sup>4</sup>

In his monumental research, The Death of the Messiah, Brown considers 1 Thess 2:14-16 a "Christian evidence independent of the Gospels" of "Jewish action against Jesus." He writes: "Very important is the passage

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<sup>1</sup>Collins, Studies, 125-35. See also Jewett's evaluation, The Thessalonian Correspondence, 46.

<sup>2</sup>Collins, Studies, 135.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Sandnes, Paul: One of the Prophets, 194.



in I Thess 2:14-16 meant as encouraging words to the Thessalonian Christians who have endured persecution." And, reacting against the assumption of interpolation -listing and rebutting "one by one the difficulties" that scholars use to argue that Paul could not have written this text, he holds: "In my judgment none of the arguments against the Pauline authorship of I Thess 2:14-16 is persuasive."<sup>1</sup>

Tenth, 1 Thess 2:13-16 is consistent with the style and theology of the Pauline corpus.

If the various arguments in this analysis are correct, it is clear that contextual considerations of 1 Thess 2:13-16 strongly discourage us from taking it as an un-Pauline interpolation. It is, therefore, appropriate to speak of the general literary context of 1 Thess 2:13-16.

#### Summary

A brief summary of the results of the investigation of this chapter follows.

First of all, for centuries scholars have judged 1 Thessalonians as authentically Pauline. However, against this background, the Tübingen School stands out as the most influential advocate of a renewed methodology of interpretation in contemporary NT scholarship.

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<sup>1</sup>Brown, The Death of the Messiah, 1:378, 380.

Specifically, based on historical, apparent theological contradictions and form-critical arguments, 1 Thess 2:13-16 has been considered un-Pauline by a few compilationist and by all interpolationist scholars, although there is considerable lack of agreement among them as it is seen both in their starting points and conflicting conclusions.

Second, most of these literary theories are founded upon pre-suppositions that are quite untenable, for which reason scholars have rejected them as inadequate or even baseless. Two general assumptions with which they begin have to do with (1) the possible reference to the fall of Jerusalem in 2:16—a contention which Baur used to hold the thesis that 1 Thess is not authentic—and, (2) the perceived vehemence of its anti-Jewish polemic. Neither is supported by the internal evidence of the letter. These assumptions belong to the view that Paul and Jerusalem were in constant tension, a view that is arbitrary in the light of the Pauline letters themselves.

Third, serious consideration is given to the fact that the manuscript tradition does not offer any support for either theory. The absence of manuscript support and the apparent non-existence of the compilation and interpolation techniques within the passage in question point to the weakness of the theories advanced against the authenticity of this text.

Fourth, recent rhetorical analyses of the arrangement of 1 Thessalonians indicates that 2:13-16 may well be considered as a unified composition. The present text has a logical function within the context of the letter. It has been regarded by several scholars as an intensification and expansion of the themes of imitation and affliction in 1:6-9a, where the behavior of the believing Gentiles of Thessalonica is contrasted to the unbelieving non-Christian Jews in Judea. The believing Christians in Thessalonica have salvation and constitute the church of God "in the Lord Jesus Christ." They are seen in a process of historical continuity with the prophets, the Lord, the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. On the other side, the unbelieving non-Christian Jews in Judea lack salvation and are under the wrath of God. They were removed from God's presence and are considered in a process of historical continuity with opposers of God's people in the OT.

Fifth, the use of several biblical motifs in 2:13-16—particularly of God's Word, the killing of the prophets and God's wrath—is a clear indication that the major motivation behind this passage is theological rather than strictly historical.

Sixth, most of the contemporary scholars who have dealt with this passage, hold that attempts to prove the

inauthenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16 have not been convincing. In view of this, 1 Thess 2:13-16 is considered to be a Pauline passage.

In light of the cumulative evidence drawn from historical and critical considerations, and supported by certain theological indices of importance, one may conclude in agreement with most of the scholars whose works have been surveyed here that 1 Thess 2:13-16 is authentically Pauline.

Having covered a historical, literary and theological analysis and given a basis for exploring Paul's connection of the term ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif in 1 Thess 1:1; 2:14, I proceed to present a study of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians.

## CHAPTER IV

### A STUDY OF PAUL'S Association OF THE TERM ἐκκλησία το ἐν Χριστῷ IN 1 THESSALONIANS

Following the results attained from the previous investigation, we now turn to an exploration of Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church as expressed in the term ἐκκλησία in connection to ἐν Χριστῷ in 1 Thess 1:1; 2:14.

Four purposes led the analysis reported in this chapter. They were: (1) to review the scholarly research regarding the ἐν Χριστῷ motif; (2) to explore Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church as expressed in the term ἐκκλησία in connection to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians; (3) to suggest evidences that the theological-christological interpretation emerges from the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17 as an arguable view for the understanding of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία το ἐν Χριστῷ as an ecclesiological formula; and (4) to contribute to the discussion of the "in Christ" motif.

The content of the chapter has been organized in three sections. The first reviews a variety of interpretations of the ἐν Χριστῷ motif. The second explores the use of the term ἐκκλησία in the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17, giving attention first to its background and context. The third suggests evidences that a theological-christological interpretation emerges from the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17 as an arguable view for the understanding of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ as an ecclesiological formula.

#### The Interpretation of the ἐν Χριστῷ Motif

Since the nineteenth century, scholars have tried to define the meaning of the ἐν Χριστῷ phrase and its equivalent terms in the Pauline corpus. The views have advanced from a personal mystical conception to a more objective emphasis—soteriological or ecclesiological or eschatological—and finally, to an interest in corporate personality.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For a history of the scholarship, see Best (One Body in Christ, 8-19); Charles F. D. Moule (The Origin of Christology [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977], 60-63); Bouttier (5-22); Ladd (480-83); and Guthrie (New Testament Theology, 647-53). See also the bibliography in Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, 208.

The mystical interpretation was first suggested by the dissertation of G. Adolf Deissmann in 1892.<sup>1</sup> He held in his major hypothesis that the ἐν Χριστῷ formula had a local and mystical meaning in which Christ, as a sort of universal spirit, was the very atmosphere in which believers lived. His theory has been followed by few.<sup>2</sup> Bultmann asserts that

to belong to the Christian Church is to be 'in Christ' or "in the Lord" (Rom. 16:7, 11; 1 Cor 1:30), and Christian congregations may also be called congregations "in Christ" (Gal. 1:22; 1 Thess. 2:14). "In Christ," far from being a formula for mystic union, is primarily an ecclesiological formula.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Deissmann, Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu"; idem, The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul; idem, Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Joseph Bover ("De Mystica unione 'in Christo Iesu' secundum b. Paulum," Bib 1 [1920]: 309-26); Traugott Schmidt (Der Leib Christi: Eine Untersuchung zum urchristlichen Gemeindegedanken [Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1919], 72-91); James S. Stewart (A Man in Christ: The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925], 158-60); Elias Andrews ("Heart of Christianity: Meaning and Implications for Life of Pauline Expression 'in Christ'," Int 6 [1952]: 162-77); Cerfaux, (Christ in the Theology of St. Paul, 324-25, 331; idem, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, 213); Albert Schweitzer, who suggested that the phrases "in Christ," "fellowship with Christ," and "belonging to Christ," were the original ideas which became, over time, "in Christ." This, he argues, was a mystical participation in Christ and His body (The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle [New York: Seabury Press, 1968], 16, 122-23); and Alfred Wikenhauser (Pauline Mysticism: Christ in the Mystical Teaching of St. Paul [New York: Herder and Herder, 1960], 25-27).

<sup>3</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1:311 (emphasis in the original). Bultmann, however, does not have a fixed view on "in Christ," but sees it as a term

Bultmann and his disciples, on the other hand, argued that the phrase is not mystical and sought to make the formula more objective in different ways. Conzelmann refers to the "objective saving work" of Christ. The ἐν Χριστῷ expression appears in contexts where reconciliation is spoken about in "juridical, objective terms,"<sup>1</sup> which shows that the idea is an objective one in Paul.<sup>2</sup> Käsemann connects ἐν Χριστῷ with the community of faith.<sup>3</sup> Bornkamm holds these meanings of the ἐν Χριστῷ form in Paul: (1) it is equivalent to the word "Christian," or "as a Christian" and that it describes a way of speaking, thinking, acting, suffering and also the conduct befitting a Christian; (2) is parallel to membership of church; (3) sums up what has come about for the believers through Christ and

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with multiple significance in Paul. See, 1:312, 327-28, and especially, 2:177.

<sup>1</sup>Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, 209-212.

<sup>2</sup>This view is shared by, e.g., Neugebauer (In Christus); Kramer (Christ, Lord, Son of God, 141-46); and Ridderbos, who defines the formula as having to do with "the church's objective state of salvation" (Paul: An Outline of His Theology, 59).

<sup>3</sup>Ernest Käsemann, Leib und Leib Christi: Eine Untersuchung zur paulinischen Begrifflichkeit (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1933), 183. For his part, Ladd says that "'in Christ' is practically equivalent to being in the church" (481). Ben Witherington III argues that "if one is *en Christō* then one is in his body—the *ekklēsia* ("Christ," in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, ed. G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993], 99).



constitutes salvation (Rom 8:38-39; 15:17; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; 15:31; 15:58; 2 Cor 5:2; Gal 2:4; Phil 3:14); and, (4) involves "the new basic and all comprehending reality into which believers are transferred."<sup>1</sup>

Albrecht Oepke relates the formula to eschatology:

*En Christo* is not a formula of mystical fellowship but means that the believer belongs to Christ. The new creation in Christ (II Cor. 5:17) designates not a mystical but an eschatological fact. In Christ man has righteousness (II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 2:17), freedom (Gal. 2:4); he belongs to the new aeon, to the new humanity which has come into being with the salvation event.<sup>2</sup>

Best sees in the formula the idea of Christ as a corporate personality. Christ is the inclusive representative of human, and by faith we are incorporated into Him and so become members of His Body the church.<sup>3</sup> Moule builds his "understanding and experience of Christ as corporate"<sup>4</sup> by analyzing Pauline "incorporative phrases"<sup>5</sup> and "body-temple" language.<sup>6</sup> He argues that "it

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<sup>1</sup>Bornkamm, Paul, 154-56.

<sup>2</sup>A. Oepke, "ἐν," TDNT, 2:542.

<sup>3</sup>Best, One Body in Christ, 20-3.

<sup>4</sup>Moule, The Origin of Christology, 47.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 54-69. What Best calls "corporate personality," Oepke calls "universal personality" (2:542); Moule "inclusive personality" (The Origin of Christology, 95); and Wright "incorporative" (The Climax of the Covenant, 41, 46). These designations are roughly equivalent.

<sup>6</sup>Moule, The Origin of Christology, 69-96.

is difficult to escape the impression that Paul is using *en* with a name for Christ in a genuinely (though metaphorically) locative sense," in at least, "a limited number of occurrences."<sup>1</sup>

E. P. Sanders suggests that the *ἐν Χριστῷ* expression in Pauline thought is a participatory language.<sup>2</sup>

For his part, Dunn argues that "in various passages 'in Christ' (or 'in the Lord')" Paul

refers not so much to the objective saving work of Christ, not so much to community of faith, not so much to the idea of Christ as a corporate personality, (or mystically) as a sort of atmosphere in which Christians live, but rather denotes religious experience (or a particular religious experience) as experience of Christ—deriving from Christ as to both its source and its character. In all the passages noted, 'in Christ' or 'in the Lord' express not merely a rational conviction, but something more—a sense that Christ is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 55, 62. See also, Walter Bartling ("The New Creation in Christ: A Study of the Pauline *ἐν Χριστῷ* Formula," *CTM* 21 [1950]: 401-18); Michael Parsons, who concludes that the in-Christ formula "primarily designates a close and indissoluble relationship with the Lord, but more than that it speaks of solidarity with Christ in his death and resurrection as the representative head of his people, the church" ("'In Christ' in Paul," *VoxEV* 18 [1988]: 40); Brenda B. Colijn, who examines nonparticipatory and participatory language and explores the implications of the phrase for Christology and for the believers ("Paul's Use of the 'in Christ' Formula," *ATJ* 23 [1991]: 9-26); and John A. Allan, who does not find the incorporative motif in Ephesians and the pastoral epistles ("The 'in Christ' Formula in Ephesians," *NTS* 5 [1958]: 54-62; idem, "In Christ" Formula in the Pastoral Epistles," *NTS* 10 [1963]: 115-21).

<sup>2</sup>E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1977), 447-74.

thoroughly involved in the situation or action in question—a consciousness of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Thus scholars have recognized that ἐν Χριστῷ "is used in a great variety of contexts"<sup>2</sup> and with "differing shades of meaning."<sup>3</sup> Particularly significant is the arrangement of meaning suggested by Best.<sup>4</sup>

Numerous commentators on 1 Thessalonians also discuss the ἐν Χριστῷ formula and propose several interpretations.

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<sup>1</sup>James D. G. Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament (London: S.C.M. Press, 1975), 324 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>2</sup>Bartling, "The New Creation in Christ," 402.

<sup>3</sup>Parsons, 27.

<sup>4</sup>Best suggests that Paul uses the term ἐν Χριστῷ in the following way: (1) "A is in Christ": for instance, Paul refers to the saints "in Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:1); to "those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1) and of himself as "a man in Christ" (2 Cor 12:2). (2) "A does something to B in Christ": the apostle exhorts the Thessalonians "in the Lord Jesus" (1 Thess 4:1; cf. Eph 4:17). (3) "A does something in the Lord": Paul urges the Philippians to "rejoice in the Lord" (Phil 3:1; 4:4-10; cf. 2 Cor 10:17). (4) "A is X in Christ": Appelles is said to be approved "in Christ" (Rom 16:10); and Paul's final goal in his ministry is "to present everyone perfect in Christ" (Col 1:28; cf. 1 Cor 3:1). (5) "God gives us (does to us) something in Christ": God forgave us in Christ (Eph 4:32; cf. 1:6). (6) ". . . the gift of God . . . in Christ" (Rom 3:24). (7) "A, B, C . . . are in Christ" (Gal 1:22). The Thessalonian church is "in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). (8) The formula sometimes has cosmic importance, as it does in Colossians 1:16-17: "in him all things hold together" (cf. Eph 1:9-10; 3:10-11). (9) The use of the phrase in Col 2:9 deserves singular mention: "For in Christ all the fullness of the deity lives" (One Body in Christ, 1-7).

1. To be ἐν Χριστῷ is to be ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ.

Deissmann found that this expression might very well mean "in der christlichen Gemeinde" (1 Thess 1:1; 2:14; 2 Thess 1:1; Gal 1:22; Eph 3:21).<sup>1</sup> In one sense, ἐν Χριστῷ is equal to ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ: the two are inseparable.<sup>2</sup>

2. The ἐν Χριστῷ form designates Christian communities. Frame has held that "the distinctively Pauline ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is added" in 1 Thess 2:14 and Gal 1:22, "to specify the communities as Christian."<sup>3</sup>

3. The locution ἐν Χριστῷ indicates a spiritual union with Christ. Kelcy argues that "churches of God is an expression indicating ownership," and that "these churches are further described as being in Christ Jesus,

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<sup>1</sup>Deissmann, Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu", vi.

<sup>2</sup>This interpretation has been observed, however, because the concept of being ἐν Χριστῷ is soteriologically prior in time and in importance in being ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ. Traugott Schmidt holds that "Jenes ist die Voraussetzung fuer dieses, die Gemeinde hat ihr Dasein überhaupt erst durch Christus und in ihm, er bleibt immer die übergeordnete Größe, und die Zugehörigkeit zur Gemeinde ist immer erst die Folge des Seins in Christus" (Der Leib Christi, 154).

<sup>3</sup>Frame, 109. See also Hendriksen, 70; and Wanamaker, 112. Nevertheless, this understanding of the formula has been somewhat questioned by Büchsel (141-58); Neugebauer ("Das paulinische 'In Christo'," 124-38; idem, In Christus); Bouttier; Kramer (Christ, Lord, Son of God, 139-44); and Conzelmann (An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, 208-12).

indicating spiritual union with him."<sup>1</sup> Clowney, particularly close to Deissmann's interpretation, holds that ἐν Χριστῷ "often expresses the representative identification of Christians with Christ," although in 1 Thess 1:1 and 2 Thess 1:1 the phrase carries "a fuller meaning."<sup>2</sup>

Although some scholars follow Deissmann's explanation that the formula *in Christ Jesus* "brings Christians into the orbit of the Godhead, and steeps them through their local churches in the power of God, as in some sort of fluid which flows into them and makes them new"<sup>3</sup> in "the letters to the Thessalonians, there is no development of any mystical thought, and its place seems to be taken by eschatology."<sup>4</sup>

Bouttier rightly emphasizes the fact that "si l'on en juge par les premiers écrits en notre possession (1 Thess), l'expression *in Christo* est née dans un contexte *ecclésiologique*."<sup>5</sup> In 1 Thessalonians the term ἐν Χριστῷ, in its different locutions and in a context of

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<sup>1</sup>Kelcy, The Letters of Paul to the Thessalonians, 51-52.

<sup>2</sup>Clowney, "Toward a Biblical Doctrine of the Church," 3:281.

<sup>3</sup>Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, 211.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 213.

<sup>5</sup>Bouttier, 135 (emphasis in the original).

persecution, defines the relation between the believing Thessalonians and the person of Christ, the Lord Who will come to earth, in terms of faithfulness (1:3; 3:6-8; 4:14, 16), Christian ministry (2:6; 3:2) and exhortation (4:1; 5:12, 18). Particularly in 1:1 and 2:14, the expression is applied to churches, not to individual Christians.

4. The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ distinguishes the Christian communities from Gentile and Jewish assemblies. Many scholars find in this formula a reference to this phenomenon. For example, Ellicott defines "in Christ Jesus" in 1 Thess 2:14 as "in union and communion with Him." He asserts that "this spiritual definition is suitably subjoined as still more clearly separating them even in thought from the συναγωγαὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων which might be ἐν Θεῷ, but were far indeed from being ἐν Χριστῷ."<sup>1</sup> Frame, considering the expression ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ of 1 Thess 1:1, comments that this phrase, along with 2:14 and 2 Thess 1:2 "specifies the Christian character of the ἐκκλησία in contrast with the civic assembly of the Gentiles and the theocentric assembly of the Jews."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ellicott, 43.

<sup>2</sup>Frame, 69. See also, Rigaux, Saint Paul. Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens, 442; cf. Neil, The Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, 49; Milligan, St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, 4; Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 90; Best, One Body

5. The expression emphasizes the unity of Christian communities. Best considers that the "qualification in Christ Jesus" is "more probably" used by Paul in the plural "to denote the unity of the Judean Christian communities and also, perhaps more importantly, to stress the unity between them and the Christians of Thessalonica."<sup>1</sup> According to Bruce, the phrase "ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ . . ." denotes the fellowship which binds together Christian churches as surely as it does individual Christians."<sup>2</sup>

These scholars have made a positive contribution to New Testament christology and have extended the knowledge about Paul's ecclesiology. However, these researchers do not generally highlight the meaning of Paul's connection in the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17. Neither do they provide in-depth analysis of the texts where the ἐν Χριστῷ motif appears connected to

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in Christ, 1-33; idem, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 62; Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 78; Robert J. Banks, Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Historical Setting (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1980), 43; Collins, "Glimpses into Some Local Churches of New Testament Times," 298; Holtz, Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher, 100; and O'Brien, "Church," 124.

<sup>1</sup>Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 114 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>2</sup>Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 45-6 (emphasis in the original).

ἐκκλησία in its historical, literary, and theological contexts.

Thus the inevitable question arises: What is the real meaning of this special Pauline motif in connection to ἐκκλησία in the context of 1 Thessalonians? Is the ἐν Χριστῷ motif in the context of 1 Thess 1:1; 2:14 a technical term emphasizing the concept of being ἐν ἐκκλησία; does it merely designate a Christian community; does it differentiate the Christian assemblies from other ones; does it express ownership and spiritual union with Christ; does it highlight the unity of Christians everywhere; or all of these simultaneously? Is there any particular reason why scholars seem to have ignored Acts 17 in interpreting the term ἐκκλησία in connection to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians? To what extent may Paul's connection of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17 contain more than what has been suggested so far? To what extent may the theological-christological interpretation be an arguable view for the understanding of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17?

The main thesis of this dissertation is that in the context of 1 Thessalonians, Paul is redefining the



understanding of the Greek term ἐκκλησία by a theological and christological hermeneutic.

The second section of this chapter suggests the hypothesis that Paul understands the Christian church in Thessalonica to have been constituted by the proclamation of God's Word and gathered in Christ, the Messiah—Whom the Word reveals. The section explores the use of the term ἐκκλησία from the perspective of its original background, and geographical, theological, and christological Pauline implications in the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17.

#### Use of the Term ἐκκλησία

Considering that "the word *ekklesia* was not a creation of the Christian church,"<sup>1</sup> it would be helpful to discuss briefly the background and context of the term ἐκκλησία.

#### Background and Context of the Term ἐκκλησία

In the prescript of the letter, Paul addresses the community as the "ἐκκλησία of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1). What exactly he implied by using the word ἐκκλησία has been the subject of much discussion.

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<sup>1</sup>Radmacher, 115 (emphasis in the original).

