



Digital Commons@

Loyola Marymount University
LMU Loyola Law School

LMU/LLS Theses and Dissertations

Spring 2009

Christology of 1st Thessalonians

John L. Weitzel

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

This Research Projects is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for inclusion in LMU/LLS Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@lmu.edu.

Christology of 1st Thessalonians

John L. Weitzel

Submitted to the
Faculty
of
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, California

Department of Theological Studies

Master of Arts in Theology
May 2009

Thesis Committee

Jeffrey S. Siker, PhD, Thesis Director

David Sanchez, PhD, Reader

Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, DPhil, Reader

To my wife, Victoria, and our sons, John, James, and Joshua.

Christology of 1st Thessalonians

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>		<i>1</i>
	Paul	2
	Thessalonica	4
	Hellenistic Ideology	5
<i>Chapter One</i>	<i>Christology in Paul's World</i>	<i>7</i>
	Christology	7
	General Theme of 1Thes	10
	Isaiah	16
<i>Chapter Two</i>	<i>Ten Christological Themes in First Thessalonians</i>	<i>20</i>
	Christological Terms	20
	I. One who proclaims the Word of the Lord	22
	II. Suffering Servant – Afflicted One, One who suffers and dies	26
	III. One who is Gentle, a Comforter, a Consoler	30
	IV. Light and Darkness	35
	V. Voice to the Gentiles / the Nations	39
	VI. Wearer of Divine Attributes	42

VII.	True Provider of Peace and Security	45
VIII.	Jesus: Lord, Son of God, Son from heaven	47
IX.	Divine Reconciliation and Restoration	51
X.	Sharer in Divine Purpose and Activity with God the Father	54
 <i>Chapter Three The Lord Jesus Christ of Paul in First Thessalonians</i>		 58
 <i>Conclusion</i>		 65
 <i>Bibliography</i>		 70

Introduction

The earliest extant written witness of an experience of Christ is Paul of Tarsus' First Letter to the Thessalonians (1Thes). Paul's letter is also the earliest written document to become part of the Christian canon, the New Testament. As such, this letter holds some clues as to the beliefs, teachings, and theologies of the earliest Christian communities. Scholars date the writing of this particular letter circa 51 C.E., and a few to an earlier date,¹ written after his visit to Philippi (1Thes 2.2). Many theologians have written commentaries on this first letter and much has been written about the theology of Paul, including his Christology – both the person and the role.² Gordon D. Fee, for example, begins his treatment of Paul's Christology with a definition inclusive of "Paul's understanding of the person of Christ" that is "Paul's understanding of *who* Christ *was/is*, the *work* of Christ – *what* Christ did for us as *Savior*."³ My thesis will expound upon the Christology of Paul in 1Thes as a stand alone document, as if it were read exclusively as the only New Testament text, within the context of the popular Jewish and Hellenic thought of the time. The rationale for this is to see what is said about the person or nature of Christ and what Christ's mission was, according to Paul in this first letter both implicitly and explicitly. I am using just one Pauline document in order to "penetrate

¹ Earl J. Richard, *Sacra Pagina, First and Second Thessalonians*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), suggests the following: "date the Thessalonian mission to the early 40s and the correspondence to the early and mid-40s from Athens and Corinth", page 8, cf.14, as in "Lüdemann, *Paul*, pages 164-170, Murphy-O'Connor, 'Missions,' 84-86 and *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archeology* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1983) 130-40, that Paul's arrival in Corinth follows shortly after the Claudian edict (as noted by Luke in Acts 18:2), which is plausibly dated to 41 rather than 49."

² Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study*, (Hendrickson Publishers: Massachusetts, 2007).

³ *ibid*, pages 5-6.

more deeply into the subject matter”⁴ of Christology. As Fee has stated: “Christology in 1 Thessalonians sets the pace for the discussion of Christology in all the subsequent letters, not because all of Paul’s Christological emphases get a hearing here but because the major matters appear on the first page of the first letter.”⁵ Furthermore, continues Fee, “all the ways that Paul will speak of Christ in the subsequent letters are already in place” in 1Thes.⁶ Another aspect is considering the sources that Paul used from Jewish Scriptures – specifically the book of the Prophet Isaiah due to the large number of quotations from it in the 1Thes,⁷ which helps to contextualize his Christology in 1Thes. Beyond the Jewish Scriptures, we also need to remember the rhetorical style of Paul and his companions, in terms of language and terminology, is similar to those of the Stoics, Cynics, Epicureans, and other philosophers who also taught the Thessalonian people.

Paul

Some understanding of Paul’s background will be described here but not specifically taken into account as part of the analysis of the Christological context of 1Thes since we want to know, as much as possible, about Paul’s Christology based on the language used in 1Thes and not particularly Paul’s biographical background. Previously known as Saul of Tarsus of the Hebrew Tribe of Benjamin, Pharisee, devout Jew, and persecutor of Christians, who then became better known as Paul the (Christian) Apostle to the Gentiles,⁸ he is a complex person of the 1st century CE. Paul was a citizen of Rome by birth, was an urbanite, of a major city in the Eastern Roman Empire – Tarsus –

⁴ See Brevard S. Childs, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), page xi: “by limiting the scope of analysis to one book, an interpreter is able to penetrate more deeply into the subject matter and not be forced to retreat into generalities or in drawing only a few broad lines.”

⁵ Fee, pages 33-34.

⁶ Fee, page 34

⁷ Childs, page 5

⁸ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*. (New York: Doubleday, 1997) page 427.

a city renowned for its culture, scholars, and diversity of religious expression.⁹ He was influenced by the variety of philosophical and religious debates within the greater empire.¹⁰ As a devout Jewish Pharisee he knew the law and the prophets. He had a particular point of view concerning the Jewish religion including beliefs about the Messiah. More than likely he visited the Temple of Jerusalem on a number of occasions and consulted with other Pharisees in Jerusalem.

Part of the purpose of this thesis will be to trace Paul's thought process from the writing of 1Thes back to its antecedents in his background in order to discover the roots of his Jewish thinking that affected the content of his early Christology, notwithstanding his conversion or call experience which, according to the Book of Acts, occurred on the road to Damascus. On the road to Damascus (according to the first of three versions in Acts at 9:3-8¹¹), Paul saw a light and heard a voice say, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" When Paul asked who was speaking to him, a voice said, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting." The third version¹² at Acts 26:15b the voice states further,

I am that Jesus whom you are persecuting. Get up now and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to designate you as my servant and as a witness (*μάρτυρα*, TYN) to what you have seen of me and what you will see of me. *I have delivered you* (emphasis mine)¹³ from this people and from the nations; to open the eyes of those to whom I am sending you, to turn them from *darkness to light* (emphasis mine)¹⁴ and from the dominion of Satan to God; that through their faith in me they may obtain the forgiveness of their sins and a portion among God's people.

⁹ Brown, pages 423-425.

¹⁰ See Christopher Forbes, "Paul and Rhetorical Comparison" in J. Paul Sampley, *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*. (New York: Trinity Press International, 2003) pages 150-160.

¹¹ Scripture quotes throughout are from *New American Bible*. New York, NY: Catholic Publishing Co., 1970, unless otherwise indicated. All Greek texts are from *Word Study Greek-English New Testament*. Paul R. McReynolds (Ed.). (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1999 (TYN)).

¹² The three versions of Paul's conversions are at Acts 9:1-9; 22:5-11; and 26:9-18. Also see 1Cor 15:8.

¹³ See 1Thes 1:10b, "Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come."

¹⁴ See 1Thes 5:5, "No, all of you are children of the light and of the day. We belong neither to darkness nor to night."

Paul's conversion had an impact on his message and his theology including his Christology. He used similar language from his own conversion story in 1Thes in identifying that it is Jesus who delivers us from wrath and that Jesus' followers are to be children of the light and not of the darkness, as in 1Thes 1:10b and 5:5 (see my footnotes above). *Thessaloniki* was a place where a variety of beliefs and practices were intertwined (see below). The introduction of Christian theology from Paul caused a stir among the populace beginning with some members of the Jewish synagogue (as in Acts 17:1, "Paul and Silas ... came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue") who created a mob to protest against these people who call Jesus a king which can be viewed as a statement against the state where Caesar is the one true king. Paul considered this interference an act of Satan, as in 1Thes 2:18: "So we tried to come to you – but Satan blocked the way."¹⁵ This Satan, or dominion of Satan or darkness, will be overcome by the light, as in his conversion story above and in the 1Thes at 5:4-8a.

Thessalonica

Paul's audience lived in a major urban center of the Roman Empire, Thessalonica, (*Thessaloniki*). It was founded in 316 B.C.E. by Cassander and named after the daughter of Philip II and was a large and important port city on the eastern side of Macedonia. It was the capital and center of Roman administration for the region; a wealthy free-city since 42 B.C.E. after the Battle of Philippi by Augustus and Octavian. It was made up primarily of Gentiles, but there were also enough Jews to establish a synagogue. The primary cult was that of Serapis, though evidence of cults of Isis, Dionysius, Zeus, Cabiri (Cabirus as the Chief Cult of the area), Roma (as an important civic cult honoring the

¹⁵ See Romans 15:22, "That is why I have so often been hindered from visiting you."

Roman Empire), and others are present as well.¹⁶ It will be shown that some of these cultic ideas are present in 1Thes..

Hellenistic Ideology

Most of the people in the Greco-Roman world worshipped a variety of deities and could easily have a set of idols at home, partake in public ceremonies in the community honoring another deity, as well as participate in ceremonies honoring the Caesar as a god.¹⁷ In the city of *Thessaloniki*, as in every polis, “each individual was familiar with a pantheon determined by place of birth, family ancestry, neighborhood of residence, and ethnicity”¹⁸ such that slaves and free, upper and lower class, as well as citizen and non-citizen were separate – even in the procession of any particular deity.¹⁹ However, “the gods one worshipped and the manner in which one did so were ... predetermined by tradition and enforced by the state.”²⁰ In terms of religious authority, certain “religious specialists” ranged “from charismatic sectarian leaders to oracle-sellers ... claiming direct access to the divine ... sometimes running afoul of local authorities.”²¹ This meant that there were multiple ways to interpret the divine for each particular citizen dependent upon their access to a variety of these specialists.

The main tenets of these cults, popular in the general region of *Thessaloniki*, according to Donfried, included the following: Isis with an emphasis on salvation, eternal life, humility, confession of sin, and repentance before nocturnal initiation; Dionysius and the hope of a joyous afterlife, nurse maid language (as in Dionysius nursed by nymphs.

¹⁶ See Karl Paul Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity*, pages 22-46.

¹⁷ See Peter Oakes, “Re-mapping the Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1Thessalonians and Philippians.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 27, 3, (2005), pages 307-308, “imperial cult was practiced in ... Thessalonica ...” and “(there is) ample inscriptional and coin evidence of the cult.”

¹⁸ Jennifer Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults: A Guide*. (New York: Routledge, 2007), page 3.

¹⁹ *ibid*, pages 6-7.

²⁰ *ibid*, page 12.

²¹ *ibid*, page 13.

(divine women), and the use of the phallus symbol in ceremonies; Cabirus(i) with an unusually bloody appearance whose god promoted fertility,²² and who had a similar congregational set-up to early Christian assemblies as well as confessions, nursing of life, hope for a blessed afterlife, fertility symbol as male genitalia;²³ and civic cults – oath of loyalty to Caesar as lord / *kyrios* / *κυριος*, reverence and obedience, *Pax et Securitas*, son of god / *divi filius*, and a royal theology.²⁴

Some of this terminology will be discussed below as it relates to the context of language in 1Thes. The cultic language and lifestyle of the metropolis was the everyday language that Paul encountered upon visiting *Thessaloniki*. Paul then used both this pagan context as well as the Jewish understanding of Messiah to define the person of Jesus and his role in salvation, all in light of his own experience. As seen above many of the issues of Greek pagan ritual life are transformed by Paul's language in 1Thes. These include: monotheism; universal worship as opposed to division by race; one source of divine authority; the true meaning of salvation and afterlife; sexuality and the proper use of the body; the Lord of life who provides peace; and is the son of God. These, among other issues (such as the use of nursemaid imagery) point to some of the inter-religious concepts that will be vehicles of Paul's Christology in 1Thes which we will explore in the following chapters.

²² Donfried, page 26.

²³ *ibid*, page 29.

²⁴ See Fee, page 42.

Chapter One

Christology in Paul's World

Christology

There was not an exclusive Jewish idea about how the Messianic promise would come about; these expectations of resolution included “messiah, prophet, exalted hero, archangel, even God.”²⁵ Each segment of Jewish society had their own beliefs, needs, and understanding of the promise dependent upon their tribe, local rabbis, faith experiences, class, and the alignment of ideology to either the Essenes, Pharisees, Sadducees, or another group. Therefore, there are numerous starting points when describing an early Christian understanding of who Christ was (that is a Christology of 1Thes). The context of 1Thes will define Christology within the framework of the particularities within the letter and the sources that Paul used. As intimated by Fee above (page 1) there are two basic features of Christology: 1) Jesus Christ the person or his nature (who) and 2) Jesus the actor or purpose (role). According to Frank Matera, the Christology of “Paul begins with Christ’s death and resurrection and presents him as the crucified Messiah, the risen Lord, the image of God, the eschatological Adam, the one who will come again.”²⁶ Fee defines the difference between the person and the actor and Matera clarifies that in 1Thes Paul includes the death, resurrection, and return of Jesus.

- **Who was Jesus, the person, to Paul at the time he wrote 1Thes**

First, it will be important to see who Paul said Jesus Christ was in terms of specific language in 1Thes. A number of clues will be gleaned from this letter and from a

²⁵ Freedman, David Noel (ed.). *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Christology, Section A1.

²⁶ Frank Matera, “Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology”, *Theological Studies*, 67, no. 2, June 2006, page 239.

number of resources relevant to this particular epistle. In doing so it will be clear what was important for Paul about the life of Jesus on earth, as far as Paul's preaching ministry is concerned. It is also of interest to see what Paul did not say about Jesus either because the stories were already well known to the population or because Paul was unaware of these stories of Jesus.²⁷ For example, in his writing about Jesus Christ in 1Thes there is no mention of his birth, life, or miracles. Although one cannot make too many assumptions about why these are not mentioned it is possible to narrow down the field of speculation given by a wide variety of modern writers.²⁸

Paul used a number of titles for Jesus in 1Thes. One presumes these titles had a particular meaning for Paul and the community at Thessalonica in regards to their own Jesus experience individually and as a community. A few questions come to the fore: What was Paul trying to tell this community about the person of Jesus or what did he presume? Who was Jesus to Paul? The Hellenistic Jewish community and the Greek peoples of Thessalonica had a particular understanding of these titles and motifs. How was Paul speaking to one or both sets of people? It will be necessary to look at what was going on in this part of the world and tease out possible meanings of Paul's terminology.²⁹

- **What was Jesus' role in the divine plan in 1Thes**

Secondly, an outline of the role of Jesus as outlined in 1Thes will be laid out.

