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Carmela Ruiz

Exegetical Process Notebook Steps 1-8

NT615: Biblical Exegesis: OA

Professor Shawn Craigmiles

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EXEGETICAL PROCESS NOTEBOOK

NAME: Carmela Ruiz

PASSAGE: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

STEP 1. SURVEY THE GENERAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Read the entire document through in English in one sitting (aloud), considering the specific prompt questions in the syllabus (Week 1): YES X NO

1.1 AUTHOR. (a) **What do you observe about the identity of the author and his circumstances?** (b) **What else do you know about the life of the author and his situation at the time of writing that might influence the exegesis of this text?**

What I observed about the identity of the author was that Paul the Apostle came into Thessalonica in the hope of spreading the good word of God and His blessings. Paul is also accompanied by Silas and Timothy. The opening of the passage was warm and loving but also humble and true. I know that the author is approaching the Jewish and Greek population in Thessalonica during a time of uncertainty and during a time when the Roman Caesar was ruling over the lands. The text is also a reflection of the earlier texts that Paul may have wrote and take place in a time after the death and **resurrection** of Jesus Christ.

Paul was already on his journey to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. In this passage, Paul is giving thanks to the Thessalonians for their love, and faith in Jesus Christ. Another driving force behind this writing is to highlight the hope that the Thessalonians have despite the oppressions they are currently facing.

1.2. RECIPIENTS: (a) **What are your observations about the identity of the recipients?** *Be careful to base your observations on what the text says, not what you have always heard.* (b) **Are there any hints about their ethnicity or socioeconomic and cultural contexts?** (c) **Where do the recipients live?** *Are there direct or indirect hints that help you identify the geographic region?* (d) **What are their present circumstances?** (e) **What historical situation occasioned this writing?** (f) **What is the relationship between the author and the recipients?**

a) The observations about the identity of the recipients are somewhat vague. While we can gather that the passage takes place in Thessalonica, it's not exactly clear who is really hearing from the author.

b) Though there are some hints at the socioeconomic status of the recipients it's not easily told and can't really be extracted from just this passage. The culture hints at people who are currently going through some sort of oppression and is looking for a means to get out. The ethnicity of the people is not clear.

c) The recipients currently live in Thessalonica, with indirect hints based on the title of the passage as well as notes about coming from Philippi.

d) The present circumstances are that of people who are currently suffering some sort of oppression.

e) It's hard to say given just the passage without diving a bit deeper into research.

f) The author's relationship with the recipients is not all too unfamiliar but warm and inviting. Paul is trying to give praise upon the people.

1.3 PURPOSE: (1)

What can be said about the author's purpose for writing is that they are trying to spread the word of God and the good news of Jesus Christ. They want to show that they too suffered and have overcome their atrocities. They are showing that the people of the city are not victims but survivors of the injustice that they are currently going through. The author is making clear points about how the recipient's faith in God has not gone unnoticed.

Paul states that he is “remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Thess 1:3). This is clear outlining of how the author is trying to give recognition to the faithful and talk about how their faith is praised.

The overall theme is that of rejoice, to show that they are appreciated and loved. They are worthy of the kingdom of God and thus will be rewarded for their faith. They have endured and will be met with relief and see vengeance taken upon those who caused them strife. There are many words describing relief and recusing them from the wrath that soon befalls the enemies. There are specific accounts of how those who had faith in God will be able to serve under his presence. Others touch upon the idea that they are chosen not just because of saying a few words but because of their faith. One part describes it such as “because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction” (Thess 1:5). These ideas tell me that the purpose of this writing is to show the world what having true faith in God can mean. It’s to also show that it’s not something that is turned on at a moment’s notice. Instead, it’s something that you must truly believe in during times of good but especially during the hardships that one may endure.

Overall, the narrative provides a good thematic collection of teachings. Each section improves upon the last and continues the theme of being thankful for one’s faith in God.

STEP 2. CONFIRM THE LIMITS OF YOUR PASSAGE.

