
The Theological Concept of Hope (Ἐλπίς) in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians 4:13–5:11

A Social-Scientific Study Using Social Memory Model

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**THE THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF HOPE (ΕΛΠΙΣ)
IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS 4:13–5:11**

A Social-Scientific Study Using Social Memory Model

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor's Degree in Theology

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SUMMARY/RÉSUMÉ

The Theological Concept of Hope (Ελπίς) in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians 4:13–5:11, A Social-Scientific Study Using Social Memory Model

All exegetes agree that the first epistle to the Thessalonians seeks to restore the confidence of a tested community. Hope is, therefore, the heart of this letter of Paul. Yet, it seems to us that the theological concept of hope in First Thessalonians has not received adequate attention. How does the apostle go about giving hope to his community? In other words, how does Paul construct by rhetoric the theological concept of hope in First Thessalonians (4:13–5:11)? We hypothesise that Paul communicated hope using repeated rhetorical contrasts and antithetical features. Therefore, this study focuses on the dynamics of the rhetorical contrasts, antitheses, and their implications in the discourse by applying a socio-scientific method: the social memory studies. In the process, our research study envisions a theology of hope (ἐλπίς) in First Thessalonians, particularly in the eschatological discourse (4:13–5:11).

The doctoral thesis addresses this primary objective in seven chapters, including a general introduction and a conclusion summarising this research endeavour. The opening section indicates why we need a theological concept of hope in First Thessalonians and outlines a methodological basis. Chapter One introduces and explains the social memory theory. We see its historical roots with Maurice Halbwachs and his successors, the method with its advantages and limitations, its adaptation to biblical studies, and its significance for the present research. Chapter Two considers the delimitation of the text. It analyses the Thessalonian correspondence (the first and the second epistles) concisely, delimits the focus to First Thessalonians, and looks at the form and structure of the letter, as well as its theological and eschatological issues. The chapter prioritises the eschatological discourse (1 Thess 4:13–5:11) for an interpretive analysis in the two subsequent chapters.

Chapters Three and Four deal with exegesis from an interpretative framework of “we wish, we believe, we declare, and we encourage”. These chapters identify the antitheses considering apocalyptic and social dualism. Chapter Five deals with the antitheses and social memory, the formal structure and content of antitheses, reflecting a communicative strategy of a constructive negation. Chapter Six refers to traditions and social memory. The chapter analyses hope, grief, death and life antitheses referring to the framework of “we wish, we believe, and we declare”. Here, we consider non-biblical and biblical traditions, the material objects (God, Paul, and the community) and the formal aspects (presence and absence), as well as an analysis of the Lord’s word.

The concluding chapter deals with the “we encourage” context of the letter. Followingly, it develops and introduces a theology of hope as a theology of hope by negation. We establish this conceptual notion supported by additional categories: a) the temporal nearness aspects of the letter (not only but also, do not, whether or, always, everywhere), and b) the spatial approximation of the content (faith, love and hope; the steadfastness of hope; suffering and joy; glory, joy, crown, and hope; grief and hope; the hope of salvation). The chapter concludes by defining a functional theological concept of hope and provides a brief description of hope as “Non-abandonment (negated)” and “Divine-perseverance (positive)”.

Le concept théologique de l'espérance (ἐλπίς) dans la première épître aux Thessaloniens 4:13–5:11, une étude socio-scientifique utilisant le modèle de mémoire sociale

Tous les exégètes s'accordent à dire que la première épître aux Thessaloniens cherche à restaurer la confiance d'une communauté éprouvée. L'espérance est donc au cœur de cette lettre de Paul. Pourtant, il semble que le concept théologique de l'espérance dans la première épître aux Thessaloniens n'ait pas reçu toute l'attention qu'il méritait. Comment l'apôtre s'y prend-il pour ranimer l'espérance dans sa communauté? En d'autres termes, comment Paul construit-il par la rhétorique le concept théologique de l'espérance dans la première épître aux Thessaloniens (4:13-5:11)? Nous faisons l'hypothèse que Paul communique l'espérance à l'aide de contrastes rhétoriques répétés et de caractéristiques antithétiques. Par conséquent, cette étude se concentre sur la dynamique des contrastes rhétoriques, des antithèses et de leurs implications dans le discours en appliquant une méthode socio-scientifique: les études de la mémoire sociale. Dans cette optique, notre étude envisage une théologie de l'espérance (ἐλπίς) dans la première épître aux Thessaloniens, et en particulier dans le discours eschatologique (4:13-5:11).

La thèse de doctorat aborde cet objectif principal via sept chapitres, comprenant une introduction générale et une conclusion résumant cette entreprise de recherche. La section d'ouverture souligne le besoin d'un concept théologique de l'espérance dans la première épître aux Thessaloniens et expose une base méthodologique. Ensuite, le premier chapitre présente et explique la théorie de la mémoire sociale. Nous parcourons ses racines historiques avec Maurice Halbwachs et ses successeurs, et examinons la méthode avec ses avantages et ses limites, son adaptation aux études bibliques et sa signification pour la présente recherche. Le chapitre deux se penche sur la délimitation du texte. Il analyse brièvement la correspondance thessalonienne (la première et la deuxième épître), pour se concentrer essentiellement sur la première épître aux Thessaloniens en interrogeant la forme et la structure de la lettre, ainsi que ses enjeux théologiques et eschatologiques. Le chapitre donne la priorité au discours eschatologique (1 Th 4,13–5,11), pour aborder une analyse interprétative dans les deux chapitres subséquents.

Les chapitres trois et quatre traitent de l'exégèse à partir du cadre interprétatif de "nous souhaitons, nous croyons, nous déclarons et nous encourageons". Ces chapitres identifient les antithèses considérant le dualisme apocalyptique et social. Le chapitre cinq traite des antithèses et de la mémoire sociale, de la structure formelle et du contenu des antithèses, reflétant une stratégie communicative de négation constructive. Le chapitre six fait référence aux traditions et à la mémoire sociale. Il analyse les antithèses de l'espérance, de la tristesse, de la mort et de la vie en se référant au cadre de "nous souhaitons, nous croyons et nous déclarons". Nous considérons ici les traditions non bibliques et bibliques, les objets matériels (Dieu, Paul et la communauté) et les aspects formels (présence et absence), ainsi qu'une analyse de la parole du Seigneur.

Le dernier chapitre traite du contexte "nous encourageons" de la lettre, pour ensuite développer et introduire une théologie de l'espérance comme théologie de l'espérance par négation. Nous établissons cette notion conceptuelle soutenue par des catégories supplémentaires: a) les aspects de proximité temporelle de la lettre (pas seulement mais aussi, ne pas, ou bien, toujours, partout), et b) l'approximation spatiale du contenu (la foi, l'amour et l'espérance; la constance de l'espérance; la souffrance et la joie; la gloire, la joie, la couronne et l'espérance; la tristesse et l'espérance; l'espérance du salut). Le chapitre se termine par la définition d'un concept théologique fonctionnel de l'espérance et fournit une description brève de l'espérance comme "non-abandon (négation)" et "persévérance divine (positivité)".

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
ANCCS.NT	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture New Testament
ANL	Annua Nuntia Lovaniensia
ARS	<i>Annual Review of Sociology</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BBC	Blackwell Bible Commentaries
BDAG	BAUER Walter, DANKER F. W., ARNDT W. F., and GINGRICH F. W., <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , Chicago-London, The University of Chicago Press, 3 rd edition 2000
BDF	BLAS F., DEBRUNNER A., and FUNK R. W., <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , Cambridge-Chicago, IL, Cambridge University Press, 1961
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Review</i>
CIDE	Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995)
ConBNT	Coniectanea neotestamentica or Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
COP	Colloquium Oecumenicum Paulinum
CPLSE	Christian Perspectives on Leadership and Social Ethics

CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
EBD	The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary
EDNT	Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament
EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
EWNT	Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>The Expository Times</i>
GG	Griechische Grabinschriften
GNT	The Greek New Testament
GNTG	Grammar of New Testament Greek. Moulton, James H., Wilbert F. Horward, and Nigel Turner. 4 vols. Edinburgh; vol.1 [3d ed.], 1908; vol.II, 1919-1929; vol.III, 1963; vol.IV, 1976.
GV	Griechische Vers-Inschriften
HGFV	Historische Geisteswissenschaften Frankfurter Vorträge
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Studies</i>
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchung zur Theologie
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KJV	King James Version
KWB	Katholisches Bibelwerk
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of the New Testament Studies
LSJ	LIDDELL Henry George, SCOTT Robert and JONES Henry Stuart (eds), <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , Oxford, Clarendon, 1996
LTPM	Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs
MTSR	Method and Theory in the Study of Religion

N28	Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland, 28 th Revised Edition, Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012
NAB	The New American Bible
NCB	New Century Bible
NET	New English Translation
NETS	A New English Translation of the Septuagint, Albert PIETERSMA and Benjamin G. WRIGHT (eds), Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, 2007
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIDNTT	The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NJB	The New Jerusalem Bible
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NPNF	P. Schaff et al. (eds), A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Series 1 and 2 (14 volumes each), Buffalo, NY, Christian Literature, 1887-1894. Edinburgh, T & T Clark; Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, reprint 1952-1956
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (<i>The Holy Bible, The New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition</i> , New York, NY, HarperCollins Publisher, 1989; Bangalore, Theological Publications in India, reprint 2009)
NT	New Testament
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTAbhNF	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen N. F.
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OCB	The Oxford Companion to the Bible
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PG	Patrologia Graeca
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Theodor KLAUSER et al (eds), Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 1950-
REB	Revised English Bible
RExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
RhM	Rheinisches Museum
RSV	Revised Standard Version

<i>RelSRev</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SGRR	Studies in Greek and Roman Religion
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
StUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
TDNT	Gerhard KITTEL and Gerhard FRIEDRICH (eds), <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , 10 Volumes, Geoffrey W. Bromiley (trans.), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1964-1976
THAT	Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament
THNTC	The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary
TNIV	Today's New International Version
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TRE	Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Gerhard KRAUSE and Gerhard MÜLLER (eds), Berlin, de Gruyter, 1977
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

All exegetes agree that the first epistle to the Thessalonians seeks to restore the confidence of a tested community. Hope is, therefore, the heart of this letter of Paul. Yet, it seems to us that the theological concept of hope in First Thessalonians has not received adequate attention. How does the apostle go about giving hope to his community? In other words, how does Paul construct by rhetoric the theological concept of hope in First Thessalonians (4:13–5:11)? We hypothesise that Paul communicated hope using repeated rhetorical contrasts and antithetical features. Therefore, this study focuses on the dynamics of the rhetorical contrasts, antitheses, and their implications in the discourse by applying a socio-scientific method: the social memory studies. In the process, our research study envisions a theology of hope in First Thessalonians, particularly in the eschatological discourse (4:13–5:11).

The research study focuses on the relationship between rhetorical contrasts, antitheses and the traditions these features imply. A rhetorical contrast¹ is a literary unit consisting of an opposing character or content to persuade the audience. At the same time, an antithesis is a stylistic tool comprised of a “balanced contrast of words and ideas”². In the discourse, we find the following antitheses: grief and hope, death and resurrection, peace and destruction, day and night, light and darkness, sober and drunk, awake and asleep, and wrath and salvation. This study critically looks at these contrasts for their constructive and interactive process using the social memory model.

The research aims to interlink the rhetorical contrasts with the antithetical features, search for the implied traditions, and examine their role as social memory media. Paul has structured his message using contrasts along with the antithetical features. These features reinforce Paul’s message layered with different traditions and show Paul’s unique style of constructing antitheses. We find in the antitheses both the social and apocalyptic dualism, which points to an understanding of the eschatological hope. Our purpose is to find similar polemical contexts from non-biblical Greek sources, especially the epigraphic evidence. By this process, we hope to see a constructive memory pattern to understand the role of antithetical forms and their content in forming a definite notion of hope in First Thessalonians.

The Thessalonian Christ-followers’ suffering context resembles the community’s social location as a minority faith group. The community, homogeneous in its composition, faced social conflicts and opposition by their fellow citizens of similar ethnic backgrounds. As a result, the organisation experienced social dislocation³. Their foundational experience of a new faith

¹ Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Birth of the New Testament, The Origin and Development of the First Christian Generation*, New York, NY, Crossroad, 1993, p. 176.

² George KENNEDY, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 29 and 33.

³ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus: Rethinking the Relationship Between 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, in Christopher M. TUCKETT (ed.), *2 Thessalonians And Pauline Eschatology, For Peter Pokorny on His 80th Birthday* (COP, 21), Leuven, Peeters, 2013, p. 81-114.

resulted in a movement separate from the majoritarian culture, in this case, Graeco-Romans. As the foundational understanding unfolded new memories, the new converts worked out their past, present and future perspectives about their new faith communicated by Paul. We identify that the rhetorical contrasts and antitheses function as a medium to express Paul's theological thought pattern and reflect issues at stake while writing the community.