This will allow for an analysis of the language used in 1Thes as it relates to the actual

²⁷ See James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998, page 183. There is little of the life of Jesus in Paul, save a mention of his being born of a woman and under the law (Gal. 4:4), that he had brothers (Gal. 1:9; 1 Cor. 9:5), and the last supper references in 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

²⁸ See John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity*, (Harper Collins, 1998). Also see Dunn (Theology of Paul, pages 183-185) who argues that for Paul, the life of Christ was not essential to his message but that the "Christ of his theology as Christian ("now") was Christ risen from the dead" (page 184).

²⁹ See, for example, Forbes, pages 134-171.

role that Jesus would play in 1Thes. Paul's background will be deduced and seen as an important lens into his Christology. It will be shown that Paul had a definite mix of Jewish motifs from Isaiah and other documents. Some of the roles of Jesus include avenger and redeemer. Therefore his early Christology has an identifiable theme beginning in 1Thes though it is modified somewhat in later writings, that is theology developed over a short period of time and thus theology was diverse as early as the first few decades of Christianity.³⁰

- **Additional Christological concerns in 1Thes**

A well developed Christology arose later, well after the other New Testament writings in the creeds of the Church. Moreover, the Nicene Creed that is proclaimed in Christian liturgies and rites since the fourth century is far removed from the early church in *Thessaloniki*. 1Thes therefore is only a snapshot of that time and thus a singular glimpse about how a certain group of Christians experienced who Christ was and what his role was for them. So, for purposes of clarity, the working definition of *Christological statements* in 1Thes is any verse which "discusses any evaluation of Jesus in respect to who he was and the role he played in the divine plan."³¹

1Thes is one among several sources for 1st century Christology, including the Acts of the Apostles, the letter to the Romans and other Pauline literature. Isolating a particular reading from a single letter can be helpful, as it can give us a component part of the whole picture from Paul's various letters. Once we can glean an understanding of Christology from 1Thes, then we can, in future studies, compare the Christological

³⁰ James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*, Norwich, (UK: SCM Press, 2006).

³¹ Raymond E. Brown, *Introduction to New Testament Christology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), page 3.

statements (taking into account the variance of purpose for each document) with the rest of the Pauline corpus, the Gospels, other N.T. writings, and beyond. The importance of understanding 1st century Christology in 1Thes is that it gives us a starting point to delve into and analyze one picture of how a particular community experienced the Christ event, as proclaimed and imitated by Paul and his companions, and therefore gain some understanding of first century Christology.

Many studies discuss Christology from the angle of the Christological controversies of subsequent centuries and in particular discuss Paul's Christology from a historical perspective describing the development of thought throughout all of his writings.³² This thesis will describe Christology from the data of 1Thes, c. 51 C.E. I am arguing that it is important and necessary to begin an investigation of how early Christians experienced Jesus Christ by examining each document, in this case 1Thes.

General Theme of 1Thes

Paul's message in 1Thes is a *paraenesis*, that is a moral exhortation³³ (such as 1Thes 4:1, "Now ... we beg and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that even as you learned from us ... you must learn to make still greater progress") written to foster the community's faith and brotherly love, reminding them about what was taught before, and enlivening them to hope in the *parousia*³⁴ (the second coming of Christ). Many Cynics, Stoics, Epicureans, and other philosophers of the day also wrote and preached in the paraenetic motif.³⁵ Since 1Thes was written in a the paraenetic mode of discourse there is

³² See Fee, pages 10-15, for a discussion of pre-Pauline Christology through modern scholarship concerning Pauline Christology.

³³ As in 1Thes 4:1, 10; 5:11-12, 14.

³⁴ See Donfried, pages 119-120.

³⁵ Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989) pages 35-36, 50

a boundary of topics that are necessarily included while at the same time certain other topics may be presumed or simply not necessary to state. So while analyzing 1Thes it is important to remember that development of a theology, no less a Christology, was not the primary purpose of the letter but rather it had a pastoral purpose that drew on Paul's theological and Christological connections. Simply stated, if the letter was written as a theological treatise on Christology then the meaning of the text would be apparent, but since it is a letter of exhortation then the theology must be carefully pulled from the text.

According to Norman Wentworth DeWitt, Paul's role was to "transform... an Epicurean community into a Christian community and a Greek philosophy into the Christian religion, replacing for example, the virtue of total honesty by the virtue of total sanctification."³⁶ Furthermore, Benjamin Fiore, shows that Paul used *paradeigma* in 1Thes³⁷ not looking for them to change behavior "but for two things: their correct appraisal of the power of the Holy Spirit ... and their own apostolic effectiveness."³⁸ To wit, Paul engaged in the rhetoric of the time in order to relay information about true sanctification and a true model to replicate behavior which is from the power of the Holy Spirit and for the benefit of others, i.e. spreading the gospel.

Paul was concerned about several issues. The initial visit to *Thessaloniki* included a message about turning from idols. According to 1Thes 1:9, "The people of those parts (Macedonia and Achaia) are reporting what kind of reception we had from you, and how you turned from idols, to serve him who is the living and true God" Other issues of importance to Paul was God's dealing with those who continue in sin (2:16);

³⁶ Norman Wentworth DeWitt, *St. Paul and Epicurus* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1954), page 52.

³⁷ Benjamin Fiore, "Paul, Exemplification, and Imitation", in J. Paul Sampley (ed.) *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, (New York: Trinity Press International, 2003), page 228.

³⁸ *ibid*, page 239.

salvation for those who have been chosen or elect (1:4); and staying vigilant until the coming of the Lord (1:10, 3:8) which was thought to be very soon.³⁹ 1Thes continues in that vein but also includes encouraging them in the virtue of hope, teaching them that those who have died will not miss out on the resurrection (4:13), and that the faithful departed will in fact precede those who are still living (4:15).

God is present to those called (the elect who are afflicted) in 1Thes and God leads them to salvation⁴⁰ through the gospel or *Word of the Lord* (a message directly from Paul's experience of Jesus or from a primary source such as an Apostle) preached and practiced. 1Thes then is an apology,⁴¹ a confident restatement intended to reassure, a Word of the Lord, and a letter to validate the message preached by Paul and his companions when he traversed there previously, spending "3 Sabbaths" there according to Acts 17:2. Paul certainly could have been in *Thessaloniki* for a longer period of time or on a few other occasions.⁴² Parallel to this understanding is an awareness of the texts known, quoted, and alluded to either as "highly literal or (as) free renderings"⁴³ from Paul's Bible, the Jewish Scripture,⁴⁴ such as these brief examples (*italics* below are mine to show similar or identical language).⁴⁵

Zech 14:5b 'the *Lord, my God*, shall come, and *all his holy ones* with him'
 1Thes 3:13b 'blameless and holy before *our God* and Father at the coming
 of our Lord Jesus with *all his holy ones*'

³⁹ See Alexandra R. Brown, *Paul and the Parousia*, in John T. Carroll, *The return of Jesus in early Christianity*, (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Pub., 2000), pages 47-76.

⁴⁰ Donfried, page 120.

⁴¹ *ibid*, page 134.

⁴² Phil 4:16 states that he was sent alms twice "Even when I was at Thessalonica you sent something for my needs, not once but twice."

⁴³ See reference to Ziegler, 1934 -- *Untersuchungen* in Childs, page 2.

⁴⁴ Childs, 16. "Paul uses the Greek text of the Septuagint ... he shares throughout the features from his Jewish-Hellenistic milieu, but his exegesis cannot be easily fitted into one pattern."

⁴⁵ See Fee, pages 43-48 for a comparison between Jewish scripture and 1Thes.

Psalm 47:6 ‘God *mounts his throne* amid shouts of joy; the Lord amid *trumpet* blasts.

1Thes 4:16b ‘the *Lord himself will come down from heaven* ... at the sound of the archangel’s voice and God’s *trumpet*’

Joel 1:1a ‘The *word of the Lord* which came to Joel’

1Thes 1:8a, 4:15a ‘The *word of the Lord* has echoed forth from you resoundingly’, ‘We say to you, as if the *Lord himself had said it*’

Gen 24:3a ‘and *I make you swear by the Lord*’

1Thes 5:27a ‘*I adjure you by the Lord*’

Joel 1:15a, 2:1b ‘Alas, the day! For *near is the day of the Lord*’, ‘blow the trumpet ... for *the day of the Lord is coming*’

1Thes 5:2 ‘you know very well that the *day of the Lord is coming* like a thief in the night’

Psalm 94:1 ‘God of *vengeance*, Lord, *God of vengeance*, show yourself’

1Thes 4:6b ‘for the *Lord is an avenger*’

Psalm 33:22 ‘May *your kindness*, O Lord, be upon us who have put our *hope in you*’

1Thes 1:3b ‘*laboring in love*, and showing constancy of *hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*’

Listed above are seven examples of similar phrases used by Paul in 1Thes from the Jewish scripture. The ‘word of the Lord’ phrase, a prophetic formula, is essential in 1Thes as Paul uses it on a number of occasions. A purpose of the phrase is to show that the words preached are neither Paul’s own words nor the words of anyone else other than Jesus Christ. Whether the phrase ‘word of the Lord’ means that Paul learned from the Lord Jesus Christ directly, as in Acts 9:16 (“I myself shall indicate to him how much he will have to suffer for my name”) or it is the gospel as taught to him by Ananias and others, as in Acts 19b-20 (“Saul stayed some time with the disciples in Damascus, and soon began to proclaim in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God”) shows that the ‘word of the Lord’ are not Paul’s words but belong to God and the people of God. One

of the primary referents for Paul, however, is the book of the prophet Isaiah⁴⁶ which will be covered below. Within the sequence of *Christological* phrases are quotes directly from or similar to verses from the book of Isaiah and others as used in 1Thes. Each of the ten Christological themes listed in Chapter Two below describes the terminology, context, and Christology of 1Thes.

Paul used an *imitation* or *mimetes motif* and drew on examples, experiences, and scripture to show that he is an imitator of Christ and a messianic prophet,⁴⁷ and importantly he recognized Christ-like behavior in the Christians of *Thessaloniki* who received the word of the Lord with joy which allowed it to spread throughout the region, (1:6-7). 1Thes 1:6 reads specifically *καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου* “and you became imitators of us and of the Lord” (TYN), that is Paul and his companions call on the Thessalonians “to excel in Christ-like action and behavior” (TYN)⁴⁸ and “imitators of the missionaries and of the Lord and therefore “an example *τύπον* to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia” (1:7, TYN).

According to Donfried the imitation motif is at variance with Greek understanding. The Greek philosophers who preached in the streets pointed to themselves as the one to be imitated but Paul called on his followers to copy the original, Jesus Christ.⁴⁹ At that time many philosophers used the imitation motif⁵⁰ though they pointed to themselves as the one to be imitated with caution, and not to act exactly as

⁴⁶ See reference to *United Bible Society's Greek New Testament* in Childs, page 5 “more than 400 quotations, paraphrases, or allusions to Isaiah in the New Testament”

⁴⁷ Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989) cf. 4 “Paul presents himself as a messianic prophet to the gentiles.” A.-M. Denis, “L'Apotre Paul, 'prophete messianique' des Gentiles: Etudes thematique de 1 Thess, II, 1-6” ETL 33 (1957): 245-318.

⁴⁸ Richard, page 66. See pages 65-73 for an explanation of the four imitation verses, (1 Cor 4:16; 11:11; Phil 3:17; 1 Thes 1:6).

⁴⁹ Donfried, pages 126-127.

⁵⁰ Malherbe, pages 51 and 57.

they did.⁵¹ Paul however points to the Lord Jesus Christ. One of Paul's main messages in 1Thes is his praise for the community that they imitated him as he imitated Jesus Christ; their imitation was their reception of the word of the Lord and following the same path that Paul did. Paul understands that Jesus Christ has attributes that are far greater than any other human; such that Jesus is the ideal. Paul preached, not from his own authority, but from a "Jewish background which sees everything as originating from the Torah"⁵² and thus from God.

According to Elizabeth A. Castelli,⁵³ Paul was addressing a situation in which the Thessalonians imitated his manner of receiving the word of the Lord, but were not necessarily just doing as he did; rather they were imitating Paul for the sake of flattery. Benjamin Fiore states that "Paul calls for ethical conformity to his own pattern of behavior; he embodies what he expects of the Thessalonian community."⁵⁴ So to put these thoughts together it may be said that Paul used similar methods as the other philosophers who taught in the streets, temples, etc. because he desired their audiences to act as they acted though with a "look at me" attitude even if the ultimate aim was the imitation of a divine figure.⁵⁵ Paul however "is interested in a personal relationship" with the Thessalonians "rather than (one of) authority"⁵⁶ though by necessity and design he exercised authority as a parental figure, "doesn't draw attention to particular deeds but

⁵¹ Malherbe, page 57.

⁵² Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 94 also cf. 48 T. Holtz, 'Zur Frage der inhaltlichen Weisungen bei Paulus', *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 106 (1981), 385-400.

⁵³ See Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1991), 92-93. "The usage of mimesis in both passages in 1Thessalonians differs from the other passages (Phil 3:17 and 1Cor 4:16, 11:1) because the Thessalonians texts describe a historical 'fact' about mimesis, rather than exhorting the community to perform a mimetic act.

⁵⁴ Fiore, page 239.

⁵⁵ See Malherbe, pages 50 – 57

⁵⁶ *ibid*, page 57

how the gospel came to them,”⁵⁷ and used the Epicurean, Cynic, and Stoic patterns of exhortation.⁵⁸ Paul, therefore, was quite comfortable using the language and rhetoric of the learned class around him.

Isaiah

John F. A. Sawyer asks a question in *The Fifth Gospel*, concerning “whether Isaiah can be said to have had any special role to play at the earliest stage in the origin and development of Christian tradition.”⁵⁹ He suggests that Jesus may have used a good number of passages from Isaiah, especially Chapter 53, in his own preaching ministry though it is not really possible to know.⁶⁰ If it is the case that Jesus quoted from Isaiah on a regular basis then it would make sense that his apostles and disciples, including Paul, would have also used Isaiah in a more pronounced manner. At any rate early Christians used Isaiah to interpret their experience of Jesus. Although he shows only one direct quote from Isaiah in 1Thes, which is at 3:5 (“I have labored in vain”⁶¹) there are indirect quotations to Isaiah in 1Thes such as 5:8 “putting on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet” which parallels Isaiah 59:17 “(God) put on justice as his breastplate, salvation, as a helmet on his head.” Other phrases quoted from Hebrew Scriptures include: 2 Mac 6:14 at 1Thes 2:16, “filling up their quota of sins” and Proverbs 20:22, “Say not, ‘I will repay evil’” at 1Thes 5:15. Also see Chapter One above for a list of seven parallels between Hebrew Scripture and 1Thes.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, page 58

⁵⁸ *ibid*, page 59; see also Green, page 183, cf. 1 for Greek and Latin exhortations.