According to Richard C. Trench, "we have *ekklēsia* in three distinct stages of meaning—the secular, the Jewish, and the Christian."<sup>1</sup> Thus *ἐκκλησία* in Paul's day "was already a word with a history, and a double history—both Jewish and Greek";<sup>2</sup> however, "whether the Christian use of *ἐκκλησία* was first adopted from Jewish or Gentile usage is a disputed point."<sup>3</sup>

### The Greek Background

As a secular term in the Greco-Roman world, *ἐκκλησία* was "the lawful assembly of free Greek citizens met to transact public affairs."<sup>4</sup> In that secular context, the term was commonly used to refer to non-religious,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Richard C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, ed. Robert G. Hoerber (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 17.

<sup>2</sup>Radmacher, 115. For a more detailed account of the meaning in the Graeco-Roman world, Judaism and the early Christian church, see pp. 115-86; Fenton J. A. Hort, The Christian Ecclesia: A Course of Lectures on the Early History and Early Conceptions of the Ecclesia (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1900), 1-21; 107-22; Schmidt, The Church, 5-61; Johnston, 1-66; Flew, Jesus and His Church; and John Y. Campbell, Three New Testament Studies (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 41-54.

<sup>3</sup>Peter T. O'Brien, Colossians, Philemon, Word Biblical Commentary, 44 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 58.

<sup>4</sup>Trench, 17-18.

<sup>5</sup>Plat. Gorg. 456B; Plyb. 23.10.10; Acts 19:39; cf. Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, rev. and aug., ed. H. S. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 1:509; William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago, IL: The

democratic,<sup>1</sup> and non-exclusivistic assemblies of their respective πόλεις in the secular sense of "gathering."<sup>2</sup>

In this setting, then, ἐκκλησία was "never the title of a religious group."<sup>3</sup> There are "no attested instances in profane Greek of ἐκκλησία used in a religious sense."<sup>4</sup> Consequently, "the use of the word ἐκκλησία in ordinary Greek does not suggest any obvious explanation of the special Christian use of it."<sup>5</sup>

The New Testament meaning of the term ἐκκλησία, seems to have developed under the influence of Hebrew thinking, particularly as it is expressed in the LXX.<sup>6</sup>

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University of Chicago Press, 1957), 240; Schmidt, The Church, 24-31; Johnston, 35-36, 38.

<sup>1</sup>See Lothar Coenen, "ἐκκλησία," NIDNTT, 1:291-307, particularly 291.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell notes that "in the ordinary usage" ἐκκλησία "always" meant "an assembly, a meeting, and not the body of people which assembles or meets together." σύλλογος was a general word used for "meeting," and thus ἐκκλησία was a category of former term (Thuc. 2:22; Plat. Gorg. 452E, 456B) (43).

<sup>3</sup>Johnston, 35 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>4</sup>T. J. Deidun, New Covenant Morality in Paul, Anacleta Biblica, 89 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 10 n. 31.

<sup>5</sup>Campbell, 44.

<sup>6</sup>For example, W. Koester, Die Idee der Kirche beim Apostel Paulus, Newtestamentliche Abhandlungen XIV, Heft 1 (Münster: 1928), 1-5. Schmidt implies that the etymological meaning of the word ἐκκλησία in the New Testament comes "by way of the LXX" (The Church, 57). For

### The Jewish Background

The Greek word for "church" in the New Testament, ἐκκλησία, was chosen by the Palestinian translators of the LXX to translate the Hebrew term קָהָל (qā-hāl)<sup>1</sup> "73 times out of a total of 123 occurrences."<sup>2</sup>

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his part Johnston held that "knowledge of the LXX is vital for understanding its N.T. meaning" (36). In his exhaustive research, Radmacher remarks on "the importance of the Septuagint usage" by saying: "Several factors make the Septuagint an indispensable aid for finding the meaning of certain New Testament words and concepts" (121). I. Howard Marshall argues that the most probable explanation for the Christian usage of ἐκκλησία is "ultimately connected with the Jewish use in the LXX" ("New Wine in Old Wine-Skins: V. The Biblical Usage of the Word 'Ekklesia'," ExpTim 84 [1973]: 362). According to Foakes-Jackson and Lake, "ἐκκλησία is in the Septuagint, except in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, to mean the People of the Lord assembled together for common action, and it is this use of the word in the Septuagint which is really important, rather than any considerations derived from Greek etymology" (2:188).

<sup>1</sup>That is particularly evident in Deuteronomy—except 5:22, Joshua, Judges, Samuel—except 1 Sam 19:20, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Psalms. Generally in the Pentateuch קָהָל (qā-hāl) is translated by συναγωγή (Gen 28:3; 35:11; 48:4; Exod 16:3; Lev 4:13, 14, 21; 16:17; Num 10:7; 16:3, 33, 47; 19:20; 20:4, 6, 10, 12; Pss 22:16; 67:30; 85:14; Jer 44:15), which is also used for קָהָל ('ē-dā) in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Joshua. According to Hort, קָהָל (qā-hāl) and קָהָל ('ē-dā) "were so far coincident in meaning that in many cases they might apparently be used indifferently: but in the first instance they were not strictly synonymous." קָהָל ('ē-dā) is derived "from a root y'dh used in Niphal in the sense of gathering together, specially gathering together by appointment or agreement." It "is applied to Israel, the society itself, formed by the children of Israel or their representative heads, whether assembled or not assembled." קָהָל (qā-hāl), on the other hand, comes from "an obsolete root meaning to call or summon," what could have suggested to the LXX translators the word ἐκκλησία, "derived from καλέω (or rather ἐκκαλέω) in precisely the same sense."

According to The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon, קהל (qā-hāl) means "assembly, convocation, congregation."<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the word is presented in the following sequence: First of all, an "assembly specially convoked" for evil counsel (Gen 49:6; Ps 26:5); for civil affairs (Prov 5:14; 26:26; Job 30:28); for war or invasion (Num 22:4; Judg 20:2; 21:5, 8;

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קהל (qā-hāl) "is properly their actual meeting together" (emphasis in the original), *ibid.*, 4-5. For further study of קהל ('ē-dā) see Wolfgang Schrage, "συναγωγή," TDNT, 7:798-841; and Leonhard Rost, Die Vorstufen von Kirche und Synagoge im Alten Testament, 2, unveränderte Aufl. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), 32-91; 118-28.

<sup>2</sup>Marshall, "New Wine in Old Wine-Skins," 359. Although a consensus has not been reached regarding to the occurrences of the term in the LXX, I could identify more than 20 appearances in the Apocrypha (Judg 6:16, 21; 7:29; 14:6; Sir 15:5; 21:17; 23:24; 24:2; 26:5; 33:18; 31:11; 38:33; 39:10; 44:15; 50:13, 20; 1 Macc 2:56; 3:13; 4:59; 5:16; 14:19), and 80 specifically in the Old Testament (Deut 4:10; 9:10; 18:16; 23:1, 2, 3 (2x), 8; 32:1; Josh 9:8; Judg 20:2; 21:5, 8; 1 Sam 17:47; 19:20; 1 Kgs 8:14, 22, 55, 65; 12:3; 1 Chr 13:2, 4; 28:2, 8; 29: 1, 10, 20 (2x); 2 Chr 1:3, 5; 6:3 (2x), 12, 13; 7:8; 10:3; 20:5, 14; 23:3; 28:14; 29:23, 28, 31, 32; 30:2, 4, 13, 17, 23, 24, 25 (2x); Ezra 2:64; 10:1, 8, 12, 14; Neh 5:7, 13; 7:66; 8:2, 17; 13:1; Job 30:28; Pss 21:23, 26; 25:5, 12; 34:18; 39:10; 67:27; 88:6; 106:32; 149:1; Prov 5:14; Lam 1:10; Ezek 32:3, 23; Joel 2:16; Mic 2:5). On this usage see particularly Schmidt, The Church, 1-69; Johnston, 35-45; Rost, Die Vorstufen von Kirche und Synagoge im Alten Testament, 7-31; 107-18; Lothar Coenen, E. Beyreuther, and H. Bietenhard, hrsg., Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament, 4. Auflage der Studien-Ausgabe; 7. Auflage der Gesamtausgabe (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1986), 2:784-99; and F. L. Hossfeld, E. M. Kindl, and H. J. Fabry, "קהל," TWAT, 6:1204-222.

<sup>1</sup>Francis Brown, The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1979), 874.

1 Sam 17:47; Ezek 16:40; 17:17; 23:24; 32:3; 38:4, 7, 15; Jer 50:9); for a company of returning exiles (Jer 31:8; Ezra 2:64; Neh 7:66); for religious purposes (to hear words of Yahweh [Deut 4:9-13; 9:10; 10:4; 18:16]; words of Jeremiah [Jer 26:17; 44:15]; for feasts, fasts and worship [2 Chr 7:8; 20:5, 14; 30:13, 25; 1 Kgs 8:65; Neh 5:13; Pss 22:23; 107:32]); and second, a "congregation, as organized body": of Israel (Exod 12:6; 16:3; Lev 4: 13, 14, 21; 16:17, 33; Num 14:5; 16:3; Deut 31:30; Josh 8:35; 1 Kgs 8:14, 22, 55; 12:3; 1 Chr 13:2, 4; 28:8; 2 Chr 6:3, 12, 13); restored community in Jerusalem (Ezra 10:8, 12, 14; Neh 8:2, 17; Ps 149:1); of angels (Ps 89:6); more generally, company, assembled multitude (Gen 28:3; 35:11; 48:4; Prov 21:16).<sup>1</sup>

The term קהל (qā-hāl) in the Old Testament does not always refer to the congregation of Israel. However, when קהל (qā-hāl) is translated by ἐκκλησία to indicate the religious congregation of Israel, it is qualified by יהוה (Yhwh [ādō-nái])<sup>2</sup> or ישראֵל (yiś-rā-'él).<sup>3</sup> It is in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>For example, the expression יהוה (yhwh [ādō-nái]), the proper name of the God of Israel, associated with קהל (qā-hāl) is present in Num 16:3; 20:4; Deut 23:1-3, 8; 1 Chr 28:8; Neh 13:1 (cf. Judg 20:2; Jer 26:17); in Lam 1:10 it is implied; Mic 2:5.

<sup>3</sup>The word ישראֵל (yiś-rā-'él) connected to קהל (qā-hāl) appears in Lev 4:13; 16:17; Num 14:5; Deut 31:30; 1 Kgs 8:14, 22, 55; 1 Chr 13:2; 2 Chr 6:3, 12, 13.

the presence of these religious modifiers, particularly with the connection to the proper name of Israel's God, that ἐκκλησία refers to the "cultic community in which God is invoked at a fixed place, at fixed times and in fixed ways, such as sacrifice, prayer, song, etc."<sup>1</sup>

Specifically, then, קהל (qā-hāl) in conjunction with these qualifiers means "the assembly of the Congregation of Israel," "the congregation of God's people."<sup>2</sup> ἐκκλησία "would be familiar to all as the characteristic designation of Israel, the people of God, especially in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah."<sup>3</sup> Thus the word was used "in the LXX for the solemn gathering of the people of Israel as a religious assembly."<sup>4</sup> According to Cerfaux, "the word has a solemn religious meaning."<sup>5</sup> Although most scholars have presupposed that קהל יהוה

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<sup>1</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, Faith and Understanding I, ed. with an introduction by Robert W. Funk and trans. Louise P. Smith (New York; Evanston: Harper and Row, 1969), 193. Cf. Arndt and Gingrich, 240; Liddell and Scott, 1:509; Schmidt, The Church, 51-56; and Johnston, 36-37.

<sup>2</sup>Johnston, 36, 37. See "the meanings of קהל" (qā-hāl) given by Johnston in n. 2, p. 36. Hort has held that "ἐκκλησία, as the primary Greek representative of qāhāl would naturally for Greek-speaking Jews mean the congregation of Israel quite as much as an assembly of the congregation" (7). See also Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1:37-39.

<sup>3</sup>Foakes-Jackson and Lake, 2:188 n. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Wanamaker, 70.

<sup>5</sup>Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, 101.

(Yhwh [ādō-nái] qā-hāl) itself was a *terminus technicus* for Israel, the covenant people of God,<sup>1</sup> a consensus has not been reached among them.

Thus "the Ecclesia of the New Testament takes its name and primary idea from the Ecclesia of the Old Testament."<sup>2</sup> The view commonly held is that

because the Christian community constituted the new People of God who assembled regularly for worship and

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<sup>1</sup>For instance Schmidt, The Church, 52; Johnston, 37; and Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, 105.

<sup>2</sup>Hort, 3. According to Clarence T. Craig, "to understand the nature of the Church we must begin with the Old Testament. . . . Terms like new Israel and 'Israel of God' would be pointless except against the background of a nation which had been so conceived as the people of God (Gal. vi, 16). If Christians were the 'true circumcision' (Phil. iii, 3) and the 'real sons of Abraham' (Rom. iv, 16; Gal. vi, 16) this Old Testament background is presupposed." (Clarence T. Craig, "The Church of the New Testament," in Man's Disorder and God's Design: The Amsterdam Assembly Series [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948], 1:32). In his opinion, "when Christians applied the term *ekklesia* to themselves they re-defined the People of God in terms of the new acts of God for their redemption. It was not to be identified with Israel after the flesh, but with individuals from every tribe, nation, people, and tongue (Rev. vii, 9, etc.). Its adherents were not those who were strictly loyal to Torah, for Christ was the end of the law (Rom. x, 4). Its center was not in a Temple where sacrifices were continually offered, but in Christ Who had died for their sins and been raised by God from the dead (1 Cor. xv, 3ff.). Though membership in the People of God was determined by different criteria, the basic conception of a Church goes back to the Old Testament" (emphasis in the original), *ibid.*, 1:33. For George Florovsky, the *ἐκκλησία* was "adopted under an obvious influence of the Septuagint use" ("The Church: Her Nature and Task," in Man's Disorder and God's Design: The Amsterdam Assembly Series [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948], 1:44).



fellowship, the word was taken by Paul and others as a designation for any local Christian community (cf. 1 Cor. 4:17; Gal. 1:22), for the wider Christian community (cf. 1 Cor 12:28), and even for house churches (Rom. 16:5).<sup>1</sup>

Apparently, "Paul's ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ reflects the Old Testament *qahal yhwh*; if so, it may recall God's holy People at the very moment of its constitution, for *qahal yhwh* came into being on *yōm haqqāhāl*, the day of the Sinai congregation (cf. Dt. 4,9-13; 9,10; 10,4; 18,16)."<sup>2</sup>

In the light of this brief background, then, an early conclusion can be drawn. The term ἐκκλησία of the NT seems to derive its original meaning from the Hebrew word *קָהָל* (*qā-hāl*), which designates the cultic and religious gathering of God's People in the OT. In that sense, ἐκκλησία in the Pauline usage, having its roots in the OT, might connote a religious congregation as well.

With this framework in mind, the Pauline geographical use of the expression ἐκκλησία in the context of 1 Thessalonians is introduced.

#### Geographical Use of ἐκκλησία

In the epistolary prescript of the epistle (1:1; cf. 2 Thess 1:1), Paul refers to the community of those who are ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ with the

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<sup>1</sup>Wanamaker, 70.

<sup>2</sup>Deidun, 11.

descriptive expression ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων (*church of [the] Thessalonians*:<sup>1</sup> the church "of a select number of Thessalonians";<sup>2</sup> the local church in Thessalonica). Through this "peculiar"<sup>3</sup> usage of the genitive of the geographical name Paul identifies "the inhabitants of a place."<sup>4</sup>

The geographical use of the noun ἐκκλησία to situate a specific church is distinctive of Paul. The apostle connects ἐκκλησία explicitly to the place—at Cenchrea (Rom 16:1) and Corinth (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1); or the region where the ἐκκλησία is established—the churches of Asia (1 Cor 16:19), Galatia (1 Cor 16:1; 1:2), Macedonia (2 Cor 8:1), and Judea (1 Thess 2:14; Gal 1:22); or to any local Christian community (1 Cor 4:17; 11:16).

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<sup>1</sup>A consensus has not been reached why Paul uses the expression Θεσσαλονικέων without an article instead of "at Thessalonica," which is characteristic in his following epistles. From this fact it is argued that "not all but only some of the inhabitants of Thessalonica had been converted" (emphasis in the original), Hendriksen, 40. According to Archibald T. Robertson, the absence of the article is because Θεσσαλονικέων is "a proper name" and does not need a definite article (Word Pictures in the New Testament [Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1930], 4:5).

<sup>2</sup>Hiebert, The Thessalonian Epistles, 38.

<sup>3</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), 4:10.

<sup>4</sup>Raymond F. Collins argues that the church of the New Testament was basically a local church ("Glimpses into Some Local Churches of New Testament Times," LTP 42 [1986]: 291-316). See also his article "The Church of the Thessalonians," Louvain Studies 5 (1974-75).

Sometimes Paul associates the word ἐκκλησία with the Christian assembly established in a house (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Phlm 2).

Scholars are virtually unanimous in their understanding that ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ was originally a self-designation of the early Christian community at Jerusalem (Gal 1:13; 1 Cor 15:9; Phil 3:6), and it was then extended to the Judean and Gentile churches (Gal 1:22; 1 Thess 1:1; 2:14; 2 Thess 1:1, 4).<sup>1</sup>

In 1 Thess 1:1, Paul uses ἐκκλησία in a geographical and local sense, but it is also clear that this local church belongs to the universal church. In the extended thanksgiving of the letter (2:14), the church of the believers in Thessalonica is placed alongside τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (and elsewhere, cf. 2 Thess 1:4).<sup>2</sup>

For the purposes of this chapter, however, Paul's theological use of the term ἐκκλησία is of greater significance.

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<sup>1</sup>See particularly, Rigaux, "Vocabulaire chrétien antérieur à la première épître aux Thessaloniens," 387; and Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, 114-15.

<sup>2</sup>According to Cerfaux, τῶν οὐσῶν "emphasizes the idea of local churches" of God in Judea (The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, 108).

## Theological Use of ἐκκλησία

In the salutation of the epistle (1:1), Paul defines the local meeting or gathering of Christians not only by a geographical reference, but also theologically by connecting the noun ἐκκλησία to the prepositional phrase ἐν Θεῷ<sup>1</sup> πατρί,<sup>2</sup> which is considered to be "an

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<sup>1</sup>God pervades 1 Thessalonians as theme and actor. The letter uses Θεός some 38 times throughout all five chapters, in 89 verses (1 Thess 1:1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 (2 x); 2:2 (2 x), 4 (2 x), 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 (3 x), 14, 15, 16; 3:2, 9 (2 x), 11, 13; 4:1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 14, 16; 5:9, 18, 23). It is the sixth most common word used as well as the most common noun in 1 Thessalonians (occurring 50 percent more often than the next most common noun, Κύριος). In the critical Pauline Corpus, Θεός occurs 153 times in Romans, 106 times in 1 Corinthians, 79 times in 2 Corinthians, 31 times in Galatians, 23 times in Philippians, and twice in Philemon. The trinity in 1 Thessalonians includes dominant references to God (the Father) and to the Lord Jesus Christ (the Son) and occasionally some to the Holy Spirit. By and large the priority and emphasis is with God (cf. 1:10), and the many prayers are addressed directly to God (1:2; cf. 2:13; 3:9-10, 11-12; 5:18).

<sup>2</sup>The noun Θεός is expanded by the appositive function of the word πατήρ. This expression appears three times in the epistle connected with Θεός in an appositive position (1:1, 3; 3:11), and one more time with a descriptive purpose (3:13). For Paul, God is Father and Jesus Christ is Lord. Authors such as John W. Bailey and James W. Clarke have argued that "this represents his basic religious heritage and conviction from his Jewish background and his new experience in the fellowship of Christ. The Shemoneh Esreh, the eighteen (later nineteen) prayers of the Jewish liturgy supposed to be recited daily, include petitions to 'our Father'; the fifth asks that he lead his people again to 'thy law,' and the sixth, that he forgive us for 'we have sinned.' Throughout the N.T. period, from the first sermon of Peter recorded in Acts 2:36 on, the designation of Jesus as Lord was constant in Christian thinking" (John W. Bailey and James W. Clarke, The First and Second Epistles to the

unusual expression in the Pauline corpus."<sup>1</sup> Actually, as we show in more detail later, Paul's characteristic expression is the phrase "ἐν Χριστῷ" and its related formulas, which is also found in this verse and repeatedly in the context of the letter (cf. 2:14; 3:8; 4:1, 16; 5:12, 18).

Presumably, for the Thessalonians themselves, the term ἐκκλησία could have had the implications that it had in secular Greek circles, like other assemblies in the city—"a gathering of the Thessalonians." However, it would seem Paul wants to emphasize to his readers in Thessalonica that this gathering is different. Its existence is ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ. The relationship denoted by this prepositional expression, being "certainly more profound, more precise and more distinctively Christian (God the Father!) than the simple genitive τοῦ Θεοῦ" of 2:14, "includes that implied by the genitive" of the mentioned verse.<sup>2</sup>

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Thessalonians, The Interpreter's Bible, 11 [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1955], 255).

<sup>1</sup>Neil, 4; Marshall, "Pauline Theology in the Thessalonian Correspondence," 177; Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 7; and Wanamaker, 70.

<sup>2</sup>Deidun, 11. He also believes that "it seems unreasonable to doubt that in I Thess. 1,1 Paul is thinking of the Christians of Thessalonica as members of the 'Church of God', and that he is fully aware of the biblical background and theological implications of his use of the term" (ibid.).