In the first epistle to the Thessalonians, the antitheses, especially in 4:13–5:11, show a certain ambiguity. The interpreters try to resolve these issues with divergent approaches and reconstruct the community's historical situation. I explain this process as follows.

The Research Problem

Pauline studies on Paul's use of rhetorical contrasts and antithetical features show the following trends:

First, the relationship between the rhetorical contrasts and antitheses has led to reconstructing the historical situation of Paul and his opponents⁴. Paul writes to the community using "others" (οἱ λοιποί) as a contrary ploy. He applies antithetical forms that suggest an ambiguous context. Here, the notion that others have no hope becomes a contested issue: a complete denial of hope for others. In this particular context, it is not clear whether Paul groups the Jews with the "others" (οἱ λοιποί). The contrasts and the implicit polemics reinforce the concept of the opponents of Paul and the community. About 1 Thess 4:13–5:11, and in the overall context of First Thessalonians, there is no evidence of Paul facing or engaging direct opponents. Even though the rhetorical contrasts and antitheses point to polemical contexts, they are not explicit⁵. But the prohibition of grief in 4:13 ("that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope") results from an only hope and points to the Christ-followers' communitarian participation at the coming of the Lord, Parousia.

Second, there have been efforts to reconstruct the community's historical situation by referencing the other non-biblical contexts. In this regard, socio-scientific research studies have contributed to understanding the identity of early Christ-followers in Thessalonica⁶. Wayne

⁴ Ferdinand C. BAUR, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, his Epistles and Teachings*, Vol. 1-2, Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 2010, reprint 2 in 1; Jerry L. SUMNEY, *Studying Paul's Opponents: Advances and Challenges*, in Stanley E. PORTER (ed.), *Paul and His Opponents* (Pauline Studies 2), Leiden, Brill, 2005, p.7-58.

⁵ I focused on this subject in my master's Thesis. In the present research, I work on the exegetical parts of the original master thesis in chapters three and four. See Jeevan PRASAD, *The Role of Antitheses in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11: A Study on the Categorical Division for Identity* (Thesis of Master of Theology and Religious Studies), Leuven, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2014 (Promoter: Reimund BIERINGER). Also, I considered the subject of antithetical parallels of Paul used in 1 Thess 4:13 from non-Biblical Greek sources and I have reworked few parts from the sections on Greek literature, anthologies and epigraphs in this study in chapter six. See Jeevan PRASAD, *The Meaning of ἐλπίς in 1 Thes 4:13, A Study on the Description of Others as having no Hope from Non-Biblical Greek Sources* (Thesis of Advanced Master of Theology and Religious Studies), Leuven, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2015 (Promoter: Reimund BIERINGER).

⁶ See Paul TREBILCO, *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament*, Cambridge, University Press, 2012; Philip A. HARLAND, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians*, New York-London, T & T Clark, 2009.

Meeks⁷ has emphasised the urban setting of the early Christ-followers. Abraham Malherbe⁸ has looked at the philosophical background. Karl Donfried⁹ and Robert Jewett¹⁰ have investigated the cultic influence and its impact upon the community. Richard Ascough¹¹ has proposed a model of an artisan community like a voluntary association for funerary rites. John Barclay¹² has argued that a presence or absence of social conflicts influenced the growth of the developing Christian communities. As a result, these groups developed divergent interpretations of the faith.

Barclay has also argued for a correlation between the community's experience of conflict and their corresponding apocalyptic understanding¹³. For the Thessalonians, displaced in their context, social dualism forms their symbolic world. The community experiences suffering. That is, the larger public does not support them shifting to a new faith. The outcome is one of opposition. Despite conflicting scenarios, we see that Paul shapes a prospective memory of Parousia and sobriety in the face of death for the Christian world¹⁴.

Further, James Harrison¹⁵ has investigated an imperial context as a background for social conflicts. He has argued and placed Paul's eschatological preaching in direct contest with the

⁷ Wayne A. MEEKS, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1983; *id.*, *Taking Stock and Moving On*, in Todd D. STILL and David G. HORRELL (eds), *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 134-136.

⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Light from the Gentiles: Hellenistic Philosophy and Early Christianity. Collected Essays, 1959-2012 by Abraham J. Malherbe*, Vol. 1-2, in Carl R. HOLLADAY et al (eds), Leiden-Boston, Brill 2014; *id.*, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (AB, 32B), New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2000.

⁹ Karl P. DONFRIED, *The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonian Correspondence*, in NTS, 31 (1985), p. 336-356; *id.*, *The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonian Correspondence*, in Karl P. DONFRIED (ed.), *Paul, Thessalonica and Early Christianity*, London, T & T Clark, 2002, p. 21-48. See also Charles EDSON, *Cults of Thessalonica*, in HTR, 41.3 (1948), p. 153-204.

¹⁰ Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety*, Philadelphia, PA, Fortress, 1986.

¹¹ Richard S. ASCOUGH, *The Thessalonian Christian Community as a Professional Voluntary Association*, in JBL, 119.2 (2000), p. 311-328; *id.*, *Paul's Macedonian Associations. The Social Context of Philippians and 1 Thessalonians*, (WUNT 2, Reihe 161), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2003; *id.*, *A Question of Death: Paul's Community Building Language in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*, in JBL, 123 (2004), p. 509-530; *id.*, *Paul's Apocalypticism and the Jesus Associations at Thessalonica and Corinth*, in Ron CAMERON and Merrill P. MILLER (eds), *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians* (SBL, 5), Atlanta, SBL, 2011, p. 151-186; *id.*, *Redescribing the Thessalonians' Mission in Light of Graeco-Roman Associations*, in NTS, 60.1 (2014), p. 61-82; *id.*, *What are they Saying about Christ Groups and Associations?*, in CBR, 13.2 (2015), p. 207-244.

¹² John M. G. BARCLAY, *Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity*, in JSNT, 47 (1992), p. 49-74 (here p. 50).

¹³ John M. G. BARCLAY, *Conflict in Thessalonica*, in CBQ, 55 (1993), p. 512-530 (here p. 517). See also Todd D. STILL, *Conflict at Thessalonica: a Pauline Church and its Neighbours*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

¹⁴ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve, Like the Rest Who Have No Hope (1 Thess.4:13): Death and Early Christian Identity*, in Morna D. HOOKER (ed.), *Not in the Word Alone, The First Epistle to the Thessalonians* (Benedictina, 15), Rome, Benedictina, 2003, p. 131-153.

¹⁵ James R. HARRISON, *Paul, and the Imperial Gospel at Thessaloniki*, in JSNT, 25.1 (2002), p. 71-96; *id.*, *Paul and Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome, A Study in Conflict of Ideology* (WUNT, 273), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2011, p. 1-7. See also Judy DIEHL, *Anti-Imperial Rhetoric in the New Testament*, in CurBR, 10.1

imperial reign. Harrison has succeeded in putting the early Christian groups in their historical and imperial social milieu. But the crisis that Christ-followers face is as much internal and external. In other words, the problem is a result of both social and theological misunderstanding. Colin Nicholl¹⁶ has investigated the theological and social situation of the community. The study emphasises the aspects of doubt and fear of losing the eschatological salvation guaranteed at Parousia. Nicholl considers the death of community members as a primary cause of the crisis in the community.

As shown above, only Ascough, Barclay and Nicholl have considered the community's theological and social situation in their context. Still, Barclay has highlighted more on social contrasts as parallel to apocalyptic dualism. My point of departure will, therefore, be Barclay¹⁷. His analyses include both the social and apocalyptic dimensions of the antitheses in the discourse. Notably, he emphasises a categorical understanding of the antithetical features and their implications for identity and sobriety that herald a new dawn in Christian culture. In this regard, the rhetorical distinctions point to social conflicts that influence the community toward an apocalyptic understanding that foresees God's wrath for the others. Paul also formulated his teaching with conflicts or without disputes by appealing to the traditional and contemporary literary conventions.

Third, the rhetorical contrasts and antitheses include the early Christian faith formulas within the apocalyptic and social dualism¹⁸. The apocalyptic dualism¹⁹ is essentially an ideological and conflicting vision that depends on a type of theodicy which envisions a reversal of the present suffering. Mainly, it refers to the otherworldly dimension to end the current conflicts. Social dualism²⁰ reflects a social alienation of a group or groups from a larger society due to significant differences, often resulting in conflict. Notably, it relates to this worldly dimension and points to alienation from the social structures that form and maintain an identity. Since society is a sum of human activity, social groups with significant differences may impede social stability and result in conflicts. In this outcome, the dominant groups alienate the subsidiary groups that distance from the normal process of social interaction. As a result, the alienated

(2011), p. 9-52; *idem.*, *Empire and Epistles: Anti-Imperial Rhetoric in the New Testament Epistles*, in *CurBR*, 10.2 (2012), p. 217-263.

¹⁶ Colin R. NICHOLL, *From Hope to Despair: Situating 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (SNTSMS, 126), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 188.

¹⁷ John M. G. BARCLAY, *Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity*, p. 50; *id.*, *Conflict in Thessalonica*, p. 517.

¹⁸ Regarding the apocalyptic dualism during the intertestamental period see Jörg FREY, *Apocalyptic Dualism*, in John J. COLLINS (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 271-294. Concerning the apocalyptic genre of First Thessalonians see Albertus F. J. KLIJN, *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and its Background in Apocalyptic Literature*, in M. F. HOOKER and S. G. WILSON (eds), *Paul and Paulinism, Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, London, SPCK, 1982, p. 67-73.

¹⁹ Peter L. BERGER, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York, Open Road Integrated Media, 1966, 71-72.

²⁰ Peter L. BERGER and Thomas LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality, A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, London, Penguin Books, 1966, reprint 1991, p. 194-195.

groups begin to develop an independent mechanism for social interaction. The eschatological discourse represents this mechanism reinforced by dualistic characteristics. They reflect through a type of baptismal paraenesis that functions as a creedal formula. As a result, the antithetical features describe the community's identity and sustain its eschatological status²¹.

Fourth, the antitheses point to Paul's personal experience, unique communication style, and means of constructing theological content. We see that Pauline's form and the content in this discourse show a pathway in building eschatological hope using antitheses. Norbert Schneider²² has done an extensive study and a synthesis between the antithesis as a unique style of Paul and the content of Paul's theology. His reviews critique the earlier research contributions focused separately on Paul's rhetorical style or his theological content. In another direction, Gottfried Nebe²³ has looked at the various terminologies that Paul applies to communicate hope. Nebe's contribution relates to the conceptual world of hope with other terms that point to suffering and endurance. However, Nebe has ignored the antithetical forms that express an eschatological direction in First Thessalonians. In terms of the vocabulary of hope and its specific place in the triadic formula, we can mention Thomas Söding²⁴. He has analysed the triad formula of faith, hope and love in the Pauline letters. However, we can see an inadequate focus on the relationship between contrasts, antitheses, and traditions that construct the eschatological hope in First Thessalonians²⁵.

The Present Research Study

This research study aims at a theological explanation of hope and a Pauline eschatology in First Thessalonians. We primarily look at the interactive significance of contrasts, antitheses, and their implied traditions in this process. We have seen that the earlier studies have considered the rhetorical contrasts and antitheses as a window to the community's historical and literary situation and tried to reconstruct the context. But the ambiguity persists, and the present research focuses on this issue by applying a socio-scientific interpretation using the social memory model. We address this concern in seven chapters.

²¹ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation in 1 Th 4, 13-5,11*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians* (BETL, 66), Leuven, Peeters, 1984, p. 154-172.

²² Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr Siebeck, 1970.

²³ Gottfried NEBE, *Hoffnung bei Paulus: Elpis und ihre Synonyme im Zusammenhang der Eschatologie* (SNTU, 16), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1983.

²⁴ Thomas SÖDING, *Die Trias Glaube. Hoffnung. Liebe bei Paulus: Eine exegetische Studie* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, 150), Stuttgart, Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1992.

²⁵ See Rudolf BULTMANN and Karl Heinrich RENGSTORF, *ἐλπίς. ἐλπίζω*, in *TDNT*, 2 (1964), p. 517-535; Gerd LÜDEMANN, *The Hope of the Early Paul: From the Foundation-preaching at Thessalonika to 1 Cor. 15:51-57*, in *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, 7 (1980), p. 195-201; Karl P. DONFRIED and Ian Howard MARSHALL, *The Theology of Shorter Pauline Letters*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993; Horst BALZ, *Early Christian Faith as 'HOPE AGAINST HOPE'*, in Henning Graf REVENTLOW (ed.), *Eschatology in the Bible and in the Jewish and Christian Tradition* (JSOTSup, 243), Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, p. 31-48; Nicholas T. WRIGHT, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*, New York, Harper Collins, 2008.

