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Exegesis Research Paper

1. Text/Passage: Book of *1 Thessalonians* 4-5
2. Observations: (**Leave ALL of these questions in your final paper.** If you do not believe that the question applies to this passage, enter “Not Applicable.” Delete this information within the parentheses.)

A. Who is mentioned in this passage? Are they referred to by name, by relationship, or in some other way? Is there any description given for each one? If so, what words are used to describe them?

Paul repeated the phrase “brother and sisters,” to remind the Thessalonians Church that they should know who to walk in Christians faith through please God. The term “pleasing God” should not be out of necessity, but rather as a personal choice that they must have a relationship with God.¹ Paul used the verb “we asked” and “we urges you” as the basis for his exhalation with the phrase “in the Lord Jesus whom they have heard through oral traditions how they should live walk.”² According to Beale & Carson the verb “walk” was commonly used in the Old Testament as a rabbinical term as a moral conduct. In the Old Testament the idea of pleasing

¹ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament commentaries: 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2009), 78

² *Ibid.*, 79

God was the goal of human behaviors. Therefore, Paul incorporated the tradition into the letter to emphasize a relationship with the audience who was knowledgeable about the Old Testament concepts.³

B. *What is happening in the passage?*

Paul identifies the concept of holiness which is used interchangeable with sanctification as proper ethical conduct for the Thessalonian Church. According to Beale & Carson, the term holiness in Judaism and Christianity was defined as a God who is Holy. Therefore, The Lord required his chosen people in the Old Testament as Israel to be separated from the pagan religions which could lead to idolatry.⁴ Paul incorporates the Old Testament roots into the New Testament concepts by stating the phrase “*For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality.*”⁵ The quote suggests Paul was not only concerned with following directions, but rather showing them a way to the Father.⁶ The data suggests that Thessalonian Church were aware of right and wrong conduct through oral and written traditions

C. Is there any dialogue between the participants? Can one of the speakers be identified as the main speaker in the passage? If so, who is the main speaker?

The Thessalonian Christians refused to live according to the norm of the culture by insisting that life style could cause the wrath of God’s vengeance on them through written traditions. The Gentile Christians argued that to avoid sexual immortalities meant to follow

³ G. K. Beale and D.A Caron, *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapid MI: Baker Academic, 2007) 11

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12

⁵ Stanley E. Porter, Fear, Reverence,” ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers and His Letters (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 2115

⁶ G. K. Beale and D.A Caron, *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapid MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 79

Christ.⁷ Paul incorporates the Old Testament oral traditions into the New Testament concept by arguing the blessed hope with a preposition “For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness” which is achieved through the Holy Spirit.⁸ Paul uses rhythmical language stating that “each one of you should know who to possess his own vessel sanctification and honor.”⁹ The quote suggests to the Thessalonian Christians that was the will of God for their lives.

D. What is being discussed? Are there any commands, promises, warnings, words of encouragement, instructions, etc.? If so, what are they?

Paul used rhetorical criticism in his letter to the Thessalonians Church to command them to continue walking in mutual love for each other’s. He introduced the synonymous term of “brotherly love” or “family love” and “love for another” as way of exalting the reputation of the Thessalonians who showed “love to all brothers and sisters in all of Macedonia.”¹⁰

E. Were you able to tell when and where the events and/or discussions in this passage occurred? If so, when and where did these things occur? What places, if any, are mentioned in the passage?

According to the book of *Acts*, the apostle, and Silas went to Thessalonica in 49 A.D. “Thessalonica in the first century was the capital of Macedonia and it’s the largest.”¹¹ The city has a central Roman highways through the sea cost. The city received its name from half-sister of King Alexander the Great.¹² The information suggests that Thessalonica and Macedonia were important during the first century due to trading and commerce by sea ports.

⁷ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament commentaries: 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2009), 79

⁸ Stanley E. Porter, Fear, Reverence,” ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers and His Letters (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 2115

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2115

¹⁰ Gary Shogren, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012), 171

¹¹ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament commentaries: 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2009), 17

¹² *Ibid.*, 18

F. Is there anything else that was unfamiliar to you or that you needed to look up, such as a particular name, the definition of one of the words used, etc.?

