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The Jesus Tradition in 1 Thess 4.13–5.11*

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The Thessalonians' grief about the dead believers and their anxiety about the date of the parousia arose mainly out of their inadequate understanding of the eschatological sayings of Jesus which Paul had delivered to them. Therefore, in 1 Thess 4.13–5.11 Paul seeks to resolve the problems by helping them understand those sayings properly in the light of the fundamental saving event of Christ's death and resurrection.

Having received the report from Timothy (1 Thess 3.6–8) that the Thessalonians were grieving over the believers who had died before the parousia and were also anxious about the date of the parousia, Paul deals with these questions in turn in 4.13–18 (περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων) and 5.1–11 (περὶ δὲ χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν). But what was the exact nature of the Thessalonians' grief about the dead believers? Did they think that the dead believers would not participate in salvation at the parousia at all, or just that they would have some disadvantage over against those who would survive until the parousia? What caused them to think like that? Was there any relationship between their grief about the dead believers and their anxiety about the date of the parousia? In our passage Paul explicitly appeals to the 'word of the Lord' (4.15) and imparts his teaching in a language strongly reminiscent of some sayings of Jesus that are transmitted in the Synoptic Gospels. Is Paul alluding to some sayings of Jesus here? If he is, why does he deal with the two problems of the Thessalonians by referring to Jesus' sayings in a way somewhat unusual to him?

I. Some basic exegetical observations

In order to answer these questions, we have to start with a clear understanding of what Paul says in our passage, especially in its first section (4.13–18). In 4.14 Paul gives his answer in a nutshell to the Thessalonians' grief (4.13), and then in the

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subsequent verses, vv. 15–17, he unfolds and substantiates this answer.[1] There is a grammatical anomaly in 4.14, in that the protasis is a conditional clause, but the apodosis starts with a comparative and inferential conjunction (οὕτως καί). The protasis with εἰ states a reality rather than a hypothetical condition.[2] Yet it is formulated as a conditional clause in order to invite the readers to identify themselves with the confession once more:[3] 'If we believe, I trust we do, that. . . .' Οὕτως καί is inferential and comparative: 'even so'. It refers to the unexpressed assumption: '(If we believe, I trust we do, that Jesus died and rose again, i.e. that God raised him from the dead), *even so* God will bring those who have fallen asleep. . . .'

In 4.16, where Paul unfolds and substantiates his summary conclusion of 4.14, the resurrection of the dead is prominently referred to, and it is clearly envisaged as the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, in v.14 we are to construe διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ with the verb ἄξει,[4] and the clause ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει should be interpreted as meaning: 'God will bring through Jesus those who have fallen asleep.'

The phrase σὺν αὐτῷ of v. 14 has to be interpreted in the light of its elaboration in 4.17 and 5.10. In 4.15–17, in unfolding and substantiating the summary conclusion of 4.14 on the basis of 'the word of the Lord', Paul first of all states in v. 15b the implication of 'the word of the Lord' which he is about to give:[5] 'We, who are alive, who are left until the parousia of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have fallen asleep.' Then, in vv. 16–17a, he paraphrases 'the word of the Lord' itself: '. . . the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.' Paul proceeds in this manner because he wants immediately to address the problem of the Thessalonians and allay their anxiety. By paraphrasing the 'word of the Lord' in 4.16–17a, Paul substantiates the part of the conclusion, ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει, of 4.14 as well as the implication he drew in v. 15b from the 'word of the Lord'. However, Paul draws another implication in v. 17b from the 'word of the Lord' paraphrased in vv. 16–17a: 'And so we shall always be with the Lord.' This (together

1 Cf. N. Hyldahl, 'Auferstehung Christi – Auferstehung der Toten (1 Thess. 4,13–18)', *Die Paulinische Literatur und Theologie* (ed. S. Pedersen; Arhus: Forlaget Aros, 1980) 121; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 125; A. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (AB 32B; New York, etc.: Doubleday, 2000) 267.

2 Cf. BDR § 372.1.

3 T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (EKK 13; Zürich: Benziger/Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1990) 190.

4 So also Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 266.

5 So, e.g., P. Siber, *Mit Christus leben* (ATANT 61; Zürich: Theologischer, 1971) 35–6; Marshall, *Thessalonians*. 126–7; C. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistle to the Thessalonians* (NIGNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 171; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 269.

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with the part of the 'word of the Lord' cited in v. 17a) clearly unfolds and substantiates the ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ of 4.14. This means that we must understand the phrase ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ of 4.14 in the sense of the phrase σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα of 4.17: '*to be* with him'. This confirms A. Malherbe's view: 'the meaning of *syn autō* is equivalent to *eis to einai autous syn autō*'.[6]

Further, we should note an *inclusio* between 4.14 and 5.9–10, and understand them respectively as affirmation of the fundamental truth at the outset of the discussion of salvation at the parousia of Christ (4.14) and its reaffirmation at the conclusion of it (5.9–10). This is shown not only by the parallelism between the two passages but also by the flow of Paul's logic in 5.1–11: with the exhortation in 5.8 Paul concludes his argument of 5.1–7: 'Since we belong to the day, let us be sober and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.' Then, in 5.9–10a he provides the basis for his exhortation in 5.8: 'For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us.' Thus he grounds our *Sollen* upon God's indicative. With this his argument for a watchful and disciplined life in view of the unknown date of the parousia is complete. Yet he goes on to draw out the purpose of God's indicative stated in 5.9–10a: 'so that whether we wake or sleep we might together live with him [sc. the Lord Jesus Christ]' (5.10b). Within the context of the argument of 5.1–10 this ἵνα-clause is not really necessary, and it only makes itself liable to be misinterpreted in the manner of Markus Lautenschlager and John P. Heil.[7] So, the

6 Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 267, following Theodore of Mopsuestia; cf. also Siber, *Mit Christus leben*, 30.

