

SEYOON KIM

Paul's Gospel
for the Thessalonians
and Others

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament
481*

Mohr Siebeck

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Essays on 1 & 2 Thessalonians
and Other Pauline Epistles

Mohr Siebeck

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*In Memory of Ralph P. Martin and Robert P. Meye,
and
for Donald A. Hagner and Robert K. Johnston*

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Tübingen, July 2021

Seyoon Kim

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3 rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BDF	Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
Billerbeck	H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch</i> . 6 vols. München: Kessinger, 1922–61.
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i> . Edited by G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993.
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . 3 vols. Edited by G. Schneider and H. Balz. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990 (ET of <i>EWNT: Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>)
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExAud</i>	<i>Ex Auditu</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments

FS	<i>Festschrift</i>
HKNT	Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HThKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IB	<i>Interpreter's Bible</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MHT	James H. Moulton, Wilbur F. Howard, and Nigel Turner. <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i>
MM	James H. Moulton and George Milligan. <i>The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament</i> . London, 1930. Repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997
NCB	New Century Bible
NICNT	New International Biblical Commentary on the New Testament
NIDNTT	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . 4 vols. Edited by C. Brown. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975–85.
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PG	Patrologia graeca. Edited by J.-P. Migne, 162 vols. (Paris, 1857–86)
PNP	S. Kim, <i>Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel</i> . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; WUNT 140; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002.
PFG	N. T. Wright, <i>Paul and the Faithfulness of God</i> . vol. 2. Christian Origins and the Question of God 4. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
ÖTK	Ökumenischer Taschenkommentar zum Neuen Testament
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> . 3 rd edition. 6 vols. Edited by K. Galling. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1957–65.
RTR	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SD	Studies and Documents
SNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
TBei	<i>Theologische Beiträge</i>

<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . 10 vols. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (ET of <i>ThWNT: Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>). Translated by G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76.
<i>ThWAT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck, et al. 9 vols. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973–2000.
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Introduction

This collection of essays is meant to serve as a companion to my commentary, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*.¹ Most of the essays collected here were written alongside my work on the commentary, either as its *Vorarbeiten*, or as more detailed discussions of some important themes and issues that could not be contained within the confines of the commentary.

In *Essay 1* of the volume, I observe how in 1 Thess 1–3 Paul affirms five times that the Thessalonian Christians accepted his gospel and came to the Christian faith in spite of severe persecutions, because they saw its truth demonstrated in his “entry” (ἔσσοδος) as its preacher (1 Thess 1:5–6, 9–10; 2:1, 13; 3:6), i. e., in his apostolic conduct that was in stark contrast to that of the contemporary wandering Cynic philosophers and Sophists in Hellenistic cities (1 Thess 2:1–12). For this fact, Paul gives thanks to God three times over in the first three chapters of the epistle (1:2 + 5–6; 2:13; 3:6–10), so that the whole first part of the epistle (1 Thess 1–3) is not only the longest but also the most unusual thanksgiving section within the whole Pauline corpus. Paul’s fivefold association of the Thessalonians’ faith with his apostolic “entry” runs like a red thread through the first and main part of the epistle. This new observation, and the inquiry as to why Paul repeatedly makes this association, supporting it with a concrete description of the manner of his “entry” (2:1–12), help us to define the occasion and purpose of the epistle, as well as to determine whether form criticism and rhetorical criticism are of any value for this epistle. I argue that a proper appreciation of Paul’s fivefold association of the Thessalonians’ faith with his apostolic conduct is decisive for a right interpretation of the letter.

1 Thess 1:9b–10 is a summary of the gospel that Paul preached to the Thessalonians and the Thessalonians believed. Therefore, in *Essay 2*, I argue that each word, phrase, or clause in it must be treated as a keyword or heading that encapsulates a whole narrative or doctrine, similarly to those in 1 Cor 15:3–5, and that we need to expound the words and phrases and the whole of the summary in connection with the other summaries of the gospel in the epistle, namely 4:14; 2:11–12; and 5:9–10, as well as with the wish-prayer in 3:11–13 which reflects the gospel. This procedure leads me to see 1 Thess 1:10 as closely connected with Rom 5:8–10 and Rom 8:1–4, 32–34 and to conclude that the gospel of 1 Thess

¹ Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming in 2022).