⁵⁹ John F. A. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel, Isaiah in the History of Christianity*. (Oxford, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), page 22.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, page 23

⁶¹ *ibid*, page 33

Sawyer further shows that Isaiah had a prominent place in all the Jewish traditions such that the Jews of the first century certainly would have been very familiar with it and given it much esteem.⁶² Since Isaiah was widely used (by Jews in Jerusalem and in the Diaspora) and since early Christians, even non-Jews, would have had a fair amount of exposure to Isaiah,⁶³ it is evident that Isaiah played a significant role in Paul's theology in the early church. Brevard S. Childs argues that the "New Testament's exegetical coherence with Isaiah ultimately highlights a fundamental difference: at the heart of the New Testament's application of the Isaianic prophecy is the conviction that the coming of the kingdom is not simply a promise, but a divine reality experienced in the person of Jesus Christ."⁶⁴

According to Acts 16-17, Paul preached in Philippi and passed through Amphipolis and Apponia prior to coming to Thessalonica. After leaving Thessalonica he traveled to Athens and Corinth – where he wrote 1Thes (Acts 18). While in Thessalonica Paul preached in the Jewish Synagogues for at least three Sabbath days reasoning with them from scripture (Acts 17:2) and "explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying 'This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ' (Acts 17:3). Due to his preaching many Jews were persuaded and joined with Paul and a 'large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women' (Acts 17:4).

Thus his followers included a mixed audience of Jews and converts from Hellenistic religions. Some of the Jews who did not agree with Paul's preaching about Jesus 'set the city in an uproar,' (Acts 17:5) in pursuit of the followers of the Way,

⁶² *ibid*, page 23

⁶³ *ibid*, pages 22-23

⁶⁴ Childs, page 6

including Jason and some brethren (Acts 17:5-9). The accusation against the followers of Paul's preaching was that they considered Jesus as a king, a message that was against the law of the Roman Empire who saw Caesar as the one and only king. The brethren sent Paul away to Berea but the Jews of Thessalonica went to a more 'noble-minded' population of Berea to stir up trouble there as well (Acts 17:10-13).

In summary, there were a number of Jewish beliefs about the messianic hope. Paul, as a Jewish teacher, had a particular understanding from among those beliefs, of who the messiah was and what his role would be. A portion of his understanding can be understood in part by reading 1Thes, though the primary intention of the letter is pastoral rather than theological. The Christology of Paul consists of both his understanding of: 1) who Jesus was as a person, which is his biography and nature, and 2) the role of Jesus, that is, his purpose. Much of Paul's language is taken from Isaiah and he preached from a 'word of the Lord' which he received from the community of believers in Palestine and perhaps also directly from his own experience of God. The following chapter will address particular themes within 1Thes.

Three particular issues were raised above that are relevant to the discussion of Paul's Christology in 1Thes, namely the imitation motive, Greek philosophy, and Paul's understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures in general and the book of Isaiah particularly. Paul is not an actor of his own accord but tries to live in imitation of the one who sent him, namely Jesus the Lord under the guidance and teaching of the Apostles. He preaches the word of the Lord using language from both Greek philosophy and Isaiah since because he is a man of his day, that is he is an educated man who understands those who philosophize in the streets, gathering crowds. Also he knows and is intimate with

the book of Isaiah as well as the rest of Hebrew Scriptures. These are the three legs which support the message of Paul to 1Thes or the lenses which Paul uses to know and proclaim the word of the Lord. In imitating the Lord he expects the followers of Jesus in Thessaloniki to also imitate the Lord. In using Greek philosophical and religious imagery he hopes to capture the imagination of the Greeks in the city. Finally by using language from Isaiah he can adequately speak to the Jews in the city and teach the Gentiles the salvific history of the Jewish people.

Chapter Two Ten Christological Themes in 1Thes

Christological Terms

In this chapter I will proceed by describing ten terms or phrases within 1Thes, including their context that can help us trace Christology beginning in *Thessaloniki*. Furthermore, texts from the Jewish Scriptures will also be used, primarily Isaiah as noted above as well as a few Hellenistic themes. Childs⁶⁵ identified eight concepts from Isaiah that were used in the New Testament. I have incorporated five of them – *italicized below* – into my ten Christological themes listed here:

- I. One who proclaims the word of the Lord (1Thes 1:5-8; 2:13; 4:15-16)
- II. *Suffering Servant* – Afflicted One, One who suffers and dies (1Thes 1:6; 2:2; 3:3-4, 7; 4:14, 16b-17)
- III. One who is Gentle, a Comforter, a Consoler (1Thes 2:7-8, 11)
- IV. Light and Darkness (1Thes 5:4-8a)
- V. Voice to the Gentiles / the Nations (1Thes 2:16) – (*Inclusion of the Gentiles and Hardening of Israel*)
- VI. Wearer of Divine Attributes (1Thes 5:8)
- VII. True provider of Peace and Security *Pax et Securitas* (1Thes 5:3)
- VIII. Jesus: Lord, Son of God, Son from Heaven (1Thes 1:10; 4:16-17)
- IX. *Divine Reconciliation and Restoration – Fulfillment of God's Eschatological Promise of Salvation* – (1Thes 1:10; 2:4; 4:6; 5:9-10)
- X. *Sharer in Divine Purpose and Activity with God the Father* – (1Thes 4:13-16)

⁶⁵ *ibid*, page 5

Each of the above themes will be explained in the context of 1Thes related to the text itself along with one or more of the other nine terms. The terms will be developed to show how each relates to the people of *Thessaloniki*, Paul, and ultimately back to Jesus Christ. The Christology of 1Thes may be summed up as the combination and interrelationship of these terms. Of course the person and role of Jesus Christ is more than the sum of these ten concepts but a discussion of these terms make a good starting point for understanding the horizon of Christology that we find in 1Thes.

Furthermore, parallels within the Book of Isaiah, as well as other Jewish Scriptures, will be described within each of the ten concepts to underscore the historical and cultural context of the ancient world. Interestingly the majority of the terms from Isaiah are referenced in the latter part of Isaiah, chapters 40-66,⁶⁶ Second Isaiah. It is a possibility that during the preaching ministry of Paul and others they were reading through this part of the Hebrew scripture as part of preaching the “word of God”⁶⁷ over the three or so weeks he spent there.

There are a number of terms used in 1Thes which describe a) who Jesus was and b) his role in the divine plan. I will outline ten terms / phrases that describe an aspect of the person of Jesus (who he was) and/or the work of Jesus (his role) to be important factors in 1Thes. These ten terms / phrases will be outlined below along with general motifs from a variety of sources. Primarily Paul’s letter is pastoral, as a mentor to a follower, and comes from a trio of messengers – including Paul, as well as Silvanus and

⁶⁶ See Sawyer, ‘Consolation’ readings from chapters 40-61, page 25

⁶⁷ Fortescue, Adrian. “Liturgy.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 9. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910).

Timothy (1Thes 1:1) though it concludes with a “solemn command”⁶⁸ in the first person. The overriding image is that of Paul as an imitator of Christ and the Thessalonians as imitators of Christ by imitating⁶⁹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy (1Thes 1:6-7; 2:14, TYN) – “you became imitators (*μιμηται*) of us and of the Lord ... a model for all believers ... have become imitators of the churches of God that are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you suffer the same things from your compatriots as they did.” So in using the imitation motif Paul encourages the Thessalonians to hear the Word of the Lord, endure suffering, and follow Jesus Christ – as he and his compatriots did – in so doing they all imitate the Lord Jesus Christ.⁷⁰

I. One who proclaims the Word of the Lord

The first phrase to consider, in sequential order, is the phrase ‘word of the Lord, word of God’ which is used more often in 1Thes than any other Pauline letter⁷¹ (var. *λόγος του κυρίου; λόγον θεου; λόγω κυρίου*) as seen at 1Thes 1:5-8; 2:13; and 4:15-16. Paul describes the people of *Thessaloniki* as those who received the word of the Lord, as received prophetically, as well as imitators or models *μιμηται* of the gospel to the surrounding area including Macedonia and Achaia. In 1Thes 1:5-8 many of the essential ingredients of this writing are expressed:

For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the holy Spirit and (with) much conviction. You know what sort of people we were (among) you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in great affliction, with joy from the holy

⁶⁸ The entire letter is written in third person except this particular I statement, presumably by Paul, in 1Thes 5:27 “I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all”.

⁶⁹ Fiore, pages 228-230

⁷⁰ Malherbe, page 58.

⁷¹ See Donfried, page 92 – the terms gospel and word are interchangeable. This phrase is also used more in 1Thes proportionately than in any other Pauline text.

Spirit, so that you become a model for all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth not only in Macedonia and (in) Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

Paul's preaching brought conviction to the people and he saw that as an attribute of God's work in him.⁷² So Paul's *modus operandi* is that he imitated Jesus Christ by preaching and modeling the behaviors of Jesus while enduring great affliction, as in 2:2 "from the humiliation we had suffered ... in the face of great opposition," 3:4b "we used to warn you that we would undergo trial;⁷³ now it has happened, and you know what we meant" and in 3:7 "we have been much consoled by your faith throughout our distress and trial." Then the Thessalonians imitated Jesus Christ by preaching and modeling the behaviors of Jesus in great affliction by imitating Paul's standard. Paul is writing to exhort the people to look "beyond Paul to the experience of conversion to faith in Christ."⁷⁴ It is Jesus Christ that proclaims the word of God through Paul by the power of the Holy Spirit as well as through the Thessalonians.

This *word* is not just any word, not just any human word as used by the philosophers (human rhetoric), but a divine word taught to Paul by the apostles and through his call and conversion, as in 2:13, "and for this reason we too give thanks to God unceasingly, that, in receiving the word of God from hearing us you received not a human word but, as it truly is, the word of God, which is now at work in you who believe." This word of God which was active in Jesus Christ then Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, is now active and alive, working in the Thessalonians and spreading to Macedonia and Achaia (1:7). Thus it was imperative for Paul to show that proclaiming

⁷² James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 48, cf. 117

⁷³ See Acts 14:22b, "We must undergo many trials if we are to enter into the reign of God."

⁷⁴ Fiore in Sampley, page 239.

the word of the Lord, through the power of the Holy Spirit was an essential component of following Christ.⁷⁵

Furthermore in 4:16, Jesus Christ is said to have attributes that Paul and the Thessalonians do not have, that is Jesus speaks (or cries) a word as one who commands angels, “For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with a voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven.” Thus the difference between the trio of preachers (Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy) and their followers in relation to Jesus Christ is that Jesus speaks the word of God with his own authority over the angels. There is no evidence in 1Thes that Paul or anyone else speaks with this authority over angels. So the first difference between Jesus Christ and Paul and, by extension, humanity is that Jesus speaks the word of God with authority while people therefore speak the word of God via the power and authority of the Holy Spirit and the imitation of Jesus Christ.

The phrase “word of the Lord” is used in a number of ways in the Jewish Scriptures to reference a prophetic voice or an oracle of the Lord. In Isaiah 51:16, the prophet describes God putting the ‘word of God’ into the mouth of the people in general and the prophet in particular, “I have put my words into your mouth and shielded you in the shadow of my hand (51:16).” This parallels what is occurring in *Thessaloniki*, that Paul as prophet is carrying the word of God directly from Jesus Christ to the people who have this word of God now and can share it with others, as in 1Thes 4:15a “we say to you, as if the Lord himself had said it.” Whereas in the Isaiah passage there is an indication of a salvation on earth, here in 1Thes the people are shielded from spiritual

⁷⁵ Brown, Raymond E.; Fitzmyer, Joseph A; Murphy, Roland E. Murphy. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), page 774

harm since in the end, the faithful will join Jesus in the sky along with those who have died (4:15-17):

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, God will bring forth with him from the dead those also who have fallen asleep believing in him. We say to you, as if the Lord himself had said it, that we who live, who survive until his coming, will in no way have an advantage over those who have fallen asleep. No, the Lord himself will come down from heaven at the word of command, at the sound of the archangel's voice and God's trumpet; and those who have died in Christ will rise first. The we, the living, the survivors, will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

In Jeremiah 1:4 the term, the word of the Lord, is used in association with an oracle, which is often the case when used by the prophets, "The word of the Lord came to me thus ..." In this case the word of the Lord appointed Jeremiah as prophet to the nations (Jer. 1:5) and placed God's word into Jeremiah's mouth "saying, See I place my words in your mouth," Jer. 1:9. This parallels Isaiah 6:7 which read, "See ... now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged." One who proclaims the word of the Lord is one who is called, touched, given the word of the Lord to speak, and *purged* of sin.⁷⁶ Paul and his companions do not claim to be the word of the Lord nor perfect, but do claim to have been called by Jesus Christ, touched, given the word, and purged of sin in order to speak and proclaim the Word of the Lord; thus continuing a prophetic tradition of proclamation.

This phrase 'word of the Lord' according to Dunn "was an inspired utterance or prophecy given to Paul (privately or in the Christian assembly, perhaps drawing on earlier Jesus tradition)." This inspiration or prophecy from the Spirit is suggested in 5:19 "Do not stifle the Spirit" and shows that the people of 1Thes were no "strangers to the

⁷⁶ The phrase 'purged of sin' refers to the prophets, Paul, and Jesus. There is no specific indication of Jesus' sinlessness in 1Thes though in e.g. 2 Cor 5:21 it is clear that Paul considers Jesus sinless.

experience of prophecy.”⁷⁷ Perhaps part of the Jesus tradition that Paul had already imparted on the people of *Thessaloniki* includes something about Jesus as a prophet who received the word of the Lord, proclaimed it, and passed it on to those who followed him. The Christian assembly then should proclaim the word of the Lord in such a way that those around them, in their community and beyond, may have the same experiential learning and spiritual experience of Christ.