7 M. Lautenschlager, 'Εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν: Zum Verhältnis von Heiligung und Heil in 1Thess 5,10', *ZNW* 81 (1990), argues that γρηγορεῖν is never used as a metaphor for being alive (42) and that καθεύδειν is used as a metaphor for spiritual/moral negligence but never for death, while κοιμᾶσθαι is used as a metaphor for death but never for spiritual/moral negligence (42–9). On the basis of this linguistic observation, Lautenschlager insists on taking the γρηγορεῖν/καθεύδειν of 1 Thess 5.10 in the sense of spiritual–moral vigilance/negligence and interprets the phrase εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν in the verse to mean 'so sei es, dass wir in Erwartung der Parusie heilig leben, sei es, dass wir nachlässig werden'. Then, according to Lautenschlager, Paul is saying in the verse: God has destined us to acquire salvation through Christ, 'so that "whether we live a holy life in expectation of the parousia, or whether we are negligent," we may together live with him'. But besides his questionable exegesis of some of the texts where (καθ)εύδειν appears (e.g. esp. Ps 87 [88].6; Dan 12.2: see 46–9) (cf. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 300), his interpretation leads Paul to negate all the emphatic exhortation that he has just imparted in the preceding verses (5.6–8), something that Paul, if he is a normal person, would hardly do. Standing on Lautenschlager's linguistic argument but realizing the problem here pointed out, John P. Heil, 'Those Now "Asleep" (not Dead) Must be "Awakened" for the Day of the Lord in 1 Thess 5.9–10', *NTS* 46 (2000) 464–71, seeks to improve Lautenschlager's thesis by saying that in 5.10 Paul means that those Thessalonian Christians who 'may presently be "asleep" [i.e. in the moral–spiritual sense] . . . must be "awakened" to a life of holiness before living with the Lord Jesus Christ' at

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ἵνα-clause can be understood only under the assumption that with it Paul seeks to stress the salvation of both the living believers and the dead believers by way of a grand conclusion of his argument in the whole eschatological section from 4.13 to 5.10. His formulation of the final salvation in terms of ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν, deliberately echoing ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ of 4.14, ἅμα σὺν ... of 4.17a and σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα of 4.17b, also clearly suggests that here he is making a conclusion not just for the sub-unit of his teaching in 5.1–11 but rather for the whole section of his eschatological teaching in 4.13–5.11. Therefore, with εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν in 5.10b he is referring back to the living and dead believers of 4.13–18. The reappearance of ἅμα of 4.17a in 5.10b also indicates this. Thus there is an *inclusio* between 4.14 and 5.9–10.[8] Then, ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ of 4.14 must be interpreted in the sense of σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν: hence, 'to bring them *to live* with him'. The idea of living with the Lord is a greater specification of the idea of being with the Lord. In the grand conclusion of 5.10 Paul uses σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν to express more clearly and conclusively the eschatological hope that he has already expressed with εἶναι σὺν αὐτῷ in 4.14 and 17.

If so, we may see in v. 14 εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτούς omitted before σὺν αὐτῷ, and take ἄξει only with διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Then, the whole phrase of 4.14b will run: 'Even so God will bring through Jesus those who have fallen asleep to be with him.' Or we may understand that precisely in order to combine *in one word* the ideas both of God's raising the dead through Jesus Christ and of his making them be with him, Paul chose ἄξει here.

II. The nature of the Thessalonians' grief

Now, then, what is the significance of the fact that Paul gives his fundamental answer to the Thessalonians' problem in terms of God's bringing the dead Christians 'to be with the Lord Jesus Christ' in 4.14, and repeats it twice more in 4.17 and 5.10? Why does Paul draw out the implication of the 'word of the Lord' in terms of our 'being with the Lord' in 4.17b? What is the significance of the fact that Paul states the grand conclusion of his answer to the Thessalonians' problem(s) in terms of the dead and living Christians 'together living with the Lord Jesus Christ' always (5.10)? Isn't this emphatic repetition of the hope of the dead and living Christians' being or living with the Lord Jesus Christ indicative of the nature of the

his parousia (471). But this is an unwarranted importation of an alien thought into the text. Furthermore, it does not really improve on Lautenschlager's thesis. For, according to Heil's interpretation, Paul, having stressed that the Thessalonians should not be asleep but keep awake at present (5.6, 8; note the three present subjunctives here as Heil, 468, himself points out!), is now seen to be allowing their spiritual–moral lapse so long as they are 'awakened' before the parousia. This is clearly contrary to Paul's intent in the passage.

8 Cf. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 300.

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grief of the Thessalonians? It clearly indicates that they grieved because they could not think that their dead Christian relatives would participate in the future eschatological salvation at the parousia of God's Son (1.9–10) and 'be or live with the Lord Jesus Christ'. This is precisely what is suggested in Paul's definition of their grief in 4.13: they grieve 'like the rest who have no hope'. 'The rest' are those non-Christians who do not belong to the company of 'us' whom 'God has destined not for wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ' (5.9). So they will be exposed to destruction at the parousia of Christ and will not be able to escape from it (5.3). Hence they have 'no hope' (4.13). Thus, both Paul's initial definition of the nature of the Thessalonians' grief and his emphatic answer for the grief indicate that the Thessalonians grieved because they thought that the dead Christians would not be able to participate in the salvation at the parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If so, why does Paul counter their grief first with the statement in v. 15 that the survivors will not precede the dead believers? The statement may be regarded as an implication that Paul draws out of the 'word of the Lord' which he is about to cite in vv. 16–17a, or as a proposition which he substantiates with the 'word of the Lord'. Anyway, it is emphatic. Further, we must also account for Paul's emphasis on the ἅμα in 4.17 and 5.10, the simultaneous nature of the salvation of the dead and the living Christians. The statement in v. 15 and the emphasis on the ἅμα in 4.17 and 5.10 seem to suggest that the Thessalonians' grief may have arisen from an understanding that the dead Christians would not participate so immediately in the salvation at the parousia of Christ as the Christians who survive until the parousia. But would Paul identify the Thessalonians' grief out of such a mistaken view with the grief of non-Christians who have '*no hope*' (4.13)?[9] This definition of the nature of the Thessalonians' grief seems to rule out any interpretation that they grieve over the *relative* disadvantage of the dead believers over against those believers who would survive until the parousia.[10]

This means that we must give greater weight to Paul's definition of the Thessalonians' grief in 4.13 as being over the absolute hopelessness for the dead believers and to his principal answer in 4.14, which states simply that the dead believers will be brought to life with Christ. The statement in 4.15 and the twice repeated ἅμα in 4.17 and 5.10, which emphasize that the dead believers will receive salvation at the same time as the surviving Christians, will have to be given only a secondary consideration. Once we sort out the apparently contradictory data in this way, we can see that the latter set of data is related more to Paul's desire to stress the *certainty* of the dead believers' salvation than to the nature of the Thessalonians' grief. The stress is necessitated by the Thessalonians' belief that

9 Cf. Hyldahl, 'Auferstehung', 129.

10 So U. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus* (BEvT 49; München: Kaiser, 1968) 319.

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only the survivors until the parousia would be saved but the dead would be lost. Against this belief Paul is saying: 'No! Dead Christians will also be saved; in fact, they will begin to experience the saving power of the returning Lord even before you, the living ones!'