1:10 is essentially the same as that of Rom 1:2–4 + 16–17. In this way, the basic unity and continuity between the gospel which Paul preached to the Thessalonians and that which he preached later to the Romans through his letter are highlighted. Additionally, the whole study helps us understand why Paul defines the gospel in terms of Jesus being “the Son of God” (Rom 1:1–4, 9; 2 Cor 1:18–20; Gal 1:16; cf. Acts 9:20) and presents it in terms of justification, acquittal of sins and restoration of sinners to the kingdom of God. Thereby, it also helps us affirm that Paul’s gospel of God’s Son (Rom 1:3–4, 16–17 + 8:31–39; 1 Cor 15:23–28; Col 1:13–14) closely corresponds to Jesus’ gospel of God’s kingdom.

The majority of New Testament scholars consider 1 Thessalonians to be the earliest of the Apostle Paul’s surviving letters. Accordingly, they appreciate it as witnessing to his early theology, often highlighting especially the absence of the Pauline doctrine of justification and the focus on futuristic eschatology in it. On this basis, it is quite common for scholars to argue for a theory of substantial development in Paul’s theology from its early stage in 1 Thessalonians to its mature stage in Galatians and Romans. Since 1 Thessalonians is commonly viewed as having been written in AD 50, even for those who hold Galatians to have been written a couple of years before it, there is no problem in taking it as an early letter of Paul. However, against the majority view, I consider other factors beyond those considered in the preceding essay, in order to consolidate the case for the essential unity and continuity of Paul’s gospel between 1 Thessalonians and his later letters. So, in *Essay 3*, I further argue for an implicit or encapsulated presence of Paul’s doctrine of justification in 1 Thessalonians, partly in the contextualized form of sanctification, a parallel metaphor to justification (as in 1 Corinthians). It is also shown that, along with that doctrine, other related Pauline doctrines, such as the Lord Jesus Christ’s present reign (1 Thess 3:11–13) and the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:8–9), also appear in the letter in similarly encapsulated form. I explain that they are not explicitly referred to or unfolded in it because an exposition of the gospel *per se* or an argument for a right form of its presentation was not part of the needs of the Thessalonian Church that Paul sought to address in that brief letter. Additionally, it is suggested that we should consider more realistically the chronological fact that Paul, a trained former Jewish theologian, had already had about 16–18 years of Christian theological reflection and ministry experience before writing the letter – a period that is more than two times longer than the approximately seven years between it and Romans. It is also pointed out that there is a logical incongruity in the view of many scholars (especially New Perspectivists) who trace the formulation of the justification doctrine to the Antioch controversy and yet highlight its alleged absence in 1 Thessalonians, a *post-Antioch controversy letter*, as an argument for their theory of its late development. As for the question of a substantial development in Paul’s eschatology between 1 Thessalonians and his later letters, I show the situation-conditioned nature

of the focus in 1 Thessalonians on the futuristic aspect of the common Pauline eschatological scheme of “already/but not yet.”

While working on 1 Thessalonians, I was struck by the following four facts, when I considered them together: (1) For his eschatological teaching, Paul cites a Son of Man saying in 1 Thess 5:2 (Matt 24:43–44//Luke 12:39–40) and, most likely, another one in 1 Thess 4:16 (Matt 24:30–31//Mark 13:26–27); (2) he explains his apostolic conduct, echoing the Son of Man saying (the ransom saying) of Mark 10:45//Matt 20:28 in 1 Thess 2:6–8, just as he does in 1 Cor 9:19–22; 10:33–11:1; (3) he wrote 1 Thessalonians while transmitting to the Corinthians the eucharistic saying (1 Cor 11:23–26), which is a Son of Man saying (Mark 14:21–25 and *parr.*); and (4) some scholars think that the gospel cited in 1 Thess 1:10 originally had “the Son Man” in it before Paul replaced it with “[God’s] Son.”² So, in *Essay 4*, I seek to demonstrate how various kinds of Jesus’ Son of Man sayings shaped Paul’s Christology, soteriology and eschatology. Thus, the study leads me to the conclusion that the Jesus tradition, both his teaching about God’s kingdom and his sayings about himself as the Son of Man who bore that kingdom or kingship (Dan 7:13–14), formed a basis for Paul’s formulation of his gospel. Hence, there is a close material correspondence between Paul’s gospel of God’s Son or justification and Jesus’ gospel of God’s kingdom, as ascertained in *Essay 2*.