This first Christological term described in 1Thes is that Jesus Christ is the paramount one who proclaims the word of God⁷⁸ and gives this word to others to share with the whole world. Jesus Christ is higher than the angels unlike any prophet from the Jewish Scriptures, unlike Paul, and unlike any other human. As such he is the bearer of the *word of the Lord*, one who has authenticated it and lived it out. He is the message that is received and the gospel that is sounded forth. As such the Thessalonians acted as a model *μιμηται* or pattern *τυπος* to the neighboring communities and bore that same word and witness through action and affliction.⁷⁹

II. Suffering Servant – Afflicted One, One who suffers and dies

The second phrase to consider is the concept of affliction or suffering, as in the Suffering Servant or *Servant of Yahweh*.⁸⁰ According to Dunn, “Paul regarded suffering as an integral feature of the eschatological tension.”⁸¹ Plevnik furthermore outlines that whatever happens to Christ will happen to Christians: Jesus suffered, died, and rose. So

⁷⁷ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, cf. 45, page 303.

⁷⁸ David Wenham, *Paul, Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, MI, 1995, pp. 305-307 explains that this phrase is a ‘tradition indicator’ passed on from other Christian communities and not a traditional saying of Jesus.

⁷⁹ Donfried, page 131.

⁸⁰ See Thomas P. Rausch, *Who is Jesus, An Introduction to Christology*. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), p. 48.

⁸¹ Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 484, also cf. 97

to Christians will suffer, die, and rise.⁸² Language in 1Thes shows that Paul and his companions suffered: in 2:2 “we have suffered” *προπαθόντες*, and the Thessalonians have and will be “shamelessly mistreated” *ὄβρισηθέντες*. Also as in 1:6 – they were “receiving the word in great affliction” *θλίψειπολλή*, as did the Lord Jesus Christ who also suffered and died (4:14). Thus Jesus Christ can also be seen as the afflicted one – the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. Furthermore, Paul was and continues to be afflicted, and those in *Thessaloniki* can also expect to go through affliction or suffering because of the time and circumstances (not because it is a qualification of being a follower of Jesus Christ). In verses 3:3-4, 7, Paul writes:

... so that no one be disturbed in these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For even when we were among you, we used to warn you in advance that we would undergo affliction, just as has happened, as you know ... in our every distress and affliction, through your faith (TYN).⁸³

Although the other philosophers used an affliction motif, Paul used it not to be harsh⁸⁴ but to warn, comfort, and encourage. The destiny of the people of *Thessaloniki* may be affliction and this burden has occurred, is occurring, and *may* occur to all who follow and attend to the Word of the Lord. These afflictions however may simply be “the alienation caused by the converts’ adoption of a new value system which radically changed their social, cultic, and religious affiliations and loyalties.”⁸⁵ This is not an easy path to travel, though the ultimate destiny is not affliction but rather salvation. As Paul

⁸² Plevnik, Joseph. *Paul and the Parousia: an Exegetical and Theological Investigation*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), pages 71-72.

⁸³ For birth pangs of the age to come, see Seyoon Kim, “The Jesus tradition in 1Thess 4.13-5.11.” *New Testament Studies*, 48(2), 231, cf. 16. See also Matt 24:8 and Mark 13:8.

⁸⁴ Malherbe, page 51.

⁸⁵ Richard, page 149. In *Sacra Pagina*, First and Second Thessalonians, Earl J. Richard argues for three interpretations of the term *thlipsis* (afflictions as in 1Thes 3:3) which can be defined in three distinct ways, 1) as a part of Christian life, 2) the suffering of Christ within the members of the community, and 3) the eschatological tribulation, does not necessarily mean all three definitions are implied with each usage. 1Thes 3:3 should not imply that it is the destination of all Christians to suffer, page 148).

explains in verse 4:14, it is Jesus that “died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.” This early creed is stated a few times in 1Thes to show that even if suffering and affliction led to death, Jesus would provide comfort and encouragement for those who follow the *word of the Lord*. This early doxology is also stated in 5:9-10 as Paul wrote that the “Lord Jesus Christ ... died for us.” If Christ was afflicted, suffered unto death, and Paul went through affliction, then it follows that all who imitate Christ by imitating Paul (in this case) will suffer affliction (at least in terms of living an alienating lifestyle as described above, cf. 85), even death for some. The community imitated Christ as mediated by Paul. It is unclear in 1Thes that someone could directly imitate Christ, who has risen, but could do so via another human person or from the experience and faith of the community. So that even the community of *Thessaloniki* will undergo death but that need not be a concern, as seen in 4:16b-17 – “the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.”

Thus those who follow Christ in *Thessaloniki* at that moment in time will necessarily experience suffering,⁸⁶ will go through affliction,⁸⁷ and may even die but all will end up joining Jesus in the clouds (4:17), whether this means escorting Jesus to earth to establish the kingdom of God or following him to a heavenly kingdom. The message, however, is that those who follow Christ will continue to do so even after death, death is no barrier to being *in Christ*. In the end all will be brought together, reuniting those who

⁸⁶ For more on the issue of the lot of the Christian in the time and letters of Paul to suffer, see Rom 8:17; 2Cor 1:15; and continues in non-Pauline letters 1Pet 4:12; and 2Tim 3:12 which reads, “Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” For more see G. L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (PNTC). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2002, page 162.

⁸⁷ This affliction, as explained in Phil 1:7b, 29-30 shows that those who suffer will experience grace.

are alive and those who have died, affliction will end, suffering will cease, in the end there will be peace.⁸⁸

The affliction or *coming affliction* motif also occurs in the Jewish Scriptures as it concerns those who follow the word of the Lord and who are under the care of God. For many Jews in the Diaspora including *Thessaloniki*, who have known war and persecution, it would likely be no surprise⁸⁹ to understand that those who follow the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be afflicted but revived by God. One such verse is Isaiah 53:3, which reads “He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, One of those from whom men hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.” Isaiah 57:15b, as one example, describes God’s comfort for the afflicted – “To revive the spirits of the dejected, to revive the hearts of the crushed”. Life brings pain and affliction, it is not God who causes it but those who follow the word of the Lord, even if they undergo affliction, will be consoled. The one who follows God, as in Isaiah 66:2b which states “this is the one whom I approve: the lowly and afflicted man who trembles at my *word*” (emphasis mine) will, in the case of 1Thes, suffer because they are in the minority and are going against the state’s religious practices. It is not a sign of rejection of God to be afflicted or lowly but simply a result of living in righteousness for God who trembles or ‘shows concern’ at the word of the Lord.

God pays attention to those who follow the word of the Lord, as in Jeremiah 30:4b, 7 which shows that the Lord hears the cry of dismay and that Jacob will be saved from the time of distress. God is not separated from those who follow but hears those

⁸⁸ See Revelations, Chapters 20-21

⁸⁹ This refers to the history of repression, captivity, and longing for the arrival of the Messiah. Also from Isaiah chapter 51, which has been previously referred, verses 13b, “all the day you are in constant dread of the fury of the oppressor.”

who cry out and brings comfort to those who are afflicted. Being afflicted for following the word of the Lord is not a sign of weakness but a 'cry' to God for comfort.

In Christological terms, then, Jesus Christ can be defined as one whom: suffers and undergoes affliction, lives in affliction and dies, is raised from the dead by God the Father, and meets both those who have died in Christ and those who are alive in Christ in the clouds, an eschatological event. So a major Christological point made in 1Thes is that Christ underwent affliction due to the socio-religious climate of his time and place. Jesus endured suffering for and was victorious over death. Since those in *Thessaloniki* are called to be a type or model *μιμηται* of Christ following the example of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to those in Macedonia and Achaia, then they should be aware of the possibility of suffering and affliction all the while living a righteous life just as Jesus Christ lived in such a way to suffer, die, and rise. Followers of Christ may suffer, or are 'called to suffer (3:4),⁹⁰ as much as Jesus Christ did, but God is just as near to the followers of Christ as God was near to the Israelites of Isaiah's time. Just as the God of the Jewish Scriptures brought comfort to those who suffer, the followers of Christ should also comfort those who suffer, which again simply mean living a lifestyle alien to that of the majority may culture, whether in the time of Isaiah or Paul.

III. One who is Gentle, a Comforter, a Consoler

A third major Christological area of 1Thes is the concept of being gentle like a nurse, a comforter, and a consoler as shown by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. First, Paul,

⁹⁰ Wenham, page 302.

using the plural suggesting that the aforementioned trio worked together in *Thessaloniki* and each cared for the people, as he says in 2:7-8, 11 (TYN):

... we were gentle among you, as a nursing mother (*τροφοδος*) cares for her children. With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us ... as you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his children.

Here Paul used both female and male images of God, which (as will be shown using Isaiah below), has deep roots in Hebrew Scripture. Parental language is used of Paul and his fellow workers in the language of a mother nursing a child with her own milk – her own body. This may certainly have reminded the Thessalonians of the Dionysian cult which taught that this god was nursed by nymphs but here Paul shows that it is the one who preaches the Word of the Lord that acts as nursemaid to the people.⁹¹ Furthermore, the book of Hosea describes similar images, as in 11:1-4:

“When Israel was a child I loved him, out of Egypt I called my son. The more I called them, the farther they went from me, sacrificing to the Baals and burning incense to idols. Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, who took them in my arms; I drew them with human cords, with bands of love; I fostered them like one who raises an infant to his cheeks; Yet, though I stooped to feed my child, they did not know that I was their healer.”

Paul uses male language for God at 1Thes 2:11, father *πατηρ*. In Hellenistic lore, gods begat gods either with each other or with particular humans, but did not have the intimacy of a paternal relationship with god. Certainly this father-language is well established in the ancient world but here Paul shows his concern as father, not in the hierarchical sense or as one who needs to be appeased, but in a gentle comforting sense, as a protector of his children. The nurse-father “images were current in his (Paul’s) day

⁹¹ See Malherbe, page 53.

... but Paul (is a) nurse to his own children (the Thessalonians) and not simply those under his charge.”⁹²

They gave all that they had to spread the gospel; they bared their very body and soul. The attitude of the trio in Thessaloniki was not harsh or crude but soft and gentle. Although the mother and father motifs were written using comforting and gentle terminology, the relationship is at least minimally hierarchical, in that the relationship is between parents who are at least a step ahead of their ‘offspring’ who are regarded as children who need nourishment, such as infant milk as opposed to tougher food, such as meat.⁹³

In Epicurean terms the being ‘gentle among you’ is parallel to ‘we were babes’ among you. As such, the lesson here would mean that Paul was ‘like a child’ in that he was honest or ‘guileless as a child, just as a nurse is guileless in caring for the children given to her charge.’⁹⁴ Perhaps, it could be said that Jesus was a man among children (apostles) and Paul is an elder child or big brother. More likely, Paul cared for them as babes, that is, as new followers of Christ.

In terms of Hebrew Scripture, comforting and consoling terminology dealing with nursing or maternal language as well as paternal language is plentiful in late Isaiah including such verses as 49:15, 23a and 66:11-13.⁹⁵ These verses which show both the maternal and paternal love of God include:

“Can a mother forget her infant, be without *tenderness* (emphasis mine) for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you

⁹² *ibid*, page 53, also cf. 23 concerning Plutarch’s *Consolation to his wife*, 609E.

⁹³ See 1 Cor 3:1-4 about Paul’s concern for the Corinthian church as too much like ‘ordinary men’ and thus can only handle milk or the basic understanding of faith, unable to handle meat.

⁹⁴ See DeWitt, page 40.

⁹⁵ See F. F. Bruce, WBC, page 36 – the Greeks would have recognized gentleness in paternal terms as in Homer’s Odysseus and Priam in the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* respectively. Bruce further relates Ps. 103:13 with Is. 66:13 as paternal and maternal images of God.

... Kings shall be your foster fathers, their princesses your nurses.” 49:15, 23a

“Oh, that you may suck fully of the milk of her comfort, That you may delight at her abundant breasts! For thus says the Lord: Lo, I will spread prosperity over her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing torrent. As nurslings, you shall be carried in her arms, and fondled in her lap; As a mother comforts her son, so will I *comfort* (emphasis mine) you; in Jerusalem you shall find your comfort.” 66:11-13.

God, like a mother will not forget and will nourish (*τροφοῦς*) those who follow *the word of the Lord*, (the divine utterances of Jesus Christ as experienced by the Christian communities) since God regards the people as from the *womb of God*. Then the image of breasts is used again as an image of the people of God being nursed, fondled, and comforted in the lap of God.

This parallel between the language in Isaiah and in 1Thes is impressive. Paul, seemingly, is drawing a line from the Jewish Scriptures and the God of the Jews to the God and father of Jesus Christ and the people of *Thessaloniki*. The call is for the people of *Thessaloniki* to mimic or be a type of Christ by modeling the trio, as in 4:18, “console one another” in the context of concerning those who have died joining Jesus in the clouds 4:17. Furthermore, as in 5:11-14:

“therefore encourage one another and build one another up ... respect those who are laboring among you and who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you, and to show esteem for them with special love on account of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all.”

Gentleness is also a term used in the Jewish Scriptures as in Isaiah 40:2, “speak tenderly to Jerusalem;” 49:13b, “for the Lord comforts his people and shows mercy to his *afflicted*;” 54:7, “for a moment I abandoned you, but with great tenderness I will take you back.” Related to this is the term comfort/console such as in Isaiah 35:4, “be strong, fear

not!"; 49:13b "the Lord comforts his people and shows mercy to his afflicted;" 51:3a "Yes, the Lord shall comfort his people;" 51:12a "I, it is I who comfort you;" 52:9b "For the Lord comforts his people, he redeems Jerusalem;" 58:11a "he will renew your strength;" and 61:2 "To announce a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication by our God, to comfort all who mourn."

This Isaiah 61 language may also have a 'return from exile,' a 'theological exile' motif suggesting a 'bringing back' or 'coming home' understanding. Since, as Bradley Gregory suggests, the exile persists on account of Israel's sin; God continuously calls the faithful; heals the brokenhearted; and rescues people from bondage and even socioeconomic oppression.⁹⁶ Paul relays Jesus' role in consoling those who are brokenhearted due to deaths and confusion in the community as well as the rescuer of those held who are being oppressed in the present time as well as in the coming age.⁹⁷

Paul used terminology about himself including gentle as well as parental images which are similar to divine attributes from the Hebrew Scriptures such as Isaiah and Hosea. I suggest that he used this terminology also to imply that Jesus is one who is gentle, one who comforts, and one who consoles as well as a parental figure. This is how Jesus Christ can be said to treat his followers and the people he came across, this is how Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy treated the *Thessaloniki* people, and this is how they are admonished to treat each other. Presumably they treat each other well publicly, since their actions have been known far and wide thus affecting the peoples in the surrounding area. So, it can be said, that Paul taught the people of *Thessaloniki* that Jesus imitated the God of Isaiah in that he nourished his disciples, provided for them, and gave himself up

⁹⁶ Bradley C. Gregory, "The postexilic Exile in third Isaiah: Isaiah 61:1-3 in Light of Second Temple Hermeneutics," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 126, no. 3, 2007, 475-496.