Scholars have tried to define the nature of the preposition ἐν with the name Θεός in 1:1.<sup>1</sup> For some it has a locative, incorporative, or spatial sense, emphasizing that the church "exists in the sphere and power of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup> Thus "Christians are not simply people who have heard about God and trust Him. They live 'in' Him day by day. All their deeds are done in Him."<sup>3</sup>

Theologically speaking, however, one may ask whether the use of the preposition ἐν could not suggest the influence of the Semitic הָיָא (há-yá: be, happen, become), "implying that the constitution of the Thessalonian community as a church takes place in virtue of God's power."<sup>4</sup> Since the qualification of the assembly as ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ is unusual for Paul, to what extent is it

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<sup>1</sup>For a full discussion of the use of this preposition in the New Testament, see Oepke, 2:537-43.

<sup>2</sup>Robertson, 4:6 (emphasis in original); Frame, 69. See also, John Lineberry, Vital Word Studies in 1 Thessalonians: A Sound Scriptural Presentation Based upon the Original Greek Text (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), 24; Moule, The Origin of Christology, 55-56; Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 7; and Wanamaker, 70.

<sup>3</sup>Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 48. For Neil, "the members of the little Ecclesia at Thessalonica were in Paul's eyes and their own really living in God as truly as they lived in their air they breathed" (5) (emphasis in the original).

<sup>4</sup>Collins, Studies, 243.

probable that ἐν is to be understood instrumentally?<sup>1</sup> To what extent was this assembly in Thessalonica called into existence by God the Creator, Who made it His ἐκκλησία?

Whereas "en is a most versatile preposition,"<sup>2</sup> one must distinguish between its general use as it occurs in theological contexts and the prepositional meaning that it can take on in specific cases.

It is quite possible, then, that in 1:1 the preposition ἐν is used in an "instrumental sense," which means that "for the believer salvation lies in what God accomplished by Christ's life, death and resurrection."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Designating the personal agent or instrument by which the church comes into being. Wanamaker discusses the value of the agency concept for understanding Pauline theology. He has attempted to demonstrate "that Paul used this common image from the society of his day in his Christological reflection." Specifically, his attempt was to show "that the agency conception played a vital role in Paul's interpretation of Jesus' death as a saving act of God" ("Christ as Divine Agent in Paul," SJT 39 [1986]: 527).

<sup>2</sup>Moule, The Origin of Christology, 54.

<sup>3</sup>Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 62 (emphasis in the original). In his early work, One Body in Christ, dealing with the "in Christ" formula (1-30), Best interprets this preposition in a locative sense, by saying: "The ἐν has a local flavour throughout. Christ is the 'place' in whom believers are and in whom salvation is" (ibid., 8). However, Christ is not a place. He is a person, through Whom God operates His saving purpose. He is the agent of the Father, executing his eternal will. See also Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, who considers that the ἐν in 1 Thess 1:1—and 2 Thess 1:1—may retain its instrumental, causal sense ("Some Observations on Paul's Use of the Phrases 'in Christ' and 'with Christ'," JSNT 25 [1985]:

If this view is correct, it should be clear that

to be a member of the Christian community is to participate in the salvation which has been achieved by God through Christ. Here then we may take the phrase to mean primarily 'the Christian community brought into being by God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,' yet we cannot completely exclude the secondary meaning that the community stands in a special relationship to Christ, a relationship elsewhere spelt out by Paul as being Christ's body.<sup>1</sup>

Collins sees "inter-related notions" implied "in Paul's description of the Thessalonian community as 'the church in God the Father'." He holds that "the *en tō theō* formula leads to the affirmation that the church of the Thessalonians exists because of the election of God, with the help of God, and by reason of its faith in God."<sup>2</sup>

Returning to the analysis of 1:1, the whole evidence in its context would suggest that Paul himself seems to see the Christian church in Thessalonica emerging in the framework of God's salvation history by a particular initiative of God.

The Thessalonian Church:  
ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ—τοῦ Θεοῦ

This section of the survey suggests the thesis that the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων was called into existence by God the Father, Who made her His ἐκκλησία.

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89, 96 n. 39).

<sup>1</sup>Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 62.

<sup>2</sup>Collins, Studies, 243.



According to 1 Thessalonians, Paul infers that the Thessalonian believers were called into existence by God (are in God the Father) because God has loved (ἠγαπημένοι, 1:4), chosen (ἐκλογήν, 1:4), established (ἔθετο, 5:9), and called (παρακαλοῦντες, 2:12; ἐκάλεσεν, 4:7; καλῶν, 5:23–24) them to salvation.

These motifs explicated in the context of Pauline theology may help to provide the proper starting point for understanding Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church. We turn, then, to the consideration of the subject from these particular perspectives.

#### Beloved by God

The adjectival participle ἠγαπημένοι (1:4; cf. 2 Thess 2:13; also Deut 33:12; Rom 1:7; 11:28) is in the perfect passive tense, which implies that the love of God to the Thessalonian believers began in the past and continues firm in the present. This participle "stresses the continuing love which God shows" to the Thessalonians.<sup>1</sup>

The phrase *beloved by God* echoes the language used in the Old Testament for Israel (cf. Deut 33:12), which "is now reapplied to the Christian Church."<sup>2</sup> At this

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<sup>1</sup>Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 54, n. 17.

<sup>2</sup>I. Howard Marshall, "Election and Calling to Salvation in 1 and 2 Thessalonians," in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins (Leuven: Leuven

point, the formal argument presented by Marshall is persuasive. He argues in the following way:

We can see this process of reapplication under way in Rom 9. In v. 13 Paul quotes Mal 1,2 with reference to Israel, and then in v. 25 he takes up language of Hos 2,25 where God promises to love the people who were not the object of his love; in its original context this referred to sinful Israel (Rom 9,28), but Paul reapplies it to the church composed of Jews and Gentiles. Here we can see the actual process of extension of the term taking place; what once applied only to racial Israel is now extended to the Gentiles also. The significance of 1 Thess 1,4 is that Paul carries out this extension in application, without, as it were, showing us the working or needing to justify it to his readers.<sup>1</sup>

From this process of Pauline reapplication,

it is clear that by this early stage in his thinking Paul has already developed the concept of the church as the Israel of God. The conviction that God's love is now extended to the church composed of Jews and Gentiles is already present, and it does not need to be defended in any way. The church has inherited the position of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

The Thessalonian believers, who before were not God's people, were constituted the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ by God's gracious act of love. Of course, God's love is revealed in the cross. Paul certainly declares that τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν (Rom 8:39), Who is ὁ ἠγαπημένος (Eph 1:6; cf. Col 1:13). His assurance rests

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University Press, 1990), 262.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

on two facts. The first is that God has chosen the Thessalonians, and the second, that God has called the Thessalonian believers as one of His elect.

#### Chosen by God

The main ground and theme of Paul's gratitude in 1 Thessalonians came from his assured confidence that the Thessalonian believers have been chosen to salvation by the electing grace of God.<sup>1</sup>

The terminology of election occurs two times in the epistle (ἐκλογήν, 1:4; ἔθετο, 5:9<sup>2</sup>). Paul reminded his readers of their "election" (ἐκλογή): that consisted in the gospel's coming to them "in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1:4-5; cf. 1:6).

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<sup>1</sup>It is not my purpose here to discuss the doctrine of the divine election, which, in the words of Gerrit C. Berkouwer, "has often been called the heart of the Church" (Divine Election [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960], 51). For C. Samuel Storms, it "is certainly one of the more profound and controversial doctrines of the Holy Scripture" (Chosen for Life: An Introduction Guide to the Doctrine of Divine Election [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987], 13). For a study of the relation of Christian and Jews, of church and Synagogue in the context of this debated concept, see Jocz, A Theology of Election.

<sup>2</sup>According to Neal Flanagan, "the vocabulary of 1 Thes 5,9 . . . with their emphasis of *peripoiēsis* . . . echoes that of Ex 19,5 and Dt 7,6; 14,2; 26,18 where God chooses Israel as His own people, the *Israēl tou Theou* (Gal 6,16) ("Messianic Fulfillment in St. Paul," CBO 19 [1957]: 479, n. 15).

Scholars have argued that the OT background of the Greek expression ἐκλέγομαι<sup>1</sup> is the Hebrew term בָּחַר (bā-hár).<sup>2</sup> Both words are considered to be "roughly equivalent terms."<sup>3</sup>

In the OT, בָּחַר (bā-hár) is used to transmit the concept of the election of the people of Israel. The explicit passages about God's election of Israel are mainly to be found in Deuteronomy (4:37; 7:6-8; 10:14-15; and 14:2). On the base of these passages, Byron E. Shafer, concludes:

a. the concept of a people chosen by Yahweh in the Exodus event and bound to him by the Sinai Covenant is specifically grounded throughout the dtn. layers in a prior oath and covenant which 'Ēl, God of the Fathers and cosmic deity, had made with the patriarchs; b. the conquest of the land, which establishes the tribal בְּחִירָה, is Yahweh's fulfillment of the patriarchal covenant; c. the on-going obedience of the people to Yahweh's commandments is its fulfillment of patriarchal (and Sinai) covenant.<sup>4</sup>

The choice of Israel is not "in terms of national might, but of the love with which Yahweh loves his

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<sup>1</sup>On this concept see Gottfried Quell and Gottlob Schrenk, "ἐκλέγομαι," TDNT, 4:144-92.

<sup>2</sup>See Jan Bergman, Helmer Ringgren, and Horst Seebass, "בָּחַר," TDOT, 2:73-87, and Byron E. Shafer, "The Root *bhr* and Pre-Exilic Concepts of Chosenness in the Hebrew Bible," ZAW 89 (1977): 20-42.

<sup>3</sup>Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), 924. See Lothar Coenen, "ἐκλέγομαι," NIDNTT, 1:537.

<sup>4</sup>Shafer, 27-28.

people."<sup>1</sup> The patriarchal history was "itself a proof (Dt. 4:37; 10:15) of the love of God working itself out in the election of the children."<sup>2</sup> Thus the election of Israel is not an indication of any inherent superiority or merit, but simply God's grace. God chose her because He loved her.

Also,  $\gamma\pi\alpha$  (bā-hār) and ἐκλέγομαι refer to God's election of certain persons for a particular relationship or service to Himself.<sup>3</sup> The Greek expression ἐκλογή appears only seven times in the New Testament (Acts 9:15; Rom 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28; 1 Thess 1:4 and 2 Pet 1:10), mainly in Paul.<sup>4</sup> Let us explore briefly its meaning in these Pauline passages.

Paul was called as a σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς by the Lord Jesus Christ "to carry" His "name before the Gentiles and

<sup>1</sup>Bergmann, Ringgren, and Seebass, 84.

<sup>2</sup>Quell and Schrenk, 163.

<sup>3</sup>See Brown, The New Brown, 103-04; Coenen, "ἐκλέγομαι," 1:536-43; and Dale Patrick and Gary R. Shogren, "Election," ABD, 2:434-44.

<sup>4</sup>The noun ἐκλεκτός (Matt 22:14; 24:22, 24, 31; Mark 13:20, 22, 27; Luke 18:7; 23:35; Rom 8:33; 16:13; Col 3:12; 1 Tim 5:21; 2 Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:4, 6, 9; 2 John 1, 13; Rev 17:14), and the verb ἐκλέγομαι (Mark 13:20; Luke 6:13; 9:35; 10:42; 14:7; John 6:70; 13:18; 15:16 [2x], 19; Acts 1:2, 24; 6:5; 13:17; 15:7, 22, 25; 1 Cor 1:27 [2x], 28; Eph 1:4; James 2:5) are more frequent; each 22 times.

kings and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15; cf. Matt 10:18 || Mark 13:9 || Luke 21:12).

Taking Paul's own perception of his election for this particular service to God, one finds in his biographical confessions that (1) he was "a servant of Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised through His prophets in holy scriptures, the gospel concerning His son, Who was descended from David according to the flesh" (Rom 1:1-3); and (2) he was "called" to "preach Him" among "the Gentiles" (Gal 1:16). Paul was elected, separated, and called to proclaim the gospel of God—either to Gentiles or to Jews—as the fulfillment of God's promises through His prophets in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

In the context of Rom 9-11, Paul is dealing with the situation of Israel before God in view of its rejection of Christ. The apostle considers Israel as God's chosen people because of a free decision of the One Who elects, God. This election has nothing to do with blood-descent or biological privileges, but rather with a divine purpose and promise (Rom 9:11; 11:28). Although most Israelites did not accept the conditionality of the promises and free acts of God in Christ, "at the present time there is a remnant" that so accepted them, and it is "chosen by grace" (Rom 11:5, 7).

In 1 Thess 1:4 (cf. 2 Pet 1:10) ἐκλογή is used with the implication that the existential basis of the Christian church in Thessalonica is centered in the mighty God's action through the Pauline proclamation there.<sup>1</sup> The Thessalonians were "beloved by God," and "He has chosen" them by intervening in Paul's proclamation of the gospel which was "not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1:5).<sup>2</sup>

The Thessalonian believers were, in a personal and corporate sense, elected by God as Israel was in the past. Their election was not a birthright but a historical act of divine grace in the context of the gospel. The emphasis is not upon the elected, but rather upon the One who operates this process of election through the work of the Spirit and the proclamation of the gospel (1:5-6).

If this analysis is correct, this brings us to a preliminary conclusion: the choice of the word ἐκλογή in this letter has an exclusive and concrete soteriological-

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<sup>1</sup>Note the perfect tense in the causal participle εἰδότες in 1:4. By his preaching to the Thessalonians and their positive response to the gospel, Paul knew that the Christians in Thessalonica were elect and called by God. For the meaning of this term, see Richard N. Longnecker and Merrill C. Tenney, eds., New Dimensions in New Testament Study (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 334-56.

<sup>2</sup>Patte remarks that "Paul's proclamation involved the intervention of God (manifestations of his power, possibly in miracles, and of his Holy Spirit)" (Paul's Faith and the Power of the Gospel, 132).

ecclesiological component. Theologically speaking, the believers in Thessalonica were an ἐκκλησία "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1) as a consequence of the divine election according to a pre-existent plan of God. Soteriologically speaking, they were saved from the present and future wrath of God. And from the ecclesiological point of view, they constituted a special gathering of those who were beloved and gathered by God like the people of Israel was. Thus this ἐκκλησία had its real meaning ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ. Consequently, since the Thessalonian believers were part of God's pre-existent plan, the apostle addresses them as ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ (1:4).

Returning to the earlier analysis of the texts or theological argumentation, one must consider whether there is any evident reason for this historical activity of God in gathering in Thessalonica those whom He chooses to save.

There is reason to think that the evidence for this inquiry is positive. The context in 1 Thessalonians shows that the concepts of God's love and divine election are connected to the idea of the divine call.<sup>1</sup> God did not only love and elect the believers in Thessalonica, He also

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<sup>1</sup>On the relationship of election and call, see Marshall, "Election and Calling."



called them with a purpose in mind. This particular theological motif helps us not only to understand the theological use of the term ἐκκλησία in this letter, but also to perceive the reason for this historical (and still present) gathering of God.

#### Called by God

The concept that God calls individuals or groups occurs frequently in Paul.<sup>1</sup> The verb καλέω appears 148 times in the New Testament, of which 33 are found in the his writings.<sup>2</sup>

With the exception of Rom 9:7, 25, 26; 1 Cor 10:27, and 15:9, Paul uses the verb καλέω with the meaning of divine calling; it is a technical expression implying the process of salvation.

The expression of calling appears three times in the epistle. First, in 2:12, most commentators take the participle καλοῦντος,<sup>3</sup> to stress the fact that God is the

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<sup>1</sup>For the use of this word in the New Testament, see Karl L. Schmidt, "καλέω," TDNT, 3:487-91; and Lothar Coenen, "καλέω," NIDNTT, 1:271-76.

<sup>2</sup>Rom 4:17; 8:30 (2x); 9:7, 12; 24, 25, 26; 1 Cor 1:9; 7:15, 17, 18 (2x), 20, 21, 22 (2x), 24; 10:27; 15:9; Gal 1:6, 15; 5:8, 13; 1 Thess 2:12; 4:7; 5:24.

<sup>3</sup>On textual considerations see Bruce Metzger (A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament [New York: United Bible Societies, 1971], 630); and Paul Ellingworth and Eugene Nida (A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians [New York: United Bible Societies, 1976], 34). According to these sources, the preferred

Caller, or to denote the continuous and on-going call of God to His people.<sup>1</sup> From 2:12, one knows that God has called the Thessalonians to share in "his kingdom<sup>2</sup> and

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reading is the present participle καλοῦντος, which the editors of The Greek New Testament give a {C} rating. B, D, F, G, H, K, L, P and most minuscules support this reading. The alternate reading is the aorist καλέσαντος, adopted by the Textus Receptus, N, A, 104, 326, 606, 1611, 1831, 1906, 1912, 2005 and other versions. This last kind of reading loses significance by idiomatic considerations.

<sup>1</sup>See Daniel B. Spross, "Sanctification in the Thessalonian Epistles in a Canonical Context" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988), 18. Marshall, commenting about the verb καλοῦντος, holds that "the present participle indicates that the calling is a dynamic process throughout the life of believers" ("Election and Calling," 269).

<sup>2</sup>The expression kingdom of God or equivalent expressions appear six times in the critical Pauline corpus (Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9; 15:50; Gal 5:21; 1 Thess 2:12). Scholarship has long discussed the temporal nature of the kingdom of God in Pauline theology. At times Paul makes reference as if it were a present reality, and at another as if it were a future hope. On this see Ernst Käsemann, New Testament Questions of Today (London: S. C. M. Press, 1969), 108-37; Ralph P. Martin, who argues that the kingdom of God is both present and future (The Spirit and the Congregation: Studies in 1 Corinthians 12-15 [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984], 109-25); and George Johnson, "'Kingdom of God' Sayings in Paul's Epistles," in From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare, ed. P. Richardson and J. C. Hurd (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University, 1984), 143-56.

glory."<sup>1</sup> For that reason their walk must be ἀξίως τοῦ Θεοῦ.<sup>2</sup>

Second, in the section of exhortations concerning Christian living (4:1-12) the verb καλέω is used as an aorist in 4:7, οὐ γὰρ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεὸς ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ ἀλλ' ἐν ἁγιασμῷ, implying that the calling of God to live in sanctification "began and still continues" for the Thessalonians.<sup>3</sup> The position of the noun Θεὸς in the original, the subject of this sentence, comes after the verb and its object, which might stress that God took the initiative for this special calling.

With the contrast οὐ . . . ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ ἀλλ' ἐν ἁγιασμῷ, Paul seems to emphasize ἐκάλεσεν:<sup>4</sup> "the Christian's vocation."<sup>5</sup> Both prepositions, ἐπί and ἐν, have been interpreted "as synonymous and expressive of the

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<sup>1</sup>In the critical Pauline corpus, the noun δόξα appears 58 times and the verb δοξάζω 11 times. For Paul, God wants to share "the riches of His glory" with "the saints (Rom 9:23)"; Who "made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Rom 16:2 (ἀξίως τῶν ἁγίων); Phil 1:27 (ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε).

<sup>3</sup>Marshall, "Election and Calling," 269.

<sup>4</sup>Milligan, 51.

<sup>5</sup>Neil argues that "here the emphasis is on the Christian's vocation. He is chosen by God to serve Him, to grow in grace into the stature of true sonship" (83).

goal or result of God's call: he did not call us to be unclean but so as to be holy."<sup>1</sup> Some scholars take the prepositional phrase as indicating "the purpose or object"<sup>2</sup> of the call.<sup>3</sup>

The expression ἐν ἁγιασμῷ designates precisely the nature of the lifestyle of those who were called by God: holiness. The same word used to denote holiness in 4:7 is used in "the general introductory statement"<sup>4</sup> in vs. 3 to express God's will: ἁγιασμός (sanctification). This general statement is followed by an "ethical instruction, vv. 3b-6a. In this connection 6b-8 gives three

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<sup>1</sup>Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 113; and Rigaux, Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens, 512-13.

<sup>2</sup>Frame, 154-55; Hiebert, 175. Morris holds that when "God called the Thessalonians it was not an aimless procedure. He had a very definite purpose, and that purpose was not uncleanness" (The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 128). Bruce, citing Gal 5:13; Eph 2:10 and 2 Tim 2:14, comments that "the use of ἐπί with the dative to express purpose is classical" (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 85). See also Wanamaker, The Epistles to the Thessalonians, 156-57.

<sup>3</sup>However, other scholars understand the expression differently. They see ἐπί as expressing "the ground or condition of God's call" and ἐν as declaring "the mode" of God's call. The idea then is that ἀκαθαρσία expresses "the state of the unconverted," and ἁγιασμῷ must be understood "passively as God's activity in sanctifying his people." On this interpretation see Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 113.

<sup>4</sup>R. F. Collins, "'This Is the Will of God: Your Sanctification'," LTP 39 (1983): 36.

motivations for obeying the instruction given":<sup>1</sup> the judgment (4:6), the call to holiness (4:7), and the gift of the Holy Spirit (4:8).<sup>2</sup>

Returning to God's will (4:3), Collins's comment seems particularly apropos. He has written that

Paul as a former Jew formed by the rabbis, looked to God's will as the ultimate norm of and motivation for behavior. Paul would have agreed that the will of God is the ultimate ground of all true morality. However, the expression *thelēma tou theou* does not normally have a moralistic sense in the New Testament. Rather, it connotes the sovereign, gratuitous, and salvific will of God, realized in the ministry and exaltation of Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

Otto Procksch and Karl G. Kuhn assert that in "ἁγιασμός we thus have a process which has as its

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<sup>1</sup>George P. Carras, "Jewish Ethics and Gentile Converts: Remarks on 1 Thess 4,3-8," in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 307.