Then, in *Essay 5*, I go on to show more echoes of Jesus’s ransom saying and the eucharistic saying in Paul’s soteriological statements (especially those that contain the giving-up formula or its variants) and his ministerial/paraenetic teachings in 1 Thessalonians and his other letters, and conclude that those sayings of Jesus provided the most fundamental basis for his soteriology and decisively shaped his apostolic ministry after Jesus’ example.

In *Essay 6*, I seek to demonstrate that the two issues that Paul addresses in the eschatological sections of 1 Thess 4:13–18 and 5:1–11 (namely, the Thessalonians’ grief about the believers who died before the parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ and their anxiety about the exact timing of the Day of the Lord), arose from their inadequate understanding of Jesus’ sayings about the coming of the Son of Man, such as Matt 24:30–31//Mark 13:26–27 and Matt 24:43–44//Luke 12:39–40, which Paul had delivered to them as part of his eschatological teaching. I argue that therefore he tries to reassure them by helping them understand those sayings properly in the light of the fundamental gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection for our salvation (1 Thess 4:14; 5:9–10). Thus, this study supports the thesis unfolded in the preceding *Essays 4* and *5*.

Having seen how the Thessalonians came to be anxious with their expectation of an imminent parousia of the Lord Jesus due to an inadequate understanding of some sayings of Jesus about the coming of the Son of Man, in *Essay 7*, I consider

² For a discussion of this matter, see 133–37 below (*Essay 4.1*).

whether the problem of some Thessalonian Christians' idleness (1 Thess 4:11–12; 5:14; 2 Thess 3:6–15) could have arisen at least partly from their one-sided understanding of Jesus' sayings, such as Luke 12:22–34//Matt 6:25–34 + 19–21, as well as of his sayings about the coming of the Son of Man.

In *Essay 8*, I ask: In what sense does Paul call the Thessalonian church his “hope or joy or crown of boasting” or his “glory and joy” (1 Thess 2:19–20)? I was stimulated to raise this question as many commentators appear to avoid a serious discussion about it or make confusing comments about the passage, while many preachers simply expound it meritologically. A critical inquiry about that question leads me to discuss Paul's teachings about judgment according to works and reward for good deeds within his doctrine of justification and so helps me lay bare the structure of his doctrine of justification.

Counter-imperial interpretation of the New Testament has been in vogue for some time. Pointing especially to Paul's open criticism of imperial Rome's slogan or “gospel” of “peace and security” (1 Thess 5:3) and his discussion of the Lord Jesus' *parousia* (1 Thess 4:13–18), which evokes the majestic picture of the *parousia* of the Roman Emperor, the *lord* and *god's son*, to a provincial city, many scholars take 1 Thessalonians as providing the clearest evidence for Paul's counter-imperial presentation of the “gospel” of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (the Davidic King). So, in *Essay 9*, I closely examine whether 1 Thessalonians can really be interpreted as presenting a counter-imperial message. Then, in *Essay 10*, I go on to examine Paul's gospel preaching as a whole in the form of critiquing the work of N. T. Wright, one of the most influential counter-imperial interpreters of Paul, to find out whether he really presented his gospel with an intention to subvert the Roman Empire.

In *Essay 11*, by examining Paul's common paraenesis in 1 Thess 4–5; Phil 2–4; and Rom 12–13, I further consolidate my view of an essential unity and continuity in Paul's theology between 1 Thessalonians, an early letter of his, and Romans and Philippians, his later letters. I also affirm that Paul's paraenesis for Christians is basically an exhortation to live a holy and righteous life in reversal of the Adamic way of existence (Rom 1:18–32).