Why did the Thessalonians fail to have any hope for the salvation of dead Christians at the parousia? Did they have no notion of the resurrection of the dead? From Paul's invitation for them to reaffirm their faith in Christ's death and resurrection in 4.14, we can safely infer that he also taught them about the resurrection of believers. For it is hardly imaginable that he would have taught about Christ's resurrection without also drawing out its implication for believers.

Building on the demonstration of Gerhard Lohfink that in the OT and Jewish apocalyptic literature only living persons are assumed into heaven,[11] Joseph Plevnik argues that the Thessalonians' worry was not that dead Christians would not share in the resurrection but rather that they would not participate in the assumption into heaven at the parousia.[12] But this is a strange argument. If the Thessalonians had known that at the parousia dead Christians would be raised to life, on the assumption of Lohfink and Plevnik, they should have had no fear. For the dead Christians who are resurrected would immediately stand ready as living persons to be assumed into heaven!

So, if the Thessalonians were worried that dead Christians would not be assumed into heaven, this worry was based on their inability to understand the resurrection of dead Christians at the parousia. Therefore, the fundamental cause for anxiety was the Thessalonians' failure to understand the doctrine of resurrection adequately.[13] Precisely for this reason, Paul begins to allay their fear by appealing to the fundamental kerygma of Jesus' death and resurrection and its corollary of believers' resurrection in 4.14.

Why this failure, then? Various factors such as the Thessalonians' Hellenistic background and Paul's brief mission among them may be contemplated for this. Further, from 5.1–11[14] we may surmise that their excitement about an imminent parousia prevented them from paying much attention to the doctrine of resurrection. But then what could have caused them to have an expectation of an imminent parousia and become so excited about it?

11 G. Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu: Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrts- und Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas* (SANT 2; München: Kösel, 1971) 37–71.

12 J. Plevnik, 'The Taking Up of the Faithful and the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18', *CBQ* 46 (1984) 274–83; *Paul and the Parousia: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997) 69–71, 83, 94–6.

13 Cf. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 120–2.

14 Clearly we have to take together the Thessalonians' grief about the dead Christians and their anxiety about the date of the parousia, i.e. the two parts of the eschatological section of 4.14–5.11.

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III. The Thessalonians' inadequate understanding of the Jesus tradition, and Paul's correction

Here I would like to present the thesis that the Thessalonians' excitement about the parousia and their grief about the dead believers were caused mainly by their inadequate understanding of the Jesus tradition that Paul had delivered to them, and therefore in 1 Thess 4.13–5.11 Paul seeks to resolve the problems by helping them understand the Jesus tradition more adequately.

It has long been suspected that some eschatological sayings of Jesus are echoed in our passage. Not only do some ideas, phrases and words in the section remind us of some eschatological sayings of Jesus that are transmitted in the Synoptic Gospels, but Paul's appeal to the 'word of the Lord' in 4.15 also strongly supports the suspicion.

1 Thess 5.2 (and 4b) is seen almost universally as echoing Jesus' saying of the Son of Man coming at an unexpected hour like a thief in the night (Matt 24.43–4/Luke 12.39–40; cf. Rev 3.3; 16.15; 2 Pet 3.10; *Gosp. Thom.* 21; 103).[15] 5.3b is also seen by many commentators as echoing Luke 21.34–6, as the former, with the sentence 'then sudden destruction (αἰφνίδιος ὄλεθρος) will come upon them as travail (ὠδίν) comes upon a woman with child, and there will be no escape (ἐκφύγωσιν)', closely parallels the latter's saying: the day of the Son of Man will 'come upon you suddenly (αἰφνίδιος) like a snare (παγίς); for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape (ἐκφυγεῖν) all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'[16]

Even 'minimalists' like N. Walter and C. M. Tuckett cannot completely deny these parallels.[17] However, they try to weaken the implication of these admissions

15 E. Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (BNTC; London: Black, 1972) 191–3, may be the only recent major commentator who hesitates to affirm this.

16 Cf., e.g., L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted* (Lund: Gleerup, 1966) 192–3; F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (WBC 45; Waco: Word, 1982) 110; Holtz, *1. Thessalonicher*, 216–17; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 134–5; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 292. Hartman, *Prophecy*, 192, explains that the Pauline ὠδίν and the Lukan παγίς represent the two different pointings of the Hebrew/Aramaic word חבל/חבלא. This is accepted by Holtz, *1. Thessalonicher*, 216, but rejected by L. Aejmelaeus, *Wachen vor dem Ende: Traditionsgeschichtlichen Wurzeln von 1. Thess 5:1–11 und Luk 21:34–36* (SESJ 44; Helsinki: Kirjapaino Raamattualo, 1985) 121, and C. M. Tuckett, 'Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians?', in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. R. F. Collins; BETL 87; Leuven: Peeters, 1990) 174–5, on the ground that חבל is never rendered with παγίς in the LXX. D. Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 315, considers the possibility that Paul substituted ὠδίν for παγίς under the influence of Jesus' saying of the eschatological birth-pangs (Matt 24.8/Mark 13.8). Sometimes an echo of Matt 24.37–9/Luke 17.26–7 is also detected in 1 Thess 5.3a.

17 Nikolaus Walter, 'Paul and the Early Christian Jesus-Tradition', *Paul and Jesus* (ed. A. J. M. Wedderburn and C. Wolff; JSNTSS 37; Sheffield: JSOT, 1989) 66–7; Tuckett, 'Synoptic Tradition', 171.

