**School of the Word**

**Exploring St Paul**

*4. 1 Thessalonians (Part 2)*

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**Summary here**

1Th. 1:9 For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

**Layout – 1 Thessalonians**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Letter* | Speech |
| 1:1 | *Opening Greeting* |  |
| 1:2-10 | *Thanksgiving* | Introduction |
| (1:9-10) |  | Thesis |
| 2:1-3:12 | *Body of the Letter* | Proof 1: Relationships / Faith |
| 4:1-12 | Proof 2: Holiness / Love |
| 4:13-5:11 | Proof 3: The dead / Hope |
| 5:12-27 | *Exhortations* | Conclusion |
| 5:28 | *Closing Greeting* |  |

**Topic in three parts**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1Th. 1:9 For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, | = 2:1-3:12  *Faith* |
| and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, | **=** 4:1-12  *Love* |
| 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming. | = 4:13-5:11  *Hope* |

**Rereading the Text**

Task: re-reading:

Proofs *Nos. 1, 2 and 3*

Thesis 1:9-10 (= partitio)

Introduction 1:2-10

Conclusion 5:12-27

**Introduction and Conclusion Compared**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1Th. 1:2   We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly 3 remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. 6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. 9 For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming. | 1Th. 5:12   But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect (lit. *to know*) those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; 13 esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. 15 See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise the words of prophets, 21 but test everything; hold fast to what is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil.  1Th. 5:23   May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. |

**Towards a Conclusion**

* 1Thessalonians = earliest surviving Christian document
* We can locate the letter in the life and mission of Paul
* Written during the second missionary journey, from Corinth
* The content is certainly concrete (contingent), dealing with immediate concerns of the Thessalonians
* The content can also be placed into a larger (coherent) view of Pauline theology, which is our next task

**The Context**

* Order and Well-being (Delphi, capricious, Tyche, monotheism)
* Death (mystery religions, Isis, Cabiri)
* How to live / behave? (Early Christianity, “schema”)
  + Trade guilds
  + Abolition of social stratification
  + Civil authorities

**Overview**

*God and Father*

(a) The Language of the Relationship with God x36

(b) The Configuration of the relationship with God

(i) Not an *idol*: but living and true

(ii) God called “*father*”

(iii) Controls history / can be angry

(iv) God *raised Jesus* and raises the dead

(v) The Thessalonians are in the *church* of God

(vi) God gives the Thessalonians his *Word*, his *Gospel*, his *Spirit*, “taught œby God”

(vii) God desires our *santification* and our *salvation*.

(2) Jesus

(a) Historical Jesus

(b) Risen Jesus

(c) Present Relationship

(d) Future Jesus

(3) Life in community

(a) Called, elected and chosen

(b) Attitudes of faith, hope and love (waiting):

(c) Prayer

(d) Actions

(i) Personally

(ii) Within the community

(iii) Encouragement

**Jesus in the letter**

* Jesus x 16
* Christ x 10
* Lord x 24 - almost always in ref. to Jesus, although: 1:8; 4:6; 5:2.
* Son is used once: 1Thess 1:10, though elsewhere of *disciples* 1Thess 5:5.

**The Historical Jesus**

1Th. 2:14 For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you suffered the same things from your own compatriots as they did from the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out; they displease God and oppose everyone.

*1Th. 4:14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. 15 For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. 16 For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.*

**The Risen Jesus**

1Th. 4:14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. 15 For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. 16 For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1Th. 1:10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

**The Present Jesus**

1Th. 1:1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace.

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

1Th. 1:6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit,

1Th. 1:8 For the word of the **Lord** has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it.

1Th. 3:8 For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the **Lord**.

1Th. 3:11 Now may our God and Father himself and our **Lord Jesus** direct our way to you. 12 And may the **Lord** make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. 13 And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our **Lord Jesus** with all his saints.

1Th. 4:1 Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

1Th. 2:19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

1Th. 4:6 that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter, because the **Lord** is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you before-hand and solemnly warned you.

**The Future Jesus**

1Th. 1:10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

1Th. 3:11 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. 12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. 13 And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

1Th. 4:14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. 15 For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. 16 For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.

1Th. 5:2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

1Th. 5:9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

1Th. 5:23 May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Matera: Summary from 1 Thessalonians**

*Jesus, the Son of God, endured a life of affliction. His afflictions were similar to those endured by the Jewish prophets of old. Just as the Jewish people killed the prophets, so they killed Jesus. The death of Jesus, however, played a significant role in God’s plan of salvation, for he was God’s son, and God raised him from the dead. Christ died on behalf of others, and when he returns he will rescue believers from God’s wrath and lead them to salvation. Because of Jesus’ death, believers enjoy the gift of the Spirit; they are the sanctified and elect people of God.*

(*New Testament Christology* 90-91)