<sup>2</sup>On this see particularly Frame, 153; Neil, 82-84; Rigaux, Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens, 511-16; Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 126-29; Hiebert, 173-77; Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 159-70; Laub, Eschatologische Verkündigung und Gestaltung nach Paulus, 52-3; M. Adinolfi, "La Santità del Matrimonio in 1 Tess. 4,1-8," RevBI 24 (1976): 165-66; Marxsen, Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher, 59; Collins, "'This Is the Will of God: Your Sanctification'," 47; Holtz, Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher, 163; Wanamaker, The Epistles to the Thessalonians, 156-59; and Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 112-14.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 36-37. Cf. Adinolfi, 167; Raymond F. Collins, "Thy Will Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven," BibTo 14 (1964): 911-17; and Raymond E. Brown, "The Pater Noster as an Eschatological Prayer," ThSt 22 (1961): 175-208.

presupposition the religious process of atonement."<sup>1</sup>

According to Paul, God has the exclusive initiative in this process. ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ "δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ ἁγιασμός καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις" becomes possible (1 Cor 1:30).

Literally, picking up part of the words of vss. 29-30, "you are in Christ Jesus from Him (. . . τοῦ Θεοῦ. ἐξ αὐτοῦ. . . ἀπὸ Θεοῦ)." Thus the concrete situation of the Christians ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ has its origin and initiative exclusively in God the Father, through the various steps described in 1 Cor 1:30.

The Pauline thought in the last text is clear: the Christian existence of the Corinthians is possible only by "the activity of God, which has been effected in history through Christ Jesus."<sup>2</sup> For that reason, "to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks" Christ is "in fact the ultimate expression of God's 'power' and 'wisdom'" (1 Cor 1:24).<sup>3</sup> For that reason, then, the Christians in Corinth seem to be identified as τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ . . .

ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίος (1 Cor 1:2; cf. Phil 1:1: τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; 4:21: πάντα ἅγιον ἐν

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<sup>1</sup>Otto Procksch and Karl G. Kuhn, "ἅγιος," TDNT, 1:113. For a full discussion of this biblical motif, see the entire article, pp. 88-115.

<sup>2</sup>Fee, 85.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 76.

Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Indeed, for Paul, Christ is "wisdom for us from God" (1 Cor 1:30).<sup>1</sup>

Paul usually applies the expression ὁ ἅγιος both to the Christian community in Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-26; 1 Cor

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<sup>1</sup>The author of the epistle to the Hebrews connected sanctification to the offering of the blood of Jesus (Heb 2:10-11; 9:13-14; 10: 10, 14, 29; 13:12). In the context of Heb 2:11, Jesus is designated as ὁ ἁγιάζων, *He Who sanctifies*. Note as this expression seems to reproduce the veterotestamentary formula ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ ἁγιάζων ὑμᾶς, *I am the Lord Who sanctifies you* (Exod 31:13; Lev 20:8; 21:15; 22:9, 16, 32; Ezek 20:12; 37:28). At his time, Jesus "ἔξο τῆς πύλης ἔπαθεν" ἵνα ἁγιασῆ δια τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος τῶν λαῶν (Heb 13:12; cf. 10:10, 14, 29). In the context of Heb 10:10 the writer, reflecting Old Testament thoughts, defines the means and the absolute source of sanctification for Christians: the will of God included "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Thus Jesus "came into the world" to do the will of God (10:5-9). The present participle τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους in 10:14 describes the result of Christ's sacrifice: Christians as "sanctified" by virtue of his exclusive and perfect atoning death. This argument is confirmed in the witness of the Holy Spirit attested in the Scripture (10:15). The citation of Jer 31:33-34 in Heb 10:16-17 places the death of Christ in the context of the new covenant promised by God to His people. The comments of William L. Lane seem particularly relevant: "By directing the attention of his auditors once again to the oracle in an abbreviated form in vv. 16-17, the writer makes it clear that the preceding discussion of sacrifice and priesthood is to be related to the prophecy of the new covenant. The writer interprets the text in priestly and sacrificial terms because he views the old covenant in these terms. He recognized that the finished work of Christ on Calvary was the actual realization of the divine intention towards which the sacrificial cult and the prophecy were both pointing" (William L. Lane, Hebrews 9-13, Word Biblical Commentary, 47B [Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991], 268). David Peterson argues that the writer of Hebrews "relates the work of Christ to the broad perspective of covenant theology in the Old Testament" ("The Prophecy of the New Covenant in the Argument of Hebrews," RTR 38 [1979]: 74).

16:1, 15; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:1, 12) and to the Christian community beyond Jerusalem as well (Rom 1:7; 16:15; 1 Cor 1:2). According to Owen E. Evans, this title "became henceforth his own (Paul) characteristic designation for all members of the Church of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

Both the verb ἁγιάζω and the noun ἅγιος have a rich Old Testament background. The church of God of New Testament times was set apart ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, just as were the utensils in the Temple of the Old Testament: as God's property to be used exclusively in His service.

Thus in Pauline thought, the members of the Christian church are designated "the saints," which finds its background in the OT. Flew,<sup>2</sup> Cerfaux,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Owen E. Evans, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: XIII. The Saints," ExpTim 86 (1975): 198. The substantive οἱ ἅγιος applied to Christians appears 22 times in the critical Pauline corpus (Rom 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:26, 31; 16:2, 15; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:1-2; 14:33; 16:1, 15; 2 Cor 1:1; 8:4; 9:1, 12; Phil 1:1; 4:21-22; Phlm 5, 7).

<sup>2</sup>Flew holds that "the conception of the people of God, especially when assembled for worship, as holy, is firmly established in the Old Testament, and is based on the holiness of God. He it is who makes His people holy. The idea acquires a richer meaning in Second Isaiah, because of the declaration that the Holy One of Israel is also the Redeemer" (Jesus and His Church, 102).

<sup>3</sup>Cerfaux (The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, 118-44) argues that "the Pauline expression κληροῖ ἅγιοι is a reminiscence of the desert community, and is equivalent to 'church of God'. The title of 'saints' connects the Christian community with the people of the Old Testament" (118). Moreover, citing the apocalyptic 17th Psalm of Solomon, Cerfaux implies that in late Judaism the expression οἱ ἅγιοι was used for those faithful Israelites



Conzelmann,<sup>1</sup> Schnackenburg,<sup>2</sup> Evans,<sup>3</sup> Fee<sup>4</sup> and others have argued this OT background.

Returning then to the earlier analysis of 1 Thess 4:7, the term ἁγιασμός<sup>5</sup> is "a *nomen actionis*,"<sup>6</sup> because "it designates the process of sanctification rather than the result of the process."<sup>7</sup>

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who would be "devout" and be in contact with the Messiah: "They were devout, they called themselves *hosioi* and 'just,' but they did not normally call themselves *hagioi*. When they did, it was rather as an anticipation of some glory reserved for the future. . . . They would be holy, in fact, when they had the Messiah among them" (ibid., 124).

<sup>1</sup>Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, 34-36.

<sup>2</sup>Schnackenburg, The Church in the New Testament, 83.

<sup>3</sup>Evans, "New Wine in Old Wineskins," 196-200. See also, idem, Saints in Christ Jesus: A Study of the Christian Life in the New Testament (Swansea, Wales: John Penry Press, 1975), 15-28. Evans introduces his thought by saying: "In a general sense, the description of Christians as 'the saints' derives from the Old Testament concept of Israel as the 'holy people' of Yahweh, that is a people 'separated' or marked off as belonging exclusively to Yahweh and worshipping him alone. . . . The basis of this exclusive relationship between Yahweh and Israel is the Covenant and the divine election" (ibid., 15).

<sup>4</sup>Fee, 32.

<sup>5</sup>This term appears only 10 times in the New Testament (Rom 6:19, 22; 1 Cor 1:30; 1 Thess 4:3, 4, 7; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Tim 2:15; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:2).

<sup>6</sup>Procksch and Kuhn, 1:113.

<sup>7</sup>Collins, "'This Is the Will of God: Your Sanctification'," 37, 44. Cf. Spross, 24, 34.

The central point of the Pauline declaration in 4:7 "is that the work of salvation has already begun. . . The process of sanctification is one which God has already begun."<sup>1</sup> Rigaux has held that "ἁγιασμός conserve donc un fond d'action de la part de Dieu et s'épanouit dans des résultats tangibles chez les fidèles."<sup>2</sup>

Let us consider now the third passage in which the language of calling appears in this letter. In the first section of the epistle, 3:11-13 concludes the long thanksgiving section (1:2-3:13). Based on 3:13, Paul now builds 5:23-24,<sup>3</sup> which closes the paraenetic section of the letter (4:1-5:22).<sup>4</sup> Marshall considers 5:23-24 the

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<sup>1</sup>Collins, "'This Is the Will of God'," 48.

<sup>2</sup>Rigaux, Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens, 501.

<sup>3</sup>It is not the purpose here to enter into details, but let me mention something in regard to 3:13 and 5:23. Note in particular the cultic character of the words ἅγιος (the noun ἁγιωσύνη in 3:13—used by Paul only here, in Rom 1:4 and 2 Cor 7:1; and the verb ἁγιάζω in 5:23) and ἄμωμος used in these verses. These motifs are familiar from the OT, particularly in connection with the characterization of the unblemished animals set apart for God as Old Testament sacrifices (Exod 29:38-42; Num 28:3-8; Ezek 46:13-15, cf. Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:19). The vocabulary appears to be used in its OT significance. On the other hand, according to Paul É. Langevin, "les thèmes dominants" in 5:23-24, are: "la sainteté de vie, l'intervention incessante de Dieu, la confiance mise dans le Dieu fidèle, l'attente de la parousie du Seigneur Jésus" ("L'Intervention de Dieu Selon I Thess 5,23-24," in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990], 237).

<sup>4</sup>Sanders considers 3:11-13 and 5:23-24 as examples of the closing formulas which marks the end of the

expression of a prayer for Paul's "readers and an assurance that God will fulfil it."<sup>1</sup> His praying is for the "continuation and completion" of the process of sanctification that was already begun in the Thessalonians, and that will "be accomplished at the parousia."<sup>2</sup>

The present tense of the participle καλῶν in 5:24 (as in 2:12) "stresses that (God) does not merely call Christians once and then leave them on their own. Instead God continues to call the followers of Christ to salvation."<sup>3</sup> The "implication is that God calls them in holiness (4,7) to share in the kingdom and the glory, and that He will therefore make them holy and preserve them until that day."<sup>4</sup> The purpose "of holy living is that the Thessalonians may be unblamable at the Parousia."<sup>5</sup>

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extended thanksgiving and the paraenetic section of the letter ("The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," 359). For an extensive study of Pauline intercessory prayers in 1 Thessalonians, see Gordon P. Wiles, Pauls' Intercessory Prayer: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St. Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 45-71.

<sup>1</sup>Marshall, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 160.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 161.

<sup>3</sup>Wanamaker, The Epistles to the Thessalonians, 207.

<sup>4</sup>Marshall, "Election and Calling," 269.

<sup>5</sup>Marshall, "Pauline Theology in the Thessalonian Correspondence," 179.

Thus the God Who calls the Thessalonians is the One Who "also consecrates and keeps them blameless to the end."<sup>1</sup> God will faithfully carry out the process of ἀγιαῖξασθαι and τηρεῖσθαι outlined in 5:23.<sup>2</sup> This God is a faithful God on Whom the Thessalonians can rely, Who keeps His promise, in Whose word and work they can place complete confidence. He is faithful particularly in His conduct toward His ἐκκλησία and His members in Thessalonica.

Theologically speaking, then, in his earliest statement concerning the Christian church in Thessalonica, Paul seems to see it as constituted in the context of God's salvific events in history. This God, Who does act and intervene in history, in a historical process of salvation, Paul defines as "Father," which is characteristic in the introductions of his undisputed epistles.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Frame, 213.

<sup>2</sup>Compare this brief Pauline description on the faithfulness of the Thessalonians' God and the faithfulness of the Israelites' God. On the faithfulness of God as expressed in the Old Testament, see Alfred Jepsen, "יְהוָה," *TDOT*, 1:292-323, particularly 295, 313-16, 319-20. According to Wiles, "in priestly fashion" Paul "was placing the hard-pressed converts before God of faithfulness, that they might be prepared for the great forthcoming crisis" (71).

<sup>3</sup>Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3-4; Phil 1:2; Titus 1:4; Phlm 3 (cf. Eph 1:2; Col 1:2; 2 Thess 1:1-2; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2).

It is argued that this "theological characterization of the church in 1:1 already sets off the Thessalonian Christians from other assemblies."<sup>1</sup> However, this introductory statement in the very beginning of the letter "does much more . . . than differentiate the Christian assembly from the Jewish synagogue or any secular gathering in Thessalonica."<sup>2</sup>

The theological importance of this instrumental use of ἐν in 1:1 should not cause us to lose sight of the fact that the "spontaneous joining of 'God the Father' and 'the Lord Jesus Christ' under a single preposition bears witness to the exalted place which the risen Christ occupies in the thoughts of Paul and his colleagues."<sup>3</sup> This "essential unity between the Father and the Son is striking and important,"<sup>4</sup> because, the same preposition

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<sup>1</sup>Collins, "Glimpses into Some Local Churches of New Testament Times," 298.

<sup>2</sup>Best, A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 62, which is a traditional view.

<sup>3</sup>Best, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 7.

<sup>4</sup>Moore, 23. Marshall affirms: "Significantly Paul places **Jesus Christ** alongside God the Father without any sense of doing anything strange. For Paul and his readers God as Father and Jesus the Lord were closely bound up together as the source of spiritual blessings. They are placed on the same level, and the use of **Lord** to describe Jesus strongly suggests that for Paul he stands 'on the divine side of reality'" (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 49) (emphasis in the original).

"places the two names side by side on a basis of equality."<sup>1</sup>

On the evidence of the foregoing discussion, a twofold conclusion follows the contextual study of Paul's association of the term ἐκκλησία το ἐν Θεῷ πατρί-του Θεοῦ in 1 Thessalonians. First of all, ἐκκλησία in Thessalonica is not simply a social and temporal human association. In a theological perspective, the Christian church as seen in the context of 1 Thessalonians is more than a sociological, ethnic, temporal, and visible community. It is a gathering of those who were loved, chosen, and called to sanctification. And second, the Thessalonian Christian church is a "gathering" made possible primarily not by human initiative but exclusively by God's historical intervention.

It would be helpful to consider how this community came into existence by divine election and calling as a manifestation of God's love. Thus the question is: How did God call and gather those who were His beloved and chosen people in Thessalonica?

As a part of the main thesis proposed beforehand, the central point now is that the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων

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<sup>1</sup>Hiebert, The Thessalonian Epistles, 39. This equality is also explicitly in 3:11 and implicitly in 1:3; 2:14; 3:13; 4:14; 5:9, 18, and 23.

ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ took place in the "gathering"<sup>1</sup> of those who actually were assembled by virtue of the proclamation of τὸν λόγον (1:6).<sup>2</sup> This topic is developed in the following section.

#### Christological Use of ἐκκλησία

This new segment of the study proposes the thesis that by virtue of the proclamation of the λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων was called into existence by God the Father, Who made her His ἐκκλησία ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (1:1).

#### The Thessalonian Church: Constituted into an ἐκκλησία by the Proclamation of τὸν λόγον

The term τὸν λόγον in 1:6 introduces an essential concept that is determinant in Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church. In 1:6 λόγος is the word used by Paul to define the Christian expression εὐαγγέλιον

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<sup>1</sup>Collins, The Birth of the New Testament, 105.

<sup>2</sup>On Paul's preaching as the foundation of the church in Thessalonica, see particularly Rigaux, "Evangelium im ersten Thessalonicherbrief"; Dewailly, "Une communauté naissante: Thessalonique. I. Naissance en vie Chrétienne," idem, "Une communauté naissante: Thessalonique. II. Saint Paul Apôtre," and his book La Jeune Église de Thessalonique; Chattuvakulam, The Efficacy of the Word of God According to St. Paul, 39-47; Koester, "Apostel und Gemeinde in den Briefen an die Thessalonicher," 287-98; and Beaudean, 29-58.

of 1:5, as the genitive statement λόγον Θεοῦ in 2:13 specifies and explains the phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ in 2:2, 8, 9.

Paul based his view of the election and calling of the Thessalonians on the fact that "the gospel—ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ—came" to them "not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess 1:5).<sup>1</sup> "Having received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit," they "became imitators" of Paul, Silas, Timothy and "of the Lord" (1:7). "They received the word" and "accepted it not as the word of man but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work" in the "believers" (2:13).

The historical order of the events in the process of the constitution of the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ is significant. The aorist participle δεξάμενοι in 1:6 indicates a time prior to the time of the main verb ἐγενήθητε.<sup>2</sup> No one in Thessalonica could have become an

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<sup>1</sup>In the words of Frame, "the proof of election is the presence of the Spirit not only in the preacher (εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν) but also in the hearers who welcomed the word (ὁμεῖς δεξάμενοι) with joy in the midst of great persecution" (82).

<sup>2</sup>See the discussion on the temporal relation of the aorist participle to its main verb in Ernest De Witt Burton, Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek, 4th ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1900), §§ 139-41, 144, 146; Archibald T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of



imitator of Paul, Silas, Timothy, and of the Lord, until he first would have had the opportunity of listening, receiving, and accepting God's word (2:13).<sup>1</sup> When the Thessalonians began to listen to Paul, Silas, and Timothy they were not yet the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ. They were only an ἐκκλησία in the Greek secular sense, one more ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων. However, when, by the power and evidence of the Holy Spirit, this secular ἐκκλησία "received the Word of God," then and not before, it became imitator of other Christians and the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ came into existence.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the essential point is that the Thessalonian believers received the Word of God. God did call and gather the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων through the proclamation of His word, as it was done before at Jerusalem to

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Historical Research (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1923), 858-64; Maximilian Zerwick, Biblical Greek: Illustrated by Examples, trans. and adapt. J. Smith (Rome: Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963), 87-90; and C. F. D. Moule, An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 100.

<sup>1</sup>The literal sense of 2:13 may be the following: "the Word that you heard from us, but whose author is God himself." Wanamaker holds that "the word of God that they received was not a meaningless idea or a doctrine to be maintained; it was a source of power in the lives of those who believed" (The Epistles to the Thessalonians, 111-12).

<sup>2</sup>Wanamaker believes that in 1:6 the theme of imitation "appears to be concerned with the Thessalonians' initial experience as Christians" (ibid., 80).

increase "the number of disciples" in the original Christian church (Acts 2:40-42; 6:7).

Besides, in the context of 1 Thessalonians, one finds an additional and more significant element in the ecclesial constitution of the Christians in Thessalonica: by virtue of the proclamation of the λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων was called into existence by God the Father, Who made her His ἐκκλησία ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (1:1).

The Thessalonian Church: (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

While λόγος is a veterotestamentary term making reference to the power of God,<sup>1</sup> εὐαγγέλιον seems to be a preferred Pauline word<sup>2</sup> carrying a specific thought, the fact of Jesus as Lord and Messiah, the Christ event.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For a complete discussion of the meaning of this term in the Old and New Testament, see Jan Bergman, H. Lutzmann, and W. H. Schmidt, "לַיָּהּ," TDOT, 3:84-125; and Otto Procksch, "λέγω," TDNT, 4:91-100.

<sup>2</sup>Of the 76 occurrences of εὐαγγέλιον in the New Testament, 60 belong to the Pauline corpus. According to U. Becker, Paul "established euangelion in the vocabulary of the N.T." ("Gospel," NIDNTT, 2:110-15).

<sup>3</sup>See Gerhard Friedrich, "εὐαγγέλιον," DTNT, 2:707-77; Kim, The Origin of Paul's Gospel; Peter Stuhlmacher, ed., The Gospel and the Gospels (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 149-72; and A. Boyd Luter, "Gospel," Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, ed. G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 369-72.

In Pauline theology, the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:2)<sup>1</sup> is the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ that God "promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning His Son, Who was descended from David" (Rom 1:1-3).<sup>2</sup> Thus, the coming of Jesus as the Davidic-Messiah was a decisive act of God in His history with Israel, a historical event to which the Old Testament looked forward. Precisely this point is one of the most important aspects of Paul's earliest understanding about the Christian church.

The fact that the Thessalonian believers became imitators of the Lord (1:6)<sup>3</sup> implies that they "had received some instruction from the missionaries concerning the life, suffering, and death of the Lord Jesus."<sup>4</sup> André Viard argues that the Gospel preached by Paul emphasized

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<sup>1</sup>There are no examples of the expression "gospel of Christ" outside the Pauline corpus. It appears nine times in Paul (Rom 15:19; 1 Cor 9:12; 2 Cor 2:12; 4:4; 9:13; 10:14; Gal 1:7; Phil 1:27; 1 Thess 3:2; cf. 2 Thess 1:8).

<sup>2</sup>According to Stuhlmacher, "in terms of its origin and authority the gospel is εὐαγγέλιον (τοῦ) Θεοῦ (Rom. 1:1; 15:16; II Cor. 11:7; I Thess. 2:2, 8, 9); in terms of its content it is εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom. 15:19; I Cor. 9:12; II Cor. 2:12; 9:13; 10:14; Gal. 1:27; I Thess. 3:2)" (The Gospel and the Gospels, 153).