CHAPTER ONE introduces the social memory model, its origin and progress as a scientific tool of interpretation, its adaptation in biblical studies, its relevance for our research, and its benefits and drawbacks. Social memory studies begin with Maurice Halbwachs and his sociological approach to memory²⁶. The chapter briefly describes Halbwachs' contributions and limitations as well as his successors who modify his concepts with further adaptations. I explain how biblical studies have adopted the social memory model, especially to the New Testament, Pauline studies, particularly First Thessalonians. The chapter describes the social memory frameworks and tools for interpretation and constructive role. We show how these tools can help our present study define the theological concept of hope in First Thessalonians.

CHAPTER TWO deals with the text's delimitation for an exegetical study (1 Thess 4:13–5:11). First, I explain why this study limits its focus only on First Thessalonians from the Thessalonian correspondence. Here, the purpose is to show how the social memory model can contribute differently to understanding the authorship and chronology concerning Second Thessalonians. Second, the chapter highlights the literary unity in First Thessalonians and explains delimiting this research study to 1 Thess 4:13–5:11, the eschatological discourse. We delimit the pericope considering the genre and unity of the letter. We see that various methods have delimited the literary units of the letter to support their arguments. Overall, the eschatological discourse dominates multiple approaches adopted for the interpretation of First Thessalonians. Third, the study describes the interconnective elements between 1 Thess 4:13–18 and 5:1–11. Finally, I include a sense line division of the text to be dealt with in the subsequent chapters.

In CHAPTERS THREE AND FOUR, we undertake a brief exegetical study of the two pericope units (4:13–18; 5:1–11). Chapter three concerns 4:13–18 and chapter four, 5:1–11. In both chapters, we analyse the constructive role of the rhetorical contrasts and antitheses. We see how the antithetical forms supply specific content, how the presumed traditions overlap in both the subunits and describe a unique understanding of hope. We hope to find the pathways and media of memory and the group's social consciousness.

CHAPTER FIVE focuses on antitheses, the forms and content in the entire discourse (1 Thess 4:13–18; 5:1–11). We consider the antithesis a rhetorical tool, a characteristic of apocalyptic and social dualism, and a media of communicative memory. We study the implied role of antitheses in the form of prohibitions and corrections as a pathway to hope²⁷. The trajectory of hope points to the dynamics between remembrance (endurance of hope in 1:3), forms of prohibition (do not grieve, in 4:13) and destiny (hope of salvation, in 5:10). The content of remembrance, prohibitions, and Christ-follower's future plays out in an anti-climax way for others (they do not know God in 4:5; do not have hope in 4:13; only death, destruction in 5:3, and wrath in 5:10). The others have not accepted the faith. Only believers do so and have to follow

²⁶ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, Lewis A. COSER (ed. and trans.), Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1992. See also Gilles MONTIGNY, *Maurice Halbwachs, Vie. Œuvres. Concepts* (Les grands théoriciens, Sciences Économiques et Sociales), Paris, Ellipses, 2005, p. 13-49.

²⁷ Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, p. 121-125. In his conclusion to the monograph, Schneider proposed that a relationship between the antithetical forms of prohibitions and important themes in Pauline theology like law, grace, and purity needed more attention. In this chapter, I advance this proposition to our study, a theology of hope in First Thessalonians.

the path. We analyse if endurance stands as indicative, and not-grieving as imperative during destiny. We illustrate how hope stays a constant accompaniment in destiny's journey and means differently for different communities (quasi-synonym)²⁸. Besides, as social memory studies are closely related to identity theories and history, our research also considers insider-outsider perspectives and community building. We hope to discover the significance of the antithetical forms and their effect on the community's understanding of hope in these dynamics.

CHAPTER SIX investigates the traditions from a social memory perspective. We explore the traditions as an interplay of the world of Paul and his readers. Social memory studies reconsider and reassess excessive focus on the original logion of the traditions, insist on the diversified adaptations of Jesus' sayings, and limit its focus on the author's intentions. The method focuses more on the interactive process between temporal and spatial frameworks and contexts of the community. Besides, we examine non-biblical Greek sources, especially epigraphs and their polemical contexts. We see how they use traditional material, mythical content. Next, we refer to inscriptions from ancient epigraphers, closer to Paul's era, which applied deformative techniques²⁹ and the deictic approach³⁰. A deformative strategy is a tool that a writer adopts to devalue the earlier writers. As a literary tool, it misrepresents the biographical details of earlier writers and thereby frames content for the present polemical context. With the deictic approach, the epigraphs and anthologies construct a literal and physical reality for the audience. We refer to a gradual funerary literary growth in the surroundings of Thessalonica (personal, polemical, and deictic content in the funerary epigraphs). Our study relates these results to Paul's consolatory pattern in First Thessalonians. We compare two epigraphic sources to Paul's antithetical forms. Our analysis also considers other probable traditions and Judean sources behind Paul's phrasing of antitheses, word of the Lord, and Jesus' sayings. Due to the earlier reference, I argue that Paul consoled his readers using specific epigraphic patterns familiar to them.

The concluding chapter (CHAPTER SEVEN) defines a theology of hope as a theology of constructive negation. The letter presents this dynamic process formally through clustering and cataloguing opposing realities of hope employing antithetical features and rhetorical contrasts. In Paul, we notice this mechanism of dual representation. It is an act of contrary portrayals. Here is an image of the Thessalonian Christ-followers and those opposed to their faith. Dualistic or binary polarities as antithetical and contrast parallels repeat and reinforce this strategy. In this process, a theology of negation proves a definite hope for the believers (turning away from idols and turning toward God blamelessly) and hopelessness for others.

²⁸ Jean NÉLIS, *Les Antithèses littéraires dans les Épîtres de Saint Paul*, in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* (1948), p. 3-30 (here p. 25); *id.*, *L'Antithèse littéraire ΖΑΩ – ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ dans les Épîtres pauliniennes*, in *ETL*, 20 (1943), p. 18-53.

²⁹ Francis CAIRNS, *Hellenistic Epigram: Contexts of Exploration*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 173-175. For Christian adaptation in funerary inscriptions see, Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften und neutestamentliche Eschatologie* (WUNT, 157), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2003.

³⁰ Brittney SZEMPRUCH, *Literary Commemoration in Imperial Greek Epigram: Niobe in the Living Landscape* (SGO 05/01/55) in *AJP*, 140 (2019), p. 227-253.

This dynamism, a theology of hope by negation, helps the followers endure the suffering and wait patiently for the Lord's coming. God, Paul, and the community's defining character supply a framework and points to hope as our multidimensional aspect. So, in First Thessalonians, we cannot have a single explanation of hope. Hope functions as a metonymy of Parousia. It stands for belongingness with Jesus, refers to the foundational experience of enduring hope. It is eschatological and a liberating hope of salvation.

Methodological Considerations

Our study focuses on a theology of hope (ἐλπίς) in the eschatological discourse of First Thessalonians (4:13–5:11). It is not Paul's theology of hope, in general. We consider relevant Pauline parallels only as a point of reference but do not explain the units. We do not focus on the eschatological passages from Second Thessalonians (cf. 2:1–12) regarding the Thessalonian correspondence. Also, it is not a representative study of the early Christ-followers for the entire Macedonian churches (First and Second Thessalonians, and Philippians). This study utilises a combination of historical-critical, form-criticism, rhetorical-criticism, and socio-scientific approaches. But our primary application is a socio-scientific method using social memory studies to interpret the rhetorical contrasts and antitheses.

Further, this research study is not a systematic treatment of the eschatological discipline. That is not our aim. However, in the concluding chapter, we discuss the continuity and discontinuity in a limited way, a narrative scheme for a theology of hope. For this, we look at other studies that define hope in general and in Pauline theology. Besides, this research study tries to include the relevant resource material but, in any way, is not exhaustive. Time constraints do not allow an extended dialogue. Also, we find a limited reference to epigraphs and anthologies. I have referred to epigraphs related to the polemical contexts and mythical content concerning grief and afterlife thoughts. I follow the Faculty of Theology of Université Catholique de Louvain's guidelines for the footnotes and bibliographical reference. Concerning the biblical translations in English, I follow the NRSV (The New Revised Standard Version) for the New Testament and NETS for the Septuagint (A New English Translation of the Septuagint). The select bibliography section follows a simple single division organised in ascending alphabetical order. Besides, I have included the relevant information concerning some of the biblical tools within the section on abbreviations. I have not repeated a similar reference in the section on the bibliography.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL MEMORY THEORY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the reader to the social memory theory, diverse social memory types, transmission techniques, relations to oral history and tradition, and limitations. The first section deals with a short biographical description of Maurice Halbwachs and his works. The second part distinguishes distinct kinds of social memory. The third part shows how the followers of Halbwachs have developed further the concept of social memory. The fourth section presents how social memory studies relate to oral studies, identity, and history. The fifth part deals with a brief survey of the memory model's application to the Gospels and Pauline studies, especially First Thessalonians. There, we look at the application of memory studies within a general reference to the ancient Christian origins. In the closing section, I explain how memory studies help this research formulate a methodological approach toward a theology of hope by negation.

1. MAURICE HALBWACHS: LIFE AND WORKS

Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) was born in Reims¹. He studied under philosopher Henri Bergson and was a creative follower of Durkheimian tradition, as well as an accomplished statistician². At an early stage of his studies, Halbwachs followed Bergson's highly individualistic philosophy. But at a later stage, he followed the Durkheimian collective psychology, which helped him shift from a subjective and intuitive outlook of memory to a social and collective perspective. Halbwachs taught at various schools and worked in the Universities of Göttingen, Caen, and Strasbourg³. Meanwhile, he joined the socialist movement and was a correspondent to the socialist journal *l'Humanité*, in which he once wrote condemning the police brutalities on a demonstration in Berlin in 1911⁴. He also worked on the wartime industry organisation and was a supporter of the civil rights movement. Halbwachs' last years, from 1940 to 1945, were full of tragic experiences. His family members and close relatives either died or became wartime victims. In 1945, he went personally to Lyon to protest the murder of

¹ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, Lewis A. COSER (ed. and trans.), Chicago, IL, Chicago University Press, 1992 from *La Mémoire collective*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1950 (1st edition, published posthumously), p. 1. See also Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization. Writing, Remembrance and Political Imagination*, New York, NY, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 21.

² Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 1-3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 3-6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3-5; Gilles MONTIGNY, *Maurice Halbwachs Vie. Œuvres. Concepts*, p. 5-12.

Victor Basch and his wife (his Jewish father-in-law and mother-in-law). From there, he was deported to the concentration camp at Buchenwald, where he died on 16 March 1945⁵.

Social memory studies systematically begin with Halbwachs. During his teaching career, he pays particular attention to demographic data to study group behaviour in rapid industrialisation and the subsequent spatial changes. He has contributed three critical works in the sociology of knowledge, and these have received high appreciation. Halbwachs himself had considered *The Social Frameworks of Memory* (1925; *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire*) the most important of his works⁶. The other two works related to social memory are *The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land* (1941; *La Topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre Sainte*) and *On Collective Memory* (1950; *La Mémoire collective*)⁷. Halbwachs published two of these works in the interwar years (1925, 1941), and the third was published posthumously. These three works are essential and, in these, Halbwachs lays a foundation for a sociological consideration of memory.

Halbwachs described language, time, space, group, and experience as social memory frameworks in *The Social Frameworks of Memory*. The second work highlighted gospels' formation and how eyewitnesses could have shifted the narratives between Galilee and Jerusalem. The eyewitness reorganised the narratives in an orderly way taking care of the time and spatial frameworks of the events. In terms of the historical turns, Halbwachs explained how the perception of the Holy Land's topography enters a different mode of experiences among the pilgrim groups (particularly in IV CE and between XI–XIII CE). The third book deals further with the concepts already explained in *The Social Frameworks of Memory*. Here, Halbwachs takes up the relationship between memory and history. This work has highlighted how the historical turn in the religious movements incorporates both the old and new narratives. Halbwachs writes as follows:

“In the fundamental texts of Christianity — the Gospels and the Epistles — the opposition between the Pharisees and the Christians, between orthodox Judaism and the religion of the Son of Man, is incessantly repeated. It is taken to be history, and we can say that in its articles of belief, its dogmas, and its rites, Christianity is in effect above all the expression of a moral revolution which was a historical event, the triumph of a religion with spiritual content over a formalistic cult, and, at the

⁵ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 6-7; Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 21.

⁶ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 1-3.