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that Paul transmitted the sayings of Jesus. For even while stating that 'it can assuredly be assumed that at least in [1 Thess] 5.2–3 Paul takes up sayings from the Jesus-tradition', Walter claims that 'we can then no longer be sure that Paul was conscious that he was applying *Jesus*-tradition'.[18] This is a desperate argument born of excessive scepticism. Of course, we can never be absolutely sure about the psychological state of Paul about this or anything else. However, Paul's appeal to the 'word of the Lord' in the same passage seems to make it reasonably sure that he did. For even if the clause λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου is taken as indicating merely 'by whose commission and authority he speaks',[19] it would be quite unlikely that, while being so conscious of the commission of the Lord Jesus, Paul would use the unique imagery of the day of the Lord coming like a thief without being conscious of its author. Since the imagery is not attested in the Jewish literature, it is reasonable to suppose that the former Jewish theologian Paul learned it from his Christian predecessors. Further, it is more reasonable to suppose that the early followers of Jesus transmitted the unique and striking imagery to Paul, clearly identifying it as a word of their Lord *Jesus*, than that they passed it on as an anonymous saying.[20]

C. M. Tuckett also affirms the use of the parable of the thief in 5.2.[21] However, he disputes the use of a Jesus tradition in 5.3. Rightly rejecting L. Aejmelaeus's view that 5.3 represents Paul's own creation,[22] he maintains that it is 'part of Paul's tradition' and that the subsequent verses represent 'Paul's own modifications and applications of his tradition'.[23] Yet Tuckett agrees with Aejmelaeus that Luke 21.34–6 is dependent on 1 Thess 5.3, and goes on to argue that some other elements in Luke 21 (e.g. 'drunk', 'the Day'), which show 'the substantive agreement' with 1 Thess 5.4–8, are also due to Luke's dependence on Paul's teaching in 1 Thess 5.[24] So Tuckett's conclusion is that in 1 Thess 5.1–11 Paul uses traditions of disparate origin, with only the thief image in v. 2 being a Jesus-tradition.[25] It is a pity that Tuckett does not go on to identify the origin of the allegedly non-Jesuanic tradition that Paul uses in 5.3. In my judgement, D. Wenham has effectively countered Tuckett's argument and rightly concluded that it is much simpler to conclude that both 1 Thess 5.3 and Luke 21.34–6 are dependent on a common Jesus-tradition.[26]

In 5.4–7 Paul exhorts the Thessalonians not to fall asleep but to keep awake,

18 Walter, 'Jesus-Tradition', 67 (his italics).

19 Ibid., 66, citing O. Hofius, 'Agrapha', *TRE* 2 (1978) 104; P. Stuhlmacher, 'Jesustradition im Römerbrief?', *TBeitr* 14 (1983) 243.

20 Unless they identified the saying clearly as a saying of the Lord Jesus, Paul, if not already they, would have found the saying blasphemous: the Lord is to come like a *thief* in the night!

21 Tuckett, 'Synoptic Tradition', 171.

22 Aejmelaeus, *Wachen*, 38–47.

23 Tuckett, 'Synoptic Tradition', 173–4 (quotation in 174).

24 Ibid., 175–6 (quotation in 175).

25 Ibid., 176.

26 Wenham, *Paul*, 334–6.

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not to be drunk but to be sober, in view of the day of the Lord coming like a thief in the night. This looks like Paul's application of the parables of the watchmen (Luke 12.36–8; cf. Matt 24.42; Mark 13.34–7) and the steward (Luke 12.41–8/Matt 24.45–51), which are linked with the parable of the thief in Luke 12.39–40 (/Matt 24.43–4).[27] Tuckett denies this on the ground that in our passage 'keeping awake (γρηγορεῖν)' is conceived of as a daytime activity whereas in the Synoptic texts it is a night-time activity.[28] But again Wenham counters this effectively with the observation that 'Paul's thought about waking, sleeping, darkness, and light develops not directly from reflection on the day of the Lord but from the thought of the day coming like a thief *in the night*'.[29]

The high probability that in 5.1–11 Paul echoes at least four sayings of Jesus (Luke 12.39–40/Matt 24.43–4; Luke 21.34–6; Luke 12.36–8; Luke 12.41–8/Matt 24.45–51) strengthens the view that in 4.13–18 also Paul echoes some sayings of Jesus. Many commentators see in 4.16–17 an echo of the Synoptic saying of the Son of Man coming on clouds and sending out his angels with a loud trumpet call to gather the elect (Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7).[30] However, Tuckett objects to this view, first, on the ground that the Matthean version, showing a closer parallel to 4.16–17, is usually regarded as a Matthean redaction of the Markan saying.[31] The only substantial difference between the two versions with regard to a possible parallelism to 1 Thess 4.16–17 is the reference to 'trumpet' in Matt 24.31. So, then, we may compare 1 Thess 4.16–17 with Mark 13.26–27, leaving out the reference to trumpet in 1 Thess 4.16, and still find a sufficiently close parallelism between them in both language and ideas that makes an echo of the tradition represented by Mark 13.26–7 in 1 Thess 4.16–17 probable.[32]

27 So ibid., 308–12; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 112; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 184. R. Bauckham, 'Synoptic Parousia Parables and the Apocalypse', *NTS* 23 (1977/78) 163–70, demonstrates that '*parousia* parables were widely used ... in the primitive church' and 'were collected and associated from a very early stage' and that this is especially well attested for the parables of the thief and the watchmen and, to a lesser extent, also for the parable of the steward (quotation from p. 170). C.-P. März, 'Das Gleichnis vom Dieb: Überlegungen zur Verbindung von Lk 12,39 par Mt 24,43 und 1 Thess 5,2.4', *The Four Gospels 1992* (FS F. Neirynck; ed. F. van Segbroeck et al.; Leuven: Peeters, 1992) 633–48, also concludes that Paul knew the parable of the thief as already connected to the parable of the watchmen and probably also to the parable of the steward (esp. pp. 646–8). W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* vol. 3 (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997) 385–6, confirm this view, with a further reference to *Gosp. Thom.* 21 and 103.

28 Tuckett, 'Synoptic Tradition', 170–3.

29 Wenham, *Paul*, 309, n. 36 (italics added).

30 E.g. Hartman, *Prophecy*, 189; Hyldahl, 'Auferstehung', 130–1; Stuhlmacher, 'Jesustradition', 243; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 126, 129–30; Aejmelaeus, *Wachen*, 84–5; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 171; Wenham, *Paul*, 306.

31 Tuckett, 'Synoptic Tradition', 177.

32 Then Paul as well as Matthew could have added the reference to 'trumpet' from the stock imagery of Jewish apocalyptic tradition.