“The passage I intend to investigate is **Thess 1:2-10, “Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians’ Faith.”**”

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

STEP 3. BECOME THOROUGHLY ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR PARAGRAPH/PERICOPE (Fee, 12).

3.1

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, (Thess 1:4 ESV)
For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, (Thess 1:4, NIV)
knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you; (Thess 1:4, NASB)
Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. (Thess 1:4, KJV)
knowing your election, brothers loved by God. (Thess 1:4, HCSB)

The differences amongst the translations are based on approach to the to the reader. For ESV and NIV, both take on the approach that the author is being inclusive of the audience. NASB and KJV translations take a more direct approach that is more directive towards the audience. The HCSB translation is targeting those based on an assumption that they know what it is that they’re doing.

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, (Thess 1:2 ESV)
We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. (Thess 1:2 NIV)

remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (Thess 1:3 ESV)

We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (Thess 1:3 NIV)

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, (Thess 1:4 ESV)

For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, (Thess 1:4 NIV)

because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. (Thess 1:5 ESV)
because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. (Thess 1:5 NIV)

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, (Thess 1:6 ESV)

You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. (Thess 1:6 NIV)

so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. (Thess 1:7 ESV)

And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. (Thess 1:7 NIV)

For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in

God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. (Thess 1:8 ESV)

The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore, we do not need to say anything about it, (Thess 1:8 NIV)

For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, (Thess 1:9 ESV)

for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, (Thess 1:9 NIV)

and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. (Thess 1:10 ESV)

and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. (Thess 1:10 NIV)

3.2 Determine which of these differences are exegetically significant (e.g. are the differences a matter of synonyms, grammar, stylistic or theological preference, or textual criticism? Do these differences alter the meaning in any way? Does a particular translation have slightly different theological implications? Which is closer to the original author's meaning given the overall argument?)

I have examined the passage from 5 different translations ESV, NIV, NASB, KJV, and HCSB. Given all 5 translations, only the HCSB seems to limit it to two distinct parts, whereas the others are broken down into 3 parts. Two of them focus on "For we know" which comes off as a strong acknowledgement or statement of what's to come next. Whereas in NASB and KJV they translate it into "knowing" which can come off as less certain or more on an approach of trying to get the audience to understand. Lastly, the HCSB version has a highlight on the audience to change the tone from full ownership to democracy, it's the basis on the words "your election." This is showing that the author is trying to communicate that they know what's happening and that it's clear and by choice.

The next part is a focus on who is being called out, for a few passages it's both brothers and sisters. Another means of making sure that everyone is involved not just the men. While brethren can also mean all but coming from a different viewpoint. The last translation by HCSB states only brothers loved by God. This could mean the sisters are purposely excluded or that there is a more focus on the men as they are given more authority in this context. The differences in translations alter the meaning of the passage in some ways. For instance, in some cases it's a clear callout to specific groups of people such as

just the brothers. In other translations is a call to show that the people themselves chose this faith in God rather than a misunderstanding of that it is that they were practicing.

Ultimately, I believe the New International Version NIV is the best translation of the passage. The reason for this is that it's the most inclusive of the audience. There is a direct call out of both brothers and sisters throughout the passage, making sure that everyone is included. It's important because it shows not only that all can suffer but that all can rejoice in the presence of God.

STEP 4: LITERARY CONTEXT

4.1 Identify the particular literary character of the document (i.e., narratives, psalms, law, Gospel, prophecy, epistle, apocalypse, etc.) and be alert to the fact that specific genre issues will arise.