Paul repeated the word body which is which literally means “vessel.” In the Greek culture the word body symbolized a “container of the soul.” While in the New Testament a vessel is used in inference to a person.¹³ The apostle argued the Thessalonians should know who to control their bodies through sanctification which lead to holiness and not in worldly passion.¹⁴ The information suggests that Paul urged ethical standards on the Thessalonians for purity.

G. Is there anything that is repeated, that is emphasized, or that stood out to you as being unusual?

Paul’s concept of the “Holy Spirit” can be linked to intertestamental Judaism. The early Christians of Thessalonian Church perceived the Holy Spirit as God’s presence and his life-giving power. They understood and experienced the Holy Spirit as a “fulfillment of prophetic hopes that in the age of the Messiah, the Spirit would fall on Israel.”¹⁵ Paul took the background information from the Old Testament Ezekiel says that the Lord will give his chosen people a new heart and new spirit to empower them to proclaim the Gospel of salvation.¹⁶ The above information shows that the Holy Spirit is necessary to empower believers.

111 Interpretation:

A. Social Context: (What is the social context of the people in the passage? What did they believe about God, themselves, and each other? How did they interact with each of these mentioned? What did they think about and how did they interact with their families, villages/cities, neighbors, etc.?)

¹³ Ibid.,81

¹⁴ Stanley E. Porter, Fear, Reverence,” ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers and His Letters (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 2115

¹⁵ Ibid.,2115

¹⁶ Ibid.,1397

The studying of Judaism is an important concept to understand the New Testament. The first type of Christians were Jews, then merged with the Greeks and Roman cultures from the Mediterranean society lead to the rise of Christianity.¹⁷ The information supports Judaism point of view in the first-century

The first-century Thessalonian Church understood the scripture through the lenses of Judaism was based on the concept of a covenant laws of Israel. It was a “gift to Israel-his way of setting them apart from their pagan neighbors, of setting stipulation and boundary of conduct”....so that they would learn to love God and others.¹⁸ In others the law was understood as a covenant relationship between Yahweh and his chosen people Israel with land. The oral traditional belief was that God is faithful to His’ covenant promises and would not abundant them. The lord is compassionated to those who do not obey the law with ethical and moral standards such the ritual of sacrifices for forgives and atonement of sins due to violation.¹⁹ The information implies that the Israel law was based upon rituals and rules for obedience.

- B. Literary Context: (Where does this passage occur in the book? The beginning, middle, the end? What has come before it? What comes after it? You can insert an outline of the book, and/or a brief summary of what is mentioned before this passage and what is mentioned after it. Also, how does what we find in this passage relate to what has come before and what comes after?)**

In 1 Thessalonians 4-5 occur toward the end of the Epistle. Paul is the author of the book based on chronological background information that he went from Philippi, then to Thessalonica during 49 A.D.

¹⁷ Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 198

¹⁸ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2014), 175

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 175

In the beginner section Paul encouraged the Thessalonians for spreading the Gospels to Macedonia and Achaia regions. Paul is the author of the epistle due to Greco-Roman Rhetoric style, languages and structural flows of context.²⁰ He apostle used epistolary to bring awareness to the letter. For example, introduction was written to influence the author interest with exhalations and conclusion making the argument appealing. The body of his letters are composed of facts about the case such as his authorship by saying “I Paul time and again” emphasizing relationship, then introduced a new idea that Satan has hinder him from spreading the gospel.²¹ The information infers that Paul is the original writer for Epistle

(Introduction)

“**Exaltation** to Christians Living”²² 1 Thessalonians 4-5

1 Thessalonians 4: 1-2 General exhalations greeting how to walk and please God

(Facts)

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 Ethical Standard of Holiness and Holy Spirit

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 Enforced Covenant Language and love for each other