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Tuckett's weightier objection is that Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7 does not contain anything about the resurrection of the dead and about its happening before the rapture of the living, which he regards as 'the key point of Paul's argument' in our text.[33] Against those who view those elements in our text as the results of Paul's interpretation and application of the saying of Jesus to the Thessalonian situation, Tuckett contends:

> Yet it seems still strange that Paul should cite the tradition as an authoritative answer to the problem faced by the Thessalonians if the tradition itself said nothing relevant to the situation and all relevance is supplied by Paul's own redactional adaptations. Further, the elements in 1 Thes 4,16–17 which clearly relate the saying to the Thessalonian problem by speaking of the resurrection of the *dead*, and the relationship of the living and the dead at the Parousia, are not all clearly redactional.[34]

I have already suggested that 4.15b ('we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep') is an implication that Paul draws from the 'word of the Lord' which he cites in 4.16–17a, and that Paul presents the implication even before citing the 'word of the Lord' itself because he is eager to address the concern of the Thessalonians immediately (4.13) and substantiate his thesis in 4.14. In 4.16–17a Paul does not speak of 'the relationship of the living and the dead at the Parousia', except to affirm that they are going to be caught up together. The fact that they are going to be caught up together is clearly the ground for his earlier statement in 4.15b that the living believers will not precede the dead believers at the parousia. So really the question is whether Paul could not have interpreted the idea of the Son of Man 'gathering his elect' from the four corners of heaven or of heaven and earth through his angels (Matt 24.31/Mark 13.27) as implying the resurrection of the dead believers in view of the concerns of the Thessalonians. From the saying of Jesus Paul could clearly have understood that all the elect, both the dead and the living, would be gathered to be with the Son of Man or the Lord. Then, he could have seen that it presupposed the prior resurrection of the dead believers.[35] In view of the Thessalonians' anxiety, Paul is stressing this implication of the saying (4.14b, 16b).

Unlike the Synoptic sayings of the future coming of the Son of Man, John 5.27–9 explicitly associates resurrection with the coming of the Son of Man: 'the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his [sc. the Son of Man's]

33 Tuckett 'Synoptic Tradition', 180.

34 Ibid.

35 So also Aejmelaeus, *Wachen*, 84–5; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 126. For this interpretation, Paul's knowledge of the Danielic background of Jesus' Son of Man saying could have been helpful. Understanding the saying of Jesus in the light of Dan 7, Paul could have drawn Dan 12.2–3 (resurrection of the dead) in its interpretation, as Hartman, *Prophecy*, 189–90, and Hyldahl, 'Auferstehung', 130–1, suggest.

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voice (φωνή) and come forth ... to the resurrection of life'. Since it is difficult to assess the age, let alone the authenticity, of this Johannine saying, we cannot make much of it here. Nevertheless, it does show how the Son of Man's ingathering (φωνή) at his parousia could be conceived of as involving the resurrection of believers. Thus the Johannine saying helps us at least to see that Paul could have interpreted the Synoptic idea of the Son of Man's ingathering of the elect as implying the prior resurrection of the dead.[36]

Thus it is to go too far to suggest that Paul would have found the tradition in Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7 as containing 'nothing relevant' to the Thessalonian situation. Yet there is some validity in Tuckett's question. We may reframe it this way: when the saying of Jesus does not explicitly speak of dead believers' resurrection and their salvation, so that Paul has to draw these out as implications of the saying, why does he cite it here at all, explicitly appealing to the 'word of the Lord'? Why does he not just give his apostolic teaching about the resurrection of the dead? Why does he not just stop with 4.14, where he has applied the conclusion drawn from the fundamental faith in Jesus' death and resurrection to the (resurrection and) ingathering of dead believers? Why does he not just elaborate what he has said in 4.14, in a way similar to 1 Cor 15.12–28? Why does he explicitly appeal to the 'word of the Lord' here (4.15)? This is rather unusual in Paul (besides our passage, it occurs only in 1 Cor 7.10–11; 9.14).

It has become popular to interpret the phrase λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου in 4.15 as a biblical idiom for prophetic inspiration and commission by the Lord (cf. 1 Ki 13.1, 2, 5, 32; 21.35; 1 Chr 15.15; Sir 48.3, 5), and consequently to understand Paul here as referring to a prophetic oracle which a Christian prophet or even he himself as a prophet received from the exalted Lord.[37] For this view, the 'mystery' in 1 Cor 15.51–2 is often brought in for comparison, as it shows some similarities to our passage. However, the concept of 'mystery' itself does not suggest any particular mode of inspiration. In Rom 11.25–6, by 'mystery' Paul probably does not refer to an oracle that he actually heard from the Lord but rather to a new understanding of God's saving plan which he obtained by interpreting a new revelation in the light of the Scriptures (Isa 6; 42; 49; Deut 32) and also the Jesus tradition (Matt 8.11–12/Luke 13.28–9; Luke 21.23–4; etc.).[38] So it is likely that by the 'mystery' of 1 Cor 15.51–2 also he does not refer to an oracle that he or another Christian prophet actually heard from the Lord but rather to a new insight that he obtained

36 Cf. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 130.

37 See, e.g., Best, *Thessalonians*, 191–3; F. Neirynck, 'Paul and the Sayings of Jesus', *L'Apôtre Paul* (ed. A. Vanhoye; BETL 73; Leuven: Peeters, 1986) 311; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 268–9.

38 See S. Kim, 'The "Mystery" of Rom 11.25–26 Once More', *NTS* 43 (1997) 412–29; repr. with additional notes in S. Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Tübingen: Mohr–Siebeck, 2002) 239–58. Cf. Wenham, *Paul*, 319–26.

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by interpreting the revelation of the risen Christ (resurrection; the εἰκών language; change/transformation)[39] in the light of the Jesus tradition (trumpet; sudden coming) and the Scriptures (Dan 12.2–3). Therefore, even if the phrase λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου in our passage is to be taken as indicating only a prophetic inspiration, it is not excluded that in 4.16–17 Paul reproduces the (prophetic) 'word of the Lord' not as he actually heard but rather as he interpreted it in the light of the Jesus tradition and the Scriptures (Dan 7; 12.2–3). Note how in Rev 3.3; 16.15 the prophetic words of the risen Lord make use of the word of the earthly Jesus (the thief parable!).[40] Similarly, the undeniable affinities of 4.16–17 with Jesus' logion in Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7 may be seen as indicating that 4.16–17 is a prophetic word that contains that logion. Then, there is little material difference whether the phrase λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου is taken as referring to a prophetic word of the exalted Lord or to a word of the earthly Jesus.