For **epistles**, do you suspect the letter is *ad hoc* (addressing a specific local situation), formal (perhaps meant for a wider general audience), casual (friendly and exhortative), or perhaps more representative of a treatise or extended sermon (e.g. Hebrews) than a letter (Fee, 17)? *This observation is foundational before working through the next steps.*

WHY DO THIS STEP? *You are not going to approach a letter in the same way you approach a narrative that has character, plot, and dialogue. You would not interpret a psalm in the same way you would interpret one of the commandments of Moses. There are different expectations and techniques associated with different kinds of literature*

4.1

For this epistle, I suspect that the letter is *ad hoc* based on the introduction and opening narratives. It's *ad hoc* because the author Paul opens up the epistle by giving thanks for the people of Thessalonica for their faith, love and hope in Jesus Christ. He is rewarding them in a sense with praise and good fortune for their specific acts that they have done. Formality is not fully there as it's not meant to give a specific notion to a cause. Rather it's meant to highlight the great attributes that these people have, in relation to Jesus Christ. It leans a lot more on the casual and exhortative side. The prayer is meant to encourage and incite the people. As such an example would be "And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia" (Thess 1:7). The letter having these examples and ongoing themes will guide the reader to a different path than normally. Using this approach, we can see that the epistle was meant to have positive effects on the people as well as galvanize them to the word of Jesus Christ.

4.2 Pay detailed attention to the unique characteristics of your passage's genre (refer to the appropriate section in *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* and the power point presentations throughout the course):

1. **(Epistle) To what formal structure of an ancient letter does your particular text belong?** *For a quick overview visit http://www2.ferrum.edu/dhowell/txt_cntxt/ and click the "pathway" tab on the left and follow the directions. Is it part of the initial greeting? Is it part of the thanksgiving period typical of Paul's letters? Will this affect your exegesis in any way? (Fee, 17).*

This text belongs to formal structure of those during the Greco-Roman world. The letter opens with a salutation "Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you." It then moves onto the next part which is a prayer of

Thanksgiving. This carried out in the next few texts. It then follows to that of a body and then to moral exhortations and a conclusion. To be exact Thess 1:2-10 follows the structure of a salutation, then prayer, then body and finally a conclusion. The text covers the initial greeting, thanksgiving period and prayer. Since the text covers the normal format for Paul's letters it will not negatively affect my exegesis. Rather it will give a much better basis and benchmark to compare the text to the normal formats of Paul.

2. **(Narrative) Does your narrative describe an event, highlight a character/s, include dialogue, sayings, OT quotations or allusions, attitudes to emulate or avoid, etc. (a)** How does the dialogue and interaction of characters illumine attitudes or behavior? **(b)** Does the event highlight something presented earlier in the text, or does it prepare us for something about to follow? **(c)** If you removed your passage from the larger narrative, how would our understanding of this event or saying be affected? *Be careful of over exegeting and making the section say more than it does.*

The narrative introduces the author Paul and his companions, Silas and Timothy. It gives the allusions that they are close and travel as companions. Most of the text starts off or includes we versus I or they. This signifies a more personal bond or a type of relationship that is much more inclusive. The event doesn't really highlight something that was presented earlier in the text but does prepare us for something to follow. It highlights the notion that a prayer is coming, and that this prayer is to give thanks to God and Jesus Christ. If we were to remove this text from the larger narrative Paul is giving a speech that is to thank the people for their commitment to God. There is no other context to use other than the basis that Paul wrote this letter to be more in touch with the people he visited.

- 4.3 **Give an original, detailed outline of the whole book and note the placement of your text within the outline.**

What I do: *I use bible software and copy/paste the entire book into a word document. Using different highlighters, I mark changes in themes, characters, geographical locations, events, or groups of exhortation, teaching, warnings, and commands, etc. I also pay attention to noticeable repetitions and color code them as well. On the side I might jot down one or two words that seem to capture something significant about the progression and interconnectedness of the different stories or arguments. Use any method that makes sense to you.*

1 Thessalonians 1:1-20

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, **making mention of you in our prayers**;

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.

7 So that **ye were** ensamples to **all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia**.

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your **faith to God-ward is spread abroad**; so that we need not to speak any thing.

9 For **they themselves shew of us** what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, **which delivered us** from the wrath to come.