<sup>3</sup>Lenski, considering that the aorist ἐγενήθητε "is placed between the two genitives," argues that "the second genitive is the more emphatic of the two." So, "Paul and his helpers were themselves imitators of the Lord; hence those who imitate them imitate the Lord" (228).

<sup>4</sup>Hiebert, The Thessalonian Epistles, 58.

the good news of the salvation fulfilled in Jesus Christ and offered to all by God through the death and resurrection of Christ, His Son. The Son has become the Lord and now shares the kingdom and glory of His Father.<sup>1</sup>

Richard C. H. Lenski, among other scholars, considers that "Luke gives us a clear idea as to just how Paul proceeded"<sup>2</sup> in the constitution of the ἐκκλησία in Thessalonica. Thus the christological content of Paul's founding preaching in Thessalonica requires some amplification from Acts 17.

#### The testimony of Acts 17

What Paul preached to the Thessalonians is also suggested by Luke in Acts 17. The present participles διανοιῶν and παρατιθέμενος in vs. 3, which include the time implied in the main verb διελέξατο of vs. 2, refer to Paul's procedure in his missionary preaching. He reasoned ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν, opening "the sense of the prophets"<sup>3</sup> and "setting side by side"<sup>4</sup> the prophecies about "the person,

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<sup>1</sup>Viard, 413-27.

<sup>2</sup>Richard C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 691.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph S. Exell, The Acts, vol. 2, The Biblical Illustrator (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1954), 547.

<sup>4</sup>Frederick F. Bruce, The Book of the Acts, rev. ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing

doctrine, and works of Jesus."<sup>1</sup> Paul "appealed to the Scriptures as text and basis (apo) of his ideas."<sup>2</sup>

According to Robertson, the "major premise in his argument from the Scriptures about the Messiah" was the "very argument made by the Risen Jesus to the two on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:25-27)": the "necessity of his suffering according to the Scriptures." The "minor premise" was "the resurrection of Jesus from the dead."<sup>3</sup> Since Jesus fulfilled these conditions, the "conclusion of Paul's line of argument," "is logical and overwhelming": "This is the Messiah, viz., Jesus whom I am proclaiming unto you."<sup>4</sup> Paul "began with the known among the Jews which was the concept of a Messiah. From the known he

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Company, 1988), 323, note 3. According to Everett F. Harrison, the expression means "to bring forward by way of proof" (Acts: The Expanding Church (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1975), 261.

<sup>1</sup>Exell, 547. Since this method of arguing was used by Jesus (Luke 24:32, 45-46), Exell suggests that Paul's procedure and interpretation must be right (ibid).

<sup>2</sup>Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 3:267.

<sup>3</sup>In his interpretation of Acts 17:2-3, Haenchen asserts that "the doctrine of the death and resurrection of the Messiah Jesus was before Jewish-Christian hearers the most important" (507).

<sup>4</sup>Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 3:268-69.

moved to the unknown, i.e., the historical Jesus was that Messiah."<sup>1</sup>

Although the prophecies from the Scripture "to prove that Jesus was the Messiah"<sup>2</sup> are not mentioned in "this general summary of Paul's evangelism,"<sup>3</sup> "the whole story of Jesus was presented in the light of the Messianic prophecies."<sup>4</sup>

Thus the Lukan evidence suggests that the central argument of Paul's christological message in Thessalonica, whose essence was derived ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν (Acts 17:2), was

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore C. Smith, D. Moody, and R. B. Brown (Acts-1 Corinthians, BBC., ed. C. J. Allen (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1970), 10:101. Arnold E. Airhart comments that "Paul's method was to demonstrate first from the Old Testament that the prophecies concerning the Christ has foretold His suffering and resurrection. A suffering, dying Messiah was a stumbling block to Jews. Having removed the barrier, Paul then proceeded to place the Scripture record alongside the person of Jesus, demonstrating the Jesus is Savior and Lord" (Acts, BBE, Vol. 5, ed. W. M. Greathouse and W. H. Taylor [Kansas, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1977], 5:195).

<sup>2</sup>J. W. Packer, Acts of the Apostles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 142.

<sup>3</sup>I. Howard Marshall, The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 277.

<sup>4</sup>Lenski, The Acts of the Apostles, 692. He thinks in Isa 53 (ibid.); and Albert Barnes in Gen 49:10; Isa 11:1, 10; 53; Dan 9:24-27; and, Mic 5:2 (Acts of the Apostles, NNTEP, Vol. 12, ed. R. Frew [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953], 12:252). For his part, Marshall affirms that "we can be reasonably sure that the Scriptures used would include Psalms 2, 16, 110; Isa 53; and possibly Deuteronomy 21:23" (The Acts of the Apostles, 277).

the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus as the Messiah (ὁ Χριστός, 17:3) of the Old Testament. The same missionary method used by Paul in Thessalonica to demonstrate this christological truth, was followed by Paul in Damascus (Acts 9:19-22), and Antioch of Pisidia (13:13-42), and after Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9) in Berea (17:10-15), Corinth (18:1-6), Caesarea (26:22-23),<sup>1</sup> and Rome (28:23). Although Luke does not indicate the sources used by Paul, he implies that the apostle gives scriptural evidence that Jesus is the Messiah predicted in the Scriptures.

On the basis of these considerations, it might be suggested that the creative point that originated the Christian church in Thessalonica, at least among the early Jewish adherents, seems to have been the christological evidence of Paul's message and the positive response of the believers to it. This christological experience assembled the ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων not only ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ but also ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, the Messiah—Whom the Word

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<sup>1</sup>Bruce argues that before Agrippa "Paul emphasized that the teaching which, by God's help, he had consistently given to all to whom he witnessed was thoroughly loyal to Israel's ancestral faith and in complete harmony with the divine revelation imparted through Moses and the prophets. Here we are probably to understand that he adduced one text after another from the OT scriptures which found their fulfilment in the life, death and triumph of Jesus" (The Book of the Acts, 469).

reveals. God had loved, elected, and called the Thessalonians to salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It would be helpful to discuss here what seems to be a crucial issue to my thesis. That is, the historical value of Acts 17 as a genuine witness of Jesus' messiahship in the ecclesial constitution in Thessalonica.

The authenticity of the testimony of Acts 17

An analysis of the debate over the historical value of Acts 17:1-14 is decisive to determine the immediate and original background of the ecclesiology of 1 Thessalonians. If Acts 17:2-3 has historical value as a record of how the gospel came to Thessalonica, the Pauline use of the (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ phrase in 1 Thessalonians would appear to be based on OT motifs.

Many scholars do not find any historical, theological and literary justification for considering Acts an inaccurate account of Paul's history in the framework of his time in early Christianity. Among those who defend its basic historical precision are I. H. Marshall (in the updated edition of his highly regarded book of 1970<sup>1</sup> and his 1990 article<sup>2</sup>); Jacob Jervell

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<sup>1</sup>I. Howard Marshall, Luke: Historian and Theologian (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989).

<sup>2</sup>I. Howard Marshall, "Luke's View of Paul," SJT 33 (1990): 41:51.



(1972,<sup>1</sup> 1984<sup>2</sup>); Willem C. van Unnik (1977);<sup>3</sup> Colin J. Hemer (1977,<sup>4</sup> and particularly his work written in 1989<sup>5</sup>); A. N. Sherwin-White (1978);<sup>6</sup> Martin Hengel (1979);<sup>7</sup> F. F. Bruce

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<sup>1</sup>Jacob Jervell, Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972).

<sup>2</sup>His thesis is that Acts completes the picture of Paul presented in his letters and that without Acts we cannot know the historical Paul (Jacob Jervell, The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History [Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984], 68-76).

<sup>3</sup>Willem C. van Unnik, "Luke's Second Book and the Rules of Hellenistic Historiography," in Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie, ed. J. Kremer (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1977), 37-60. In his concluding observations, the author says that he is "becoming more and more convinced that much critical study of Acts has been done at a distance from, or even without living contact with, Luke's world. It is not sufficient to remind ourselves that he was not a historian in our sense, but in that of antiquity; but we shall have to walk with him along his roads, to see and hear with his eyes and those of his contemporaries" (emphasis in the original), *ibid.*, 60.

<sup>4</sup>Colin J. Hemer, "Luke the Historian," BJRL 60 (1977): 28-51."

<sup>5</sup>In which Hemer attempts to demonstrate that Acts is a reliable historical source for primitive Christianity (Colin J. Hemer, The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History, ed. C. H. Gempf. Tübingen: J. C. M. Mohr, 1989).

<sup>6</sup>Adrian N. Sherwin-White, Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978).

<sup>7</sup>Martin Hengel, Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1979).

(1982);<sup>1</sup> and W. Ward Gasque (1989).<sup>2</sup>

Philipp Vielhauer's article on the theology of Paul implied in Acts,<sup>3</sup> however, and the commentaries on Acts by Ernest Haenchen (1956),<sup>4</sup> Hans Conzelmann (1963),<sup>5</sup> and Gottfried Schille (1983),<sup>6</sup> are marked by a radical skepticism toward the historical value and accuracy of Luke's account. For his part, Gerd Lüdemann (1987)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick F. Bruce, "The Acts of the Apostles Today," BJRL 65 (1982): 35-56.

<sup>2</sup>Who writes assuming that those critics who judge the author of Acts as a reliable historian of early Christianity are essentially correct in their conclusions. Gasque gathers the arguments for the historicity of Acts as they have been set forth in past research and concludes by reiterating his belief in its historicity (W. Ward Gasque, A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles [Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1989]).

<sup>3</sup>Philipp Vielhauer, "Zum 'Paulinismus' der Apostelgeschichte," EvT 10 (1950-51): 1-15, whose English translation is, idem, "On the 'Paulinism' of Acts," in Studies in Luke-Acts, ed. Leánder E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980), 33-50.

<sup>4</sup>E. Haenchen, Die Apostelgeschichte (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956), whose English translation is already being used in this dissertation, The Acts of the Apostles.

<sup>5</sup>H. Conzelmann, Die Apostelgeschichte (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1963). The English translation, idem, Acts of the Apostles, trans. J. Limburg, A. T. Kraabel, and D. H. Juel (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987).

<sup>6</sup>G. Schille, Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukes.

<sup>7</sup>Gerd Lüdemann, Das frühe Christentum nach den Traditionen der Apostelgeschichte: ein Kommentar (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1987), whose English edition is, idem, Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary, trans. J. Bowden (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989).

presents a discussion of the historicity of Acts that seems to be "a decisive break with the consensus based on the work of E. Haenchen and H. Conzelmann."<sup>1</sup>

According to a recent consensus, not shared by earlier scholars, Lüdemann denies that Luke was a companion of Paul or that he knew his letters.<sup>2</sup> Luke's account is based upon traditions<sup>3</sup> and their historical value must be evaluated.<sup>4</sup> Using redaction-critical methods to determine the value of Acts for the reconstruction of early Christian history, Lüdemann insists that the historicity of the story behind the traditions must be demonstrated and that a careful separation must be made between them and redaction.<sup>5</sup>

To separate what is historical from mere redaction in Acts, Lüdemann first proposes to define the meaning of

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<sup>1</sup>Marshall, "Luke's View of Paul," 43.

<sup>2</sup>Lüdemann, Early Christianity, 4-9.

<sup>3</sup>For Lüdemann tradition "denotes written sources, oral tradition, and also general information which Luke had" (ibid., 9).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. Earl Richard considers that this kind of "distinguishing between tradition and redaction is a recurring problem or challenge for Lukan research." Few scholars deny "one or the other of these elements in their analysis of Luke-Acts, but they vary greatly in their estimate of the degree to which these elements are present" ("Luke-Writer, Theologian, Historian: Research and Orientation of the 1970's," BTB 13 [1983] 9). Jervell estimates that is "almost a gamble to base one's solution of what the Lukan Paul is on the separation between tradition and redaction" (The Unknown Paul, 68).

the Lukan redaction, then to evaluate the character of the tradition, and finally to discover the historical value of the tradition from which Luke formed the individual pericope in his narrative.<sup>1</sup>

According to Lüdemann's approach, if the contents of Acts "are not to be derived from the use of Paul's letters, then generally speaking they could be explained by the use of 'traditions'" that must be evaluated in terms of "age, origin and content."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the historical value of the traditions used by Luke in Acts should be evaluated in terms of explicit support in the primary sources, namely, Paul's letters. Lüdemann holds that "only reliable traditions can be identified through the letters of Paul; reports which completely distort historical circumstances can hardly be recognized as traditions on the basis of the primary sources."<sup>3</sup>

For the purposes of our study, the important question is: What about Acts 17? According to Lüdemann's analysis, what in these passages is Lukan redaction, what is tradition and what is historical?

Lüdemann holds that "some of the passages" in Acts 17:1-15 "are based on tradition" and "have been shaped by Luke." The descriptions of the mission in Thessalonica

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<sup>1</sup>Lüdemann, Early Christianity, 9-10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 13.

(vss. 2-9) and in Beroea (vss. 10b-12) "have similar structures (the mission begins in the synagogue; the sermon is based on scripture; conversion especially of the well-to-do women; persecution)."<sup>1</sup> For him, 17:1a "contains traditions about Paul's itinerary"<sup>2</sup> and "is certainly historical."<sup>3</sup> The verses 2-3, on the other hand, "can be said to be completely redactional." The content of the sermon "that the Christ had to suffer in accordance with the scriptures and rose again on the third day," is based on Luke's scheme (vss. 2-3).<sup>4</sup> Although Lüdemann says nothing explicit about the identification of Jesus with the Messiah in vs. 3b, he reiterates that "the relationship of the Christian message to scripture is a Lukan theme."<sup>5</sup> Finally, Lüdemann sees that "the report about the winning over many Gentiles is shown to be historical by what is said in I Thessalonians. The same may be true of the uproar over Jason."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 187.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 185. This view is also held by Conzelmann, Acts of the Apostles, 134. Cf. Luke 9:22; 24:25-27, 44-46; Acts 2:22-36; 3:18; 8:32-35; 13:27, 29; 26:23. Paul (1 Cor 15:3-4) and Peter (1 Pet 1:11) emphasize this aspect also.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 188.

Considering Lüdemann's basic working presuppositions, (1) that Luke has not been a companion of Paul; (2) that Luke has not known his letters; (3) that Acts has been written using oral-written traditions—or general information which Luke had; and, (4) that the historical value of these traditions first must be determined by the primary sources, Paul's letters, the crucial question is: To what extent does the redactional composition in Acts 17:2-3 correspond with Paul's own testimony that Jesus is the Messiah derived from the Scriptures?

It is not our purpose here to discuss the question fully. I suggest seven types of evidences connected among themselves that may help to determine the historical value of the traditions used by Luke in Acts 17.

First, Lüdemann recognizes that the stages in Paul's journey from Philippi via Thessalonica and Athens to Corinth in Acts 16-18,<sup>1</sup> the Lukan report about the winning over of many Gentiles in Thessalonica (Acts 17:4), and the uproar over Jason (17:5-9) are historical facts supported by what is said in 1 Thessalonians.

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<sup>1</sup>What is an argument used by scholars in favor of the assumption that Luke used Paul's letters. See particularly Morton S. Enslin ("Luke and Paul," JAOS 58 [1938]: 81-91); idem, "Once Again, Luke and Paul," ZNW 61 [1970]: 253-71); John Knox ("Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus," in Studies in Luke-Acts, ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980], 279-87); and, William O. Walker ("Acts and the Pauline Corpus Reconsidered," JSNT 24 [1985]: 3-23).

Second, Luke in Acts gives just a general summary of Paul's mission in Thessalonica. The three Sabbath days involve only the period of the Jewish mission, which was presumably followed by a longer mission to the Gentiles (1 Thess 1:9-10). George H. C. MacGregor argues that Luke's "chief interest is in Paul's teaching in the synagogue and the inevitable break with the Jews."<sup>1</sup> William Neil remarks that "Luke uses his limited space to emphasize once more the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews."<sup>2</sup> This redactional purpose of Luke may help to explain that "the brevity of Paul's stay does not fit with 1 Thessalonians and Phil 4:9" [sic; undoubtedly Phil 4:16].<sup>3</sup> From Paul's letters to the Thessalonians it is assumed "that he stayed long enough to receive financial help from the Philippian church on at least two occasions

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<sup>1</sup>George H. C. MacGregor, The Acts of the Apostles, IB, Vol. 9 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1980) 225.

<sup>2</sup>W. Neil, Acts, NBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 187.

<sup>3</sup>Conzelmann, Acts of the Apostles, 135.

(Phil 4:16), although he was also supporting himself at his own trade" (1 Thess 2:9; cf. 2 Thess 3:7-12).<sup>1</sup>

Third, the historical accuracy of Luke's account of Jewish hostility in Thessalonica is questioned in view of the assertion in 1 Thess 2:14 that "you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they (the churches of God in Christ in Judea) did from the Jews," implying that the persecution was provoked by the heathen populace. However, Paul says in vs. 15 that the Jews "displease God . . . by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles," which may well be a reference that includes the local experience of persecution in Thessalonica.<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, the theme of Jesus' death and resurrection, presented by Luke as the central and scriptural message of Paul in Thessalonica, is also found in 1 Thessalonians.

From the introductory form "we believe" in 1 Thess 4:14, it is assumed that the concept "Jesus died<sup>3</sup> and rose

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<sup>1</sup>Neil, Acts, 187.

<sup>2</sup>MacGregor, The Acts of the Apostles, 226.

<sup>3</sup>As we read Paul's letters we find that he refers to the death of Christ about sixty-five times. Of this total number, more than half are incidental references to the death as a well-known fact. The fact of his death is mentioned nineteen times: *death* (Rom 5:10; 6:3, 4, 5; 1 Cor 11:26; Phil 2:8; 3:10); *died* (1 Thess 4:14; 5:10; Rom 5:6, 8; 7:4; 14:9, 15; 1 Cor 8:2; 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14, 15; Gal 2:21). The method of His dying is stated in twelve references to his crucifixion: *The cross of Christ* (1 Cor 1:17, 18; Gal 5:11; 6:12, 14; Phil 2:8; 3:18); *crucified* (1 Cor 1:23; 2:2, 8; 2 Cor 13:4; Gal 3:1).



again"<sup>1</sup> is common to Paul and the Thessalonians. Furthermore, the fact that "Christ died for us" (5:10) is mentioned "as something known to the readers" of the letter in Thessalonica.<sup>2</sup> It means that Paul could have emphasized this christological content as part of the gospel originally preached in that city.<sup>3</sup> According to the testimony of the Macedonian and Achaian believers, Paul knew that the Thessalonians were waiting "for his Son from heaven, Whom He (God) raised from the dead" (1:9-10).

If one takes 1:9-10, 4:14, and 5:9-10 as a summary of Paul's original preaching in Thessalonica,<sup>4</sup> the central

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<sup>1</sup>Paul speaks of the resurrection in several passages, which are distributed as follows: 1 Thess 1:10; 4:14; Rom 1:4; 4:24, 25; 6:4, 5, 9; 7:4; 8:11 (2x), 34; 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:4, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20; 2 Cor 4:14; Gal 1:1; Phil 3:10. Some of these texts teach that God raised Jesus from death (1 Thess 1:10; Rom 4:24; 7:4; 8:11 [2x]; 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:15; 2 Cor 4:14; Gal 1:1).

<sup>2</sup>Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 114.

<sup>3</sup>Lührmann has remarked that those "who have access to Paul's later letter may be surprised that in 1 Thessalonians Paul mentions the expiatory effect of Jesus' death only once, toward the end of the letter (5:10), revealing that Paul presupposed that this was something his readers knew. Thus, Jesus' expiatory death must also have belonged to his initial preaching, as it did in Corinth, according to what Paul repeats as the gospel he preached there from the beginning (1 Cor 15:1-8). . . . So, what Paul in 1 Cor 15:1-8 summarizes as the essential and initial gospel can also be found in his letter to the Thessalonians" ("The Beginnings of the Church at Thessalonica," 244-45).

<sup>4</sup>Although Eric Franklin, implying in his comment 1 Thess 1:9-10, observes that "1 Thessalonians is not a summary of Paul's initial preaching but rather a statement of his converts' movement from one sphere of authority to another: it summarizes his converts' stance rather than

content of Paul's message could well have been the passion, the atoning death, and resurrection of Jesus in accordance with the scriptures, what Paul later considered a component "of first importance" in his message (1 Cor 15:3).

Fifth, of great significance is the fact that Luke's language in his summary account of Paul's missionary preaching in Thessalonica-Beroea (Acts 17:11, 13), is very similar to Paul's language in 1 Thessalonians.

The word λόγος in 17:11 means, as very often in Acts (2:41; 4:4; 8:4; 10:44; 16:6; 19:; 20:7), the missionary sermon; which is designated in vs. 13 (cf. also, 4:31; 6:2, 7; 8:14; 11:1) "God's Word." Furthermore, the particular expression ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον

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the initial preaching which occasioned that stance. The basis of that initial preaching must, of course, have been the resurrection for that alone could validate any claim to authenticity that the preaching might have. Yet that initial preaching of Paul could mention the resurrection without the cross and its significance is scarcely conceivable, for it would have said nothing about the change of stance which for Paul determined and demonstrated the reality of the change of spheres" (Luke: Interpreter of Paul, Critic of Matthew [Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1994], 82).

in vs. 11 is "recurrent"<sup>1</sup> in Acts to refer to missionary preaching, and reminds one of 1 Thess 1:6 and 2:13.