In this situation, the analogy of 1 Cor 7.10–11 and 9.14 (cf. also 1 Cor 11.23–5), where Paul gives the word or command of the 'Lord' in his own formulation without any suggestion of a particular prophetic inspiration, is quite suggestive. Further, in 1 Cor 7.12, 25, regretting that he does not have the word of the Lord Jesus on the questions arising out of marriage between a believer and a non-believer and on the question of marriage of 'virgins', Paul does not show any awareness of the possibility of soliciting a prophetic 'word of the Lord' for those questions. So he simply gives his apostolic 'opinion' 'as one who has received mercy from the Lord to be trustworthy' (v. 25). Thus, we have at least three cases in which Paul cites the words of (the earthly) Jesus explicitly (1 Cor 7.10–11; 9.14; 11.23–5), but we have no evidence, except the present disputed passage, that he explicitly appeals to a word that he received from the Lord through a prophetic inspiration.[41]

39 Cf. Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, 165–213.

40 Seeing that the thief parable appears within the prophetic words of the risen Lord Jesus in Rev 3.3 and 16.15, some critics may like to think that the parable itself originated from a word of a Christian prophet who spoke in the name of the risen Lord Jesus, and then entered into the Gospel tradition (Matt 24.43–4/Luke 12.39–40) and other Christian traditions (1 Thess 5.2, 4; 2 Pet 3.10; *Gosp. Thom.* 21; 103). But see Bauckham, 'Synoptic Parousia Parables and the Apocalypse', 162–76, for a demonstration that in Revelation the prophet John made use of the authentic parable of the thief along with the parable of the watchman (Luke 12.36–8). For a similarly negative conclusion as to the question whether many prophetic sayings of the risen Lord were assimilated to sayings of the earthly Jesus, see also J. D. G. Dunn, 'Prophetic "I"-Sayings and the Jesus Tradition: The Importance of Testing Prophetic Utterances within Early Christianity', *NTS* 24 (1978) 175–98; D. E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 233–45.

41 In 1 Cor 2.16 he claims to have 'the mind of Christ'. Called to be an apostle, i.e., a fully empowered agent of the Lord Jesus Christ, by God's grace or mercy (cf. Rom 1.5; 12.3; 15.15; 1 Cor 3.10; 15.9-10; Gal 1.15; 2.9; etc.), Paul has 'the mind of Christ'. So, in 1 Cor 7.12, 25, facing a new situation in his gentile mission for which there was no directly relevant saying of Jesus, he does

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Lastly, in the context, namely in 5.2–7, Paul cites a word of the earthly Jesus and echoes a couple more, saying that the Thessalonians know them ἀκριβῶς. This suggests that Paul delivered to them some eschatological sayings of Jesus whom he calls 'the Lord'. So, in the context of discussing the parousia of the Lord in 4.13–5.11, he is clearly conscious of those sayings of the earthly Jesus.

For these reasons, it appears better to take the phrase λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου as a reference to a word of the earthly Jesus.[42] If it has to be taken as a reference to a prophetic word, in view of the affinities of 4.16–17 with Jesus' logion in Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7, the presence of the words of Jesus in the context (i.e. 5.2–7), and the analogy of Rev 3.3 and 16.5, we will have to agree with P. Stuhlmacher that the prophetic word is really a paraphrase of the Jesus tradition made to apply to the Thessalonian situation.[43]

To return to the question that we have raised, no matter whether it is a 'prophetic' or simple exegetical paraphrase, why does Paul appeal to the 'word of the Lord', Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7, in our passage? Both the fact that he usually lays out the hope of resurrection of the dead by expounding the implications of the fundamental kerygma of Christ's death and resurrection (1 Cor 15!; further, e.g. Rom 6.4–9; 8.11; 1 Cor 6.14; 2 Cor 4.14; Phil 3.10–11; Col 3.1–4) and the fact that he rarely appeals explicitly to the word of the Lord make us wonder why he goes on to substantiate his summary answer drawn from the fundamental kerygma of Christ's death and resurrection (4.14) with an explicit reference to the 'word of the Lord' in our passage. Why does he do this, furthermore, when the word of the Lord does not explicitly mention the resurrection of the dead, so that he has to expound it as an implication of the word?

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not seek a special 'prophetic' inspiration of the 'word of the Lord' but rather gives the 'opinion' which he has obtained through 'the mind of Christ' in him. At least in 1 Cor 7.12–16 we can see how justified Paul is in his claim to have 'the mind of Christ' when he faithfully adopts Jesus' opposition to divorce as far as possible and supports this stance with the uniquely Jesuanic principle of sanctification by association in opposition to the principle of defilement by association which he as a Pharisee used to hold.

42 So, e.g., Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 126; Wenham, *Paul*, 305–6; Holtz, *1. Thessalonicher*, 184.

43 Stuhlmacher, 'Jesustradition', 243. Even Walter, 'Paul and the Early Christian Jesus-Tradition', 67, sees here a 'fluid blending of Jesus-tradition . . . with its prophetic application' by Paul. However, some critics may like to go so far as to think that Paul could have mistaken the Son of Man sayings like Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7 and Matt 24.43–4/Luke 12.39–40 for sayings of the earthly Jesus although they really had originated from sayings of early Christian prophets. In principle, that possibility cannot be ruled out. However, those critics will have to demonstrate against the witnesses of the Synoptists as well as, in the case of Matt 24.43–4/Luke 12.39–40, against the view of the majority of scholars, that those sayings really did originate from prophetic sayings. They will further need to show why we should deny rather than affirm that Paul and his colleague Silvanus (a 'leader' and 'prophet' from the Jerusalem church – Acts 15.22, 32) were in a position to discriminate prophetic sayings from sayings of the earthly Jesus. Cf. Dunn, 'Prophetic "I"-Sayings', 183–98.

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We may find a clue in Paul's use of the saying of Jesus in 5.1–11. Trying to reassure the Thessalonians who are anxiously calculating 'the times and seasons' of the parousia of the Lord, Paul says:[44] 'You yourselves know ἀκριβῶς that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night' (5.2). Here he cites the logion of Jesus (Matt 24.43–4/Luke 12.39–40). The Thessalonians could have come to have the eschatological expectation of the parousia of the Lord only through Paul's teaching. Paul's teaching must have included the sayings of the coming of the Son of Man like Matt 24.43–4/Luke 12.39–40. For only so could Paul refer to the saying of Matt 24.43–4/Luke 12.39–40, noting that they already 'know' it ἀκριβῶς (5.2) and so they 'have no need to have anything written to' (5.1). Therefore, we can assume that he himself delivered at least that saying of Jesus to them during his founding mission in Thessalonica a few months previously.[45] *Then, it is likely that it and possibly other sayings*[46] *like it have led them to be anxious about 'the times and sea-*

44 Cf. J. M. G. Barclay, 'Conflict in Thessalonica', *CBQ* 55 (1993) 517, against R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Party* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 96–100, who interprets 5.1–11 as evidencing the Thessalonians' lack of interest in the future parousia born of 'their intense experience of realized eschatology' (97).