⁷ Maurice HALBWACHS, *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, Paris, Alcan, 1925, Gérard NAMER (ed.), (Bibliothèque de l'Évolution de l'Humanité), Paris, Albin Michel, 1994; *id.*, *La Topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre sainte. Étude de mémoire collective* (Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine), Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1941 (1st edition); Marie JAISON (ed.), Paris, Quadrige 2017 (2nd edition); Maurice HALBWACHS, *La mémoire collective*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1950 (1st edition), Gérard NAMER (ed.), (Bibliothèque de l'Évolution de l'Humanité), Paris, Albin Michel, 1997. Here, I have mentioned the works that relate to our study of social memory. For more details on the principal works of Halbwachs, see Gilles MONTIGNY, *Maurice Halbwachs. Vie. Œuvres. Concepts*, p. 13-49.

same time, of a universalist religion with no reference to races and nations over a narrowly nationalist religion. But it would be hard to understand the impact of this history and this religion itself unless we see it as emerging against the background of Judaism”⁸.

To conclude, three fundamental concepts characterise Halbwachs’ works: social morphology, social class, and class consciousness⁹. These concepts remain as the grounding principles in Halbwachs’ observations of the past as a social reconstruct. At the same time, according to Jan Assmann¹⁰, Halbwachs did not expand his sociological findings to the realm of culture. As a result, his concept of memory limits itself as a socio-psychological phenomenon. Assmann comments that Halbwachs overlooked the significance of culture and traditions in the formation and transmission of memory. Also, Halbwachs did not explain anything about the role of writing in the collective memory¹¹. But in my estimation, Halbwachs succeeded in dissociating from Bergson’s individualistic psychology and creatively engaged the Durkheimian collective conscience. In doing so, Halbwachs established pathways to observe memory as a social construct. In his writings, Halbwachs sometimes used both social memory and collective memory alternatively. Although he did not clearly distinguish between a social and cultural memory, he discussed social and collective memory under the same frameworks of language, time, space, events, and experience. His discussions on collective memory also included the subject of traditions.

2. TYPES OF SOCIAL MEMORY

Social memory studies distinguish between social, collective, communicative and cultural memory. The development of distinctions in social memory addresses the gaps left by Halbwachs. His successors, especially Jan and Aleida Assmann, introduced a clear difference between distinct types of social memory. Jan Assmann¹² critically examines the “floating-gap and dark age” which Jan Vansina¹³ had proposed. Here, the floating gap is the dark age that remains inaccessible, for example, between 1100–800 BCE in Greek history. Jan Vansina also spoke of the “recent past”, which, according to him, is a past spanning between 80 to 100 years¹⁴. This period is accessible through recent memory and hearsay. For Vansina, history considers only the origin and recent times. In his understanding, “Time is reckoned by reference to generations or other social institutions”¹⁵.

⁸ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 85-86.

⁹ Gilles MONTIGNY, *Maurice Halbwachs. Vie. Œuvres. Concepts*, p. 51-77.

¹⁰ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 32.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31-32.

¹² Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 34-35.

¹³ Jan VANSINA, *Oral Tradition as History*, Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1985, p. 23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23-24; cf. Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 34-35.

¹⁵ Jan VANSINA, *Oral Tradition as History*, p. 24

However, Assmann considers this proposal a researchers' perspective, and it differs from the memory approach. Social memory focuses on the societies' inner and intuitive perspectives where a clear distinction between a floating and a fixed gap is impossible¹⁶. Assmann understands the "recent past" in this way and introduces a clear distinction between cultural and communicative memory¹⁷. In this distinction, according to Assmann, communicative memory has a past duration of 80–100 years, and cultural memory goes back as distant as 3000 years. But in this vast cultural memory span, the remembered history is more important than the factual history¹⁸.

Further, the idea of a floating gap and the recent past sets a clear boundary between communicative and cultural memory. Assmann follows Halbwachs, who had emphasised the older generations' role as the custodians of society's traditions to distinguish social and collective memory¹⁹. The older people interact with other elderly persons and show a keen interest to recollect their past. It does not mean that they could remember better than the younger generation. They only had more experiences and leisure time to remember and share them with the children, particularly during the initiation rites²⁰.

Assmann takes up this critical temporal period, the idea from generation to generation, and compares it to the Exodus event, introducing the generational gap of forty years²¹. Sandra Huebenthal assigns a thirty to fifty-year period to define the concept of a generational gap²². Understanding a generational gap distinguishes between social and collective memory and explains the nature of their function in a group. Similarly, the floating gap differentiates between communicative and cultural memory, their nature of functioning, and transmission media. We distinguish four types of social memory and describe them as follows.

First, *social memory* involves the medium of conversation, depends on its carrier group, and is marked by a highly dynamic and fluctuating character. Further, social memory points to multiple perspectives and has a migrant temporal notion. It consists of a group's experiences and dissolves with carrier groups²³.

Second, *collective memory* initiates the commemoration of the founding story in concise and provisional forms. Based on a shared perception, the multiple existing perspectives move in a single direction. The treasured experiences, founding stories transform into mythical narrations

¹⁶ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 35.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34-69.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37-38.

¹⁹ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 48; Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 37-38.

²⁰ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 48.

²¹ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 37-38.

²² Sandra HUEBENTHAL, *Frozen Moments – Early Christianity through the Lens of Social Memory Theory*, in Simon BUTTICAZ and Enrico NORELLI (eds), *Memory and Memories in Early Christianity* (WUNT, 398), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2018, p. 17-44 (here p. 26-29).

²³ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 33-48; Sandra HUEBENTHAL, *Frozen Moments*, 26-30. The same reference applies to all the four types of social memories.

in which one significant perception dominates. The dominant narratives pass on independent of the experiences of the carrier groups and their particular formation times and thereby become historical.

Third, *communicative memory* incorporates both social and collective memory which function as its parts. In communicative memory, both oral and medial types are part of the transmission process. Also, this phase marks a process where historical experiences receive a framework of individual biographies. It indicates informal and organic memories, as well as non-specific carriers or witnesses. Also, the memory process sets, to a greater extent, a function of the externalisation of the texts.

Four, a floating gap, which means an unspecified and indefinite opening beyond the recent past, marks the *cultural memory*. It entails reinterpretation, relocation of memory of objects by the members to serve their current needs. All media like commemoration, rituals, texts, and norms receive a fixed form and an institutional binding. This phase depends on its specialist carriers who receive high social status. Here, a polarity between festivals (rituals) and ordinary life shapes the community. This phase shows a fixed, formal objectification. It displays an absolute past, narrations turn to myths, and it requires tradition bearers.

Besides, Assmann has introduced two dimensions in the collective memory: foundational and biographical. The first refers to the origins. The second signifies the individual experiences and their frameworks in the recent past²⁴. Considering these applications, the constructivist-past understanding of memory points to the following stages of transmission: a) mimetic memory that relates to the transmission of the knowledge from the past; b) material memory which concerns the history contained in the objects; c) communicative memory that refers to the residues in language and communication; d) and finally of cultural memory that focuses on the transmission of meanings from past²⁵.

As explained above in the social memory theory, the generational gap, the recent past, and the floating gap introduce a temporal rupture. The recent past separates the social and collective memories. The floating gap separates the communicative and cultural memories. Thus, the distinction between collective and communicative in terms of time covers both the social and collective spheres.

All these distinctions show that memory, in general, indicates a remembered and reconstructed past. As Assmann opines, in all kinds of social memory, the notion of the past is the past-constructivist. It reframes Halbwachs' present-constructivist approach. Finally, all sorts of social memory mean a recollected or remembered past²⁶.

²⁴ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 37.

²⁵ Jeffrey K. OLICK and Joyce ROBBINS, *Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices*, in *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), p. 105-140 (here p. 112).

²⁶ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 33.

3. MEMORY STUDIES: BEFORE AND AFTER HALBWACHS

A consideration of the past in memory studies predates Halbwachs²⁷. In *The Art of Memory*, Frances Yates²⁸ draws our attention to an academic consciousness of the phenomenon of interior visualisation. In this, she has emphasised image-making and visually based memory practices played in the cognitive processes. She traces an archival, mnemotechnical memory tradition from its ancient locus in Greek rhetoric. These memory practices transform occult and esoteric forms in medieval times, continue to the Renaissance and reach scientific modernity²⁹. We see this memory process more clearly in *The Book of Memory* and *The Craft of Thought* by Mary Carruthers³⁰. These works refer to the literary and documentary culture of the Middle Ages. They focus on the medieval culture on writing and composing, the function of memory and training, pedagogy and visualisation³¹. In *Ancient and Medieval Memories*, Janet Coleman³² explains a vast Western intellectual history focusing on theories and practices that (re)construct the past. However, as Coleman has presented, Werner Kelber comments that medieval theologians or historians had no interest in past diversity. They mostly tried to harmonise and did not stress the historical integrity of the past. They looked at the past simply as an academic interest in the present³³.

Until Halbwachs³⁴, the concept of memory remained only as a property of the individual intellect. It is Halbwachs who first emphasised the social side of personal memory. For him, memory is a socially constituted notion even though only the individuals remember and not the groups or institutions³⁵. The groups are not like the individuals who neurologically store and retain memories, but groups produce memories and promote remembering as their primary focus. It relates to the past and the means individuals adopt to recall and reconstruct those memories as social beings. They do so within the temporal and spatial frameworks provided by their groups. These memories, in turn, shape the identity of an individual, group and society. More specifically, we can say that social memory includes the social fabric and cultural transmission process. Simultaneously, preliminary studies on social memory by Halbwachs³⁶ and

²⁷ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory: Christian Origins as MnemoHistory – A Response*, in Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER (eds), *Memory, Tradition, And Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (Semeia Studies, 52), Atlanta, SBL, 2005, p. 221-248 (here p. 223).

²⁸ Frances YATES, *The Art of Memory, Vol. III – Selected Works*, London, Routledge, 1966, p. 368; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 223.

²⁹ Frances YATES, *The Art of Memory*, 368. See Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 223.

³⁰ Mary CARRUTHERS, *The Book of Memory, A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, 2008; Mary CARRUTHERS and Jan M. ZIOLKOWSKI (eds), *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, Philadelphia, PA, Pennsylvania University Press, 2002.

³¹ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 224.

³² Janet COLEMAN, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in Reconstruction of the Past*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 522; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 225.

³³ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 225; Janet COLEMAN, *Ancient and Medieval Memories*, p. 522.

³⁴ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 22 and 48; Jeffrey K. OLICK, *Between Chaos and Diversity: Is Social Memory Studies A Field?*, p. 249-252.

³⁵ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 22 and 48; Jeffrey K. OLICK, *Between Chaos and Diversity: Is Social Memory Studies A Field?*, p. 249-252.

³⁶ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 22.

experimental studies on memory transmission by Frederick Bartlett³⁷ focused on individual memories' social aspects³⁸. Later contributors like Pierre Nora³⁹, Jan, and Aleida Assmann⁴⁰ explained the process of cultural communication and commemoration of memory⁴¹. However, Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins⁴² consider that Halbwachs stays central to the notion of social memory; they describe the developmental process of memory studies as follows:

First, Maurice Halbwachs showed that social memory is not merely an inherent property of the subjective mind but flows through structured sociological arrangements.

Second, Olick and Robbins⁴³ consider that Halbwachs has differentiated his conception of memory from Emile Durkheim⁴⁴. Halbwachs and Durkheim's essential difference centres on their respective understanding of continuity and other social problems, for example, suicide. According to Halbwachs, Durkheim differentiated between an active and a passive phase of a society's collective life. The active phase refers to those creative events in which a community collectively participates and experiences a renewal. Durkheim referred to this experience as moments of collective effervescence. The passive phase signifies the ordinary daily events of life. For him, these two phases remain separate, without continuity. Halbwachs rejects a discontinuity between an active and a passive collective phase in a society. Instead, he proposes that rituals, ceremonial acts and commemoration of heroes fill up the void. These acts enhance and strengthen a group's collective life and memory. They provide a symbolic display and go through transmission, from elders and parents to their children⁴⁵.

Besides, Halbwachs differs from the Durkheimian conception of suicide as a social deviation. He applies demographic data and shows a difference in the rates of suicide depending upon society's temporal and social frameworks. That is, the factors that lead to suicide are different

³⁷ Frederic C. BARTLETT, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental Social Psychology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

³⁸ Jeffrey K. OLICK, *Between Chaos and Diversity: Is Social Memory Studies A Field?*, p. 249-252.

³⁹ Pierre NORA, *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, in *Representations*, 26 (1989), p. 7-24.

⁴⁰ Jan ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtniss. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, Munich, Beck, 1992; Aleida AASSMANN, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wanlungen des kulturen Gedächtnisses*, Munich, Beck, 1999; Jan ASSMANN, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, Rodney Livingstone (trans.), Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2006; Jan ASSMANN, *Form as Mnemonic Device: Cultural Texts and Cultural Memory*, in Richard A. HORSLEY, Jonathan DRAPER and John Miles FOLLEY (eds), *Performing Gospel: Orality, Memory and Mark*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 2006.