⁹⁷ See Richard, page 277.

for them. Jesus Christ then is a gentle nurturer,⁹⁸ a consoler, a wonderful counselor and everlasting Father.⁹⁹

IV. Light and Darkness

A fourth Christological concept concerns the relationship between the righteousness of the individual person who follows the word of the Lord and his or her effect on others. Paul uses a number of clues to determine the righteousness of the Thessalonians. One concept is *light* as opposed to *darkness*. At 5:4-8a for example Paul explains the distinction between those of the light and those of the darkness:

you ... are not in darkness, for that day to overtake you like a thief. For all of you are children of the light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay alert and sober. Those who sleep go to sleep at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober.¹⁰⁰

A thief comes quickly and unknowingly in the darkness when one is not awake or alert or when one is drunk and unprepared. Those who lived in the light were doing the right thing, were living in righteousness. On the other hand, those that did not do the right thing, that is did evil in darkness or lived in darkness.¹⁰¹ People who received the word of the Lord and practiced the virtuous life akin to Paul and his companions and the Lord Jesus Christ were considered to be awake, alert, and sober. The “responsible

⁹⁸ See Malherbe, pages 42 – 43, about the Gentle Philosophers (*epious*) and the ancient world’s attempt to inspire philosophers to incorporate the images of nurses crooning their wards as examples of themselves

⁹⁹ Isaiah 9:6b

¹⁰⁰ See John H. Charlesworth (ed.). *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. (New York: Christian Origins Library, 1990). The term ‘sons of light’ is a phrase specific to Qumran and John; the only other NT references to this concept is here in 1Thes 5:5 which for Paul is “from Paul’s imagery of the dawning of the eschatological day”, as well as Luke 16:8, see page 101, cf. 117. Furthermore, John’s gospel and other writings attributed to him are similar in dualistic and deterministic language to Qumran, including the language of light and darkness, though there are differences between the two schools of thought. This dualistic language was available to Paul as he wrote 1Thes though beyond this one phrase, which is common in Greek writings as well, there isn’t any other connections to John or Qumran in 1Thes. For more on dualism language, see pages 19-24. See, for example, John 8:12

¹⁰¹ See Wenham, page 308 and Plevnik, page 115

Christian existence, which Paul interprets as a life of faith, love, and hope” is therefore defined “not an escape from the duties and burdens of this life but involves responsibility, preparedness, patience in suffering, and perseverance in trials.”¹⁰² In being such they were ready for the *Parousia*.

Those that are in the light, or who are light to the world, are those who act morally and not taken with the drunkenness of the pagans at the Dionysian temples. Paul was calling them to be different from their idol worshiping neighbors. The exhortation by Paul to be ‘sons of light’ means to belong to a different sphere from those ‘of the darkness’ and also means that one has a different morality.¹⁰³

The light motif also occurred in Isaiah, for example in Isaiah 49:6b it says, “I will make you a *light* (italics mine) to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” God alone is the light and makes people free who are bound in the darkness and it is Jesus Christ who liberates people from the darkness through the power of God.¹⁰⁴ The Hebrew people of the past were called by the prophet Isaiah to live as light to the nations similar to how Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy saw themselves; we are not of the night or of the darkness. They acted as a light to the nations in general and unto the area of *Thessaloniki* in this instance. They taught the Thessalonians that they too were ‘of the day . . . of the light.’ There was uniqueness to the followers of Jesus that separated them from their contemporaries. As such they could influence the neighboring communities of Achaia and Macedonia (1:7).

¹⁰² See Plevnik, page 220

¹⁰³ Richard, pages 252-253. “The imagery employed, ‘sons of light’, comes from a Hebraic construction which describes a quality of a person or the sphere to which that person belongs. The actual phrase (‘sons of light’) is often employed at Qumran (1QS 1:9f. and 1QM 1:1f. – both ‘children of light’ and ‘of darkness’) and occurs elsewhere in the NT (Lüke 16:8; John 12:36; see Eph 5:8).”

¹⁰⁴ James D. Smart, *History and Theology in Second Isaiah*, a Commentary on Isaiah 35, 40-66. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1965), pages 86-87.

As we have seen being of the light and not of the darkness meant that their behavior had to be separate, or different, from their fellow citizens. This difference included more than not being drunk or simply being sober but it also meant to act morally, to conduct oneself in righteousness. Such that in Chapter 4:1, 3, 9, and 11-12, Paul pleads that the Thessalonians be of the light through specific behaviors:

... conduct yourselves to please God ... the will of God, your holiness: that you refrain from immorality ... love one another ... aspire to live a tranquil life, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your (own) hands, as we instructed you, that you may conduct yourselves properly toward outsiders and not depend on anyone (TYN).

Paul and his two companions then are writing that they themselves aimed at being pleasing to God, refraining from immorality, loving them, leading a tranquil life, minding their own affairs, working with their hands, conducting themselves properly toward outsiders (hospitality¹⁰⁵), and didn't have to depend on anyone else but themselves. It follows then, in continuing with the *μιμηται* motif, that Paul is suggesting of Jesus Christ that he was a self-sufficient moral agent above and beyond what Paul's or any other's abilities.

Ethical and righteous behavior is crucial in 1Thes, as seen above. A consistent message in Isaiah and other Jewish texts is the obedience of the people of God at all times, especially on the 'day of the Lord.' In Isaiah there is the clear indication that the people of God desire for God to look upon them and see that they are following God's ways. For example in Isaiah 63:14b-15, 19; 64:4, "Thus you led your people, bringing glory to your name. Look down from heaven and regard us from your holy and glorious palace! ... Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down ... Would that you might

¹⁰⁵ See Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), page 219.

meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways!" Paul's understanding of ethical behavior within a community of believers came from his Jewish roots and this line of thought continues with his preaching to the Christian community.

In the last chapter of 1Thes, Paul adds on another level beyond being of the light and being a moral agent, (righteousness) which includes to pray and not quench the Spirit, as in 5:16-22:

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil (TYN).

Prayer then is related to and a part of being of the light and being a moral agent. Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus prayed with the Thessalonians and taught that rejoicing and praying in thanksgiving were essential to being a follower of Christ Jesus. As such they were not to quench the Spirit by despising prophetic utterances.

In Christological terms Jesus then can be defined as a righteous one who was of the light and not of the darkness, a moral agent who was sober and alert, one who prayed without ceasing, and one who did not quench the Spirit. The Thessalonians are called to be of the light, to behave in a moral way, and to pray by doing so they emulate Paul and his companions, and by extension following the lifestyle and behavior of Christ Jesus.¹⁰⁶ Jesus proclaimed and lived out the *word of the Lord* in righteousness regardless of the suffering that he inevitably endured. Jesus revealed the light, an apocalypse, and Christ's sons and daughters are of that light.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ See Plevnik, page 221

¹⁰⁷ See Smart, pages 86-87. Also the *War Scroll*, referred to as *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (1QM=1Q33) by C.D. Elledge, evisions a war on two planes spiritually and earthly between light and darkness where God is the warrior who will triumph over evil, C.D. Elledge, *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Boston, MA: Brill, 2005, page 13. Ibid, page 66. For Gnostic texts about

V. Voice to the Gentiles / the Nations (1Thes 2:16) – (*Inclusion of the Gentiles and Hardening of Israel*)

A fifth phrase to consider concerns the reach of the message beyond that of the Jews, to the nations, that is the Gentiles. Paul and his companions went to *Thessaloniki* not only to seek out the Jews in the Diaspora but for any who were willing to hear the good news. Such that in the following verse (1Thes 2:16a) Paul intimated that he came to speak with the Gentiles and had run into interference from some of the Hellenistic Jews, which goes against the understanding of Isaiah 49:6b “my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth,” as well as from the Jewish Scriptures (see Wisdom 9:17-18 and 2 Maccabees 3:34). Thus it is incumbent upon the Son of God to proclaim the word of the Lord to do so beyond the children of Abraham. If it were not so then Paul would have no reason to speak to the Gentiles. Certainly many Jews of the time did not consider Christ Jesus as the Messiah and tried to squelch the spread of the gospel, as in 1Thes 2:16:

(Those who killed Jesus are) trying to prevent us from speaking to the Gentiles that they may be saved, thus constantly ‘filling up the measure (their quota) of their sins’¹⁰⁸. But the wrath of God¹⁰⁹ has finally begun to come upon them (TYN).

Paul and his companions came to preach to all as Christ Jesus did and as the Thessalonians are expected to do. There is resistance on the part of some of the Jews in the city to the preaching of Paul. God’s wrath however will befall those who interfere with the spreading of the good news. Jesus came not only to save his own people but came to lead others to himself as well. The very fact that Paul went outside of Judea

the battle between the ‘sons of light and the sons of darkness’ see The Paraphrase of Shem in Willis Barnstone (ed.), *The other Bible*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 2005, pages 101-115.

¹⁰⁸ See Wisdom 11:9f; 12:2, 22; also 2 Maccabees 6:14.

¹⁰⁹ See Isaiah 35:4, as well as, Wenham, page 301 concerning the ‘wrath of God’ and Jewish problems in Rome, i.e. uprisings and conflict between Jews and Christians.

(Acts 9:15, “The Lord said to him (Ananias): ‘You must go! This man (Paul) is the instrument I have chosen to bring my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel’) to the Gentiles at *Thessaloniki*, mentioned the spread of the word of the Lord to Macedonia and Achaia (1:8), and suggested a connection with the Churches in Judea (2:14) indicate a motivation and drive of Paul to go beyond the Children of Israel, as in Gal 2:7.¹¹⁰

There is certainly language in 2nd Isaiah that also indicates a desire on the part of the God of the Jews to save peoples from all ‘the ends of the earth. Isaiah 45:23 is among the verses that include God’s concern for all to bend their knee to the God of the Jews and ostensibly the way the Jews should treat the other. “By myself I swear, uttering my just decree and my unalterable word: To me every knee shall bend; by me every tongue shall swear.” Furthermore Is. 49:6b reads, “I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth” and Is 56 shows that foreigners who minister to the Lord and obey his commands will be gathered unto God. The God of the Jews, then the prophets, then the Jewish people, then Christ Jesus, then Paul, and then the Christian community at *Thessaloniki* calls all nations to recognize and bend their knees to the one true God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This message of a universal salvific plan of the God (in the sense that all the nations will be grafted onto the chosen people of Israel) of the Jews is continued in Isaiah 49:6b, “I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” This verse connects the above phrase about being light to the notion of proclaiming a salvation to the nations. The call is not to be light for one’s own good but

¹¹⁰ Gal. 2:7, “On the contrary, recognizing that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter was for the circumcised.”

for the good of the community and those who are seeking out the way. Isaiah 56:4-8 is also important to consider:

For thus says the Lord: To the eunuch say, "See, I am a dry tree." For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who observe my Sabbaths and choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name Better than sons and daughters; an eternal, imperishable name will I give them. And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, ministering to him, Loving the name of the Lord, and becoming his servants-All who keep the Sabbath free from profanation and hold to my covenant, Them I will bring to my holy mountain and make joyful in my house of prayer; Their holocausts and sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar, For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel: Others will I gather to him besides those already gathered.

Even the Gentiles are called to worship the God of the Jews, the God of Israel.

These Gentiles are also called, as are the Jews themselves, to worship and obey.¹¹⁴ The least that a person must do to join God at the holy mountain is to observe the Sabbath, act righteously, and obey the covenant, circumcision notwithstanding (see Acts 21:15-26). Furthermore there are important verses from the last chapter of Isaiah, 66:18-19, 23, "I come to gather nations of every language; they shall come and see my glory. I will set a sign among them ... they shall proclaim my glory among the nations ... All mankind shall come to worship before me, says the Lord." Here again is the call of the Lord for all to come and worship properly and proclaim the one God.

Also, Is. 49:6 is a connection of light and an outreach to the Gentile nations. The purpose of faith, living faith, and proclaiming the word of the Lord; and the purpose of the suffering, death, and resurrection is not only necessary and sufficient for the twelve tribes of Israel scattered among the nations but is essential and valuable for all peoples.

¹¹⁴ In Acts 21:25 the Gentiles are not required to be circumcised but to only: avoid meat sacrificed to idols, blood, the flesh of strangled animals, and illicit sexual union." See also Gal 2.

So, in Christological terms, it can be said that a quality of Jesus Christ was that he came to call all peoples, all nations to worship and follow the God of the Jews. Jesus was thus the kind of person who could have had followers who were non-Jews who become part of Israel and likely there were those who were Jewish and opposed him. Just as Paul came to call Jews and Gentiles, so too did Christ Jesus and so too must the members of the community of *Thessaloniki* outreach to their neighbors. Also it can be said that people from every nation will accept the good news and be saved and at the same time there will be those from the Jews who will continue to oppose the good news. Jesus, as a voice to the Gentiles, is the light that shatters the darkness over all nations, peoples, and tribes.

VI. Wearer of Divine Attributes

The sixth concept concerns the wearing of attributes by God, Paul, and the members of the Thessalonian community. After again reminding them to be 'of the day' and therefore of light and to be 'sober' he encourages them to put on faith and hope in the following manner in 5:8, "but since we are of day, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet that is hope for salvation." The use of ostensibly military language,¹¹² in this verse concerns true Christians being ready and prepared for the day of the Lord in defensive armor. Christians who are truly ready are like good soldiers who are disciplined and whose heads are clear, that is, they are sober.¹¹³

¹¹² See Green, pages 240-241. Paul makes use of military metaphors to describe Christians and their conduct, Rom. 13:12; 2Cor 6:7. The source for 1Thes is Isaiah 59:17, also Wisdom 5:17-20.

¹¹³ *ibid*, page 241, which also includes an example from the Testament of Levi 8:2 concerning the "investiture of the priest as a metaphorical description of taking on justice, understanding, truth, faith, and prophetic power."

Paul and his companions did not need a philosopher's cloak to know their calling as ministers of the gospel. The only garments they really needed were faith, love, and hope symbolized by a breastplate and helmet (5:8). These garments covered their head and their heart as God's shield to protect them from wrath. This breastplate and helmet are figuratively worn on the outside not something that is secretive and hidden but is out, akin to being light. Perhaps, it could be said, they wore their faith, love, and hope 'on their sleeve.'