Outline 1:1-20

- I. Epistle
 - a. 1:1
 - b. 1:2-3 - A salute to the faithfulness to Christ
 - c. 1:4-5 - A point and challenge to continue the faith
 - d. 1:6-10 - A conversation with the people and their relation to other Gods
- II. The Defense of Apostolic actions
 - a. 2:1-4 - An Acknowledgement of Paul and his companions travel to Thessalonica
 - b. 2:5-8 - Paul's attitude towards the people (Thessalonians)
 - c. 2:9-12 - How Paul and his partners lived amongst the Thessalonians
 - d. 2:13-16 - Giving thanks to God for Thessalonians response to HIM
 - e. 2:17-20 Saying goodbye but not farewell as there is a desire to meet once more
- III. Report of Encouragement from Timothy¹
 - a. 3:1-3 - Why Paul sent Timothy to the Thessalonians
 - b. 3:4 - Affliction is no surprise to Christians
 - c. 3:5 - Paul's urgency

¹ David Guzik, "1 Thessalonians Chapter 3", *Enduring Word*, last modified 2020, accessed March 5, 2020, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-thessalonians-3/>.

- d. 3:6-9 Timothy's encouraging report
- e. 3:10 – Paul's prayer for Thessalonians
- f. 3:11-13 : Paul's prayer that highlight what the Thessalonians need

STEP 5: LITERARY ANALYSIS

5.1 STRUCTURE, SYNTAX, AND LOGIC OF ARGUMENT.

WHY DO THIS STEP?

Every author has a structure in mind when writing a narrative or letter. Note how the author prepares the hearer-reader for what follows (Ask yourself, "What leads into my text?" and "What leads out of this text?"). There is always some logical coherence and structure in the way a letter or story is told. Our job is to figure out this structure and determine how our passage functions to communicate a particular theological perspective.

Using the "sentence flow" method I went forth to analyze the periscope in the following method.

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: - **GIVES EXPLANATION OF WHY WRITE THIS**

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. - **PRAISE GIVEN FOR WHAT REASON?**

²We give thanks to God always - **WE WHO EXACTLY?**

for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; - **YOU ALL DIRECTED TO FOLLOWERS UB THESSALONICA?**

³Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, - **WHO IS REMEMBERING HERE?**

and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; - **REASONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES**

⁴Knowing, - **WHO KNOWS?**

brethren beloved - **JUST MALES OR BOTH OR ALL?**

, your election of God.

⁵For our gospel came not unto you - **WHEN?**

in word only - **WHEN & HOW?**

, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, - **DID EVERYONE RECEIVE IT?**

and in much assurance; - WHO IS SO SURE? as ye know what manner of men - **JUST THE MEN?**

we were among you for your sake. - **WHEN DID YOU BECOME ONE WITH THEM?**

⁶And ye became followers of us, - **YE REFERS TO WHO?**

and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction - **WHEN?**

, with joy of the Holy Ghost.

⁷ So that ye were ensamples – **IN WHAT WAY?**

to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. ? **WHY ONLY THEM ?**

⁸ For from you – **WHO?**

sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, **SEEMS TO CONNECT TO PRIOR STATEMENT**

but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; – **EVERY PLACE AUTHOR HAS BEEN TO?**

so that we need not to speak any thing. **WHY?**

⁹ For they themselves shew of us – **THEY WHO?**

what manner of entering in we had unto you, **HOW SO?**

and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; **REFERENCE TO NON BELIEVERS**

¹⁰ And to wait for his Son from heaven, **RECALL TO JESUS CHRIST**

whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. – **RECALL TO THE HOLY TRINITY**

5.1.2 Write a summary here of the information you can derive from your structure above. What lexical, syntactical or other structural indicators are important and why?

Based on the sentence structure of this periscope, we can determine that much of the lexical of the text relates to inclusion. There are many uses of pronouns all throughout the verses. The words such as we, you, ye and others are constantly used by the author. The author or Paul in this case is trying to be as inclusive as possible when writing this letter. This indicates that the purpose or current climate of the author is one that is positive and cheerful. It's a call back to the previous acknowledgement that this periscope is meant to give nothing but praise and highlight the positive affirmation of the times. The syntax of these verses show that the author is trying to get the reader to see beyond their words. Paul is painting a picture of what is currently transpiring and that his perspective is one filled with joy and acknowledge. Each sentence starts off with an admission of something that has occurred. "WE give thanks to God always" is pointing out inclusion and recognition.