45 Here we should compare the introductory form αὐτοι ... ἀκριβῶς οἴδατε ὅτι ... in 5.2 with the formula 'Do you not know that ...?' (οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ...;) in 1 Cor 3.16; 5.6; 6.2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19. In my article 'Jesus, Sayings of', in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (ed. G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin and D. G. Reid; Downers Grove: IVP, 1993) 481–2, repr. in Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, 259–97, I have tried to show that the formula in those verses alludes to the various sayings of Jesus:

5.6 – Mark 8.15–16 pars
6.2, 3 – Matt 19.28 (/Luke 22.29–30)
6.9 – Matt 5.20
6.15 – the eucharistic words of Jesus (cf. 1 Cor 11.23–4; 10.16)
6.16 – Gen 2.24 echoed in Jesus' divorce saying (Mark 10.2–12/Matt 19.3–12) which is cited in 1 Cor 7.10–11
3.16; 6.19 (and 2 Cor 5.1) – Jesus' temple sayings (Mark 14.58/Matt 26.61; Mark 11.27–12.11 pars)

Thus alluding to the various sayings of Jesus, the eight occurrences of the formula 'Do you not know that ...?' clearly indicate that Paul delivered those sayings of Jesus to the Corinthians at his founding mission to Corinth. Like οἴδαμεν ὅτι ... in 2 Cor 5.1, the introductory form αὐτοὶ ... ἀκριβῶς οἴδατε ὅτι ... in 1 Thess 5.2 may be regarded as a variant of the formula οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ...; This comparison strengthens the view that Paul delivered the thief parable of Jesus to the Thessalonians during his mission to them. The unique nature of the parable confirms it. Thus, the formula 'Do you not know that ...?' in the eight verses of 1 Corinthians and its variants in 2 Cor 5.1 and 1 Thess 5.2 (cf. also 1 Cor 10.16) together suggest that at his founding mission for various churches he regularly delivered the teaching of Jesus as part of his preaching of the gospel of God's salvation wrought in the death and resurrection of that Jesus. During his mission to Thessalonica Paul must have been aided in this significantly by his colleague Silvanus (1 Thess 1.1) (see n. 43 above).

46 If Paul knew the parable of the thief as already connected to the parables of the watchmen and the steward, as in Luke 12.35–48 (see n. 27 above), he could have delivered the three parables together to the Thessalonians.

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sons'. Such sayings led them to have an expectation of the parousia in the first place, but, with their stress on the uncertainty of its date and the need for preparedness, they led them also to be anxious about its actual date. Their anxiety does not yet seem to have reached the morbid state evident in 2 Thess 2.1–12. Nevertheless, from their query about 'the times and seasons' which Timothy may have conveyed to Paul, Paul senses a degree of anxiety which he must put to rest.

How then is Paul proposing to allay with the citation of the saying the anxiety that has been caused precisely by that saying? Before allaying it, he in fact heightens it by echoing another saying of Jesus which, like the parable of the thief, emphasizes 'sudden destruction' (or judgment of the Lord) coming at an unexpected hour (5.3). Only then does he allay their anxiety by reinterpreting the thief parable in the light of the fundamental Christian conviction: by faith in Christ they have already been saved and have been assured of the consummation of salvation on the day of the Lord. They have already been transferred from darkness into light. They are in the know about the day of the Lord. Therefore, no matter when it comes, the day of the Lord will not take them by surprise like a thief. They can rest assured of this (5.4–5; cf. also vv. 9–10). Having given this assurance, Paul goes on to underscore the moral of the thief parable of Jesus: they must 'keep awake' and 'be sober', i.e. maintain a disciplined life of faith, love and hope in preparation for the coming judgment and salvation on the day of the Lord (5.6–8). *Thus, Paul cites Jesus' word in order to correct the unhealthy anxiety that stems from their inadequate understanding of it, and he corrects their anxiety by helping them understand it more fully in the light of the fundamental kerygma (5.9–10) and their fundamental salvation occurrence.* While doing this, he does not forget to reinforce the purpose for which he delivered the word in the first place, namely the call for a disciplined life of faith, love and hope.[47]

Paul's reference to the 'word of the Lord' in 4.15–17 is to be understood in a similar way. The Thessalonians received from Paul Jesus' sayings, like Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7, and understood them one-sidedly as meaning that only the living would be gathered at the parousia of the Lord.[48] *Since those sayings, like other Synoptic sayings of the future coming of the Son of Man, did not have any reference to the resurrection of the dead, they just thought that only those who would*

47 This is important for Paul, especially in view of the fact that the Thessalonians have still not completely succeeded in overcoming their pagan moral laxity (cf. 4.3–8). Hence the reinforcing of the thief parable in 5.2 with a further echo of Jesus' saying in 5.3.

48 Unless Paul had taught them about the parousia of the Lord, how could they have become anxious about the date of the parousia? Unless he had taught them about the Lord's ingathering of the believers at his parousia, how could they have come to expect it? How could he then have taught them about the Lord's parousia and his ingathering of the believers? Since these thoughts are clearly reminiscent of Jesus' Son of Man sayings in the Gospels, is it not reasonable to believe that Paul taught them with reference to those sayings?

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be present at the coming of the Lord would be gathered by the angels. They could not see how their dead relatives could be present to be gathered by the angels at the parousia of the Lord, so they began to grieve that the dead were lost without any chance of salvation.

This inadequate understanding or misunderstanding reflected their inability 'to bring the apocalyptic expectations of resurrection and Parousia together into a systematic whole'.[49] The inability was ultimately due to the fact that Paul was driven out of Thessalonica before he could fully expound the sayings and the eschatological doctrine (cf. 3.10), as well as to the fact that the Greek Thessalonians could not easily grasp the full implications of what Paul began to teach with regard to the resurrection of the dead.[50] However, probably the nature of Jesus' logia which Paul had delivered to them was more directly responsible for this failure. First, the sayings of the Son of Man's future coming generally gave them an impression that the parousia of the Lord was imminent, and so made them extremely excited about it. Then, especially such sayings of Jesus as the parable of the thief (Matt 24.43–4/Luke 12.39–40), the saying of the sudden coming of the day like trap/birth-pangs (Luke 21.34–6), the parables of the watchmen and the steward (Luke 12.36–8; Luke 12.41–8/Matt 24.45–51), etc., made them not only excited about the parousia but also anxious of their own salvation. For those sayings gave them the impression that even they, the living believers, might be lost at the parousia if they were not 'awake and sober'.[51] In such an excited and anxious situation they were preoccupied with the thought of their own salvation (cf. 1.10; 3.13) and with the attempt to get some assurance about it by calculating the 'times and seasons' of the parousia (5.1). This left them little room for thinking through the issue of the resurrection of dead believers. Furthermore, since those sayings of Jesus contained no reference to resurrection, there was no impetus for them to do this. So, while being anxious about their own salvation, they grieved over their recently departed fellows who they thought would not be there at all at the parousia of the Lord, let alone be able to present themselves as 'awake and sober'.