In this volume, I have included two essays on 2 Thessalonians. One of the great surprises that I got while working on my commentary was to discover the clear presence of Paul's doctrine of justification in 2 Thessalonians. Thus, the subject matter of *Essay 12* is the doctrine of justification as presented in 2 Thess 1–2. In order to reassure the persecuted Christians who are confused and anxious about the Day of the Lord, no doubt, for the last judgment that is to take place on that Day, Paul presents a brief scenario of the future revelation of “the man of lawlessness” and the *parousia* of the Lord Jesus Christ (2:1–8). But what should strike us more than that is the fact that in the surrounding passages (1:5–12 and 2:9–17) Paul repeats the message that in his “just judgment” God will deliver a verdict of salvation for them, the believers in the gospel, while meting out con-

demnation for their unbelieving persecutors. He does this, echoing many words and themes of Rom 1–2, and even representing the thesis of the justification doctrine in Rom 1:16–17 twice in generalized statements (1:8–10, in a positive form; 2:10–12, in a negative form). Thus, the presence of Paul’s justification doctrine is even clearer in 2 Thessalonians than in 1 Thessalonians. This fact greatly strengthens the argument for the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians, and also supports my view of an essential unity and continuity of Paul’s gospel between his early letters and later letters.

Although Paul’s focus on God’s “just judgment” at the parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ in 2 Thess 1–2 deserves greater attention, in fact, historically scholars have been more fascinated with the brief eschatological scenario in 2 Thess 2:3–8 with the coded references, “the restraining thing” (τὸ κατέχον) and “the restraining person” (ὁ κατέχων) as well as “the man of lawlessness.” In *Essay 13*, then, I suggest that Paul’s understanding of God’s eschatological saving plan (“the mystery”) of Rom 11:25–26 is a key to the right interpretation of the scenario. I explain that by “the man of lawlessness,” Paul refers to a future Caesar who will act like Caligula but in a much more terrible way than he did, and so, as it were, to a “Super-Caligula,” the ultimate agent of Satan. Additionally, Paul refers to the then reigning Caesar Claudius and his Empire respectively as “the restraining person” and “the restraining thing.” He calls them as such because by their (relatively good) maintenance of law and order in the *oecumene*, they provide the time and other conditions for Paul to conduct his mission to all the nations and bring the full number of the Gentiles into God’s kingdom, which will trigger the repentance/salvation of all Israel, so that the parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ may take place.

Essay 14 deals with the tension between Paul’s prohibition of retaliation in personal relationships and his teaching of God’s retributive judgment. The brief inquiry is especially focused on the question how Paul reconciles his doctrine of “the just judgment of God” (2 Thess 1:5; Rom 2:5) with his gospel of God’s grace in Christ, i.e., with the doctrines of God’s justification of the ungodly and reconciliation of enemies to himself. I cautiously suggest that in the light of the revelation of God’s grace in Christ, Paul re-interprets the doctrine of God’s judgment in terms of giving unbelieving evil doers up to their own rejection of his saving love.

Imitatio Christi is an important theme in Paul, and it has serious implications both for a proper understanding of his ethics and for a right resolution of the so-called “Paul–Jesus debate.” In *Essay 15*, I show that in dealing with the question whether Christians may eat food offered to idols in 1 Cor 8–10, Paul draws his guidelines from some sayings of Jesus as well as his example of ignoring the Jewish purity regulations and eating with sinners. I argue that by “imitation of Christ” Paul has in view not just Christ’s self-giving in his incarnation and crucifixion, nor just that and some deeds of the historical Jesus, but also his teach-

ings that accompanied his deeds. With this regard, the particular importance of Jesus' ransom saying (Mark 10:45//Matt 20:28) is highlighted (1 Cor 9:19–22; 10:33–11:1; cf. also Rom 15:1–3). Thus, this essay supports the conclusions in Essays 4 and 5 of this volume as well as strengthening the view of a strong continuity between Jesus and Paul that I have propounded in the first six Essays of this volume.