⁴¹ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 22; Erika APFELBAUM, *Halbwachs and the Social Properties of Memory*, in Susannah RADSTONE and Bill SCHWARZ (eds), *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, Fordham, Fordham University, 2010, p. 77-92.

⁴² Jeffrey K. OLICK and Joyce ROBBINS, *Social Memory Studies*, p. 105-140; Jeffrey K. OLICK, *Between Chaos and Diversity: Is Social Memory Studies A Field?*, in *Int J. Polit Cult Soc*, 22.2 (2009), p. 249-252; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 221-248 (here p. 222-223). See also Jeffrey K. OLICK, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility*, New York, Routledge, 2007.

⁴³ Jeffrey K. OLICK and Joyce ROBBINS, *Social Memory Studies*, p. 109-112.

⁴⁴ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 25. See also Emile DURKHEIM, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, New York, Free Press, 1951; *id.*, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, New York, Free Press, 1965.

⁴⁵ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 25 and 38.

in rural and urban areas. We see that Durkheim perceived suicide as a social deviation from a generalised perspective of collective consciousness. In contrast, Halbwachs differentiates between a rural and urban society to explain and situate a social problem in a group's temporal and spatial frameworks. Halbwachs sees collective memory as social memory. In contrast, Durkheim interpreted collective memory from a psychological perspective. For Halbwachs, collective memory is a broad category. In his opinion, a social memory considers groups in a society in their own temporal and spatial frameworks. In this process, we see that Halbwachs critiques the psychological interpretation of memory⁴⁶. He negates the understanding of collective memory as a memory that represses and forgets. For him, social memory is a means to remember the past.

Third, if we consider Halbwachs' views on history, we understand that social memory is a remembered past, but the process of remembering does not work purely for the benefit of keeping the past as the past⁴⁷. As a result, Halbwachs views history as a dead memory, an archive and storage. However, recent critics reject this observation of Halbwachs and show that social memory studies recognise history's role at its service to explain the past as active and dynamic⁴⁸.

Fourth, social memory advances further and connects to memory retention techniques and practices⁴⁹. These techniques prove that memory is not just a property or possession but an ongoing process. As an ongoing process, memory is also central to the understanding of identity and its construction.

For Halbwachs, groups in society reconstruct their past and often erase factors that might disturb them. Similarly, disturbing networks also influence a change in the relation between individuals and their environment. His observations rest on the fundamental premise that all human activity results from social construction⁵⁰. Such a process is dynamic. It involves an active choice and grouping of the past. It passes on through a process of recollection with the significant others from the family, school, worship groups, or others to which an individual is affiliated. It means that a specific group, a belonging community, has a history of its own and its own narrative. This factor of belongingness constructs the members' identity within their groups and helps them sustain that identity⁵¹.

This section shows that the memory is socially constructed, and the past is a remembered past. This shift happens with Halbwachs, and his successors have readapted this understanding to broaden the scope of memory and its transmission process.

⁴⁶ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 38.

⁴⁷ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 222-223.

⁴⁸ Jeffrey K. OLICK and Joyce ROBBINS, *Social Memory Studies*, p. 105-140; Jeffrey K. OLICK, *Between Chaos and Diversity*, p. 249-252.

⁴⁹ Jeffrey K. OLICK and Joyce ROBBINS, *Social Memory Studies*, p. 109-112; Jeffrey K. OLICK, *Between Chaos and Diversity*, p. 249-252.

⁵⁰ Erika APFELBAUM, *Halbwachs and the Social Properties of Memory*, p. 83-85.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

4. MEMORY STUDIES: TRANSMISSION TECHNIQUES

Though Halbwachs stressed the role of traditions in social and religious groups, he had not elaborated on writing as a means for the transmission process in collective memory⁵². Barry Schwartz⁵³ fills this void in social memory studies. Schwartz sees “media” as memory’s vehicle and ritual observances as social memory’s most general medium. He explains with the example of ancient Judaism, where recitals of the written texts within ritual settings channelled memory transmission⁵⁴. Communal bonds through commemorative rituals that are standardised, repetitive and symbolic, allowed participants to define their relation to the past⁵⁵. Schwartz elaborates on the constituents of memory media both in the premodern and modern era. The first concerns oral presentations, written documents, and commemorative objects, including hagiographic texts, paintings, statues, monuments, shrines, naming practices, oratory, and ritual observances. The second refers to museums, photographs, cartoons, films, television, and websites. Here, the elements of suspicion and approbation induce negative and positive recollections. However, a primary tendency is to preserve the positive phases of the past⁵⁶.

In the emergence and transmission of memories, we look at the constitutive elements. We consider their survival beyond the danger of forgetting and their passage through the forces of change⁵⁷. These dynamics closely correspond to the historical, social, and commemorative representations, and in this process, some events are more memorable than others⁵⁸. For example, Schwartz has investigated the Gospels’ historical validity and has viewed them as the early Christian memory products. Schwartz underlines that those who listened to the holy men’s stories from the First and Second Temple periods were motivated to remember. This process also dominated first-century Jewish culture⁵⁹.

Schwartz has a keen interest to identify the origin and the forms of the first-century Jewish memory. He assumes that people keep memory (known as carrier groups) to interpret, preserve, and propagate past stories⁶⁰. And this process has to move beyond the danger of lapses. Memories from one generation to the next can sometimes get lost or change. However, there can

⁵² Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 31-32

⁵³ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke, There’s Fire: Memory and History*, in Tom THATCHER (ed.), *Memory and Identity in Judaism and Early Christianity A Conversation with Barry Schwartz* (Semeia Studies, 78), Atlanta, SBL, 2014, p. 7-37 (here p. 10).

⁵⁴ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 10.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8; Alan KIRK, *Social and Cultural Memory*, in Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER (eds), *Memory, Text, and Tradition* (Semeia Studies, 52), Atlanta, SBL, 2005, p. 1-24 (here p. 7-10). See also Emile DURKHEIM, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, p. 414 and 433.

⁵⁶ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 10.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* See also Birger GERHARDSSON, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, Lund, Gleerup, 1961; Yosef YERUSHALMI, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Seattle, WA, University of Washington Press, 1996, p. 5-26. For the cognitive underpinning of the mnemonic tactics one can consult David RUBIN, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-Out Rhymes*, New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 1995.

⁶⁰ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 11.

also be a personal obligation demanded by the social elite to remember specific unique memories. There are also oral traditions that arose from the bottom up, without central control. These oral traditions survived through written texts. Schwartz considers that social memory narratives emerge from two models: a) storytelling and b) networks and clustering⁶¹. And the preservation and transmission of the historical accounts in a coherent way happen by “keying and framing, oral and written communication, path dependency, sites of memory, and critical life-course periods”⁶².

Keying is the action that activates framing. It works like a typology and transforms the meaning of activities⁶³. According to Schwartz: “Keying defines social memory’s function, matching the past to the present as (1) a model for society, reflecting its needs, interests, fears, and aspirations; (2) a model for society, a template for thought, sentiment, morality, and conduct; and, (3) a frame within which people find meaning in their experience”⁶⁴. Keying events of the present to the sacred past is a way to frame collective experience. This collective dimension of social memory includes “not just the history being commemorated, but the accumulated succession of commemorations”⁶⁵. The succession points to a path-dependency in collective memory and also for the sacred texts. That is, social contexts and earlier representations of the content influence the narratives⁶⁶. Scriptures play a significant role to support sacred narratives. However, temporal aspects can affect them. One such example is the misunderstanding related to the Parousia that would occur within the lifetimes of Jesus’ followers. It also highlights the reasons why the evangelists did not compose the Gospels earlier. The urgency of securing the memories could also be due to the death of the first-generation eyewitnesses of Jesus’s teachings⁶⁷.

5. MEMORY STUDIES: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Memory studies have influenced other fields of research like identity, oral studies and history. It does not mean that social memory as an interdisciplinary approach reduces everything into sociological reductionism⁶⁸. For example, research studies closely follow social memory and identity construction⁶⁹. According to Kelber, since Halbwachs, memory as a concept is essential in cultural studies and a central topic in the humanities and social sciences. Memory studies have proven helpful for their explanatory powers and conceptual insights. Conceptual

⁶¹ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 12-13.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁶⁵ Jeffrey K. OLICK, *The Politics of Regret*, p. 58. See also Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 16.

⁶⁶ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 16. Here, the path-dependency involves carrier groups, the oral and written media in various forms that facilitate the transmission from one stage to the next.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*; see also Jan ASSMANN, *Form as Mnemonic Device*, p. 67-82; *id.*, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, Rodney Livingstone (trans.), Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2006.

⁶⁸ See Jeffrey K. OLICK, *Between Chaos and Diversity*, p. 249-252.

⁶⁹ See Jeffrey K. OLICK and Joyce ROBBINS, *Social Memory Studies*, p. 105-140.

studies on representation and cognition, identity and imagination, tradition and ritual, communication, and media connect closely to memory studies. These studies also relate to other intellectual disciplines like history, classical studies, ancient philosophy, medieval studies and literary criticism⁷⁰. In this sense, social memory continually contributes to a growing body of interdisciplinary studies.

5.1 Memory and Oral Studies

Memory studies have closely followed orality and literacy studies. The interfacing of cultural memory with media dynamics has received greater attention among the followers of Halbwachs⁷¹. Walter Ong highlights the role of written and printed texts in cultural memory. According to him, these texts impose on readers, fictionalising their identity as it was⁷². But at the same time, as Kelber comments, a shift from oral performance to scribal mediation of the past is overly complicated.

In the oral performance, the audience is in front of the speaker. Here, both preachers' accountability and audience responsiveness are vital to the entire process⁷³. Kelber describes this process in the following: "In the absence of the materiality of the scribal medium, orality has no choice but to enter into a binding contract with a mnemonically structured language. For this reason, formulaically and rhythmically shaped diction, various kinds of repetition and parallelism dominate orally functioning communication. Memory devices are deeply etched into the structure of oral discourse and knowledge"⁷⁴.

5.2 Memory and Identity

Henri Tajfel⁷⁵, a sociologist with a Polish-Jewish background, coined the term "social identity". This definition takes "difference" as the fundamental constituent of identity formation. New Testament Studies follow this concept of identity. Sergio Rosell Nebreda⁷⁶ has given a detailed description of social identity theory in his commentary on the Philippians. Others like Judith

⁷⁰ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 221-222.

⁷¹ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 25.

⁷² Walter J. ONG, *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1977, p. 53-81; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 226.

⁷³ Walter J. ONG, *Interfaces of the Word*, p. 56; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 227.

⁷⁴ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 227.

⁷⁵ Henry TAJFEL, *Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, in *ARPsy*, 33 (1982), p. 1-39. See also Sergio Rosell NEBREDÁ, *Christ Identity, A Social-Scientific Reading of Philippians 2.5-11*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011, p. 36-43.

⁷⁶ Sergio Rosell NEBREDÁ, *Christ Identity*, p. 36.

Lieu⁷⁷, Philip Esler⁷⁸, and Minna Shkul⁷⁹ have also adopted the theoretical approaches on social memory by Alan Kirk, Tom Thatcher, Jan and Aleida Assmann, and Jeffrey Olick.

According to Tajfel, social identity theory involves three central concepts: categorisation, identification, and comparison. First, categorisation allows us to determine people or objects based on their social context. Second, the identification process enables people to identify their groups of belonging. It happens with specific characteristics that give them an in-group feeling. Finally, comparison allows the subjects to have a better positive self-concept over the outside group, others⁸⁰. For Esler, identity is a “plastic word”⁸¹ that is overwhelmingly present but is challenging to define in its strict sense. In its general way, every group finds identity in the sense of belonging. That is, understanding members’ individual self depends on their belonging to a group⁸². According to Esler, “social identity refers to that part of a person’s self-concept (admittedly from a much larger group) that derives from his or her membership in a group”⁸³. It refers to three essential components: “the cognitive recognition of belonging to the group, connotations of the value attached to such belonging, and emotional dimensions—aspects that generally tend to coalesce, as shown in self-definitions such as ‘us women’ or ‘we Americans’”⁸⁴. In sum, it refers to categorical self-designations, like “we against them” or “we are Christians, and they are gentile”. Our research study also looks at the believers’ identity in First Thessalonians from a social memory perspective⁸⁵.

5.3 Memory and History

In comparison with social memory, Halbwachs regarded history as a dead memory⁸⁶. But recent critics have rejected this proposal and, on the contrary, consider that social memory employs history at its service⁸⁷. In the opinion of Schwartz, writers can do nothing without access to social memory⁸⁸. An individual’s experience plays a role in recalling the memory. The

⁷⁷ Judith M. LIEU, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

⁷⁸ Philip F. ESLER, *Conflict and Identity in Romans, The Social Setting of Paul’s Letter*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press, 2003.