5.1.3 Set out briefly the logic and content of your text (How does the author unfold each step in his argument? At what point does he reach the main thought or idea?). Show the significance of your paragraph in the overall development of the argument/exhortation/story, etc? (Fee, 19-20).

The author, Paul, unfolds each step in his argument in a significant way. Paul first starts off by giving an exorbitant acknowledgement of the practicing faith of the Thessalonians. It is a positive view that was previous issues with missionaries to certain areas. Yet, in Thessalonica, they have been praised for their continued faith in Jesus Christ and God. ² There is another callout in the periscope to this situation in (1 Thess 1:7:8), where it's

² Debbie McDaniel, Inside BST and Nancy Guthrie, "Thessalonians, First And Second, Theology Of - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary Of Biblical Theology Online", *Bible Study Tools*, last modified 2020, accessed March 1, 2020,

acknowledged how far their accomplishments have gone. Stories are told of their faith in Macedonia and Achaia. This is highlighted when Paul came to the main idea. This takes place roughly in the middle of the periscope “ For our gospel came not unto you in word only , but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake” (1 Thess 1:5).

5.2 RHETORIC. What “rhetorical features” (hyperbole, questions, commands, irony, parable, allegory, allusion, etc.) does your text display? How are they important for exegesis?

There are quite a few questions that the text displays as it relates to “rhetorical features”. I can’t say that there are many hyperboles or commands as well. Currently I don’t see or perceive any sort of allegory in the text. There might be the allusion to other things to past but that will require a bit more studying of the next few chapters in 1 Thessalonian.

5.3 GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

Students without the biblical languages must proceed with caution. Step 3 should give an early indication of where the grammar or meaning of individual words is dependent on the original language such as the use of grammatical structures (i.e. clauses, prepositional phrases, verb tenses, etc.) or the original meaning of words that are theologically significant (see Step 5.4 below) .

5.3.1 List any difficult or unusual grammatical features of your text addressed by the scholars (use several critical commentaries to compare their explanations) and explain their importance for understanding this passage.

5.4 LEXICOGRAPHY. (Note well Fee’s warnings, pp.79-80. On this whole section consult closely Fee’s Sect. II.4 and pay particular attention to 82-93).

5.4.1 Identify any words which are “theologically loaded,” ambiguous, repeated or emphasized by the author.

Words that I find to be theologically loaded – brethren, beloved, election, assurance, affliction, ensamples

5.4.2. Choose one or two of these words listed in 5.4.1 and look them up in a concordance to see where they are used elsewhere in your book and how context brings out different nuances of the meaning. Be reflective. For example, the term “life” in John’s Gospel appears in several contexts such as eschatological, with the adjective descriptor “eternal,” and in relation to Christ himself. There is no right or wrong...just be thoughtful in your observations.

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/thessalonians-first-and-second-theology-of.html>.

Assurance - Of their election used once in 1 Thessalonians 1:4, while “is abundant in the understanding of the gospel” is used in 1 Thessalonians 1:5. Here assurance is used in the context of The Holy Spirit, and god and once again based on the perception that the person is under the eyes of the Lord.

Election – Of Grace – also used in 2 Thessalonians 2:13. When used in these texts, there is an inclusion of knowing and your prior to the word. The text is stating that your choice is what matters only in the eyes of His grace, God.

5.4.3 Next, look up the word in one of the Hebrew or Greek lexicons provided in Accordance and notice the ranges of meanings for this word. Which best fits the context?

Election – New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary – The act of picking out, choosing or a thing or person of chosen. Using the Greek Lexicon we’re able to see how the word transitions to more possessive. I believe that this definition best fits the context of the texts in 1 Thessalonians 1.