49 Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 284; similarly also Luz, *Geschichtsverständnis*, 321–2; Siber, *Mit Christus Leben*. 20–2. However, Luz and Siber go too far with their attempts to locate this problem fundamentally in the structure of the Pauline theology. Cf. Rom 8.18–24; 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 5.1–10.

50 1 Cor 15.12, 35 and Acts 17.18, 32 show how difficult it was for the Greeks to accept the doctrine of resurrection. Acts 26.6–8 suggests that it was difficult even for some Jews. Cf. J. S. Park, *Conceptions of Afterlife in Jewish Inscriptions* (WUNT 2.121; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000), for the surprising absence of any hope for afterlife among many Jewish inscriptions as well as the often vague nature of the hope where it is present.

51 Other eschatological sayings and especially the sayings of the coming of the Son of Man for judgment and salvation which Paul may have taught them (see n. 53 below) could have easily created the same impression. Cf. Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 132.

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Therefore, Paul refers to the 'word of the Lord' that has given rise to their grief, and expounds its full implications, emphasizing that one of them is the resurrection of the dead prior to ingathering. He brings this implication out of the 'word of the Lord' by interpreting it in the light of the fundamental kerygma of Christ's death and resurrection (4.14). Among several sayings of the coming of the Son of Man which he might have used, Paul refers chiefly to the saying of Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7 because he finds it the most responsible for the Thessalonians' grief and at the same time the most suitable for his explanation of the resurrection of the dead and the ingathering of both the living and the dead saints.[52]

Having thus resolved the Thessalonians' grief over their dead relatives and friends, he goes on in 5.1–11, as we have seen, to allay their anxiety by enabling them to understand those anxiety-raising sayings more adequately in the light of the fundamental kerygma and their fundamental salvation occurrence. So in both sections of our eschatological passage Paul resolves the Thessalonians' problems by explicitly referring to the sayings of Jesus which caused those problems and by providing proper interpretations of those sayings in the light of the fundamental kerygma of the Christ event.[53]

Conclusion

This study has presented the thesis that in 1 Thess 4.13–5.11 Paul provides the Thessalonians with a proper understanding of the eschatological sayings of Jesus

52 Cf. Wenham, *Paul*, 309–11.

53 The thesis here presented will undoubtedly be strengthened if some eschatological sayings of Jesus similar or related to those observed above are shown to be echoed also in the other sections of 1 Thessalonians and in the other Pauline epistles. In my book *Paul and the New Perspective*, 194–208, I have argued in detail for the view that at several places in his letters Paul echoes various Son of Man sayings of Jesus. For example, Rom 1.16+8.34 and Phil 1.19–20 echo the saying of Luke 12.8–9/Matt 10.32–3; Mark 8.38pars. As the eucharistic tradition is transmitted as a saying of the Son of Man in the Gospels (Matt 26.24/Mark 14.21/Luke 22.22; John 6.53; 13.31–5; cf. also *Acts John* 109; *Gosp. Phil.* 15), the tradition that Paul cites in 1 Cor 11.23–6 suggests his knowledge of Jesus' use of the self-designation, Son of Man, in connection with both his passion and his parousia (vv. 23, 26). Further, 1 Thess 1.10 echoes the teaching about the coming of the Son of Man, as some scholars have already suggested (cf. E. Schweizer, 'ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ', *TDNT* 8.370, 383; U. Wilckens, 'Der Ursprung der Überlieferung der Erscheinung des Auferstandenen', *Dogma und Denkstrukturen* [FS Schlink; ed. W. Joest and W. Pannenberg; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963] 83–4 n. 67; G. Friedrich, 'Ein Tauflied hellenistischer Judenchristen', *TZ* 21 [1965] 502–16. See further J. Dupont, 'Filius meus es tu', *RSR* 35 [1948] 525; L. Cerfaux, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul* [New York: Herder and Herder, 1959] 440–1). This last observation in turn leads me to affirm that in 1 Thess 3.13 (cf. also 2 Thess 1.7) also there is an echo of Jesus' Son of Man teaching as embodied in Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7; Mark 8.38pars; Matt 25.31–3, etc. These observations increase the likelihood that Paul knew and used a group of Jesus' eschatological sayings of the coming of the Son of Man.

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(Matt 24.30–1/Mark 13.26–7; Matt 24.43–4/Luke 12.39–40; Luke 21.34–6; Luke 12.36–8; Luke 12.41–8/Matt 24.45–51) in order to remove their grief about the dead believers and to allay their anxiety about the date of the parousia, since both problems have arisen from their inadequate understanding of those sayings of Jesus that he had delivered to them.[54] This is the reason why in 1 Thess 4.13–5.11 Paul does what he rarely does, namely appeal explicitly to 'the word of the Lord' and allude to so many sayings of Jesus in such a short space.

54 If this thesis is correct, it is significant that Paul's echoes of Jesus' parables of the thief, the watchmen and the steward in our passage seem to indicate that he knew them as interconnected, as in Luke 12.36–8, 39–40 and 41–8 (see n. 27 above). Then, did Paul also know the saying that immediately precedes the catena in Luke, namely Luke 12:22–34(/Matt 6:25–34+19–21), and deliver it also to the Thessalonians? May the Thessalonians' idleness have arisen out of an one-sided understanding of that saying as well as a one-sided understanding of the eschatological sayings of Jesus? While being excited about the imminent parousia of the Lord from those eschatological sayings of Jesus that Paul had delivered to them, they may have decided to give themselves entirely to seeking the kingdom of God during the short time before the parousia, literally stopping being concerned with earning their livelihood, according to what they understood to be Jesus' command in Luke 12:22–34(/Matt 6.25–34+19–21). So they may have developed an intense expectation of the Son of Man/Son of God and the kingdom (1.10; 2.12), calculating anxiously the date of his coming (5.1), on the one hand, and giving themselves to an extraordinarily zealous evangelism in many areas of Macedonia and Achaia (1.7–8) on the other hand. According to the teaching of Jesus, they, especially the rich members, also sold their possessions and gave alms (cf. 4.9–10; 5.12–13), i.e. made the proceeds available to the community as a common fund. So, without working to earn their livelihood, the members of the community could go on carefree, thinking that their daily needs were indeed being met by the faithful provision of their heavenly Father as Jesus promised.

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