⁷⁹ Minna SHKUL, *Reading Ephesians, Exploring Social Entrepreneurship in the Text* (LNTS, 408), New York, NY, T & T Clark, 2009.

⁸⁰ Henry TAJFEL, *Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, p. 1-39; Sergio Rosell NEBREDÁ, *Christ Identity*, p. 38-39.

⁸¹ Philip F. ESLER, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, p. 11.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 81-86; Richard S. ASCOUGH, *A Question of Death*, p. 509-530; Charles A. WANAMAKER, *Apocalyptic Discourse, Paraenesis and Identity Maintenance in 1 Thessalonians*, in *Neotestamentica*, 36 (2002), p. 131-145.

⁸⁶ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 109-112.

⁸⁷ Jeffrey K. OLICK, *Between Chaos and Diversity*, p. 249-252.

⁸⁸ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 17. See also Pierre NORA, *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, in *Representations*, 26 (1989), p. 7-24.

process of recalling involves selecting and interpreting the past. As a result, writers and historians might produce different versions of the past⁸⁹. Ideological and political considerations might influence the aspect of selectivity⁹⁰. A need to interrelate history and memory arises in the effort to deal with subjective elements. We have seen that Halbwachs distanced from Henri Bergson to avoid emphasising the subjective aspects of time, thought, and reality. For Schwartz, present problems can motivate people to remember different things in diverse ways. However, Halbwachs has not explained the media that transmits memory from one generation to the next generations⁹¹. At the same time, Schwartz agrees with Halbwachs' observations of the Christian memory of Jesus to the service of individual faith and solidarity⁹².

5.3.1 Complexity and Ambivalence

Social memory in social sciences and humanities is an ambiguous and complex concept⁹³. As an individual property, social memory is also a component of culture and tradition. Schwartz has compared social memory dynamics with an analogy of public opinion⁹⁴. He explains that the individuals hold views, and they alone can assess them. However, as the thoughts acquire a more considerable proportion, they also derive a new significance. They become public and influence the way an average person thinks⁹⁵. In this direction, Schwartz defines social memory as “the distribution throughout society of what individuals believe, know, and feel about the past, how they judge the past morally, how closely identify with it, and how they commemorate it”⁹⁶. Schwartz emphasises distribution because of its vital property of variation. He views that variation denies a total consensus and makes total dissensus impossible⁹⁷.

The key to understanding Schwartz's theory is his approach to ancient and present-day knowledge. For him, the legends and common bonds are the roots of ancient wisdom and its context. He brings face to face our perception of knowledge and history in the present and the past. In the present, knowledge is data-driven, self-critical and context-free. Understanding history varies from being subjective and situation-dependent in the ancient period to as objective and transcendent in our days⁹⁸. It points to a kind of ambivalence, and our research into ancient memory faces this dilemma. It also means a complicated relationship between memory and history⁹⁹. In this relationship, the dimensions of memory closely relate to history. Schwartz

⁸⁹ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 18. See also Peter BURKE, *History as Social Memory*, in Thomas BUTLER (ed.), *Memory, History, Culture and the Mind*, Malden, MA, Blackwell, 1989, p. 97-110.

⁹⁰ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 18.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 9; Jeffrey K. OLICK and Joyce ROBBINS, *Social Memory Studies*, p. 105-140; Henry L. ROEDIGER and James V. WERTSCH, *Creating a New Discipline of Memory Studies*, in *Memory Studies*, 1 (2008), p. 9-22.

⁹⁴ Tom THATCHER, *Preface: Keys, Frames, and the Problem of the Past*, in Tom THATCHER (ed.), *Memory and Identity in Judaism and Early Christianity A Conversation with Barry Schwartz* (Semeia Studies 78), Atlanta, SBL Press, 2014, p. 1-5 (here p. 1).

⁹⁵ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7-37.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

distinguishes four dimensions of memory. They are: “(1) the past as it actually was; (2) ‘history’, which refers to linear representations of the past that take the form of oral and written narratives; (3) ‘commemoration’, whose symbols lift from the historical narrative those parts that best express society’s ideals; and (4) social memory—how individuals, in the aggregate, think and feel about the past”¹⁰⁰.

5.3.2 *Stable Essence and Fluidity*

As humans, we possess the faculties to experience as well as to remember those experiences. We can retain and know about our experience. Sometimes we forget much of our knowledge and something we cannot ignore. More significantly, approaching the biographical details after a tragic end or an interval has passed risks distortion. In tragic events of great consequence, memories of the survivors could even refer to social memories. It refers to those tragic memories transmitted over time and exist independently of the interviewers consulted¹⁰¹. In this way, social memories are autonomous. They survive independently of the people that share them. Social memories create a conversation with significant dramatic effects and also objectively motivate the readers. Schwartz illustrates this with memories of Abraham Lincoln, handed over orally from one generation to the next. They survived the people who originally carried and propagated them. Meanwhile, they were subject to modification, but the essence of the events they referred to remained unchanged. According to Schwartz, this essence, the ways and reasons to maintain memory, are the research’s principal concerns into social memory.¹⁰²

Dennis Duling agrees with Schwartz that a stable essence persists despite the element of fluidity. The dimension of fluidity refers to constant changes and fluctuations regarding social memory constructions. In other words, new narratives may significantly appear different from the previous descriptions of an event, individual, or group. Conversely, the ritual commemorations reinforce continuity and, in turn, define a community’s social identity¹⁰³. The persistence of continuity relates closely to the theoretical approaches to social memory in its studies. There are two approaches: constructionism and essentialism. Halbwachs is the most influential representative of the first proposal. This approach considers the past as a construct that serves the needs of the present. The second approach is essentialism, in which the past shapes our comprehension of the present. The present context, in no way, shapes the past¹⁰⁴. Duling emphasises a third approach by Schwartz. It is a middle course between two extremes, a synthesis known as the *contrapuntal* theory of memory. It recognises a stable historic core, a continuity in discontinuity¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁰ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 10-11.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death of ‘the Lord’: Paul’s Response to the Lord’s Supper Factions at Corinth*, in Tom THATCHER (ed.), *Memory and Identity in Judaism and Early Christianity A Conversation with Barry Schwartz* (Semeia Studies, 78), Atlanta, SBL, 2014, p. 289-310 (here p. 289).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 296-297.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

Moreover, Schwartz reiterates that transmission may be open to modification; the actual events remain unchanged¹⁰⁶. Thus, Schwartz has applied this understanding of his essentialist leaning, meaning a consistent core message or storyline that remains unchanged, to the New Testament Gospels. Duling observes that Schwartz admits and shows that oral tradition changes the image of Jesus but has cautiously argued for its historical realism across generations¹⁰⁷. Schwartz's approach to memory rests on three primary characteristics: a) the actual past and the subsequent commemoration are inter-influential; b) consistent emphasis on the normative force of the commemorated past; and c) one understands the commemorated past through two memory techniques: keying and framing¹⁰⁸. In Tom Thatcher's opinion, the memory techniques that Schwartz has proposed are a complicated process. They are mnemonic and not merely rhetorical strategies¹⁰⁹.

6. MEMORY AND CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

Recent memory studies have contributed significantly to the understanding of Christian origins. According to Kelber, it is a timely intervention because the earlier studies of Christian origins ignored the stream of memory studies in biblical scholarship. Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher¹¹⁰ consider it a "myopia" in New Testament scholarship, particularly form-criticism and its concept of tradition. They propose the relevance of memory studies as an analytical category¹¹¹. A transition happens with Jens Schröter. He has applied Jan and Aleida Assmann's concept of cultural memory as a heuristic device in reading Mark, Q and Thomas as different modalities of remembering Jesus¹¹².

Kirk and Thatcher, in a joint essay, expose the disappearance of memory as an analytical category¹¹³. Besides, Kelber comments that form-criticism has viewed the Synoptic history as driven by "intrinsic causation"¹¹⁴. Form-criticism shows that the transmission of Jesus

¹⁰⁶ Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 297; Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 297.

¹⁰⁸ Tom THATCHER, *Preface: Keys, Frames, and the Problem of the Past*, p. 2-3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER, *Jesus Tradition as Social Memory*, in Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER (eds), *Memory, Tradition, and Text* (Semeia Studies, 52), Atlanta, SBL, 2005, p. 25-42; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 230.

¹¹¹ Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER, *Jesus Tradition as Social Memory*, p. 25-42; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 230.

¹¹² Jens SCHRÖTER, *Erinnerung an jesu Worte: Studien zur Rezeption der Logienüberlieferung in Markus, Q und Thomas* (WMANT, 76), Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchner Verlag, 1997, p. 462-486; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 229.

¹¹³ Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER, *Jesus Tradition as Social Memory*, p. 25-42; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 230.

¹¹⁴ Werner H. KELBER, *The Oral and Written Gospels: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q*, Philadelphia, PA, Fortress, 1983, p. 2-8; *id.*, *The Works of Memory*, p. 230.

materials necessitated a developmental process of composing the existing material in the tradition¹¹⁵. Besides, Kelber lists three features that have diverted form-criticism from its focus on social memory. First, form-criticism examines oral units for their original form. Second, it looks at the tradition with evolutionary gravity. Hence the forces of remembering in the process of tradition are irrelevant. Finally, form-criticism considers Mark's tradition as a unidirectional transmission or primarily oral materials, which minimised the role of memorial dynamics on the gospel composition level. It means that Mark has merely brought to fruition what the tradition has already developed¹¹⁶. However, memory studies consider the notion of "the original form" as a phantom of literacy¹¹⁷. In light of these observations, we will reconsider allusions to Jesus' sayings in the eschatological discourse of First Thessalonians.

Contrarily, oral tradition operates with a plurality of original speech acts¹¹⁸. Birger Gerhardsson¹¹⁹ is an exception to the stream of form criticism. Kelber opines that Gerhardsson's work, *Memory and Manuscript*, reconsiders form-criticism's method and assumptions because this method has ignored Halbwachs' contributions. Kelber comments that for Gerhardsson, memory has assumed the principal facilitator of the transmission process and is a community's constitutive element¹²⁰. According to him, Gerhardsson gives a leading role to memory in the history of early Christian traditions. However, most contemporary models see a sharp distinction between memory and tradition to develop a primitive Christian theology and the Gospels' composition history¹²¹. In Gerhardsson's work, Kelber mainly focuses on the mnemonic structuring of Jesus' sayings. Kelber considers that these sayings consist of heavily patterned speech with features like: "alliteration, appositional equivalence, proverbial and aphoristic diction, contrasts and antitheses, synonymous, antithetical and tautological parallelisms, rhythmic structures, and so forth—[thar are] all earmarks of mnemonics which abound in the Jesus logia"¹²². These features also emphasise memory's repetitive and recollective side. Repetition carries forward the legacy of the past in the present. But recollection reconstructs the benefits of the past in response to the needs of the present¹²³.

A further contribution to Christian origins is John Dominic Crossan's work on the historical Jesus. Here, reconstructing the message of the historical Jesus is dependent on and committed to the form-critical method. In the gospel lie embedded orally identifiable units which are

¹¹⁵ Robert BULTMANN, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, John Marsh (trans.), New York, NY, Harper & Row, orig. 1921, 1963, p. 347; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 230.

¹¹⁶ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 230.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

¹¹⁸ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 231.

¹¹⁹ Birger GERHARDSSON, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity, with Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity*, Eric J. Sharpe (trans.), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1998.

¹²⁰ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 232-233; Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER, *Jesus Tradition as Social Memory*, p. 35.

¹²¹ Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER, *Jesus Tradition as Social Memory*, p. 25; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 232-233.

¹²² Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 233.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 233-234.

separable from their narrative contexts¹²⁴. But there is a consistent disregard for the plurality in searching for the original words of Jesus. The plurality of speech characterises the oral medium¹²⁵. Here, in the process of mnemonics, there is both a sense of complexity and ambiguity. Memory exists in the paradoxical tension between these two aspirations. The first tries to reconstruct the images of the past to transport them into the present. The second tries to reconstruct the images of the past to integrate them into the present context. Kirk mentions this impressive feature while introducing the social memory concept and understanding of the tradition¹²⁶. Both Kirk and Thatcher have contributed significantly to the reconceptualization of tradition¹²⁷. They propose a performance mode of tradition and affirm close affinities between oral tradition and social memory theory in the Gospels.

6.1 The Importance of Eyewitness' Account

Given the first-generation eyewitnesses, Schwartz considers the “critical periods” as significant in preserving memory. According to social memory, a critical period is when individuals are most likely to remember momentous events¹²⁸. It points to the individual’s late adolescence and early adulthood. Schwartz opines that as the new Christian generation appeared, the eyewitnesses functioned as the elders. People exposed to the teachings and the actions of Jesus during their critical period would now have been the elderly, fifty to sixty years old. Such an age in a society has the credibility of social status to transmit narratives. They remained as effective opinion leaders in a community where authority was an entitlement of age. As a result, a record’s credibility depended on its transmitters’ social status as influential opinion leaders¹²⁹. For example, Paul Ricœur points to a transitional process between them. He cites the following: “Testimony constitutes the fundamental transitional structure between memory and history”¹³⁰. Richard Bauckham¹³¹ has applied this understanding of testimony as a link to the historical Jesus. He proposes and defends the “eyewitness testimony” as a category in the formation of the Gospels.