In the Jewish Scriptures, the book of Wisdom describes the God of Israel as putting on garments such as a breastplate of justice and a helmet of judgment, thus an eschatological sign. Wisdom 5:15-23¹¹⁴ also includes some very fascinating information connecting the final judgment of the wicked along with the donning of clothing, and the statement that the just live forever:

But the just live forever, and in the Lord is their recompense, and the thought of them is with the Most High. Therefore they shall receive the splendid crown, the beautiful diadem, from the hand of the Lord – For he shall shelter them with his right hand, and protect them with his arm. He shall take his zeal for armor and he shall arm creation to requite his enemy; He shall don justice for a breastplate and shall wear sure judgment for a helmet; He shall take invincible rectitude as a shield and whet his sudden anger for a sword, And the universe shall war with him against the foolhardy. Well-aimed shafts of lightnings shall go forth and from the clouds as from a well-drawn bow shall leap to the mark; and as from his sling, wrathful hailstones shall be hurled. The water of the sea shall be enraged against them and the streams shall abruptly overflow; A mighty wind shall confront them and a tempest winnow them out; Thus lawlessness shall lay the whole earth waste and evil-doing overturn the thrones of potentates.

Here the just are awarded a crown and diadem as well as protection from the Most High. God puts on the breastplate (justice), helmet (judgment), and with a shield (invincible rectitude) and sword (of anger) as well as a bow with lightning as arrows to do battle with

¹¹⁴ See also Ephesians 6:11-18

the enemy. Only God can rightly mete out justice (covering the ‘heart of God’) and judgment (covering the ‘head of God’) on the nations whereas the people of God put on the virtues of faith, love, and hope. In 1Thes, Paul encourages the members of the community to wear the breastplate and helmet – which are defensive armaments as opposed to the offensive armaments of God.

The wearing of divine attributes is plentiful in the Book of Isaiah as well. For example in Isaiah 51:9a, “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!” and in 52:1a, “Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion, Put on your glorious garments”; as well as Isaiah 59:17:¹¹⁵

He put on justice as his breastplate, salvation, as the helmet on his head;
He clothed himself with garments of vengeance, wrapped himself in a
mantle of zeal.

In each of the above three verses from the prophet Isaiah – God has put on various armaments including: strength, justice, salvation, vengeance, and zeal to protect and defend those who are righteous. God is the ultimate warrior who alone can save and who alone can be vengeful.

Not only is God said to be wearing a variety of warrior items but the prophet of God is also seen as wearing particular items. For example in Isaiah 61:10, the prophet is wearing salvation and justice, as well as a diadem and jewelry:

(God) has clothed me with a robe of salvation, and wrapped me in a
mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride
bedecked with her jewels.

Here and in 1Thes salvation (hope of salvation) is worn, but no jewelry is worn in the latter, perhaps because that was a time of testing and affliction.

¹¹⁵ See F. F. Bruce, *Word Biblical Commentary, 1&2 Thessalonians*, Vol. 45, p. 112 – relating Rom. 13:12; Gal. 5:6; Eph. 6:11-18; Wis. 5:17-20; along with Is. 59:17 as panoplies of God.

In Christological terms, Jesus Christ, as similar to the prophet, is a wearer of the helmet of salvation and breastplate of faith in symbolic terms. As such, Jesus was given the power to judge, as well as both save those who follow God and mete out vengeance against those who refuse God; all of these are attributes of God. Paul and his followers, on the other hand are called to be on the defensive, to wear the divine attributes of faith and salvation in order to stave off retribution at the hands of God. Jesus Christ then does not go out into the world defenseless and weak but as armored and strong, a crucified warrior. As such Jesus shifted the concept of a warrior-God fighting for an earthly kingdom to a warrior-prophet fighting for a heavenly kingdom on earth. Though in this strength is not aggression but as a light shining onto the world. Only by bringing the light to the nations can the Lord Jesus Christ provide peace and security.

VII. True Provider of Peace and Security *Pax et Securitas*

The seventh concept concerns peace and security. There is a phrase *Pax Romana* which indicates that the Roman Empire had brought peace and security to the world. More pertinent perhaps is the Epicurean notion of ‘peace and safety’ and the ideals of ‘moral courage’ as opposed to ‘physical courage,’ that is to ‘speak freely or boldly’ even to power, to be totally frank and truthful. According to DeWitt, Paul emphasized similar virtues, but whereas Epicureans valued loyalty to Nature, Paul taught loyalty to God.¹¹⁶ Paul points out in 5:3 that “when people are saying, ‘*peace and security*’ (emphasis mine) then sudden disaster comes upon them, like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.” God the Father has assigned the Lord Jesus Christ to bring peace and security to the world. The people of *Thessaloniki* are warned to be wary of those that say

¹¹⁶ See DeWitt, page 38-39, 41-42.

there is already peace and security for in reality that which follows is pain and anguish. Paul, here is writing a polemic against the ruling government, the Roman Caesar.¹¹⁷

The Jewish Scriptures in the book of Isaiah also has a similar verse. In Isaiah 57:19-21 it is written, "Peace, peace to the far and the near, says the Lord; and I will heal them. But the wicked are like the tossing sea which cannot be calmed, And its waters cast up mud and filth. No peace for the wicked! says my God." So, those that follow the Lord God will have peace but those who do not will not have peace whether for those who followed God in Isaiah's time or for those who follow God in the Lord Jesus Christ in the Thessalonian community.

Furthermore Isaiah 60:17b states, "I will appoint peace your governor, and justice your ruler." The only one who could provide peace and justice is appointed by the Lord God. Finally two verses from Jeremiah including Jeremiah 6:14, "They would repair, as though it were naught, the injury to my people: 'Peace, peace!' they say, though there is no peace" and also Jeremiah 8:11, "There would repair, as though it were naught, the injury to the daughter of my people: 'Peace, peace!' they say though there is no peace." Every tribe and nation wants and desires peace but there is a price to be paid with injustice and anguish but only the Lord God and the appointed one can provide it, according to 1Thes, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

In Christological terms then it can be said that only through the Lord Jesus Christ can true peace and security come. Jesus is the embodiment of peace and security; he is the arbitrator of such and will continue to be so until the *parousia*. So for Paul and the Thessalonians, in order for them to have true peace and true security, even when

¹¹⁷ Helmut Koester, Imperial Ideology and Paul's Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians, in Richard A. Horsley (ed.), *Paul and Empire*. (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), page 158.

undergoing affliction, they need to follow the Word of the Lord, (that is the teachings of Paul and the apostles that have been handed down) and act according to the virtues outlined by Paul in 1Thes.

VIII. Jesus: Lord, Son of God, Son from the clouds

The eighth concept from 1Thes concerns Paul combining the phrase ‘God the Father’ with the phrase ‘Lord Jesus Christ’ together in a number of ways. He also connected the term ‘Son’ with the ‘Lord Jesus Christ’ thus implying a Father God¹¹⁸ with a Son of God which, according to Fee, has their “origins ... in Jewish messianism.”¹¹⁹ In the opening verse Paul, Sylvanus, and Timothy are writing to the church at *Thessaloniki* “in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Verse 1:9-10 reads “to await (the) Son from heaven, whom (God) raised from dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath.” This ‘Son from heaven’ is God’s son and is identified as the Lord Jesus Christ.¹²⁰ The term Lord *kyrios* itself is significant, for example Oakes explains that, “the lordship of the Messiah, (is) a proclamation that relativizes the claims of all other lords, especially Caesar”¹²¹ which also “includes the emperor’s realm but goes beyond it ... Christ’s universal sovereignty.”¹²² Applying the title Lord to Jesus Christ is a recognition of Jesus’ sovereignty over more than just the temporal world.

Paul may be utilizing the Son of Man motif from Daniel 7:13 at 1Thes 4:16 (“come down from heaven”) showing that Jesus is Lord, Son of God, and the promised

¹¹⁸ See Matera, page 251, cf. 13 concerning God as earthly father (including Deut 1:31, 8:5); father of the people of Israel (including Deut 32:6; Isaiah 63:16, 64:7; father of the Israelite king, in a soteriological sense (including 2 Sam 7:14).

¹¹⁹ See Fee, page 37

¹²⁰ *ibid*, pages 36-41 concerning Daniel 7:13 imagery; e.g. page 39-40, cf. 31

¹²¹ See Tom Wright in Oakes, page 306.

¹²² Oakes, Peter “Re-mapping the Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1 Thessalonians and Phillipians.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 27, 3, 2005, page 306.

one of old.¹²³ Furthermore, according to Jan DeVilliers, “The formula ‘in God’, which is especially frequent in the Septuagint Psalms, is a great favorite of Paul (1 Thes 2:2), and is closely connected with the formula ‘in Christ’ (1Thes 1:1).” Here God the Father is tied together with the person of Jesus as Son of God from heaven¹²⁴ because “‘our’ in these later instances is intended for double duty for both nouns (“Father” and “Lord”) ... Paul’s most common way to refer to God (is) when God and Christ are mentioned in conjunction with one another.”¹²⁵

The ‘Son from Heaven’ is inextricably tied to the ‘living and true God’ in 1:9-10, the latter phrase is reminiscent to the classical Jewish understanding of a monotheistic deity, the living and true God of Num. 14 and Wis. 12:27.¹²⁶ The Jesus of Paul in 1Thes is someone who has risen and dwells in heaven with God the Father.

As seen above, 1Thes 4:16-17 is important because it identifies Jesus Christ as speaking the word of God. But here it is important to note also that Christ takes on a *divine* role as outlined in apocalyptic writings related to this verse: “For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with a voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds¹²⁷ (an allusion to Daniel 7:13a, “As the visions during the night continued, I saw one like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven) to meet the Lord in the air.”¹²⁸ Thus we shall always be with the Lord.” For example, in the Jewish Apocryphal text, cf. 1 Enoch 61 hear that Yahweh

¹²³ See Malherbe, page 268, 276

¹²⁴ Jan DeVilliers in Stanley E. Porter (ed.) *Paul and His Theology*. (Brill: Boston, MA, 2006), page 398.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, page 37.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, page 39 and cf. 29 for further citations and explanation.

¹²⁷ Cf. 29 in Dunn, page 300; e.g. Isa. 19:1; Ezek. 1.4-28; Dan. 7:13. Plevnik (*Parousia* 60-63 also 45-60, 84-88 for other imagery)

¹²⁸ See Sawyer, page 221 concerning modern usage of rapture language

speaks the word through the angels, the ‘Lord of the Spirits’ endows the Elect One to sit in judgment, and God’s word will ‘do sinners in’ and ‘all the oppressors shall be eliminated from before his face.’¹²⁹

The terms Lord, Son of Man, and Son from Heaven are apocalyptic terms used in Jewish scripture, including Isaiah. Justice, or the just one, comes down from heaven, salvation buds forth from the earth, and justice springs up. See, for example, Isaiah 45:8 which states “Let justice descend, O heavens, like dew from above, like gentle rain let the skies drop it down. Let the earth open and salvation (savior)¹³⁰ bud forth; let justice spring up!” 1Thes 4:16a has “the Lord himself will come down from heaven.” Paul identifies the Lord, coming down from heaven, as the one who “delivers us from the wrath to come,” see 1Thes 1:10.

In another verse of Isaiah, 51:6b, justice is not dismayed and the salvation of the Lord lasts forever, “Though the heavens grow thin like smoke, the earth wears out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies, My salvation shall remain forever and my justice shall never be dismayed.” In 1Thes there is death and, it seems to me, a sense of hopelessness like in this verse, but Paul lets the people know that they are not destined for death but for life with Jesus (5:9). Furthermore, salvation is everlasting and justice is not discouraged or dismayed (5:11, 14).

The one who comes down from the heavens has a work to do and only when completed returns to the heavens, as stated in Isaiah 55:10-11:

For just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down
And do not return there till they have watered the earth,
making it fertile and fruitful,
Giving seed to him who sows and bread to him who eats,
So shall my

¹²⁹ See Plevnik, pages 45-49. For more on the Archangels and their word / voices as in 1 Enoch 54:16, see page 54.

word be that goes forth from my mouth; It shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.

So too in 1Thes Jesus Christ will come down from the heavens with a particular work to do and will accomplish the will of God the father (4:13-17). Jesus completed a work and will complete another, that is he has suffered, died, and rose for the redemption of those who follow him but will, at some time in the future, return to save those who are righteous, sober, and alert as well as avenge and judge those who persecute his followers.

In Christological terms therefore the person of Jesus Christ is linked to God the Father in such a way that is operationally and mystically different from the relationship between the Hebrew God and any of the prophets or any of the angels. Jesus Christ is the Lord as only Caesar¹³¹ was expected to be in the Romanized world. Jesus commanded the angels as only God or a *Son of God* would be expected to do and he came to judge the nations as only God the Father can, from the throne of heaven. Jesus is the Lord, more so than any other human including Caesar, is the Son of God and Son of Heaven, which is a unique situation even in the Greco-Roman world. Therefore Paul sees the Lord Jesus Christ as a unique human person with a unique Father and Son relationship with God the Father, the same God of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other Jewish prophets.

IX. Divine Reconciliation and Restoration – *Fulfillment of God's Eschatological Promise of Salvation*

The ninth Christological concept concerns the role of Jesus as a participant in the divine reconciliation and restoration between God and humanity in the context of the Parousia. This Parousia is that final victorious act of God that will save the righteous and

¹³¹ See Fee, page 42.

destroy the unrighteous; as such Jesus Christ is the avenger, deliverer, and the fulfillment of the salvific promise, as in the passages from Isaiah below. Paul's first and immediate consideration was that the Lord Jesus Christ was to return very soon.¹³² Verse 1Thes 1:10 reads that it is "Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath" and then in verse 2:4 "we were judged worthy by God to be entrusted with the gospel, that is how we speak, not as trying to please human beings, but rather God, who judges our hearts." Jesus is the deliverer, who will soon come to protect, or defend, his followers, whilst God is the judge and the one who does the raising from the dead.

Later in the letter, verse 4:6 reads "the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you before and solemnly affirmed" but only the sinner is hopeless because the righteous are destined for salvation. Jesus is the deliverer and avenger, as well as the one who died for the redemption of his followers, as in verse 5:9-10, "For God did not destine us for wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with" God and Jesus.¹³³ Thus Paul is stating that Jesus will divide people into two groups, those destined for salvation and those not destined for salvation and thus for wrath. Jesus Christ will deliver and avenge the followers of God in Jesus.

As we see in the Jewish Scripture, specifically in Isaiah, there is language that shows that the divine reconciliation and restoration is from God the Father. For example, Isaiah 35:4 states "Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; With divine recompense he comes to save you."