In Acts 8:14, Luke says that the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had "received the word of God" (δέδεκται τὸν λόγον)," that is to say, "the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (8:12). In 11:1, the apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles had "received the word of God" (ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ), Peter's christological message presented to Cornelius (Acts 10:24-48). In 17:11, the Bereans "received the word" (ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον) with great eagerness, which Luke elaborates in 17:13 as ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ. It is of great theological significance that Luke applies λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ to the sermons of the apostles, a phrase Paul uses for his Christ-proclamation to the Thessalonians.

According to Luke's general account, Paul based his christological exposition in Thessalonica ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν (Acts 17:3) which parallels ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ in 17:13. The significant point here is that the believing Jews at Berea "received the word" (ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον,

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<sup>1</sup>See particularly Walter Grundmann ("δέχομαι in the NT" TDNT, 2:54), and Jacob Kremer ("Einführung in die Problematik heutiger Acta-Forschung anhand von Apg 17, 10-13," in Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie, ed. J. Kremer [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1977], 13.

Acts 17:11) just as the believing Thessalonians did a few days before (δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον, 1 Thess 1:6; cf. 2:13), which provoked the Jewish persecution from Thessalonica against those believing Jews at Beroea. Luke uses the same Greek verb and noun that Paul used in his previous composition to Thessalonica (1:6 and 2:13). According to Paul, the message he announced (2:2), shared (2:8), and preached (2:9) was the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, which Paul and Luke both designated ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ (1:6; 2:13; Acts 17:11, 13; cf. vss. 2, 11: γραφή).<sup>1</sup>

Gerhard Kittel has observed that when applied to the NT events and message, "the terms ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου, and ὁ λόγος are used alongside one another without any discernible difference." Furthermore, he holds that "there is no material distinction in usage either in Paul, in Ac., or elsewhere" (cf. 1 Thess 1:6 [λόγος], 1:8 [λόγος τοῦ κυρίου], and 2:13 [λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ]; or Acts 6:2 [λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ], and 6:4 [τοῦ λόγου]).<sup>2</sup> Kittel argues that "the missionary preaching of Peter,

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<sup>1</sup>Best states that "certainly the Thessalonians accepted human words, those of the apostles, but since these were the proclamation of the gospel they were really the word of God" (emphasis in the original), A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 111.

<sup>2</sup>Gerhard Kittel, "Word and Speech in the New Testament," TDNT, 4:114, 115.

Paul, and the other apostles, whose content is simply Jesus Christ, was always this Word of God to Israel and the Gentiles. The Word of God is the Word about Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

According to Kittel

The same is true in Paul. For him the λόγος (τοῦ Θεοῦ or κυρίου) is the message proclaimed by him and accepted by his churches. That is to say, it is simply the message about Christ. The usage is already fixed in Th. The Thessalonians are δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον (1 Th. 1:6; cf. 2:13). The λόγος τοῦ κυρίου is to τρέχειν and δοδάξασαι (2 Th. 3:1). The news (ἐξηχέισθαι) of this δέχεσθαι is itself the λόγος τοῦ κυρίου (1 Th. 1:8). . . . Later epistles tell the same story.<sup>2</sup>

This verbal agreement between Luke and Paul regarding the same historical situation, where Christ is again the content of the missionary preaching, may help to confirm the historical value of the tradition used by Luke and his redactional purpose regarding the Christological content of Paul's foundational preaching (Acts 17:2-3). In 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17, Jesus, the Christ, is the theme of the Scriptures, which defines the content of the preaching and of the faith in Thessalonica (and Beroea).

From this striking verbal similarity between Acts and 1 Thessalonians, matched with remarkable parallels in concept, it is most natural to assume that the christological message derived from the Scriptures is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 116.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

God's word received by the believing in Thessalonica. Thus God's act of founding the ἐκκλησία ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ in Thessalonica was mediated through Jesus, the Messiah—Whom the proclamation of God's Word reveals. This was also true of the ἐκκλησία in Judea.

Sixth, in evaluating the historical value of the traditions used by Luke in Acts 17, the use of the term Χριστός in Acts 17:3 and 1 Thessalonians demands that we follow a particular line of investigation.

The views of scholars vary widely whether Paul uses Χριστός as a title or as a proper name for Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Some scholars do not consider Χριστός in Paul as a title, denoting its original veterotestamentary meaning of Messiah in the context of the Jahwistic faith. They see it as a customary proper name. For example, in his commentary on 1 Thessalonians, Dobschütz holds that for Paul "Christ is as much a personal name as Jesus, which sometimes he uses indiscriminately and sometimes incorporates into a double name."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>On the connection of the passion narrative with the Christos title and the generalization of the title and its use as a proper name, see Ferdinand Hahn, The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity, trans. H. Knight and G. Ogg (London: Lutterworth Press, 1969), 172-93.

<sup>2</sup>Dobschütz, 61. This hypothesis finds support in Kramer (Christ, Lord, Son of God, 133-50; 203-14; Dahl (The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays, 37-47; idem, Jesus the Christ, 15-25); Martin Hengel (Between Jesus and

Three general assumptions with which these scholars begin have to do with Paul's mission to the Gentiles. As an apostle to the Gentiles, Paul (1) did not need Jewish categories in his missionary work; (2) used the term Χριστός without any messianic intention because the title as such in the Gentile world was incomprehensible; (3) and developed instead the concept of Jesus as κύριος. These assumptions, already suggested by Wilhelm Bousset (1913),<sup>1</sup> elaborated by Bultmann,<sup>2</sup> and reiterated by Pauline scholars,<sup>3</sup> belong to the view that Paul and Jerusalem were in constant tension. These assumptions, and the view that originated them, are arbitrary and baseless when compared with the internal

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Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983], 65-77); and Marinus de Jonge ("The Earliest Christian Use of Christos: Some Suggestions," NTS 32 [1986]: 321-343); who have given it more precision.

<sup>1</sup>Wilhelm Bousset, Kyrios Christos: A History of Belief in Christ from the Beginning of Christianity to Irenaeus, trans. J. E. Steely (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1970), 121-22.

<sup>2</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1: 65-80, 121-33.

<sup>3</sup>Kramer, 219; Dahl, The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays, 46; and Hengel, Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity, 104-06. See also Walter Grundmann, "Χριστός in Paul's Epistles," TDNT, 9:542.

evidence of the Pauline corpus and the result of biblical exegesis.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, a different point of view has been taken by others.<sup>2</sup> Günter Bornkamm holds that

Die Tatsache, daß Paulus den Christusnamen gelegentlich als *nomen proprium* verwenden kann, hat die verbreitete Auffassung veranlaßt, der Christustitel sei für ihn fast bedeutungslos geworden und durch den κύριος-Titel ersetzt. Das trifft jedoch keineswegs zu. Beide Namen haben bei ihm allermeist titularen Sinn und eine durchaus verschiedene Funktion.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For example, M. de Jonge has affirmed that "Paul, the Jews knew, of course, what the term meant to Jews, and it would be wrong to suppose that the Christian communities outside Palestine for whom he wrote did not know that the word had certain connotations. If Paul in Rom 9.5 in a list of God's privileges for Israel states: 'of their race, according to the flesh, is ὁ Χριστός', the titular use of the term is evident" ("The Earliest Christian Use of Christos," 321). Dahl sees "messianic connotations" in 1 Cor 10:4; 15:22; 2 Cor 5:10; 11:2-3; Eph 1:10, 12, 20; 5:14; Phil 1:15, 17 and 3:7 (Jesus the Christ, 24, note 11).

<sup>2</sup>Clarence T. Craig holds that "the earliest title was that of Messiah. . . . As title it was bound to be temporary, for hearers without Jewish training would not know what was meant by saying, 'Jesus is the Christ.' Hence, very soon Jesus Christ came to be used as a proper name. . . . That Jesus was the promised Christ of God was the first Christian conviction, a belief which arose with the disciples during his lifetime, and one which I believe he shared. The conviction that God had raised him from the dead confirmed their faith that Jesus was the Christ" (The Beginning of Christianity [New York; Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1943], 201-02).

<sup>3</sup>"The fact that Paul can occasionally use the name Christ as a proper name has led to the widespread notion that the title Christ has become almost insignificant for him and has been replaced by the title *kyrios*. However, that is by no means the case. For him, both names have primarily the significance of titles and have quite different functions" (Günter Bornkamm, Das Ende des Gesetzes: Paulusstudien. Gesammelte Aufsätze. Band I. 2.,



Oscar Cullmann believes that Paul's "occasional practice of putting 'Christ' before 'Jesus' shows that he was still clearly aware that the title is not a proper name."<sup>1</sup> Ferdinand Hahn argues that "Χριστός plays a decisive role in Paul. The usual opinion that in his letters it occurs only as a proper name is certainly incorrect."<sup>2</sup> Wright agrees with this view. He affirms:

the majority of Pauline scholars do not read 'Christos' in Paul as a title, retaining its Jewish significance of 'Messiah', but simply as a proper name. I want now to suggest that this consensus is wrong; that Χριστός in Paul should regularly be read as 'Messiah'.<sup>3</sup>

Hengel holds that 1 Thessalonians "already presupposes" the Χριστός terminology "in the abundance that we find elsewhere in the authentic letters of Paul and in stereotyped phraseology."<sup>4</sup> The term Χριστός reveals a variety of uses and connotations. Thus the expression ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός appears in connection with (1) the church of the Thessalonians (1:1); (2) the work of faith, labor of love and steadfastness of hope of

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verbesserte Aufl. [Munich: Kaiser, 1958], 40).

<sup>1</sup>Oscar Cullmann, The Christology of the New Testament, trans. S. C. Guthrie and C. A. M. Hall, rev. ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1963), 134. See also Grundmann, 9:540-62.

<sup>2</sup>Hahn, 186.

<sup>3</sup>Wright, The Climax of the Covenant, 41.

<sup>4</sup>Hengel, Between Jesus and Paul, 66.

the Thessalonians (1:3); (3) God's saving work through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ (5:9-10); (4) the process of sanctification in the eschatological context of the second coming (5:23); and, (5) the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (5:28). The name Χριστός occurs in association with (1) Paul, apostle of Christ (2:6); (2) Timothy, brother and servant of God in the gospel of Christ (3:2); and (3) the final and eschatological resurrection of "the dead in Christ" (4:16). The form Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is in relationship (1) to the churches of God which are in Judea (2:14); and, (2) to the exhortation of being thankful in all circumstances, which is God's will for the Thessalonians (5:18).

Clearly, Paul does not define the identity of Jesus as the Messiah in any passage of 1 Thessalonians. However, there is considerable evidence that he presupposes a mass of information about Him as such.

Four elements connected with the use of the term Χριστός in 1 Thessalonians show that Paul transcended early Jewish concepts about the Messiah.

1. Messiah is not expected; he has come already. The personal name Ἰησοῦ seems to be defined by two explicit theological concepts: Χριστός, the Greek term for

Messiah,<sup>1</sup> and Κύριος, one of the major christological titles in Paul.<sup>2</sup> Of the historical Jesus, Paul emphasizes his death, which is implied in 1:10, and stated in 2:15; 4:14. He reports that God raised Jesus from the dead (1:10, 4:14). He remarks much more about the Lord Jesus coming from heaven in the future day of the Lord (1:10; 5:2; 4:14-17; 5:11-12). Jesus is not only the Rescuer from the coming wrath (1:10), but the executor of Judgment (4:6).

2. Messiah has died and his death has redemptive and soteriological significance. Although no theory of expiation is offered, Paul affirms that Christ's death and resurrection obtain salvation, and believers will "live with Him" as a result of His dying for them (5:9-10). Through Jesus' death and resurrection a new age is introduced, which is characterized by Jesus' permanent lordship (1:1, 3; 2:6, 14; 3:2, 8, 12, 13; 4:1, 6, 16-17;

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<sup>1</sup>Χριστός occurs 10 times in the letter (1:1, 3; 2:6, 14; 3:2; 4:16; 5:9, 18, 23, 28). Seven of the 10 uses of "Christ" are combined with "Jesus"; "(God's) Son" once (1:10).

<sup>2</sup>Paul uses the term Κύριος 24 times in the epistle (1:1, 3, 6, 8; 2:15, 19; 3:8, 11, 12, 13; 4:1, 2, 6, 15 [2 x], 16, 17 [2 x]; 5:2, 9, 12, 23, 27, 28) without explanation or justification, what suggests that his readers already were familiar with the expression and its christological implication. On the use of this title in Pauline writings, see particularly, Larry W. Hurtado, "Lord," in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, ed. G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 560-69.

5:9-10, 12, 23, 28). It is only through Jesus' death and resurrection that salvation from the wrath (5:9-10) can be experienced in that new age (1:9-10).

3. Messiah is associated with God in title and eschatological role. He is ὁ κύριος, the One Who has spiritual power alongside the Father (1:1; 3:11-12; 5:28), and the attributes and functions of Yahweh (2:19; 4:6, 15-17; 5:2, 23). The Christian life is determined by Him (1:1; cf. Eph 3:9; Col 3:3), Who gathers the ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ in Judea (2:14), Thessalonica (1:1) and πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν in Macedonia and Achaia (1:7). For that reason, Paul considers the NT churches assemblies of God ἐν Χριστῷ (2:14; Gal 1:22); ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (1 Thess 1:1); and αἱ ἐκκλησίαι πᾶσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 16:16).

4. Messiah is expected to come again. The reason and essence of being a Christian is to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, Jesus Who delivers us from the wrath to come (1:9-10). Believers center their hope of future salvation on His coming and final "gathering" (1:3; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-8, 23). Thus from the cross until the parousia is the time of the gathering of the ἐκκλησία assembled by God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The usage of the word Χριστός in this letter involves the whole of God's saving action: (1) the gospel

of Christ (3:2); (2) salvation through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ (5:9-10); (3) the constitution of the ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ—ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ in Judea-Thessalonica (2:14; 1:1); (4) the sanctification of the believers (5:23, 28); (5) the resurrection of the dead (4:16); and, (6) the eschatological coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (5:23; 4:16). None of these ideas had antecedents in Jewish literature.

Paul's readers in Thessalonica did not need to be convinced that Jesus was and is the Messiah predicted in the Scriptures of the OT. This had been done by Paul in his original missionary preaching, where the christological exegesis from Scripture is assumed as the presuppositional background to Paul's founding preaching in Thessalonica. The meaning of the terms λόγος (1 Thess 1:6; Acts 17:11), λόγος τοῦ κυρίου (1:8), and λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ (2:13; Acts 17:13) supports this understanding.

In Paul, the messianic proof-texts characteristic of the Gospels are "presupposed."<sup>1</sup> Dunn considers that "the belief in Jesus as the Christ has become so firmly established in his mind and message that he simply takes it for granted, and 'Christ' functions simply as a way of speaking of Jesus, as proper name for Jesus (so even in

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<sup>1</sup>Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament, 115.

1 Cor.15.3)."¹

According to Dahl's view,

In the oldest sources, the Pauline epistles, *Christos* always denotes the one Christ, Jesus. It is not a colorless proper name, however, but an honorific designation, whose content is supplied by the person and work of Jesus Christ. Where *Christos* appears as a more general term for the Messiah announced in the Old Testament, there are often signs of later theologizing.²

Seventh, in the investigation of the critical Pauline corpus it is possible to perceive that the Lukan

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¹James D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament, 43. According to Willem C. van Unnik, in his letters Paul "does not adduce proof-texts to show that Jesus the crucified was the Messiah, because that was beyond doubt believed by the readers of his letters (we must always bear in mind that the Pauline Epistles are only part of his work)" ("Jesus the Christ," NTS 8 [1961-62]: 110). Barnabas Lindars has indicated that "it is striking that he does not reproduce the christological texts nor argue that Jesus is the Messiah. This is simply taken for granted as an assured fact" (New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1961], 247). Perhaps, "a significant explanation of this fact is that in his letters Paul is arguing basic matters of soteriology to justify his praxis, and can assume belief in Jesus as the Christ" (Moody Smith, "The Pauline Literature," 275) (emphasis in the original). Hays considers that Paul shows "relatively little interest in messianic prooftexts. . . . We rarely find Paul using Scripture to define the identity of Jesus Christ or to reflect theologically about it. Perhaps the genre of Paul's surviving writings obviates overt attention to christological prophecy: he writes pastoral letters to Christian communities, not evangelistic or apologetic treatises. Paul's readers do not need to be convinced that Jesus was and is the Messiah. In that case, the messianic exegesis of Scripture might be assumed as the presuppositional background to Paul's interpretation" (emphasis in the original), Richard B. Hays, Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 86.

²Dahl, Jesus the Christ, 37.

theme in Acts 17:2-3 corresponds with Paul's own basic presupposition that Jesus is the Messiah, the fulfiller of the OT predictions.<sup>1</sup> For example, for Paul:<sup>2</sup>

1. Jesus Christ is the seed of Abraham,<sup>3</sup> in Whom the promise to Abraham is fulfilled (Gal 3:14-18).

Through faith in Jesus Christ one becomes seed of Abraham and an heir according to the promise (Gal 3:6-9, 26-29).

2. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, from the seed of David, Who was promised in the Scriptures (Rom 1:2-3).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dahl believes that "Jesus' name, Messiah, surely implies that in him and through him the promises of God were fulfilled; but remarkably little attention was devoted to the specifically messianic prophecies of the Old Testament" (Jesus the Christ, 39).

<sup>2</sup>See the interesting research by Hendrikus Boers, "The Meaning of Christ in Paul's Writings: A Structuralist-Semiotic Study," BTB 14 (1984): 131-144.

<sup>3</sup>See Barclay M. Newman, who shows that from contextual, grammatical and theological considerations "the seed" motif in Gal 3:16, 19 refers to Jesus Christ alone ("Translating 'Seed' in Galatians 3.16, 19," BibT 35 [1984]: 334-37).

<sup>4</sup>John H. Hayes summarizes several recent reconstructions of the earliest Palestinian Christology. An alternative approach is to understand the one focus of the earliest christological kerygma as Jesus' resurrection in which he was enthroned as Davidic Messiah. Behind this view lie the ritual and traditions of the royal enthronement ceremony, the concept of God's raising up a future Davidic ruler, the eschatological and messianic interpretation of certain royal psalms (especially Pss 2, 110), and Jewish traditions which place the enthronement and exaltation in the heavenly sphere. The clearest NT expressions of an enthronement Christology (Acts 2:22-36; 13:33; Rom. 1:3-4) picture Jesus as becoming the Messiah in his resurrection ("The Resurrection as Enthronement and the Earliest Church Christology," Int 22 [1968]: 333-45). According to Oscar J. F. Seitz, the Gospel prologues reflect an early Christian confession of faith which is

3. Jesus Christ, Who was born from the seed of David and appointed Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, is the Christ (ὁ Χριστός, Rom 9:5), the Messiah from Israel, "Who is over all God blessed forever."<sup>1</sup>

4. Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, and to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs (Rom 15:8).

5. In Him all the promises of God find their Yes (2 Cor 1:20).

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also seen in Romans 1:2-4 and Acts 13:16-41. Five common points are noted: (1) prophetic scriptures fulfilled, (2) promise of one to come, (3) the activity of the Spirit, (4) Jesus revealed as Son of God, and (5) Davidic descent ("Gospel Prologues: A Common Pattern? JBL 83 [1964]: 262-68). According to Dahl, the "most explicit messianic text" of the Pauline literature, Rom 1:3-4, is "best understood as a paraphrase and interpretation of the promise to David in 2 Sam 7" ("Messianic Ideas and the Crucifixion of Jesus," 391). On Rom 1:3-4, see the fundamental discussion by Hahn (246-51), who argues that "Rom I:3f, occupies a key position in the thesis of Jesus as Son of David" (246).

<sup>1</sup>See the discussion and translation of the text by Bruce M. Metzger, "The Punctuation of Romans 9:5," in Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: Studies in Honour of C. F. D. Moule, ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 95-112. Kramer judges that in Rom 9:5 "there is the greatest likelihood that Christ means 'Messiah' (210). Commenting this passage, Dahl holds that its result "is unambiguous. Anyone who knows the original meaning of the name understands that the Christ belongs to Israel precisely as Messiah" (Jesus the Christ, 17).



6. (Echoing OT sacrificial ideas), Christ, the Passover lamb, was sacrificed (1 Cor 5:7).<sup>1</sup>

7. (In an exegetical affirmation by typological interpretation), Christ is present in the OT history (1 Cor 10:4; cf. Exod 17:1-7; Num 20:2-13).<sup>2</sup>

While in no case can the name Χριστός be translated Messiah in Paul, one may find (1) traces of such scriptural proof (Rom 4:24-25; 9:33; 10:16; 11:26; 15:3, 8-11, 21), and (2) passages with messianic implications. For example, Paul describes Christ's rule, when (1) He [will] hand over the kingdom to God the Father, and (2) He [will] bring to an end all dominion and all authority and power (1 Cor 15:23-28). Paul also sets Christ on the judgment-seat, a function that the apostle attributes to God in Rom 14:10 (2 Cor 5:10; perhaps 1 Thess 4:13-18; Phil 1:15, 17; 3:7).