In this regard, we find that according to Schwartz, the eyewitnesses or Jesus’s admirers employed three kinds of memory work to portray Jesus: “First, they [the followers of Jesus] keyed

¹²⁴ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 235. See also John Dominic CROSSAN, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus*, San Francisco, CA, Harper & Row, 1983; *id.*, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, San Francisco, CA, Harper & Row, 1991.

¹²⁵ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 236.

¹²⁶ Alan KIRK, *Social and Cultural Memory*, p. 1-24; Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory*, p. 234.

¹²⁷ Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER, *Jesus Tradition as Social Memory*, p. 25-42.

¹²⁸ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 16; Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 22 and 48. Jan Assmann develops this idea further, and later Sandra Huebenthal refers to this as a generational gap.

¹²⁹ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 17. See also Elihu KATZ and Paul LAZARSFELD, *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications*, Glencoe, IL, Free Press, 1995.

¹³⁰ Paul RICŒUR, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (trans.), Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 21.

¹³¹ Richard BAUCKHAM, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses, The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2006, 2017, p. 5-7.

images of Jesus directly to the sacred history of Israel (framing). Second, they [Jesus' followers] revised and conceived multiple versions of Jesus's life without reference to Israel's history (reproduction). Third, they [the followers] sustained a tension between authorial creativity and invented history, on the one hand, and, on the other, authorial discipline, and authentic history (dual representation)¹³². Hence, memory-work models classify the similarities and differences of the representations of Jesus by his contemporaries. Making such distinctions involves sorting and combining representations. It also involves abstracting elements that make the world of Jesus' images comprehensible. Here, genres, however, are not descriptions of reality. They are ideal analytic concepts of comprehension through emphasis and simplification¹³³. Schwartz considers that Halbwachs, Bultmann, and their successors tried to reconstruct those realities. They analysed the commemoration of Jesus by matching representations of his life to social predicaments. By this, they attempted to realise that social difficulties were responsible for Jesus' commemoration¹³⁴.

An interest in the language of memory in the New Testament is not new. Nils Dahl¹³⁵ has focussed on memory terms (Greek *mnē*-root) in the New Testament and Judean (ancient Jewish) literature. He emphasises three points. First, memory language in the New Testament has a close affinity to the surrounding culture. Second, we do not find a sophisticated analysis of memory and recollection in the New Testament compared to Aristotle's *De memoria et reminiscencia*¹³⁶. Third, Aristotle restricts the sense of *μνημονεύω* (I remember) to the past (*Mem.rem.* 449b)¹³⁷. But the New Testament usage differs. It integrates the importance of memory and commemoration for the present and the future. Contemporary memory studies consider this view necessary. The studies show that past events and persons are the keys to framing the present and future behaviour. Dennis Duling synthesises these points in the following: "In short, in the New Testament, social memory is used rhetorically to develop and maintain social morality"¹³⁸.

6.2 The Relevance of Performing Contexts

The relationship between gospels rhetorics and social morality is more visible in the behavioural patterns of the early Christian communities. In this regard, I refer to Paul Connerton¹³⁹.

¹³² Barry SCHWARTZ, *Jesus in First-Century Memory – A Response*, in Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER (eds), *Memory, Tradition, and Text*, Atlanta, SBL, 2005, p. 249-261 (here p. 250-251).

¹³³ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Jesus in First-Century Memory*, p. 251. See also Max WEBER, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, A. M. HENDERSON and Talcott PARSONS (trans. and eds), New York, NY, Free Press, 1947, p. 89-98.

¹³⁴ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Jesus in First-Century Memory*, p. 258.

¹³⁵ Nils Alstrup DAHL, *Anamnesis: Memory and Commemoration in Early Christianity in Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church: Essays*, Minneapolis, MN, Augsburg, 1946, reprint 1976, p. 11-29. See Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 289-312 (here p. 299).

¹³⁶ See also Paul RICŒUR, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 15-21.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 299.

¹³⁹ Paul CONNERTON, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge, NY, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 21-25.

He identifies three main approaches to social memory: through personal memory claims, cognitive memory claims and performative memory claims (habit-memory). Connerton emphasises the third type to outline and explain how societies remember. He outlines his approach based on the distinction introduced by memory studies in psychoanalysis on two contrasting ways of bringing the past into the present: acting out and remembering. Notably, Stephen Barton¹⁴⁰ considers memory by habits in biblical contexts. He shows its performative role in the Pauline context (the community of memory, their belonging and ritual context, prayer, almsgiving, handing on the tradition, and autobiography). We see that the memory content is increasingly objectified and is discernible from the historical narratives that demand a new behavioural pattern. In this regard, social memory studies move further from the present-constructivist approach and discover elements that function as memory carriers. Notably, we see that Paul Ricœur¹⁴¹ distinguishes memory as intention (*la mémoire*) and memory as intended (*le souvenir*). Concerning the memory pathways, James Dunn¹⁴² considers that mere kerygmatic and confessional formulas are insufficient to account for the dynamics between Jesus, the Nazarene and Jesus in the Gospels. He explains this process in two ways or two motifs: bearing witness and remembering (retelling the story of Jesus, what He said and did; trying to recall them actively). The first centres more on the first disciples who bear witness to Jesus and his ministry. The second constitutes the continuity, the context of the hearing, and a movement of Jesus' story from the first disciples to the new converts¹⁴³.

In this background, Peter Botha¹⁴⁴ regards that a proper historical understanding of the Pauline letters has to reconsider how these interpretations have looked at the letters' form, style and structure. His comments are as follows:

“Any discussion of style, form or rhetorical facets always presupposes a larger framework within which these ‘formal’ aspects make sense. No one would deny that we find certain stylistic characteristics in any text. The problem is what to make them. These characteristics do not explain themselves; they need to be interpreted, to be related to various communicative strategies, cultural conventions, historical and social phenomena before they make sense. Any claim that stylistic phenomena per se can guide one to valid interpretation is misleading”¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴⁰ Stephen C. BARTON, Memory and Remembrance in Paul, Loren T. STUCKENBRUCK, Stephen C. BARTON, and Benjamin G. WOLD (eds), *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity* (WUNT, 212), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2007, p. 321-339.

¹⁴¹ Paul RICŒUR, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 22-23.

¹⁴² James D. G. DUNN, *Jesus Remembered* (Christianity in the Making, 1), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2003, p. 176-178.

¹⁴³ James D. G. DUNN, *Jesus Remembered*, p. 177-180.

¹⁴⁴ Pieter J. J. BOTHA, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*, Eugene, OR, Cascade Books, 2012, p. 235-236.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

With a review essay, Werner Kelber¹⁴⁶ opines that Peter Botha has raised some pertinent questions on how we regard ancient orality and literacy with the preconditions of our modern notion of writing with an architectural sense. Besides, Botha has argued for the role of rumour in the gospel formation and gossips concerning Paul facing conflicting situations and his subsequent letter writing. However, Botha's study ignores the process of communicative memory¹⁴⁷. But Botha's ideas on the role of rumours and gossips are not new. Jan Vansina¹⁴⁸ has previously highlighted that oral stories through gossips and rumours play a vital role and constitute the recent past of a society or a group's history.

This section showed the importance of eyewitness account and the performative context to understand the Christian origins. We find that both oral and written media of the memory transmission process remains dynamic, performative and open to multiple adaptations. However, even though oral stories are significant, their role in the oral transmission process is not free from flaws and manipulations.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE MEMORY MODEL

The social memory concept emphasises memory's constitutive element as a social phenomenon. Notably, this dimension refers to the present constructionist approach. That is, memory depends more on the contingencies of a social experience. It reduces the value of the qualities inherent in the events remembered¹⁴⁹. For Schwartz, such contingency paves the way to scrutinising the contexts because memories do not remain the same forever¹⁵⁰.

Another problem that affects memory models is when one considers the actual past only as incidental to later representations. Here, one does not recognise the past as an object of inquiry. Memory ceases to exist when one contextualises it fully or reduces it to narrative forms¹⁵¹. A tendency to reduce everything to their narrative forms also distorts history. Hayden White referred to the story structures to view that history's matters result from the narrative that conveys it¹⁵². Paul Ricœur¹⁵³ critiques this approach. Ricœur cautions against those who approach historical reality from its drawbacks. It means that we do not have recourse to complete historical evidence. On the other hand, we notice that every generation modifies the narration and

¹⁴⁶ Werner H. KELBER, *Review: Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity by Peter J. J. Botha*, in *BTB*, 44.3 (2014), p. 144-155.

¹⁴⁷ Werner H. KELBER, *Review of Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*, p. 144-155.

¹⁴⁸ Jan VANSINA, *Oral Tradition as History*, p. 12-25.

¹⁴⁹ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 22.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁵² Hayden WHITE, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1987; Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 23

¹⁵³ Paul RICŒUR, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 21; Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 23.

adapts to different communication methods through successive generations. However, it can also lose credibility if it does not retain minimal claims and accepted knowledge of history¹⁵⁴.

Schwartz gives two cognitive models to specify the limits of memory distortions: Frederick Bartlett's memory experiments in the 1920s and another related to cognitive misers¹⁵⁵. Cognitive misers refer to specific members who actively engage in memory retention related to their group. In this regard, Bartlett narrates a Native American folktale in the first experimental model. He asks his subjects to reproduce the story's content through repeated reproduction at various times. The story gradually becomes shorter, coherent, changing the order of events. It shortens with fewer mentions of supernatural powers. Its process simplifies the translation of the esoteric into simple details. Bartlett emphasises that the reproduced story in its final form appears like any other story that any simple English reader can understand¹⁵⁶. Bartlett formulates the concept of schema to describe this transformation's cognitive dynamics. It is a framework to organise the experience in an order that strengthens the ability to remember. Schwartz sees that Bartlett deprives his subjects of the resources necessary for remembering. The resources are the prior information of the experimental designs that a person part of the experiment does not know. As a result, the responses of the experimental design remain insignificant.

The second experimental model that Schwartz describes is about cognitive misers. It points to people with compelling interests in remembering accurately, like detectives, scientists, historians, military air controllers taking messages from besieged soldiers. The cognitive misers' group can also include others whose success depends on such specific situations. Cognitive misers organise the vast amount of information to which they acquaint. Cognitive misers, in one case, can become "motivated tacticians" in others¹⁵⁷. Schwartz sees that the incentives can induce one capable of remembering. Here, incentives do not pertain to material rewards alone. If memory promotes attachment, then Jesus's most enthusiastic admirers must have been intensely inspired tacticians, unlike Bartlett's test subjects. They are people whose memories were crucial to their lives and self-conceptions. For Schwartz, Bartlett's experiments are irrelevant for the Jewish Christians, who formed and communicated memories of Jesus during the first century. The context of widespread belief in the imminence of the day of judgment motivated them. Such an urgency might have inspired listeners to remember all the stories of Jesus as well as all his words and actions. However, we can say that listeners have not assimilated everything, but they have remembered more. They would have if they had a stake in the message¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵⁴ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 23; Paul RICŒUR, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁵ Frederic C. BARTLETT, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental Social Psychology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995; Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 23.

¹⁵⁶ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 23-24.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24. See also Susan T. FISKE and Shelley E. TAYLOR, *Social Cognition: From Brains to Culture*, London, SAGE Publications, 1991, 2013, 3rd edition 2017, p. 41-43, 329-421.

¹⁵⁸ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 25; Emile DURKHEIM, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, New York, NY, Free Press, 1951, p. 201. Schwartz states Durkheim's view as follows: "Man cannot live without some kind of attachment to some object which transcends and survives him".

Schwartz also discusses the proposition of a tendency in experimental accounts to emphasise dissensus rather than consensus, variations rather than similarities. However, the problem remains at what level it applies to historical questions. Since the Gospels are the only source of information about Jesus, we can only name those kinds of events most likely to pass down memory lane¹⁵⁹. Jesus indeed stayed a central figure due to his appeal and actions. His life attracted people, and they liked to spread his stories¹⁶⁰. Schwartz synthesises the tendency toward the dissensus or the consensus as follows:

“Where, then, do we stand on the memorability of Jesus? All ideas and events occur in a context that reduces or amplifies their memorability, but the ideas and events this context must surround, including Jesus’s life and death, are fundamentally real. They cannot be defined or interpreted into or out of existence”¹⁶¹.