¹³² Plevnik, page 57

¹³³ *ibid*, page 114-115

Paul uses the vindication and recompense language, similar to Isaiah, to refer to the Lord Jesus Christ in 1Thes:

Furthermore it is God the Father, as Lord, hero, and warrior, who brings justice to the world, such as in Isaiah 42:4, 13, where we read "... (God) establishes justice on the earth ... (the) Lord goes forth like a hero, like a warrior he stirs up his ardor; He shouts out his battle cry, against his enemies he shows his might." This is similar to the language in 1Thes 4:16, "the Lord himself will come down from heaven at the word of command, at the sound of the archangel's voice and God's trumpet," the Lord is the hero who comes like a warrior to bring justice to the earth. Thus Paul is using the avenger and deliverer language for the Lord Jesus Christ. There are apocalyptic overtones here as well for the "God who conquered chaos in the beginning will conquer the chaos of man's life in the present era,"¹³⁴ as described by Smart. The warrior-god, warrior-servant motifs from the War Scroll are also present here.¹³⁵

Further we read in Isaiah 66:5b, 15-16, "Let the Lord show his glory that we may see your joy; but they shall be put to shame... to wreak his wrath ... the Lord shall judge all mankind by fire and sword." It is the Lord God – the Father who brings wrath with the fire and the sword, but in 1Thes we see Jesus as the avenger (4:6) who is also given the title Lord akin to Psalm 110:1, "The Lord (Yahweh) said to my Lord,¹³⁶ 'Sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool.'" So, for Paul, in 1Thes, Jesus is the subordinate Davidic figure who will mete out justice, that is provide victory over the God the Father's enemies.

¹³⁴ Smart, page 85.

¹³⁵ Ibid, page 89.

¹³⁶ A messianic psalm, David is addressing Yahweh. A descendent of David, the messiah, will triumph over the enemies of the God of David.

The Jesus Christ of Paul can be described as the Davidic messianic figure, one who will avenge and deliver, as well as the eschatological promise. God is the ultimate savior and Jesus Christ is the ultimate instrument of God the Father for the salvation of Christians. In verse 1:10, the implicit meaning of 'with him' is an implication "that the deceased faithful will be brought by God, in the company of Jesus, to wherever God is taking them."¹³⁷ Furthermore in both verse 1:10 and verse 5:9-10 Plevnik continues that the "notions of salvation at Christ's coming and of Christ's active role in effecting the end-time salvation" is certain.¹³⁸ Finally, in verse 4:14 we read "the foundation of hope is God's past deed in Jesus Christ, the completion of hope is in God's future deed through Jesus Christ. 'God will bring us through Jesus into his presence.'"¹³⁹

In Christological terms therefore, Jesus is the one who suffered, died, and rose, a unique person, one like but superior to Elijah who rose to the heavens without suffering and dying. Jesus is the one who will lead the *Parousia* and final victory for God the Father; as only one with divine authority could do; Jesus is the avenger, deliverer, and eschatological promise of salvation. This Jesus as light to the nations; one armored with faith, hope, and love; and Son of God as well as Son from Heaven is the fulfillment of the hope of the Jews for Peace and Security, at least in their hearts and minds if not materially on earth.

X. Sharer in Divine Purpose and Activity with God the Father

The tenth concept deals with the person of Jesus as a sharer in the divine purpose and activity of God the Father. Certainly 1Thes shows that Jesus is not just another

¹³⁷ *ibid*, page 73

¹³⁸ *ibid*, page 192

¹³⁹ *ibid*, page 219

prophet but is one who proclaims the word of the Lord with authority, suffered and died, was gentle, righteous, came to deliver both the Jews and Gentiles, was 'clothed' with God the Father, deliver, fulfiller of the *eschaton*, and true provider of peace and security, but also the Redeemer and Lord to come. The word *kyrios* or lord was used many times in 1Thes as a title for Jesus Christ. The introductory greeting at 1:1 "Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ ... Grace and peace be yours" lists the Lord Jesus Christ as subordinate to God the Father, as one who is sent, as seen in Psalm 110:1, "The LORD said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand till I make your enemies my footstool." Here David is subordinate to the Lord God.

In 1Thes 4:13-16 Paul defines the role of Jesus Christ in the *eschaton*:

We would have you be clear about those who sleep in death, brothers; otherwise you might yield to grief, like those who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, God will bring forth with him from the dead those also who have fallen asleep believing in him. We say to you, who live, who survive until his coming, will in no way have an advantage over those who have fallen asleep. No, the Lord himself will come down from heaven at the word of command, at the sound of the archangel's voice and God's trumpet; and those who have died in Christ will rise first.

Here, Jesus Christ is one who gives hope and that with authority over the angels will take up with him those who have died and then the living who believe in him. He is the promised Messiah (Christ) who will come from the clouds as in Daniel 1:7. Whereas God the Father's role is to raise people from the dead, the role that both God the Father and Jesus Christ share is their command over the angels. The use of the term Lord for both God the Father and the messianic figure from both Psalm 110 and 1Thes shows that the title Lord, *kyrios*, means one who is either divine or called for a divine purpose.

1Thes 4:16 reads “the Lord himself will come down from heaven,” which is similar to the text in Daniel 7:13-14a which reads:

As the visions during the night continued, I saw One like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven; When he reached the Ancient One and was presented before him, He received dominion, glory, and kingship; nations and peoples of every language serve him.”

As such we see that not only do both figures come from the clouds of heaven but each are given dominion, in 1Thes the dominion over angels and in Daniel (Angel Michael¹⁴⁰ in Daniel 7), dominion over nations. Also in Micah 1:3 we read “for see, the Lord comes forth from his place, he descends and treads upon the heights of the earth.” Paul uses the ‘from the heavens’ motif of the Jewish scriptures in 1Thes and attaches it to the work of Jesus Christ in order to show that Jesus is the same type of person spoken of by the prophets. This one ‘from the heavens’ (‘from heaven’ in 1Thes 1:10 and ‘clouds’ in 4:17) is also tied into justice. Justice is that which descends and springs up from the heavens in Isaiah 45:8, “Let justice descend ... let justice also spring up” and as such Jesus brings justice down with him from the heavens (1Thes 4:6).

The title Lord (*o kyrios*) is used only for Christ and not for the Father in 1Thes so there is a distinction between the two though they work together, Jesus does the will of God the Father.¹⁴¹ What they share is command over the angels and the desire to redeem those who follow Christ and avenge those who have persecuted the followers of Christ. The language in 1Thes shows that God and the *Kyrios* share divine purpose and activity,

¹⁴⁰ For more on the Angel Michael in Daniel see Lorenzo DiTommaso. *The book of Daniel and the apocryphal Daniel literature*. (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), pages 153-154, 213. Also see, Martha Himmelfarb. *Ascent into Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 1993, pages 60-61.

¹⁴¹ See Dunn, page 300, cf. 29.

such as the church exists in God and Christ (1:1)¹⁴² and that God's will is in Jesus the Christ (5:18), "this is God's will in Christ Jesus for you."¹⁴³

Paul does not equate Jesus Christ with God the Father as he is purely monotheistic. However there are attributes shared by God and Christ just as there are attributes shared by the God of the Hebrews of Isaiah's time and Christ in the time of the early Christians. In terms of a Christological statement it can be said that Paul's Christology is high, as opposed to low, that is, Jesus is not an ordinary man but more of a super-ordinary prophet. Jesus is both the fulfillment of the Son of Man in terms of coming from the clouds, as in Daniel 7 and the Lord of heaven and earth. It is a novel step for Paul to take by attributing some divine qualities onto a man beyond those of the prophets and some divine purpose given to the Lord Jesus Christ by God the Father.

In what follows, these 10 concepts will be put together and weaved together in order to make sense of Paul and his understanding of who Jesus was and Jesus' role in salvation. Certainly if 1Thes were a stand-alone document there would be enough substance to have a solid, if not complete, Christology. As such a starting point can be made in the study of 1st century Christology. Paul's starting point is the suffering and death of Jesus, who was killed by a group of Jewish people (1Thes 2:14-15) though it cannot be determined in 1Thes alone how he was killed.

That is Jesus takes on the divine role of avenger, deliverer, as well as the eschatological role from the Jewish scriptures that is known well by Paul. By combining language from Isaiah and Psalm 110 one can see that Paul is a Davidic messianic figure

¹⁴² See Fee, page 48-50.

¹⁴³ *ibid*, pages 50-51.

would take on the role of avenging the enemies of God. Jesus takes on a unique role as God the Father's instrument of redemption.

Chapter Three The Lord Jesus Christ of Paul as in 1Thes

As seen above, Paul preached to a predominately Hellenistic populace in a major urban center of the Roman Empire, *Thessaloniki*. There are many Hebrew Scripture references running through 1Thes including a heavy reliance on Isaiah¹⁴⁴ for proclaiming, understanding, and applying the *word of the Lord*, that is, the authentic message or gospel of Jesus Christ as taught to him by the apostles (such as Ananais) and experienced by him within the communities of Damascus, Jerusalem, and other places. Paul's role as one who proclaims the word of the Lord comes from his calling to do so from the Lord Jesus Christ at his conversion as well as with the blessing of the apostles and disciples at the community at Damascus where he was taught, as well as at Jerusalem where he was sent by the apostles, as in Acts 9:17-30.

I have identified ten Christological concepts which give shape and substance to the man that Paul called and experienced as the *Lord Jesus Christ* in 1Thes. Jesus Christ is an authoritative figure for Paul, one who speaks with an authority greater than the angels (1Thes 4:16) and therefore the prophets, or any other human. This Jesus, who called Paul to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, has the authority to command even the angels, and as such, his word cannot be taken lightly. Therefore Jesus is a type of prophet, a person called to reveal to the people of God, the word of the Lord.

Though I have laid out a few themes where Paul alludes to Isaiah motifs for both the God of Isaiah and Jesus Christ, not every Isaiah motif can be applied to Jesus. One of the motifs that is laid out in both Isaiah and 1Thes is the prophetic figure, one who has

¹⁴⁴ See Childs, page 6.

authority over the angels and apostles, is also one who is afflicted, one who suffered and died. The Lord suffered and died, which is a scandalous (see Deut 21:22-23) and demeaning circumstance for one with authority. Jesus then is both a symbol and sign of laying down one's life, a prophetic figure that was willing to lay down his life for others. In this aspect Paul identifies Jesus with the Isaian suffering servant figure that bears insult, suffering, and death (see 1Thes 4:14 and Isaiah 53:3). Unlike other prophets, this one also rises from the dead.

Paul's Jesus is a man who is Lord and Suffering Servant yet gentle, a comforter and consoler. Paul's Jesus is kind and merciful, holding his people in his arms and gently guiding his followers to a deeper relationship and understanding while at the same time his role is also as bringing judgment and vengeance to his enemies (1Thes 4:6). This Jesus is warm and gentle – like a mother who nurses her infants (1Thes 2:7) and like a father who is honest and forthright (1Thes 2:11-12). This Jesus is also identified with the Hebrew Scriptures, particularly Isaiah's notions of a loving God who is nurturing and gentle to all who call upon the name of God who again brings justice to those who caused the suffering and persecution of the followers of God the Father (Isaiah 57:15b).

The Jesus of Paul in 1Thes is also righteous, as God the Father is righteous. God is Light, Jesus is Light; God is a Moral Agent, Jesus is a Moral Agent; and God is Sober, Jesus is Sober (1Thes 5:8, 11). The people are called to perfection, which means to 'appreciate those who labor among you' (5:12); 'live in peace with one another' (5:13b); 'admonish the unruly and encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone' (5:14); 'not repay evil for evil but seek after what is good for each other and all people' (5:15); 'rejoice always' (5:16); 'pray without ceasing' (5:17); 'not quench the

Spirit' (5:19); 'not despise prophetic utterances' (5:20); 'examine everything carefully' (5:21); and 'abstain from every evil' (5:22). This is the kind of righteous behavior that Jesus accomplished in his lifetime, if Paul is authentically preaching what he was mandated to preach by the apostles (Acts 9:15). Jesus was the light, ready and able to defend against the darkness (1Thes 4:6; 5:4-5).

Paul's Jesus was similar to God in these concepts at minimum. Thus far Jesus is a gentle Lord who lived righteously, and suffered and died for his people. Paul's Jesus is 1Thes is a unique individual, one that the gods of the city nor the philosophers can compare. The Jesus of 1Thes lived, died, and rose in order to spread his light and salvation to all, not only to the communities of Judea but to the Gentile nations. This mandate to reach beyond the borders of Judea also has similar language in Isaiah, 66:18-19, 23. Paul's Jesus was concerned about bringing people from various nations to himself, holding all gently and suffering, dying, and rising for people regardless of their blood relationship to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If Paul and the apostles mimicked Jesus then the people who modeled their lives after them may authentically model Jesus as well.¹⁴⁵

The wearing of armaments was a motif shared within the book of Isaiah and in 1Thes. This motif was used to show that God, Jesus, and the followers of Christ could defend themselves with certain attributes, such as the breastplate of faith and love, as well as the helmet of salvation. This Lord was not one who let people suffer for eternity but was there to rescue and protect the people who were righteous and who served the Lord, and who in 1Thes was identified as Jesus Christ (1Thes 5:9). Jesus did not need a philosopher's cloak to show his wisdom, his words alone commanded authority. As a

¹⁴⁵ Malherbe, pages 51-57.

crucified warrior he shifted emphasis from a warrior-God concerned about an earthly kingdom to a prophet of God concerned about the heavenly kingdom.

In so doing the Lord Jesus Christ provided true Peace and Security as opposed to Caesar who had to fight battles, pay an army to guard vast cities and countryside, and live a certain amount of time only. Afterwards a new Caesar would have to take over, but with Jesus Christ, this Peace and Security would last forever because even after death, he is still in control. Others, who are under Caesar alone, do not have Christian faith, hope, and love; are distressed as if in labor pain (1Thes 5:3). As provider, arrayed / dressed in divine attributes, and a righteous one, he will arbitrate peace throughout the whole world for all nations. Unlike a Caesar or worldly leader who is dressed to battle and destroy, the Lord Jesus is arrayed in divine-like attire (cf. 1Thes 4) to bring about a true peace, safety, and security for all who follow him; thus the irony of a martyr rather than a Caesar¹⁴⁶.

The Jesus of 1Thes is the Lord (1:1), Son of God, and Son from Heaven (1:10) who has suffered, died, and rose, is also the one to come, reminiscent of the liturgical phrase, 'Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again'; that is the *Parousia*. Upon his return, Christ will be the avenger, the deliverer, the fulfillment of God the Father's eschatological promise of salvation. Jesus is both the one who brings peace and security to those who follow God the Father and is the one who avenges for God the Father and delivers his followers from enslavement to sin and death. Even those who have died will rise, and will be taken up into the sky prior to those still alive when Jesus returns, (4:15-17).

¹⁴⁶ Thanks to Professor Daniel Christopher-Smith for this phrase.