In *Essay 16*, I discuss Paul's self-understanding as an eschatological herald of the gospel of God's saving reign through his Son, Jesus Christ the Lord (Rom 1:3–5), which redeems humanity from the reign of "the god of this age" (2 Cor 4:4) or "the dominion of darkness" (Col 1:13–14). I explain that understanding his apostleship thus, Paul seeks to proclaim that gospel throughout the *oecumene* and bring the full number of the Gentiles into God's kingdom, and thereby also to trigger the repentance and salvation of all Israel, so that the Lord Jesus Christ may return and complete the redemption of the whole world (Rom 11:25–26). I argue that he developed such an understanding of God's saving plan and his apostolic ministry by interpreting the revelation of the gospel and his apostolic call on the Damascus road in the light chiefly of the Servant passages and other related passages in Isa 40–66 as well as Isa 6 (cf. also Deut 32:21). I further argue that as a sign of partial fulfillment of the OT–Jewish expectation of the Gentiles' eschatological pilgrimage to Zion and of completion of bringing the Eastern hemisphere's portion of "the full number of the Gentiles" into God's kingdom he undertook his journey to Jerusalem with the representatives of the churches of the Eastern hemisphere to deliver their collection for the Jerusalem church before his travel to Rome to embark his mission into the Western hemisphere (Rom 15:14–32). This thesis of this Essay partially dovetails with the thesis of Essay 13 above, and therefore they support each other.

In *Essay 17*, I reflect on the Apostle Paul as a pastor and inquire as to how he preached the gospel and carried out his pastoral ministry. He has left several letters in the New Testament, and all of them, even Romans, are essentially pastoral in character. As such, they are quite valuable as witnesses, not only to the various pastoral situations of several Hellenistic churches of the first century, but also to Paul's efforts to minister to their needs "in a manner worthy of the gospel" that he preached. Of course, there is a limitation in this kind of inquiry insofar as we have to rely mainly on his own letters. Nevertheless, I hope that this study produces a portrait of Paul the pastor at least as he wanted to be regarded.

In *Essay 18*, the topic is "Paul and Violence." Somewhat similarly to "counter-imperial interpretation," what we may call "anti-violence interpretation" is also quite in vogue in some quarters of Biblical scholarship today. Just as the former has had some salutary effects in making us understand some books of the Scriptures better and in helping us be more sensitive to the socio-political effects of our theological discourses, so the latter has also had some salutary effects in making us aware of some violent thoughts and language clearly present in the

Scriptures and in helping us be more sensitive to the potentially abusive or violence-inciting character of the language we use in our theological discourses and homilies. However, in both kinds of interpretation there is the same problem of excess shown especially clearly by some extremists or “zealots” of these interpretative movements. So, in *Essay 18*, to answer the question whether Paul’s teaching is violent or his language violence-inciting, I discuss questions such as: To what extent is their reader- or victim-centered definition of violence realistic or proper? Is it possible to avoid such language as “criticism” of falsehood, “judgment”/“condemnation” of evil deeds, or “fighting” for truth, justice, freedom, peace, etc., or does the abandonment of such language serve the common good of humanity? I point out the tendency among many practitioners of the “anti-violence” interpretation to neglect due appreciation of Paul’s change from a violent “zealot” to a “pacifist” Christian apostle, his gospel of Christ Jesus’ “victory” over the Satanic forces through his self-sacrifice, and his exhortations for the church to “fight” the powers of sin and death with the “weapons” of self-sacrificing love (“the law of Christ”) in imitation of Christ Jesus. I try to assess how successful Paul was in practicing his own teaching of self-giving love even for his enemies. In this essay, I have left out assessing the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of his teachings, which, I presume, would be both positive and negative, depending on the degree to which the church in various times and places understood or misunderstood, and applied or misapplied or failed to apply, Paul’s teachings.

Most of these essays originated separately from one another on various occasions. Moreover, some of them deal with topics that are related and involve considerable overlap. Therefore, some repetition is unavoidable. I beg the reader’s indulgence.

Finally, I note here that I have appended my essay “Jesus and the Temple,” which I wrote in the Spring of 1985. For an explanation of the appendix, I refer the reader to p. 423 below.

1. The Structure and Function of 1 Thessalonians 1–3, and the Occasion and Purpose of 1 Thessalonians

1 Thess 1–3 appears to be the thanksgiving section of the epistle. However, it is unusual in that it is incomparably long, containing three thanksgivings (1:2–5 or 10¹; 2:13; 3:9–10) and two or three narratives in between them ([1:6–10]; 2:1–12; 2:17–3:8). Furthermore, a fivefold combination of the effectiveness of the gospel (or the faith of the Thessalonians) with Paul’s missionary entry (εἰσοδος) in their city runs through the whole thanksgiving section as a red thread. These phenomena raise various questions about the structure and function of the section, as well as about the relationship of the section with the remaining two chapters of the epistle. And these questions are vital for a proper interpretation of the epistle and for determining its occasion and Paul’s purpose in writing it.