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 Quality of life Standards

Exegesis Problem with the Parousia **(Arguments)**

1 Thessalonians 4:12-14 Believers who died before the resurrection

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 The time of the rapture

1 Thessalonians 5:4-11 Comparison of believers from unbelievers

1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 Overall exhortation

²⁰ Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 15

²¹ Stanley E. Porter, Fear, Reverence,” ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers and His Letters (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 2115

²² Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament commentaries: 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2009), 39-40

Conclusion

1 Thessalonians 5:23-28 Doxology the call for salvation through Jesus and greeting

- C. **Genre:** (What type of literature is this, such as a psalm, a proverb, a law text, a narrative, etc.? Does it contain other forms of literature, such as a narrative, a dialogue, a prayer, poetry, a parable, etc.?)

Paul introduced the literature law text as a reminder of their relationship an “agreement of loyalty that Israel had with God.”²³ He reinforced the Thessalonians that they were taught by God to walk and love those outsiders pagan, so that they might not lack anything ²⁴

- D. **Language:** (Is there a special meaning to the original Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic? Compare various translations at this point. Is there a particular word which may have a special meaning?)

According to Mal Couch, in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 in the Greek text reads “we shall be snatched into the clouds into the meeting place of the Lord in the air.” The word rapture is not stated in the Bible, however it is implicit and explicit expressed. The word rapture comes from the Greek word harpazo which indicated being suddenly swooped away by a force that cannot be opposed.” In the Hellenistic world the term is used for a “meeting place” (apantesin). ²⁵ The information implies that rapture has different variances meaning with same concept.

- E. **Text Criticism:** (Is there a debate in the manuscript tradition about this passage? Footnotes in study Bibles and most academic commentaries will pick this up. Does the text variant alter the meaning or interpretation of the passage? If so, how?)

²³ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2014), 176

²⁴ Stanley E. Porter, Fear, Reverence,” ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers and His Letters (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 2115

²⁵ Mal Couch, *Dictionary of Premillennial Theory*: (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publication, 340

Paul introduces metaphor jargons of “thief in the nigh” to indicate “unexpected” return of Christ. The Thessalonians believes in the resurrection; however they need confirmation of the place and time of the rapture²⁶. According to **Leith** Samuel “if there is one thing certain about the timing of the Lord’s return it is this, that we cannot be certain of the timing” because it is “inevitable, but unpredictable.” In agreeing with the eschatology hope that no one will know the time, however Christians we should be in a constant state of readiness waiting and trusting on the Master return.

F. History of Redemption: (How does this passage relate to the rest of the Bible? Is it part of the story of Israel prior to the coming of Christ? Does it occur during Christ’s time in the world between his birth and death? Does it occur after the resurrection of Christ and giving of the Holy Spirit? Is it a result of the fall, or part of the fulfillment of the Christ-event?)

Jesus the Messiah is a fulfillment of the eschatology hope. Jesus death and resurrection gives us access to salvation through Christ who died for our sins, whether we are “awake or “sleep” we will be with him in heaven with his splendors.²⁷ The first century Thessalonian Christians hope was based upon covenant relationship with God through Jesus our Messiah. Paul’s goal for spreading the gospel to Jews and gentiles were for them to obtain “salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”²⁸

Commentaries: (What are some of the main issues discussed by the commentators concerning this passage? What verse or verses, if any, do they seem to focus on more than others? How do they see what is said here impacting what happens elsewhere in the Old Testament and/or the New Testament?)

²⁶ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament commentaries: 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2009), 92

²⁷ Stanley E. Porter, *Fear, Reverence,* ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers and His Letters (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 2115

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2115

Therefore, Paul illustrates the rapture Christ in 1 Thessalonians 4:17: to emphasize apocalyptic metaphor languages of “the” Lord Himself”, “will gather together”, “with a shout” of command, “with an angel”, “with trumpet” meaning military command, “dead will rise” and then the living will be “caught up” to show Christ authority powers ²⁹

The book of *Corinthians* show intertextuality proof of how to solve the Thessalonian Church grieves and reassured them of what kind of bodies they will have in the resurrection. The apostle put the audience a peace by encouraging them that the “dead believers will be raised incorruptible, and we [living Christians] will also be changed.”³⁰ The quotation suggests that those believers in Christ will be secured with honor.