In Paul's theology, the Messiah is a descendant of David (Rom 1:3-4; cf. Acts 13:22-23, 33), Who is now at

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<sup>1</sup>See the discussion by Joachim Jeremias ("πάσχα," TDNT, 5:896-904), James K. Howard ("'Christ our Passover': A Study of the Passover-Exodus Theme in I Corinthians," EQ 41 [1969]: 97-108); and D. O. Wenthe ("An Exegetical Study of I Corinthians 5:b," Springfielder 38 [1974]: 134-40). Fee considers that "as in John's Gospel, this is a direct application of the death of Christ to the slaughter of the Pascal lambs on the first day of Unleavened Bread" (The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 218).

<sup>2</sup>See Richard M. Davidson, Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Typos Structures (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), 223-48.

the right hand of God interceding for men (Rom 8:34; cf. Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 1 Pet 3:22). *In Christ* men are justified (Gal 2:17; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21), sanctified (1 Cor 1:2), receive grace (1 Cor 1:4) and are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). *In Him* they have freedom (Rom 8:2; Gal 2:4), are led in triumph (2 Cor 2:14), shall be made alive (Rom 6:11; 1 Cor 15:22) and have resurrection (1 Thess 4:16). *In Christ* there is reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19), redemption (Rom 3:24), eternal life (Rom 6:23) and no condemnation (Rom 8:1). *In Him* God reveals His love (Rom 8:39), and His will (1 Thess 5:18). *In Christ* all things receive their Yes (2 Cor 1:19-20), for *in Him* the blessing of Abraham (Gal 3:14) is fulfilled. *In Christ* all are "sons of God" (Gal 3:26), "there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal 3:28), one body in Christ—members one of another (Rom 12:5): the church of God (1 Thess 1:1; 2:14; 1 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:22; Phil 1:1; 4:21), Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise (Gal 3:29). Everything that God has planned for the salvation of fallen man,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Don Nelms Howell, Jr., attempts to demonstrate in his dissertation that "the cohering factor, the integrating principle, the center (as defined in this broad sense) of the entire thirteen letter Pauline corpus is the person and redemptive purposes of God the Father. He is the one from whom, for whom, and to whom the redemptive program, executed by Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Lord, inexorably moves. The Father is the lodestar in Paul's theology journey" ("The Theocentric Character of Pauline Theology" [Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1992], 5).

everything that the Father has done in history for man's has been planned and executed in the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

All these considerations lead to the conclusion that there is valid and sufficient Pauline evidence that the tradition used in Acts 17 is reliable and that the redactional composition of Luke in 17:2-3 corresponds with Paul's own testimony that Jesus is the Messiah derived from the Scriptures. Acts 17 may be considered a genuine witness to the christological content of the message that Paul preached in Thessalonica, which resulted in the constitution of the Christian ἐκκλησία there.

In conclusion, Paul seems to see the Christian church in Thessalonica as being constituted by the proclamation of God's Word and gathered in Christ, the Messiah—Whom the Word reveals. This is the main part of the thesis proposed beforehand, its central point.

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<sup>1</sup>Excluding Titus, this or other equivalent expressions are used in every letter of the critical Pauline corpus (ἐν Χριστῷ: Rom 9:1; 12:5; 16:7, 9, 10; 1 Cor 3:1; 4:10, 15, 17; 15:18, 19, 22; 2 Cor 2:14, 17; 3:14; 5:17, 19; 12:2, 19; Gal 1:22; 2:17; Phil 1:13; 2:1; 1 Thess 4:16; Phlm 8, 20; ἐν αὐτῷ or ἐν ᾧ: 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9; ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ: Rom 3:24; 6:11; 6:23; 8:1, 2, 39; 15:17; 16:3; 1 Cor 1:2, 4, 30; 4:15; 15:31; 16:24; Gal 2:4; 3:26, 28; 5:6; Phil 1:1, 26; 2:5; 3:3, 14; 4:7, 19, 21; 1 Thess 2:14; 5:18; Phlm 23; ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ: Eph 4:21; ἐν κυρίῳ: Rom 16:8; Gal 3:14; Phil 4:1, 4; ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ: Rom 14:14; 1 Thess 4:1; ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ: 1 Thess 1:1). The formula appears 21 times in Romans; 22 in 1 Corinthians; 11 in 2 Corinthians; 8 in Galatians; 20 in Philippians; 7 in 1 Thessalonians; 0 in Titus, and 4 in Philemon.

Following the results attained from the previous analysis, the theological-christological interpretation emerges from 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17 as an arguable view for the understanding of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ as an ecclesiological formula.

#### An Arguable View

Five evidences show that the theological-christological interpretation emerges from the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17 as an arguable view for the understanding of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif as an ecclesiological formula.

1. The linguistic and religious background for the theological use of the term ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians. As seen in this chapter, in its secular Greek background, ἐκκλησία was never the title of a religious group. In that secular context, the term was commonly used to refer to non-religious, democratic, and non-exclusivistic assemblies of their respective πόλεις in the secular sense of gathering.

The term ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians seems to derive its original meaning from the Hebrew word קָהָל (qā-hāl), which designates the cultic and religious gathering of God's People in the OT. When קָהָל (qā-hāl) is translated by ἐκκλησία to indicate the religious

congregation of Israel, it is qualified by יהוה (Yhwh [ădō-nái]) or יישראל (yiś-rā-'él). It is in the presence of these religious modifiers, particularly in connection to the proper name of Israel's God, that ἐκκλησία refers to the cultic community: the congregation of Israel, the congregation of God's people.

The word ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians seems to take its meaning from the ἐκκλησία of the Old Testament. In that sense, ἐκκλησία in Paul's association with ἐν Θεῷ πατρί—τοῦ Θεοῦ (1 Thess 1:1; 2:14) might connote a religious congregation as well.

2. The theological modifiers of the term ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians. Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Θεῷ πατρί (1:1) and τοῦ Θεοῦ (2:14) emphasizes the concept that is developed in the inner context of the letter: God has loved, chosen, called and gathered the Thessalonian believers. This connection also defines the religious nature of the ἐκκλησία gathered in Thessalonica: It is a gathering of those who were loved, chosen, and called by God to sanctification. Thus the constitution of the Thessalonian community as a religious one took place by virtue of God's power, Who made it His ἐκκλησία.

3. The christological modifiers of the term ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians. The Pauline connection of

ἐκκλησία το (έν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (1:1) and έν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2:14) is a construction that seems to be by itself christological, which defines Paul's earliest statement regarding the Christian church as a christological one.

The use of the preposition (έν) in connection with the expressions (έν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—έν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1:1; 2:14) seems to have more than a mere locative or descriptive connotation. Paul, by connecting the expressions (έν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—έν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ to the word ἐκκλησία (1:1; 2:14), seems to point out Christ as the instrument-agent by whom a new ἐκκλησία in Thessalonica would be called into existence by God the Father.

4. The Pauline and Lukan use of the ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ motif to describe Paul's founding message in Thessalonica. According to Paul, the message he announced (1 Thess 2:2), shared (2:8), and preached (2:9) was the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, which Paul and Luke both designated ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ (1 Thess 1:6; 2:13; Acts 17:11, 13; cf. vss. 2, 11: γραφή).

In 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17, Jesus, the Messiah, seems to be the theme of ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, which might define the content of the preaching and of the faith in Thessalonica (and Berea). God's act of founding the ἐκκλησία έν Θεῷ πατρί in Thessalonica appears to have been

mediated through Jesus, the Messiah—Whom the proclamation of God's Word reveals.

Although in 1 Thessalonians Paul did not allude to OT sources to define the identity of the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, the christological exegesis of Scripture might be assumed as the presuppositional background to Paul's interpretation (1 Thess 1:6, 8; 2:13; Acts 13:16–41; 17:2–3; 26:22–23; 28:23). According to this presuppositional background, the (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ phrase in 1 Thess 1:1; 2:14 would be an OT motif. Some OT sources, then, would have provided the basis upon which Paul built the connection of the term ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians.

5. The use of the term Χριστός in 1 Thessalonians. Although Paul did not define the identity of Jesus as the Messiah in any passage of 1 Thessalonians, there is considerable evidence that he presupposed a mass of information about Him as such. As seen in this study, there are statements concerning the term Χριστός in 1 Thessalonians, and in Pauline theology in general, that suggest that Paul transcended early Jewish concepts about the Messiah.

On the basis of these considerations, it is proposed that (1) Paul was refining the word ἐκκλησία in terms of Jesus, the Messiah of the OT predictions; and

(2) Paul was operating with this theological-christological hermeneutic in mind in the context of 1 Thessalonians. According to Acts 17:2-3, Paul appealed to Thessalonian Jews and God-fearers to believe in the messiahship of Jesus. For Paul, faith in the Messiah became the scriptural and essential mark of belonging to the people of God.

#### Summary

A brief summary of the results of the investigation in this chapter follows.

First of all, the ἐν Χριστῷ motif is used in a great variety of contexts and with differing shades of meaning in Pauline writings.

Second, the linguistic background for the theological use of the term ἐκκλησία in Paul is to be sought in the Septuagint.

Third, in 1 Thess 1:1 Paul uses ἐκκλησία in a geographical and local sense, but it is also clear that this local church belongs to a wider community of God (2:14).

Fourth, the theological-christological interpretation is an arguable view that emerges from the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17 for the understanding of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ as an ecclesiological formula.



Fifth, Paul's association of the the term ἐκκλησία to ἐν Θεῷ πατρί (1:1) and τοῦ Θεοῦ (2:14) emphasizes the concept that is developed in the inner context of the letter: God has loved, chosen, called and gathered the Thessalonian believers. The constitution of the Thessalonian community as a church took place by virtue of God's power, Who made it His ἐκκλησία.

Sixth, the use of the preposition (ἐν) in connection with the expressions (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1:1; 2:14) has more than a mere locative or descriptive connotation. This Pauline construction might point out the Messiah of the OT as the *instrument-agent* by Whom a different ἐκκλησία would be established in Thessalonica. The Pauline use of the (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ phrase in 1 Thess 1:1; 2:14 seems to be an OT motif.

Seventh, the Christian church in Paul's earliest christological statement, then, seems to be a messianic and eschatological community convoked and congregated by God Himself—the Father, (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ by means of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of God's Word.

Eighth, the Old Testament—emphasizing the historic work of God in and through the Messiah, and the New

Testament—stressing the prophetic and historic dimension of the former, constitute together the basic evidence for the reality, nature, and character of the Christian church.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to develop a deeper understanding of Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church as expressed in the context of 1 Thessalonians. This understanding was gained through a review and evaluation of research into Paul's association of the term ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif in the context of 1 Thessalonians, an expression which demonstrates that Paul's earliest statement regarding the Christian church is a christological one.

On the basis of this review and evaluation, a summary of the main findings of the study follows.

Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians "to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," a church established and founded by Paul's preaching of "the word of God."

The content of Paul's founding message in Thessalonica was the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ. This christological content of the

Pauline message could have been interpreted as a real attack against the Temple and the Law, an attempt to shake the foundations of Israel's existence and hope, which provoked violence from the Jews (1 Thess 1:6; 2:2, 14; Acts 17:5-10).

The immediate occasion for writing 1 Thessalonians seems to have been the return of Timothy with his information about the spiritual condition of the Thessalonians in a context of "much affliction" and "great opposition" provoked by religious persecution.

Even though interpolationist scholars have considered 1 Thess 2:13-16 un-Pauline on the basis of historical, theological, and form-critical arguments, the authenticity and the integrity of 1 Thessalonians are admitted today by practically all Pauline scholars.

No comprehensive study has been attempted in 1 Thessalonians on Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in its historical, literary and theological contexts. Although scholars have acknowledged the presence of this motif in the letter, they have not given enough attention to its nature. Generally, scholars have built their procedure on literary exegesis rather than on a program of contextual interpretation.

The study of Paul's association of ἐκκλησία to the ἐν Χριστῷ motif in the context of 1 Thessalonians suggests

that the theological-christological interpretation is an arguable view that emerges from the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17 for the understanding of this connection as an ecclesiological formula.

From a theological perspective, the Christian church in Thessalonica is a gathering of those who were loved (1:4), chosen (1:4; 5:9), and called by God to sanctification (2:12; 4:7; 5:23-24). Her existence, reality, and meaning are centered in the historical initiative and intervention of Θεῶ πατρί.

From a christological approach, this NT community was constituted in "the Lord Jesus Christ." The use of the preposition (έν) in connection with the expressions (έν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—έν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1:1; 2:14) may have more than a mere locative or descriptive connotation. This Pauline construction might point out the Messiah of the OT as the *instrument-agent* by Whom a different ἐκκλησία would be established in Thessalonica.

Assuming that Paul's theological presupposition is that the OT testifies to Christ (Acts 17:2-3), and that "in Christ" there is a fulfillment of the OT—a filling up of the meaning of it—the evidence adduced would justify the conclusion that Paul could have developed his christological conception of the church—"in) the Lord Jesus Christ," "in Christ Jesus" (1:1; 2:14)—from

veterotestamentary traditions that would have existed prior to his own theological understanding.

For Paul, Christ seems to be the great End for Whom the Scriptures exist. The OT Scriptures do not simply record events, but rather testify that (1) the ministry of Jesus is part of and a completion of God's purposes begun in the OT; (2) the work of Jesus is anticipated in the OT prophecies and types; (3) the OT can be used to prove the messiahship of Jesus; and, (4) Jesus is the Messiah of the OT.

The OT provides the basis upon which Paul builds the connection of the term ἐκκλησία τοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ in 1 Thessalonians.

On the one hand, the (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ expression in the context of 1 Thessalonians and Acts 17 seems to refer not only to the so-called Jesus of history, but also to the exalted Christ, who is the Agent of a divine gathering already suggested typologically in the OT. This gathering seems to be not only an essential part of God's plan according to the revelation of the OT, but also a concrete reality in the ecclesial constitution of the Thessalonian church.

To speak of the Christian community in Thessalonica in terms of ἐν Χριστῷ would suggest that

(1) Paul was refining the word ἐκκλησία in terms of Jesus, the Messiah of the OT predictions; and (2) Paul was operating with this theological-christological hermeneutic in mind in the context of 1 Thessalonians.

On the other hand, the word ἐκκλησία in 1 Thessalonians seems to take its meaning from the Hebrew phrase יהוה יקרא (Yhwh [ădō-nāi] qā-hāl), which designates the cultic and religious gathering of God's People in the OT. In that sense, ἐκκλησία in connection with ἐν Θεῷ πατρί-τοῦ Θεοῦ (1 Thess 1:1; 2:14) might connote a religious congregation as well, in contrast with the secular Greek meaning of the term, where ἐκκλησία was never the title of a religious group.

Particularly in 1 Thessalonians, the phrase (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ-ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ does not seem to be an expression of mystical or individual piety, nor just a statement to designate any Christian community, to express ownership and spiritual union with Christ, to differentiate the Christian assemblies from other ones, or to emphasize the unity of Christians everywhere. Rather, it is an ecclesiological formula that confirms God's saving work through Jesus and recognizes the significance of Jesus' messiahship as the Christ of the OT predictions. Because Jesus is the Messiah, those who believe in Him constitute τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ . . . , ἡγιασμένοις ἐν

Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. . . κλητοῖς ἁγίοις (1 Cor 1:2; cf. Phil 1:1).

The theology and christology implied in the contextual study of the passages of 1 Thessalonians, and in the context of Pauline thought, suggest that Paul could qualify the geographical expression ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων with the distinctive phrase (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—Jesus, the Lord and the Messiah descendant of David (Rom 1:3-4; cf. Acts 13:22-23, 33)—because for him, Jesus is the scriptural mark of belonging to the people of God.

The Christian church, as seen by Paul's earliest christological statement in 1 Thessalonians, is a messianic assembly convoked and congregated by God Himself—the Father, (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ by means of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of God's Word. It is gathered geographically in Judea-Thessalonica and theologically (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ—ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, as a divine gift. It is part of one created entity, which convoked and congregated all of those who, in the process of salvation, had believed and accepted God's plan in Christ. This assembly was real and a clear historical manifestation of the sacrificed and glorified Messiah.



Suggestions for Further Study

In this dissertation, Paul's earliest statement concerning the Christian church as expressed in the context of 1 Thessalonians was explored by a review and evaluation of research into Paul's association of the term ἐκκλησία to ἐν Χριστῷ in the context of 1 Thessalonians.

However, there are questions connected with this topic whose further clarification would require thoughtful study.

For instance, one must wonder whether a comprehensive analysis of the development of Pauline ecclesiology from its earliest to its latest phase ought not to be carried out by tracing the development of a term as central to Pauline thought as ἐν Χριστῷ.

Not only is this term used in a great variety of contexts and with differing shades of meaning in Pauline writings—excluding Titus, but it seems to have a pre-Pauline origin and biblical background. This question in turn raises a number of other questions:

1. How did Paul develop his christological conception of the church —"(in) the Lord Jesus Christ—in Christ Jesus" (1:1; 2:14)?

2. What passages of the Scriptures does Paul allude to in Acts 17? Is there something about the Messiah in the Old Testament that can cast light on the

christological meaning of Paul's preaching in Thessalonica?

3. To what extent is the soteriological situation of being ἐν Χριστῷ the basis for Paul's ecclesiology?

4. To what extent is the theological-christological hermeneutic a definitive instrument in the interpretation of ἐκκλησία in the entire Pauline corpus?

5. To what extent does the ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ formula in 1 Thessalonians prepare the way for the "body of Christ" metaphor in Paul's later letters?

6. To what extent does the Pauline association of ἐκκλησία with ἐν Θεῷ πατρί-τοῦ Θεοῦ and (ἐν) κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ-ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ redefine the Jewish understanding of God's people?

7. Could "churches of God in Christ" (1 Thess 2:14) simply designate "Messianic Israel" as opposed to the Israel still looking for its Messiah (realized messianism as opposed to future or eschatological messianism)? Questions of this type merit further biblical and systematic research.

Although it is difficult to see in 1 Thessalonians the role that the ἐν Χριστῷ phrase will later assume in Paul's writings, this idea emerges in this book and becomes a major basis of Paul's ecclesiology.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1

CHART OF SYNOPTIC PARALLELS:  
TRIAL OF JESUS

<b>TRADITION</b>	<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>MARK</b>	<b>LUKE</b>	<b>(JOHN)</b>
<b>Triple</b>	16:21*	8:31*	9:22*	
	21:23	11:27	20:1	
	26:14-15	14:10-11	22:3-4	
<b>Matt-Mark</b>	20:18*	10:33*		
	26:1-5*	14:1-2*		
	26:47	14:43		(18:3)
	26:59*	14:55*		
	27:1*	15:1		
	27:12	15:3		
	27:20*	15:11		
	27:41	15:31		
<b>Matt-Luke</b>	21:45		20:19	
<b>Mark-Luke</b>		11:18*	19:47*	
<b>Matt only</b>	21:15			
	27:3-6*			
	27:62			
	28:11			
<b>Mark only</b>		15:10		
<b>Luke only</b>			23:10, 13	
			24:20*	
<b>John only</b>				7:32, 45
				11:47-52, *57
				12:10-11
				18:35
				19:6, *15, * 21

\*Jesus' death is implied.

## An Explicatory Note

The use of ἀρχιερεύς in all the passion narratives of the Gospels is exceptional. According to Dunn, this word is used "16 times in Mark 14-15; 19 times in Matt. 26-28; 13 times in Luke 19-24; and 14 times in John 18-19."<sup>1</sup> That the chief priests played the prime role in all the Gospels in Jesus' case is very clear also from the helpful charts of events, placed in parallel columns, provided by John H. P. Reumann<sup>2</sup> and Sanders.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dunn, The Partings of the Ways, 51.

<sup>2</sup>John H. P. Reumann, Jesus in the Church's Gospels: Modern Scholarship and the Earliest Sources (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1968), 59, 68.

<sup>3</sup>Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, 310-11.

TABLE 2

PHRASES OF 1 THESS 2:13-16  
AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN THE SYNOPTICS

PHRASE+	TRADITION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
1	Triple	13:57	6:4	4:24	(4:44)
		21:33-46*	12:1-12*	20:9-19*	
		27:15-26*	15:6-15*	23:13-25*	
		27:31-32*	15:20-21*	23:26	
		27:33-37*	15:22-26*	23:32-34*	(19:17-27)*
	Matt-Mark	26:66-68*	14:64-65*		
	Matt-Luke	5:12		6:23	
		23:29,31, 34,35		11:47,48 49,50,51	
		23:37		13:34	
	Matt only	22:6			
		27:24-25*			
	Luke only			13:31-33*	
	2	Triple	21:34-35	12:2-3	20:10
Matt-Luke		5:11		6:22	
		23:13		11:52	
		23:34		11:49	
3	Matt only	23:32			
4	Triple	21:41-44	12:10-11	20:16-18	
		26:24	14:21	22:22	
	Matt-Luke	23:35,36		11:50,51	
		23:38,39		13:35	
	Matt only	22:7			
	Luke only			21:22-24	

+ In its context, ὀργή in 1 Thess 2:16 makes reference to the Jews, who (1) killed the prophets and the Lord Jesus; (2) hinder the proclamation of the gospel in the Gentile mission; (3) fill up the measure of their sin; and (4) receive God's wrath εἰς τέλος. Each of these

phrases can be found in the Gospels, as is seen in this Table. Presumably a common situation, already a clear component of the oral tradition is reflected.

\* Jesus' death is implied.