1. The Fivefold Association of (a) the Effectiveness of the Gospel (or the Faith of the Thessalonians) with (b) Paul’s Entry (εἰσοδος)

- 1:5 (a) ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφῳρίᾳ πολλῇ [hence v. 6b: δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου],
(b) καθὼς οἴδατε οἳ ἐγενήθημεν [ἐν] ὑμῖν δι’ ὑμᾶς.
- 1:9–10 (b) αὐτοὶ γὰρ περὶ ἡμῶν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὅποιαν εἰσοδὸν ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς,
(a) καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ [τῶν] νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν ῥυθόμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης.
- 2:1 (b) Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἰσοδὸν ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς
(a) ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν,
- 2:13 (b) Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο [= his εἰσοδος described in 2:2–12]
καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως,
(a) ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.

¹ Commentators usually take the whole 1:2–10 as a thanksgiving section. But it may be better to take 1:6–10 as a narrative, which elaborates on the cause for the thanksgiving (v. 5), especially praising the faith that the Thessalonians came to have. See the section 8 “The Structure and Function of 1 Thess 1–3” below, as well as comment on 1:6 in my commentary.

- 3:6 Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφ' ὑμῶν καὶ εὐαγγελισμένου ἡμῖν
 (a) τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν,
 (b) καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε μνησίαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε,
 ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς
 (a–b/b–a/b–a/b–a/a–b – no exact chiasm)

(1) In 1 Thess 1:5, Paul relates the success of his mission or the gospel among the Thessalonians to his missionary conduct among them. At first sight, the connection between the clause *καθὼς οἴοι ἐγενήθημεν [ἐν] ὑμῖν δι' ὑμᾶς* in 1:5 and the preceding main clause *ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ* appears a little awkward. However, when we see that such a connection is not only made here but is also repeated four more times within the relatively short space of 1 Thess 1–3, we can presume that it must have a certain vital logic and a central significance. If so, finding that logic and appreciating that significance should be a key to understanding Paul's main concern and argument in 1 Thess 1–3. Already in our verse, however, we can sense that Paul considers his missionary conduct, or the Thessalonians' appreciation of it, to have been instrumental in causing his gospel to come to them not only in word but also in the powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit and with full conviction (so that they received it with joy of the Spirit in spite of much affliction, v. 6b).

(2) In 1:9–10, Paul reports what some people in Macedonia and Achaia, and in other places, speak about. They speak about Paul's *εἴσοδος* ("entry") to the Thessalonians *and* their conversion from idols to the true God for salvation. Albeit with a borrowed word, here again Paul connects the success of his mission (the conversion and faith of the Thessalonians) with his missionary "entry" or conduct. If in 1:5 he indicated with the conjunction *καθὼς* how his conduct had been a cause for his missionary success, here in 1:9–10 he suggests the same with the emphatic positioning of *ὅποιαν εἴσοδον ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς* before referring to the conversion and faith of the Thessalonians (*καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεόν ...*).

(3) In 2:1, Paul again connects his missionary *εἴσοδος* with the success of his mission, although here he puts the latter in the self-effacing form of a negative sentence: *ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν* ("that it did not become fruitless" or "that it was not in vain"). By specifying his *εἴσοδος* as the first direct object of the predicate verb *οἴδατε* and then adding to it *ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν* as an exegetical object, he produces here a similar effect as in 1:9–10.

In fact, 2:1 is so constructed as to correspond to the structure of 1:9–10. Apparently, this is in order to express a thought parallel to that of the latter in connection with *ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἢ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελήλυθεν, ὥστε μὴ χρεῖαν ἔχειν ἡμᾶς λαλεῖν τι* of 1:8. The Macedonians, the Achaians, etc. "themselves" (*αὐτοὶ*) speak about how impeccable an "entrance" Paul had towards the Thessalonians and how it brought about the wonderful conversion of the Thessalonians. For this reason, Paul "has no need to say anything" (1:8). He states a

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