In 1Thes, Paul uses Trinitarian language though not in the Nicæan sense of the term, for example he and his co-writers attribute some divine purposes and activities to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is a unique human person with a unique relationship with God the Father, as stated earlier. In Isaiah and other Jewish texts, there are individuals who are seen as messianic, like King Cyrus (Isaiah 45:1-8) but none had the three titles of Messiah (Christ), Savior, and Lord (1Thes 1:10, 5:9). As such Jesus is unique in his person and role in the plan and work of salvation.

The person of Christ shares in the divine purpose and plan of salvation with God the Father (4:13-18). Therefore he has the will of God and follows God's plan, which Paul mimics and the community of Thessaloniki shows as well (1:7). Furthermore, the Jesus of Paul is above and beyond any Caesar or deity in the Hellenistic world.

- **Who was Jesus, the person, to Paul at the time he wrote 1Thes**

For Paul, the person of Jesus in 1Thes was a strong righteous man who was gentle and comforting to all who came to him. Jesus was the kind of person who would welcome the stranger and reach out to the abandoned, based on what the followers of Christ in *Thessaloniki* did for the Macedonians and Achaians, that is they bore witness through word and deed. Jesus' personality was one who would at once be peaceful and serene while at the same time commanded respect by his word because he spoke with authority that even the angels would listen to him. Jesus, as one who is God's avenger also would be able to stand up for the weak and lowly.

Paul's Jesus in 1Thes was subordinate, as a son, to a heavenly Father. He was a man of faith, hope, and love who epitomized a prophet of old and understood his subordinate role to God the Father. He was akin to both a father and mother figure in his

gentleness, honesty, and truthfulness. If Paul was exercising the imitation motif then it would be safe to assert that Jesus was the kind of person who was alert and awake – on guard against the wiles of the wayward world (5:4-8). He was a man who was calm and reassuring to those around him who were ailing, suffering, and/or dying.

- **What was Jesus' role in the divine plan in 1Thes**

The Lord Jesus Christ of 1Thes was one who did the will of his heavenly Father for the will of the Father was the will of Jesus Christ. Part of Jesus' role was to suffer, die, rise, and return. His role was to fulfill the promise of scripture as the Son come down from Heaven to take up those who have died in Christ to heaven and restore the kingdom of God (4:14-18).

The Jesus of 1Thes had a number of roles to fulfill including proclaiming the word of God, as a type of prophet who heard and proclaimed the desire of God. The gospel of Jesus spread through Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy as well as through the people of *Thessaloniki* to the surrounding communities. Furthermore, Jesus' role was to suffer, die, and be raised from the dead by God the Father. The purpose for the suffering, dying, and rising was so that he could come again to redeem his followers (4:13-18). Whether this meant he was born to die in a particular way *or* that he lived such a righteous lifestyle that it led to a predictable end is not clear in 1Thes. Another role was to provide comfort and nurturing to those who suffered as well as to provide a peace and security to those who believed in him. It could be said that Jesus' role was also to reach out to the Gentiles, if not in his own lifetime then through agents such as Paul (Acts 9:15).

Additionally, Jesus' role was to provide a template for living by wearing faith, hope, and love – as opposed to hiding or masking oneself or trying to fit into the

surrounding cultural landscape. The Lord Jesus Christ is a model for living righteously -- by not getting drunk, carousing with women, sexual promiscuity, nor making false idols (1:9, 5:4-22).

His 'end-time' or Parousia role was to bring restoration and reconciliation, to avenge the world's idolatrous ways, and bring about true peace and security to all those who followed the heavenly Father. His role was to come back from heaven in the clouds and raise up those who had died in Christ as well as those who were living righteously even those who were suffering or being persecuted. Paul identifies the role of Christ, not as another King David or King Cyrus who would never be called Lord, but with the salvific role of God the Father, the promised fulfilled from the stories of Creation, Noah, Abraham, and Moses, as in 1Thes 5:13-18. Various apocryphal texts, such as the War Scroll, are also useful to see what other motifs and stories were circulating about the Messiah.

Conclusion

There are a number of points to keep in mind concerning 1Thes. One is that the scripture for Paul was the Jewish scripture, especially Isaiah, but as seen above other Hebrew Scriptures and Apocryphal texts seemed to play a role as well. For another, there are topics, issues, and teachings that Paul may have and likely did preach about that are *not* written in the letter, either because they did not need to be repeated or because they were not pertinent to the issues of ‘the dead in Christ’ and/or the ‘sufferings and persecutions’ of the church in *Thessaloniki*. As stated earlier, “all the ways that Paul will speak of Christ in subsequent letters are already in place”¹⁴⁷ in 1Thes. Matera¹⁴⁸ shows that “Paul’s Christology begins with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,” as stated on page 7 above. Crossan suggests that “the life of Christ was not essential to his message but that the “Christ of his theology as Christian (“now”) was Christ risen from the dead.”¹⁴⁹ This, coupled with the Parousia, are the essential message of the letter. So the topics of the birth, baptism, or ministry of Jesus Christ are not his primary concern in regards to this letter explicitly. Does this mean that Paul did not know these stories or that he taught them but they were either not relevant or presumed to the message in 1Thes? Certainly not, for he had met with the apostles at Jerusalem (Acts 9:27-28) after staying for some time with disciples in Damascus (Acts 9:19b-20).

Another point to keep in mind is that Paul was invested in a personal relationship¹⁵⁰ with the Thessalonians, as in his parental language (1Thes 2:7-8, 11). As

¹⁴⁷ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, page 34.

¹⁴⁸ Matera, “Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John”, page 239.

¹⁴⁹ Crossan, page 184.

¹⁵⁰ Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, page 57.

such he had developed an intimate relationship with them over a substantial period of time. Since he had been there so long he had plenty of opportunity to go into detail about the life of Jesus Christ as shown by his use of the phrase 'as you well know' and similar phrases, some of these are at 1Thes 1:5, 2:1, 2:9, 4:2, and 5:1-2. So there are teachings from Paul about who Jesus Christ was; for they received God's message (as in 2:13). So part of the narrative that the people in *Thessaloniki* certainly would have known about were the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It would seem odd for Paul to only mention the end of the life of Jesus without mentioning something of his life, unless perhaps someone else had done so; it is likely that he presumed this information was already known to his audience.

Another horizon of Paul's understanding was the local Greek pagan culture, as seen above. Many of the issues of Greek pagan ritual life are transformed by Paul's language in 1Thes including monotheism; universal worship as opposed to division by race; one source of divine authority; and the true meaning of salvation and afterlife, the Lord of life who provides peace, and is the son of God. Paul is monotheistic. Everyone and anyone, rich or poor, Greek or Jew could fully participate in the Christian life. There is one source, the word of the Lord, which has authentic authority of the church, and that is the living witness of the apostles and disciples beginning in Judea and spreading to the nations. Salvation and the afterlife will come quickly for both the living and the dead; followers will meet in the sky for deliverance from wrath.

Paul was taught by the apostles and disciples, as stated above. From that experience, among others perhaps, Paul used many of the same concepts as the writers of Matthew and John. Some of the teachings of Jesus Christ from the apostles would have

included eschatological language. For example, there are parallels between the language used by Paul in 1Thes 4 and 5 as compared to the writer of Matthew in chapters 24 and 25. Tracy L. Howard outlined the similarities using four subtopics:¹⁵¹ Parousia Event (Matthew 24:30-31 with 1Thes 4:16-17), Time of Day Unknown (Mt 24:36 and 1Thes 5:1), Unexpected Nature of the Day (Mt 24:43, 37-39 with 1Thes 5:2-3), and Exhortations to Watch (Mt 24:42, 29 with 1Thes 5:6-7). Other parallel phrases between the gospels and 1Thes include: 1Thes 3:6 with Jn 5:41, 44 concerning 'seeking glory or praise from God and not men'; 1Thes 4:9 with Jn 6:45; 13:34 concerning "God himself has taught you to love one another"; as mentioned above 1Thes 5:5 with Jn 8:12 concerning the 'children of light and of the day' ... 'belong neither to the darkness nor to night'; and 1Thes 5:15a with Mt 5:38 concerning 'see that know one return evil to any other' in 1Thes and 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.'

These are what informed Paul's Christology, that is, his faith experience starting with his conversion, the teachings of the apostles, his being sent from the apostles at Jerusalem, and his own faith experiences as well as the Greek culture and understanding which infused the populous. In later epistles, as well, there were more developed ideas about Christology, as well as ecclesiology and other theological areas, such as the nature of the Jesus in both unity with and separate from God the Father. As the church matured and realized that Jesus may not be coming back soon, then the understanding of who Christ was, his role, the role and mission of the church, and even the understanding of the Parousia began to mature, develop, and change through the post-Pauline writings.

¹⁵¹ Tracy L. Howard. "The Literary Unity of 1Thessalonians 4:13-5:11" in *Grace Theological Journal*, 9.2 1988, page 185.

Since the issues addressed in 1Thes concerned moral exhortation, as in 1Thes 4:1 ‘we beg and exhort you’ and 4:11 ‘we exhort you to even greater progress,’ primarily and was written to a particular group with particular issues, we cannot extrapolate a complete understanding of Christology from this one letter. In centuries to come the ideas about Jesus’ nature and role led to many arguments, heretical movements, and divisions within Christianity.

1Thes is one account from the perspective of Paul who had particular experiences of Jesus Christ and a knowledge of the experiences of the apostles and disciples in Damascus and Jerusalem. How much weight can each epistle or gospel be given by itself or do they need to be measured against each other? Christology will continue to be experienced and expressed by Christian communities throughout history starting with the New Testament. Then the voices of the early Church Fathers, such as Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, and Origen, as well as the councils including the Councils of Nicea (325 CE) and Chalcedon (351), and certainly down to present times continue to define and understand the role and person of Jesus Christ. One area of further development certainly concerns the Holy Spirit including the verses from 1Thes at 1:5-8, which includes the concepts of power, conviction, and joy.

Another fascinating study would be to compare Paul’s conversion story in Acts 26:15b with his message in 1Thes as seen in the above especially the terms “delivered you” with 1Thes 1:10b, “Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come” as well as with the term “from darkness to light” with 1Thes 5:5, “No, all of you are children of the light and of the day. We belong neither to darkness nor to the night.” How much of his conversion story affect his theology in general and his Christology in particular? Was he

specifically influenced by texts from the Apocrypha like Enos and the War Scroll? Another motif from his conversion story is the concept of Satan (a representative of darkness) which can be compared to 1Thes 2:18 where “Satan blocked the way.”

What current church communities can learn from 1Thes is that each Christian community experiences both unique expressions of faith based in part on their own culture, issues, and circumstances, as well as a strong sense of unity with other Christian communities. Although there are differences in theologies and starting points between Paul, John, and other writers, the essential gospel (which is that Jesus lived obediently, died as a consequence of living a righteous lifestyle, rose from the dead, and will soon return to save those who believe) is consistent throughout the gospels and writings. There is one God and one Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. This same Lord Jesus Christ was born, lived, suffered, died, and rose from the dead; and he will come again, from the clouds, to redeem the followers of God the Father and bring justice to the world.

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

New American Bible. New York, NY: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1970.

Word Study Greek-English New Testament. Paul R. McReynolds (Ed.).
Wheaton, IL.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1999.

Secondary Sources:

Aageson, James W. *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008.

Barnstone, Willis (ed.). *The other Bible*. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 2005.

Brown, Raymond E. *Introduction to New Testament Christology*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1994.

Brown, Raymond E.; Fitzmyer, Joseph A; Murphy, Roland E. Murphy. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999.

Bruce, F. F. (Ed.) *World Biblical Commentary, 1&2 Thessalonians*. Vol. 45 Nashville, KY: Word Books, 1982.

Burridge, Richard A. *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007.

Carroll, John T. *The Return of Jesus in Early Christianity*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000.

Castelli, Elizabeth A. *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1991.

Childs, Brevard S. *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004.

Crossan, John Dominic. *The Birth of Christianity*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1998.

DeVillies, Jan. "Essay on Adolph Deissmann" in Stanley E. Porter, *Paul and His Theology*. Boston, MA: Brill, 2006.

- DeWitt, Norman Wentworth. *St. Paul and Epicurus*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1954.
- DiTommaso, Lorenzo. *The book of Daniel and the apocryphal Daniel literature*. Boston, MA: Brill, 2005.
- Donfried, Karl Paul. *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002.
- Dunn, James D. G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998.
- , *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity*. Norwich, UK: SCM Press, 2006.
- Elledge, C. D. *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Boston, MA: Brill, 2005.
- Eusebius Pamphilius. "Church history, c. 320 C.E. Trans. Arthur Cushman McGiffert." <http://www.ecel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.toc.html>, accessed September 1, 2008.
- Fee, Gordon D. *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007.
- Fiore, Benjamin, S.J. "Paul Exemplification and Imitation," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, ed., J. Paul Sampley. New York, NY: Trinity Press International, 2003.
- Forbes, Christopher. "Paul and Rhetorical Comparison" in J. Paul Sampley, *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*. New York: Trinity Press International, 2003
- Fortescue, Adrian. "Liturgy" in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 9. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910.
- Freedman, David Noel (ed.). "Anchor Bible Dictionary". Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1st edition, CD-ROM, 1994.
- Gregory, Bradley C. "The postexilic Exile in third Isaiah: Isaiah 61:1-3 in Light of Second Temple Hermeneutics" in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126, no. 3 (2007): 475-496.
- Green, G. L. *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (PNTC). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002.
- Himmelfarb, Martha. *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Horsley, Richard A. *Paul and Empire, Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.

- Howard, Tracy L. "The Literary Unity of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11" in *Grace Theological Journal*, 9.2, 1988, pages 163-190.
- Kim, Seyoon. "The Jesus tradition in 1Thess 4.13-5.11." *New Testament Studies*, 48(2), 2002, page 231, cf. 16.
- Larson, Jennifer. *Ancient Greek Cults: A Guide*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Matera, Frank. "Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology" in *Theological Studies*, 67, no. 2, June 2006.
- Mallerbe, Abraham J. *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989.
- Oakes, Peter. "Re-mapping the Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1Thessalonians and Philippians." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 27, 3, 2005.
- Plevnik, Joseph. *Paul and the Parousia: an Exegetical and Theological Investigation*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.
- Rausch, Thomas P. S.J. *Who is Jesus, An Introduction to Christology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003.
- Richard, Earl J., *Sacra Pagina, First and Second Thessalonians*. Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier Books, 2007.
- Sawyer, John F. A. *The Fifth Gospel, Isaiah in the History of Christianity*. Oxford, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Smart, James D. *History and Theology in Second Isaiah, A commentary on Isaiah 35, 40-66*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1965.
- Wenham, David. *Paul, Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995.
- Wilson, Marvin R. *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: 1989.