Application(s):

G. Summary: (Summarize in one concise statement or sentence what the passage is teaching. What is the main point of this passage? What is the main message to the original audience in their context?)

According to Donald Hagner there is a “link between eschatology and Ethic “which is the thesis of the paper.³¹ The original Thessalonian Church audience understood the concept of the resurrection that Christ return is imminent. Paul purpose the writing 1 Thessalonian chapter 4-5 was to encourage and exalted the believers on ethical goals of holiness and sanctification as way of walking in fellowship with God. The apostle gives eschatological instruction to solve grief of love once.

H. Impact on/Importance to Believers, Unbelievers, and Me: (What is the importance/significance of these events to people today? What applications might we make to our own lives, such as what we believe, how we treat others, what we do,

²⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 187

³⁰ Ibid., 187

³¹ Donald A Hagner, *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic 2012), 461

etc.? In other words, how should knowing what is in this passage then change us now?)

- 1. Believers: (What does this passage teach a new Christian, a mature believer, etc. about who God is, what He has done, what He is going to do, etc.? Is there a promise to be relied upon, a truth to be known and trusted, a command to be obeyed, etc.?)**

The passage teaches new Christians to follow Paul ethical standards of conduct, so that they will be able to please God through holiness and walking in the commandment. As they wait on the promise of the Holy Spirit, they should be in a state of readiness for Christ return.

Unbelievers: (What does this passage teach someone who has not yet trusted Christ?)

In 1 Thessalonians 5:10, Paul teaches that unbelievers are those who are unprepared for the coming of Christ are those who rejected the gospel of salvation. Paul uses metaphorical dialects to refer to the unbelievers as those pagans who has “fallen asleep” “without hope” “grieving because they are separated from a covenant loving God who is faithful to his promises.³²

Me: (What does this passage teach me about God, His ways, and His actions in the past, present, and future? How does this instruct and/or challenge me?)

The passage teaches a new Christian that the promise of the rapture is imminent. Paul uses metaphor languages of “watchfulness” and “alertness” emphasizing that Christians should wait on the coming of the Lord with expectancy of eternal life. Paul implies reminder metaphorical expressions of “children of light” or “children of day” to show that we need to be obedient to the word as a benefit for salvation.³³

³² Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 210

³³ *Ibid.*, 211

I. Preaching/Teaching:

1. What essential elements would you want to include when preaching/teaching this text in your faith community/ministry context?

Paul ends his eschatology teaching by exhorting and encouraging the Thessalonian Church with a “call to action” with the word “so then” they should build up another with love by strengthening those who are weak and spread the gospel to other regions ³⁴

2. Are there be any parts of it that might require special explanation to help your ideal/target audience understand?

According to Shogren and Arnold interpretation of the text, the metaphor languages of “whether we sleep” or “whether we die.” Paul switches synonym to get the reader interest that those words are metaphors for death.³⁵

3. Are there any parts of it that might be especially challenging or disturbing to some in your ideal/target audience?

According to Gundry, there is a relationship between Christ and the rapture which is illustrated through the pretribulation doctrine. He calls it the “secret rapture” where the saint will be suddenly taken away from the earth without warning and the unbelievers will be left behind for the tribulation and second coming of Christ.³⁶

In conclusion passages teach prepare believers that Christ could return at any time. Therefore, as Christians we should be in a constant state of readiness by seeing, hearing, believing the Word from a historical and cultural point of views. So that we will be able to interpret and apply exegesis concepts of holiness and keep the command which is the will of God for our lives , while waiting on the promise of the Holy Spirit and rapture.

³⁴ Ibid.,211

³⁵ Ibid.,211-212

³⁶ Robert H. Gundry, *The church and the Tribulation: A Biblical Interpretation of Post tribulation* (Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan Corp, 1973), 29