Also need to access the accordance

STEP 6. CULTURAL CONTEXT

6.1 List features of your text which you suspect might be illuminated or explained by a greater knowledge of Jewish or Greco Roman history and culture.

Going into a deeper dive into the scripture, there are some features of the text that could be better explained by greater knowledge of Greco Roman history and culture. For one, the text often refers to you or other forms of the pronoun. What’s interesting to note is that this text, Paul doesn’t refer to anyone or group by name. In some translations, such as in NIV, Paul makes note of brothers and sisters. While in another translation in ESV, Paul only refers to brothers. While taken for face value there isn’t much to go off on but through some scholar’s interpretations things are a bit different. Amy-Jill Levine interprets the 1 Thessalonians as support letter to the people.³ The people here being the gentiles and not the Jewish people.

Another aspect is part of the text is the details of the faithfulness of Christ. In this part “We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess 2:3). The issue here or rather the highlight of a potential change is the fact most of the inhabitants of the new church in Thessalonica were Jewish and feared God.⁴ Another feature is the aspect that Paul seems overly delighted by the news presented to him as if he was expecting something completely the opposite. He is overly enthused more so than most would have imagined given Paul’s experience in that city and others prior to.

6.2 Choose one of these ancient issues noted in 6.1 and, using the bibliography in Fee, Sec. II.5 (and any supplementary bibliography), (a) explore the cultural background a little further and (b) explain how this study may aid in an understanding of the cultural milieu of the author.

One of the ancient issues that I choose is the fact that the new church discussed by Paul was created in a landscape not dominated by believers in Jesus Christ and God. In the opening of the book, Paul makes an announcement to the “church of the Thessalonians” which doesn’t really dictate if they

³ Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Annotated New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, n.d.).

⁴ Daniel Wallace, "13. 1 Thessalonians: Introduction, Outline, And Argument | Bible.Org", *Bible.Org*, last modified 2020, accessed March 8, 2020, <https://bible.org/seriespage/1-thessalonians-introduction-outline-and-argument>.

were Jews or Gentiles. During that time, or rather just a few years prior there was a great Jewish revolt against the Roman empire. The result of that revolt was the lost of many lives in addition to over 70,000 Jews being taken back to Rome as slaves.⁵ Those not taken into slavery were forced into exile. Where a gap currently open, Christianity was able to spread more easily to non-Jewish communities. This spread was led by Paul. At first Paul and his companions ran into many issues as well as having many Christians being persecuted. Yet, Rome ultimately became the leader of church authority and upholder of Christianity. Understanding the culture and view on religion especially Christianity during this time is crucial in comprehending what the texts are trying to tell us.

6.3 Evaluate the significance of this background data for the understanding of your passage.

The significance of this background data is that it can give a deeper understanding of where the author (Paul) is coming from. It provides more context to much of the text as well as set the stage for how someone could and should approach the scripture in this book. On the face, it appears as though all is well and that Paul was just immediately writing the letters to highlight things that went well during his past visit.

STEP 7. CANONICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

7.1 How does your passage compare to other passages in Scripture which address similar issues? (Fee 31-32)

In 1 Thessalonians, Paul describes how the Thessalonians believed in the coming of Jesus Christ and the belief in Him as the true King. Throughout the book, Paul highlights how their faith in Jesus is strong and must persevere even during the times of uncertainty and harshness. Overall, it's a celebration of their faithfulness to Jesus Christ and acknowledging the sacrifice He went through for them. It's also a call for them to growth and continue their faithfulness to Christ despite the persecution they are currently facing. Other passages like this issue are ones found in Mathews and Revelations. They too talk about the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Thessalonians must understand that Jesus Christ's return would bring about hope and rejoice for all. Examples of these are found in scriptures such as "So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" (Matt 24:44). Another is found in earlier in Matthews when it is stated that "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come" (Matt 24:42).

7.2 What does your passage contribute to the overall teaching of this subject in the Bible? What specifically would be lost or how would the message of the Bible be less complete if your passage did not exist?