TABLE 3

1 THESS 2:13-16: RHETORICAL ARRANGEMENT  
OF 1 THESSALONIANS

<b>SCHOLAR</b>	<b>RHETORICAL ANALYSIS</b>	
<b>Kennedy (1984)</b>	1:2-10 2:1-8 2:9-3:13 4:1-5:22 5:23-24 5:25-28	Address and Proem Refutation Narration Headings Epilogue Closure
<b>Jewett (1986)</b>	1:1-5 1:6-3-13 4:1-5:22 5:23-28	Exordium Narratio Probatio Peroratio
<b>Johanson (1987)</b>	1:2-3:13 4:1-5:24	Exordium/narratio Exhortation/Argumentatio /Peroratio
<b>Hughes (1990)</b>	1:1-10 2:1-3:10 3:11-13 4:1-5:5 5:4-11 5:12-22 5:23-28	Exordium Narratio Partitio Probatio Peroratio Exhortatio Conclusio
<b>Olbricht (1990)</b>	1:2-3 1:4-10 2:1-5:11 5:12-24 5:25-28	Exordium Statement Proof Epilogue Postscript
<b>Wuellner (1990)</b>	1:1-10 2:1-5:22 5:23-28	Exordium Main Argument Peroratio

Table 3--Continued.

Wanamaker (1990)	1:1	Epistolary Prescript
	1:2-10	Exordium
	2:1-3:10	Narratio
	2:1-12	First Part
	2:13-16	Digressio
	2:17-3:10	Second Part
	3:11-13	Transitus from Narratio to Probatio
	4:1-5:22	Probatio
	5:23-28	Probatio and Epistolary Closing

Source: George A. Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1984), 142-44; Robert Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), 72-74; Bruce C. Johanson, To All the Brethren: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to I Thessalonians (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1987), 157-63; Frank W. Hughes, "The Rhetoric of 1 Thessalonians," in The Thessalonian Correspondence, ed. R. F. Collins (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 94-116; Thomas H. Olbricht, "An Aristotelian Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Thessalonians," in Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe, ed. D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson, and W. A. Meeks (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 216-36; Wilhelm Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," in Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition, ed. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1979), 117-36; Charles A. Wanamaker, The Epistles to the Thessalonians: a Commentary on the Greek Text (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1990), 48-50.



TABLE 4

1 THESS 2:13-16: PAULINE WORDS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION  
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1 THESS	TERM	MEANING	DISTRIBUTION		
			NT	Paul	%
2:13	εὐχαριστέω	give thanks	38	24	63
	ἀδιαλείπτως	constantly	4	4	100
	παραλαμβάνω	receive	50	11	22
	λόγος	word	330	94	28
	ἀκοῆς	which is heard	24	10	41
	δέχομαι	accept	56	13	23
	ἀνθρωπος	human being	551	126	22
	ἀληθῶς	really	18	1	5
	ἐνεργέω	work-operate	21	18	85
πιστεύω	believe	243	54	22	
2:14	μιμητής	imitator	6	5	83
	γίνομαι	become	670	140	20
	ἀδελφός	brother	343	133	38
	ἐκκλησία	assembly-church	114	62	54
	Ἰουδαία	Judaea	44	4	9
	πάσχω	suffer	42	7	16
	συμφυλετής	countryman	1	1	100
	ἴδιος	one's own	114	44	38
	Ἰουδαίος	Jews	195	26	13
2:15	Κύριος	Lord	719	275	38
	ἀποκτείνω	kill	74	5	6
	προφήτης	prophet	144	14	9

Table 4--Continued.

<b>2:15</b>	ἐκδιώκω	persecute severely	1	1	100
	ἀρέσκω	please	17	14	82
	ἐναντίος	adverse-hostil	8	2	25
<b>2:16</b>	κωλύω	hinder-prevent	23	4	17
	ἔθνος	Gentile	162	54	33
	λαλέω	speak	296	60	20
	σώξω	save	107	28	26
	ἀναπληρῶ	to fill up make complete	6	5	83
	ἁμαρτία	sin	173	64	37
	πάντοτε	always at all times	41	27	65
	φθάνω	come-arrive	7	5	71
	ὀργή	wrath	36	21	58
	τέλος	end	40	14	35

TABLE 5

1 THESS 2:13-16: OCCURRENCES OF THE MAJOR WORDS  
OF THE PASSAGE ELSEWHERE IN PAUL'S WRITINGS

<i>1 Thess</i>	<i>Roots of Main Greeks Terms</i>	<i>Location in Paul's Writings</i>
<b>2:13</b>	εὐχαριστέω*	<b>Rom</b> 1:8, 21; 14:6 (2x); 16:4; <b>1 Cor</b> 1:4, 14; 10:30; 11:24; 14:17; <b>2 Cor</b> 1:11; <b>Eph</b> 1:16; 5:30; <b>Phil</b> 1:3; <b>Col</b> 1:3, 12; 3:17; <b>1 Thess</b> 1:2; 5:18; <b>2 Thess</b> 1:3; <b>Phlm</b> 4
	ἀδιαλείπτως*	<b>Rom</b> 1:9; <b>1 Thess</b> 1:2; 5:17
	παραλαμβάνω*	<b>1 Cor</b> 11:23; 15:1, 3; <b>Gal</b> 1:9, 12; <b>Phil</b> 4:9; <b>Col</b> 2:6; 4:17; <b>1 Thess</b> 4:1; <b>2 Thess</b> 3:6
	λόγος*	<b>Rom</b> 3:4; 9:6, 9, 28; 13:9; 14:12; 15:18; <b>1 Cor</b> 1:5, 17, 18; 2:1, 4 (2x), 13; 4:19, 20; 12:8 (2x); 14:9, 19 (2x), 36; 15:2, 54; <b>2 Cor</b> 1:18; 2:17; 4:2; 5:19; 6:7; 8:7; 10:10, 11; 11:6; <b>Gal</b> 5:14; 6:6; <b>Eph</b> 1:13; 4:29; 5:6; 6:19; <b>Phil</b> 1:14; 2:16; 4:15, 17; <b>Col</b> 1:5, 25; 2:23; 3:16, 17; 4:3, 6; <b>1 Thess</b> 1:5, 6, 8; 2:5; 4:15, 18; <b>2 Thess</b> 2:2, 15, 17; 3:1, 14; <b>2 Tim</b> 1:15; 3:1; 4:5, 6, 9, 12; 5:17; 6:3 <b>2 Tim</b> 1:13; 2:9, 11, 15, 17; 4:2, 15; <b>Titus</b> 1:3, 9; 2:5, 8; 3:8
	ἀκοῆς*	<b>Rom</b> 10:16, 17 (2x); <b>1 Cor</b> 12:17 (2x); <b>Gal</b> 3:2, 5; <b>2 Thess</b> 4:3, 4
	δέχομαι*	<b>1 Cor</b> 2:14; <b>2 Cor</b> 6:1; 7:15; 8:17; 11:4, 16; <b>Gal</b> 4:14; <b>Eph</b> 6:17; <b>Phil</b> 4:18; <b>Col</b> 4:10; <b>1 Thess</b> 1:6; <b>2 Thess</b> 2:10

Table 5--Continued.

2:13	άνθρωπος*	Rom 1:18, 23; 2:1, 3, 9; 2:16, 29; 3:4, 5, 28; 4:6; 5:12 (2x), 15, 18 (2x), 19; 6:6; 7:1, 22, 24; 9:20; 10:5; 12:17, 18; 14:18, 20; 1 Cor 1:25 (2x); 2:5, 9, 11 (3x), 14; 3:3, 4, 21; 4:1, 9; 6:18; 7:1, 7, 23, 26; 9:8; 11:28; 13:1; 14:2, 3; 15:19, 21 (2x), 32, 39, 45, 47 (2x); 2 Cor 3:2; 4:2, 16; 5:11; 8:21; 12:2, 3, 4; Gal 1:1 (2x), 10 (3x), 11, 12; 2:6, 16; 3:15 (2x); 5:3; 6:1; Eph 2:15; 3:5, 16; 4:8, 14, 22, 24; 5:31; 6:7; Phil 2:7 (2x); 4:5; Col 1:28 (3x); 2:8, 22; 3:9, 23; 1 Thess 2:4, 6, 13, 15; 4:8; 2 Thess 2:3; 3:2; 1 Tim 2:1, 4, 5 (2x); 4:10; 5:24; 6:5, 9, 11, 16; 2 Tim 2:2; 3:2, 8, 13, 17; Titus 1:14; 2:11; 3:2, 8, 10
	ἀληθῶς	
	ἐνεργέω*	Rom 7:5; 1 Cor 12:6, 11; 2 Cor 1:6; 4:12; Gal 2:8 (2x); 3:5; 5:6; Eph 1:11, 20; 2:2; 3:20; Phil 2:13 (2x); Col 1:29; 2 Thess 2:7
	πιστεύω*	Rom 1:16; 3:2, 22; 4:3, 5, 11, 17, 18, 24; 6:8; 9:33; 10:4, 9, 10, 11, 14 (2x), 16; 13:11; 14:2; 15:13; 1 Cor 1:21; 3:5; 9:17; 11:18; 13:7; 14:22 (2x), 15:2, 11; 2 Cor 4:13, 15; Gal 2:7, 16; 3:6, 22; Eph 1:13, 19; Phil 1:29; 1 Thess 1:7; 2:4, 10; 4:14; 2 Thess 1:10 (2x); 2:11, 12; 1 Tim 1:11, 16; 3:16; 2 Tim 1:12; Titus 1:3; 3:8
2:14	μιμητής*	1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Eph 5:1; 1 Thess 1:6

Table 5--Continued.

2:14	γίνομαι*	<p>Rom 1:3; 2:25; 3:4 (2x), 6, 19, 31; 4:18; 6:2, 5, 15; 7:3 (2x), 4, 7, 13 (3x); 9:14, 29; 10:20; 11:1, 5, 6, 9, 11, 17, 25, 34; 12:16; 15:8, 16, 31; 16:2, 7; 1 Cor 1:30; 2:3; 3:13, 18 (2x); 4:5, 9, 13, 16; 6:15; 7:21, 23, 36; 8:9; 9:15, 20, 22 (2x), 23, 27; 10:6, 7, 20, 32; 11:1, 19; 13:1, 11; 14:20 (2x), 25, 26, 40; 15:10, 37, 45, 54, 58; 16:2, 10, 14; 2 Cor 1:8, 19 (2x); 3:7; 5:17, 21; 6:14; 7:14; 8:14 (2x); 12:11; Gal 2:17; 3:13, 14, 17, 21, 24; 4:4 (2x), 12, 16; 5:26; 6:14; Eph 2:13; 3:7; 4:32; 5:1, 7, 12, 17; 6:3; Phil 1:13; 2:7, 8, 15; 3:6, 17; Col 1:18, 23, 25; 3:15; 4:11; 1 Thess 1:5 (2x), 6, 7; 2:1, 5, 7, 8, 10; 3:4, 5; 2 Thess 2:7; 1 Tim 2:14; 4:12; 5:9; 6:4; 2 Tim 1:17; 2:18; 3:9, 11; Titus 3:7</p>
	ἀδελφός*	<p>Rom 1:13; 7:1, 4; 8:12, 29; 9:3; 10:1; 11:25; 12:1; 14:10 (2x), 13, 15, 21; 15:14, 30; 16:14, 17, 23; 1 Cor 1:1, 10, 11, 26; 2:1; 3:1; 4:6; 5:11; 6:5, 6 (2x), 8; 7:12, 14, 15, 24, 29; 8:11, 12, 13 (2x); 9:5; 10:1; 11:33; 12:1; 14:6, 20, 26, 39; 15:1, 6, 31, 50, 58; 16:11, 12 (2x), 15, 20; 2 Cor 1:1, 8; 2:13; 8:1, 18, 22, 23; 9:3, 5; 11:9; 12:28; 13:11; Gal 1:2, 11, 19; 3:15; 4:12, 28, 31; 5:11, 13; 6:21, 23; Phil 1:12, 14; 2:25; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 8, 21; Col 1:1, 2; 4:7, 9, 15; 1 Thess 1:4; 2:1, 9, 17; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 6, 10 (2x), 13; 5:1, 4, 12, 14, 25, 26, 27; 2 Thess 1:3; 2:1, 13, 15; 3:1, 6 (2x), 13, 15; 1 Tim 4:6; 5:1; 6:2; 2 Tim 4:21; Phlm 1, 7, 16, 20</p>

Table 5--Continued.

2:14	ἐκκλησία*	Rom 16:1, 4, 5, 16, 23; 1 Cor 1:2; 4:17; 6:4; 7:17; 10:32; 11:16, 18, 22; 12:28; 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 33, 34, 35; 15:9; 16:1, 19 (2x); 2 Cor 1:1; 8:1, 18, 19, 23, 24; 11:8, 28; 12:13; Gal 1:2, 13, 22; Eph 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32; Phil 3:6; 4:15; Col 1:18, 24; 4:15, 16; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1, 4; 1 Tim 3:5, 15; 5:16; Phlm 2
	Ίουδαία*	Rom 15:31; 2 Cor 1:16; Gal 1:22
	πάσχω*	1 Cor 12:26; 2 Cor 1:6; Gal 3:4; Phil 1:29; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 1:12
	συμφυλετής	
	ἴδιος*	Rom 8:32; 10:3; 11:24; 14:4, 5; 1 Cor 3:8 (2x); 4:12; 6:18; 7:2, 4 (2x), 7, 37 (2x); 9:7; 11:21; 12:21; 14:35; 15:23, 38; Gal 2:2; 6:5, 9; Eph 4:28; 5:22; 1 Thess 4:11 (2x); 1 Tim 2:6; 3:4, 5, 12; 4:2; 5:4, 8; 6:1, 15
	Ίουδαίος*	Rom 1:16; 2:9, 10, 17, 28, 29; 3:1, 9, 29; 9:24; 10:12; 1 Cor 1:22, 23, 24; 9:20 (3x); 10:32; 12:13; 2 Cor 11:24; Gal 2:13, 14, 15; 3:28; Col 3:11

Table 5--Continued.

2:15	Κύριος*	<p>Rom 1:4, 7; 4:8, 24; 5:1, 11, 21; 6:23; 7:25; 8:39; 9:28, 29; 10:9, 12, 13, 16; 11:3, 34; 12:11, 19; 13:14; 14: 4 (2x), 6 (3x), 8 (3x), 11, 14; 15:6, 11, 30; 16:2, 8, 11, 12 (2x), 13, 18, 20, 22, 24; 1 Cor 1:2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 31; 2:8, 16: 3:5, 20; 4:4, 5, 17, 19; 5:4 (2x), 5; 6:11, 13 (2x), 14, 17; 7:10, 12, 17, 22 (2x), 25 (2x), 32 (2x), 34, 35, 39; 8:5, 6; 9:1 (2x), 2, 5, 14; 10:21, 22, 26; 11:11, 23 (2x), 26, 27 (2x), 32; 12:3, 5; 14:21, 37; 15:31, 57, 58 (2x); 16:7, 10, 19, 22, 23; 2 Cor 1:2, 3, 14; 2:12; 3:16, 17 (2x), 18 (2x); 4:5, 14; 5:6, 8, 11; 6:17, 18; 8:5, 9, 19, 21; 10:8, 17, 18; 11:17, 31; 12:1, 8; 13:10, 13; Gal 1:3, 19; 4:1; 5:10; 6:14, 18; Eph 1:2, 3, 15, 17; 2:21; 3:11; 4:1, 5, 17; 5:8, 10, 17, 19, 20, 22; 6:1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 (2x), 10, 21, 23, 24; Phil 1:2, 14; 2:11, 19, 24, 29; 3:1, 8, 20; 4:1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 23; Col 1:3, 10; 2:6; 3:13, 17, 18, 20, 22 (2x), 23, 24 (2x); 4:1 (2x), 7, 17; 1 Thess 1:1; 3, 6, 8; 2:19; 3:8, 11, 12, 13; 4:1, 2, 6, 15 (2x), 16, 17 (2x); 5:2, 9, 12, 23, 27, 28; 2 Thess 1:1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 12 (2x); 2:1, 2, 8, 13, 14, 16; 3:1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 16 (2x), 18; 1 Tim 1:2, 12, 14; 6:3, 14, 15; 2 Tim 1:2, 8, 16, 18 (2x); 2:7, 19 (2x), 22, 24; 3:11; 4:8, 14, 17, 18, 22; Phlm 3, 5, 16, 20, 25</p>
	ἀποκτείνω*	<p>Rom 7:11; 11:3; 2 Cor 3:6; Eph 2:16</p>
	προφήτης*	<p>Rom 1:2; 3:21; 11:3; 1 Cor 12:28, 29; 14:29, 32 (2x), 37; Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; Titus 1:12</p>

Table 5--Continued.

2:15	ἐκδιώκω	
	ἀρέσκω*	<b>Rom</b> 8:8; 15:1, 2, 3; <b>1 Cor</b> 7:32, 33, 34; 10:33; <b>Gal</b> 1:10 (2x); <b>1 Thess</b> 2:4; 4:1; <b>2 Tim</b> 2:4
	ἐναντίος	<b>Titus</b> 2:8
2:16	κωλύω*	<b>Rom</b> 1:13; <b>1 Cor</b> 14:39; <b>1 Tim</b> 4:3
	ἔθνος*	<b>Rom</b> 1:5, 13; 2:14, 24; 3:29 (2x); 4:17, 18; 9:24, 30; 10:19 (2x); 11:11, 12, 13 (2x), 25; 15:9 (2x), 10, 11; 15:12 (2x), 16 (2x), 18, 27; 16:4, 26; <b>1 Cor</b> 1:23; 5:1; 12:2; <b>2 Cor</b> 11:26; <b>Gal</b> 1:16; 2:2, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15; 3:8 (2x), 14; <b>Eph</b> 2:11; 3:1, 6, 8; 4:17; <b>Col</b> 1:27; <b>1 Thess</b> 4:5; <b>1 Tim</b> 2:7; 3:16; <b>2 Tim</b> 4:17
	λαλέω*	<b>Rom</b> 3:19; 7:1; 15:18; <b>1 Cor</b> 2:6, 7, 13; 3:1; 9:8; 12:3, 30; 13:1, 11; 14:2 (3x), 3, 4, 5, (2x), 6 (2x), 9 (2x), 11 (2x), 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27, 28, 29, 34, 35, 39; 15:34; <b>2 Cor</b> 2:17; 4:13 (2x); 7:14; 11:17 (2x), 23; 12:4, 19; 13:3; <b>Eph</b> 4:25; 5:19; 6:20; <b>Phil</b> 1:14; <b>Col</b> 4:3, 4; <b>1 Thess</b> 1:8; 2:2, 4; <b>1 Tim</b> 5:13; <b>Titus</b> 2:1, 15
	σώξω*	<b>Rom</b> 5:9, 10; 8:24; 9:27; 10:9, 13; 11:14, 26; <b>1 Cor</b> 1:18, 21; 3:15; 5:5; 7:16 (2x); 9:22; 10:33; 15:2; <b>2 Cor</b> 2:15; <b>Eph</b> 2:5, 8; <b>2 Thess</b> 2:10; <b>1 Tim</b> 1:15; 2:4, 15; 4:16; <b>2 Tim</b> 1:9; 4:18; <b>Titus</b> 3:5
	ἀναπληρῶ*	<b>1 Cor</b> 14:16; 16:17; <b>Gal</b> 6:2; <b>Phil</b> 2:30



Table 5--Continued.

2:16	ἁμαρτία*	Rom 3:9, 20; 4:7, 8; 5:12 (2x), 13 (2x), 20, 21; 6:1, 2, 6 (2x), 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23; 7:5, 7 (2x), 8 (2x), 9, 11, 13 (3x), 14, 17, 20, 23, 25; 8:2, 3 (3x), 10; 11: 27; 14:23; 1 Cor 15:3, 17, 56 (2x); 2 Cor 5:21 (2x); 11:7; Gal 1:4; 2:17; 3:22; Eph 2:1; Col 1:14; 1 Tim 5:22, 24; 2 Tim 3:6
	πάντοτε*	Rom 1:10; 1 Cor 1:4; 15:58; 2 Cor 2:14; 4:10; 5:6; 9:8; Gal 4:18; Eph 5:20; Phil 1:4, 20; 2:12; 4:4; Col 1:3; 4:6, 12; 1 Thess 1:2; 3:6; 4:17; 5:15, 16 2 Thess 1:3, 11; 2:13 2 Tim 3:7; Phlm 4
	φθάνω*	Rom 9:31; 2 Cor 10:14; Phil 3:16; 1 Thess 4:15
	ὀργή*	Rom 1:18; 2:5 (2x), 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22 (2x); 12:19; 13:4, 5; Eph 2:3; 4:31; 5:6; Col 3:6, 8; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; 1 Tim 2:8
	τέλος*	Rom 6:21, 22; 10:4; 13:7 (2x); 1 Cor 1:8; 10:11; 15:24; 2 Cor 1:13; 3:13; 11:15; Phil 3:19; 1 Tim 1:5

Note: This information was gathered from Concordance to the Novum Testamentum Graece. Nestle-Aland, 26th Edition, and the Greek New Testament, 3d ed., ed. Institute for New Testament Textual Research and the Computer Center of Münster University, with collaboration of H. Bachman and W. A. Slaby (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987).

\* Also found in some of the four so-called major Pauline epistles: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. Thirty one of the thirty five words studied (88.57 percent) are in the major epistles of Paul.

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