What this passage contributes to the overall teaching of this subject is that it highlights hope. It goes on to contribute that the second coming of Jesus is soon as that we will all be rescued. "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess 1:10). It covers how our faith in the Lord will not go unnoticed and that we should rejoice. Christians should celebrate knowing that their faith in Jesus Christ didn't waiver in the harshest of times. It also tells us to grow, learn to treat others and treat them in the way that Jesus Christ taught us. The message of the Bible would be less complete without this passage because some would lose hope. Some would not understand that even when times were dark, there were times to celebrate. Revel in the knowledge that faith in Jesus Christ is not something to take granted for but at the same time is seen at all times.

⁵ Harry Oates and Harry Oates, "The Great Jewish Revolt Of 66 CE", *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, last modified 2020, accessed March 8, 2020, <https://www.ancient.eu/article/823/the-great-jewish-revolt-of-66-ce/>.

7.3 What are the theological implications of your passage?

The overall theological implications of my passage are about hope in a bleak world. It covers the gospel and how those who convert share it amongst themselves. It implies that all must preach the gospel with genuineness and faithfulness. The reason being that those who follow this way will be saved by the second coming of Jesus Christ. It's about the struggles of a newly built church that is facing hardships and persecutions in their own lands. It's a message to all that not all times are great. Christians much like those in Thessalonica don't always enjoy prosperity and are triumphant. During the time these letters were created, Christians faced isolation and punishment for believing in Christ as the new King. Paul himself as stated in Acts faced persecution after only being there for a few weeks. The Thessalonians also faced similar issues even as severe as having their own property taken away from them. Yet it was through this strong belief in faith and labor of love that will drive them through these hard times.

STEP 8. ACCUMULATE A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SECONDARY SOURCES AND READ WIDELY.

8.1 Find at least 8 commentaries, books or journal articles which deal with your passage and read the contributions of other scholars. List the sources here using correct Turabian style). *DO NOT USE MATTHEW HENRY OR OTHER DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARIES!* These may add some additional insight, but remember, they did not have access to the most recent manuscript or archeological discoveries nor did they live in the complexity of our modern context.

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8.2 What are some of the most significant differences (presuppositional, theological, hermeneutical, etc.) between your approach and that of some authors you have read?

Some of the theological differences between my approach and that of some authors centers around Paul's messaging. From my approach, I see that Paul is giving praise to the Thessalonians for all that they have gone through and endured. They showed their faith to Jesus Christ and God even during times of tribulation. They did not waiver or succumb to the atrocities that befell them nor sought out salvation from the Jews. Some authors point out that Paul's letter was providing a guidance for the Thessalonians regarding their suffering. Adams proclaims that Paul encourages them to ensure suffering, just as he did. From a theological standpoint, I saw this from a different approach. Instead of praising them for the past, some authors believed Paul was congratulating them on experiencing this.

8.3 State a few places where significant differences between you and some scholar(s) demand that you deal with their views in your paper and show why they are wrong (see Fee, 33). You need not write your full refutation here.

While most scholars align with the view in my paper there are some places that require addressing. For one, it's the opening of Paul's letter. Some scholars believe that he at first was ready to dish out warnings and rebuke but later recanted. From my viewpoint, Paul's address to the Thessalonians was based on knowledge from Timothy. It was also a means of providing wisdom, encouragement and reassurance. It was a letter that shows how surprised Paul was given the situation he left in Thessalonica. Paul didn't believe the church he helped found for Christians was going to survive for long. This is also given his experience and acknowledgement from other cities he visited.

Another place that differs from my viewpoint is Paul's tone in his letter. Some scholars believe that Paul's letter was used to do more than just praise. It was used as a means of motivation or to invoke power from Paul. Some see Paul as a leader and one that used his power to influence people. This influence was used to bring about a change in thinking and perspective relating to both gospel and faith. Scholars mention how Paul's opening of the letter is thanking God for choosing the

Thessalonians. Paul then goes into exerting his power by stating that he knows God chose them and why.

While these are just a few brief points, I will be sure to make full refutations in the final paper.

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