The context is essential for a framework to interpret memory content, but it is not the only one¹⁶². The assessment of the limitation of memory studies and their potentiality point to the following elements. First, social memory must appear from individual sources and then lead to tradition and institutionalisation for continuity. The institutionalising process of the historical figures’ memory happens by “rituals, framing, keying, path-dependency, emergent oral tradition, sites of memory, life-course turning points, and, where relevant, Scripture”¹⁶³. These social memory constituents provide us with the pathways to understanding the events and figures described in the biblical texts.

In addition to Schwartz’ explanations on memory distortions, we observe that gossips, hearsays, stories, witnesses’ reports are not without bias, prejudice and other influences that may constitute a memory fallacy even though socially driven. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann¹⁶⁴ explain that the social construction of reality arises from society’s present needs and frameworks. We apply these socially driven frameworks to understand others. This process relies on social cognition, which studies “how people make sense of other people and themselves”¹⁶⁵. In this regard, the antithetical forms provide a categorical framework to understand the identity and memory structure among the early Christ-followers.

Conversely, Susan Fiske and Shelley Taylor¹⁶⁶ show that often ideals and extremes shape social categories and prototype memories. In this way, the social type and prototypes act as social

¹⁵⁹ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 25-26.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26-27.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁴ Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 33; Peter L. BERGER and Thomas LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality, A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, London, Penguin Books, 1966, reprint 1991.

¹⁶⁵ Susan T. FISKE and Shelley E. TAYLOR, *Social Cognition*, p. 17-18.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 204-222.

memory structures. They operate in two ways: top-down (conceptually driven) and bottom-up (stimulus-driven). At the same time, both top-down and bottom-up pathways are prone to false memories. Fiske and Taylor explain that false memories are a specific type of consistent information that has never occurred. Besides, peoples' memories are affected by past examples, and consequently, societal structures may influence faulty exemplar models toward the cognitive process.

One of the social memory model's limitations often refers to memory's fragile nature or that the individuals are prone to weak memory. Concerning this issue, Daniel Schachter¹⁶⁷ explains the fallacy of memory in two classifications: sins of omission (transience, absent-mindedness, and blocking) and sins of commission (misattribution, suggestibility, bias, and persistence). These explain the dynamics of two adverse processes: forgetting what one has to remember and persistently remembering what one wants to forget. They also explain the absence and presence of memory. Regarding the types of omission, one experiences the weakening of memory and desperations to retrieve wanted information. Conversely, the fallacy by commission explains the influences in shaping false memories and the possibility of lacking objectivity.

However, an overemphasis on the fragility of memory, or its sins of omission and commission, as Daniel Schachter highlights, is a one-sided view. It fails to focus on the plurality of memory dimensions. In this regard, John Kloppenborg¹⁶⁸ observes that regarding the performative context of Jesus' tradition, the diversity and plurality of contexts, in a way, represent the multidimensional physio-neuro constitution of the brain. His comments depend on the explanation provided by Ann-Kathrin Stock, Hannah Gajsar, and Onur Güntürkün¹⁶⁹. They insist that no single location in the brain activates the entire process of memory recall and association. The process is dynamic, pluriform, context-driven, and attention-oriented response based on past experiences and present needs.

I present two observations. The first one concerns the categorical type. It refers to making two types of distinctions based on polarity or extremes based on ideals or prototypes. The second refers to the multi-dimensional aspect of the physio-neural constitution, the process of association and recall memory networks spread across the brain region. Not everything stored in the brain comes to the fore. It is attention and need-driven. The brain works and recalls through associated networks already supplied by the society based on past similar associations that an individual or a group has experienced. However, these associations to be meaningful require a necessary and even distribution over time and space.

¹⁶⁷ Daniel L. SCHACTER, *The Seven Sins of Memory, How the Mind Forgets and Remembers*, Boston, NY, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001, p. 4-5.

¹⁶⁸ John S. KLOPPENBORG, *Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus*, in Karl GALINSKY (ed.), *Memory in Ancient Rome & Early Christianity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 286-323.

¹⁶⁹ Ann-Kathrin STOCK, Hannah GAJSAR, and Onur GÜNTÜRKÜN, *The Neuroscience of Memory*, in Karl GALINSKY (ed.), *Memory in Ancient Rome & Early Christianity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 369-392. See also Karl GALINSKY, *Introduction: Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus*, in Karl GALINSKY (ed.), *Memory in Ancient Rome & Early Christianity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 1-42.

Furthermore, I refer to Alexander Gerschenkron¹⁷⁰. Concerning the historical continuity, he emphasises the durative, dense, distributive aspect of the visual representation. I focus on this dimension and discover the distributive nature of hope in First Thessalonians. The durative presentation of a phenomenon is helpful to explain its particular context. In other words, we describe the context of grief and hope from the letter's overall structure. The durative dimension shows that a specific context is not an isolated event within the text. In this way, we may measure memory limitations by appealing to the historical illustrations of continuity and discontinuity and relate the same to the current context. We may easily perceive the dimensions of continuity and discontinuity as in demographic data. In this regard, Gerschenkron refers to five essential elements that constitute a historical continuity. The constituting features are constancy of direction, periodicity of events, endogenous change, the length of causal regress and the stability of the rate of change¹⁷¹. In this identification, a perceptible origin takes note of fluctuations.

Furthermore, we deal with memory limitations by constructive approaches. We see that Assmann considers the concept of the past explained by Halbwachs with a socio-constructivist application. Besides, Assmann refers to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann to understand the social construction of reality¹⁷². Berger and Luckmann consider the past and social reality are not natural growth. They are a cultural creation influenced by the present needs and rely on the current frameworks of the society that differ to each particular context¹⁷³. Therefore, testimonies and witness reports have a more significant role in the narration, especially past events that constitute the foundation of the group's existence. However, this research does not focus on the part of whispers or rumours. We reconsider the relationship between contrasts, antitheses and traditions from a social memory perspective. We intend to move beyond Paul's style and aim at theology from the group's larger context, surroundings, and the relation between Paul and his community.

8. SUM UP: MEMORY AND PAULINE LETTERS

8.1 Meaning of Memory in Pauline Letters

Pauline letters relate to tradition and the past differently from the Gospels because the letters' constitutive nature is distinct. Although the letters have lesser appeal regarding stories, they play a specific role in constructing memory and transmission. Their role as the earliest

¹⁷⁰ Alexander GERSCHENKRON, *On the Concept of Continuity in History*, in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 106.3 (1962), p. 195-209.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 195-209.

¹⁷² Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 33; Peter L. BERGER and Thomas LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality*, p. 14, 207-211.

¹⁷³ Peter L. BERGER and Thomas LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality*, p. 207-211.

documents in the making of Christianity demands adequate consideration¹⁷⁴. Memory studies now more and more emphasise this aspect. Preliminary attempts by Dahl point out the dynamic nature of remembrance. In a brief survey of the relationship between social memory and social morality, Dennis Duling highlights the role of memory in Paul's letters¹⁷⁵. He provides an analytic reference in 1 Cor 11 on the Lord's Supper. In this regard, Schwartz opines that Duling points out the following essential features of the discourse: "social boundaries (who dines with whom), bonding (reflecting social networks), obligation (meal etiquette and the ideals which they are based), social stratification (seating of guests according to their social rank), and social equality (equal treatment of guests)"¹⁷⁶. In the analyses by Duling, Schwartz recognises a semiotic model and describes its context as follows:

"The ritual aspects of an ancient banquet, including the Lord's Supper, give a Christian reading of Christian society, expressing its moral values and predicaments. Banquets are not only good places to eat; they are good places with which to think—and to remember. The banquet, after all, is a constituent of commemoration and, as such, prominent among what Maurice Halbwachs called the 'social frames of memory'"¹⁷⁷.

Paul gradually introduces the commemoration of the Lord's Supper. He has already described proper and improper cult meals (1 Cor 10) before instructing the Corinthians about Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11). The way Paul gradually introduces the subject of social morality shows a memory reconstruction. For Dahl, as Duling has commented, this way of functioning shows that "in Paul's new gospel, 'knowledge' (γνῶσις) is correlated with memory"¹⁷⁸. Further, according to Duling, in First Thessalonians, too, Dahl sees a similar path: "The Thessalonian believers remember – they already 'know' –but Paul proceeds to remind them anyhow. The first obligation of the apostle vis-à-vis a community is to make the faithful remember what they have received and already know – or should know"¹⁷⁹. Dahl then generalises this process by articulating: "I would say that for the early Christians, knowledge was a ἀνάμνησις ('memory'), a recollection of the γνῶσις ('knowledge') given to all those who have believed in the gospel, received baptism, and been incorporated into the church"¹⁸⁰. It is commendable that even before recent scholars, Dahl has pointed out the collective memory dynamics¹⁸¹.

¹⁷⁴ Judith M. LIEU, *Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory*, in Simon BUTTICAZ and Enrico NORELLI (eds), *Memory and Memories in Early Christianity* (WUNT, 398) Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2018, p. 133-143.

¹⁷⁵ Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 299-300.

¹⁷⁶ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Harvest*, in Tom THATCHER (ed.), *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, A Conversation with Barry Schwartz*, 2014, p. 313-337 (here p. 332). Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 289-310.

¹⁷⁷ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Harvest*, p. 332.

¹⁷⁸ Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 300; Nils Alstrup DAHL, *Anamnesis: Memory and Commemoration in Early Christianity*, p. 15.

¹⁷⁹ Nils Alstrup DAHL, *Anamnesis*, p. 15.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16. See Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 300-301.

¹⁸¹ See Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 300-301.

In Paul's letters, the relationship between remembrance and memory also indicates a tension between social memory and social morality. Paul acts both ways: first, he remembers and credits his followers for their fine moral qualities and actions collectively; second, he also reminds them of his gospel and urges them to correct their behaviour. An excellent illustration of this tension is the contrast between the thanksgiving sections of Paul's letters and later appeals. In this regard, Duling comments as follows: "The customary thanksgiving in Graeco-Roman letters included three interrelated elements: (1) a traditional 'health wish'; (2) a prayer to the gods on behalf of someone (usually the recipient); and (3) a 'memory motif', that is, 'making remembrance' (μνείαν ποιούμενοι) of a person or persons to the gods. In Paul's thanksgiving, the prayer-memory combination incorporates his famous faith, hope, and love triad (1 Cor 13)"¹⁸². Thus, the prayer-memory combination represents and highlights the interactive dynamics between the positive moral qualities and actions of Paul's communities¹⁸³. Dennis Duling rephrases and states this process in First Thessalonians as follows:

"We [Paul and his co-workers] always give thanks to God for all of you [readers/hearers], constantly making remembrance of [μνείαν ποιούμενοι] you in our prayers, remembering [μνημονεύοντες] before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 1:2-3; see also Philem 4-6; Phil 1:3-5)"¹⁸⁴.

Although Paul expresses confidence in his readers, he eventually reminds them of his gospel's moral requirements¹⁸⁵. This process indicates that as the paraenesis follows proclamation, social morality's exposition follows social memory. As noted, Paul uses this memory-morality rhetorical strategy. Régis Burnet comments that this is not merely an example of remembrance (*anamnēsis*) but stands to indicate the remembrance itself in Paul's letters¹⁸⁶. The ethical exhortations emphasise the new existence of the gentile converts, which is also a new mode of expression of being with the Lord. That is, the memory of Jesus and his teachings determine the self-interpretation of their new life both in temporal and spatial terms.

Applying the social memory scheme of Halbwachs, Georgia Masters Keightley shows that the memory of Jesus' death, resurrection and Parousia directs believers' life in Thessalonica both temporally and spatially. The Thessalonians now understand their origin and destiny through the prism of Jesus' memory. They live their new social habits in and through initiation and communal meal rites¹⁸⁷. Besides, Simon Buttica observes twofold developments in recent

¹⁸² Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 300.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Paul's Letters to Corinth: The Interpretative Intertwining of Literary and Historical Reconstruction*, in Daniel N. SCHOWALTER and Steven J. FRIESEN (eds), *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2005, p. 201-211.

¹⁸⁶ Régis BURNET, *L'anamnèse: structure fondamentale de la lettre paulinienne*, in *NTS*, 49.1 (2003), p. 57-69.

¹⁸⁷ Georgia Masters KEIGHTLEY, *The Church's Memory of Jesus: A Social Science Analysis of 1 Thessalonians*, in *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 17.4 (1987), p. 149-156; *idem.*, *Christian Collective Memory and Paul's Knowledge of Jesus*, in Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER (eds), *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (Semeia Studies, 52), Atlanta, SBL, 2005, p. 129-150

memory studies in Pauline letters: first, memory maintains and prolongs Paul's preaching; second, Paul not only assumes the role of a guarantor but also becomes the object of memory¹⁸⁸. When Paul wrote, he was free to modify the stories and the sayings he quoted. There existed no written documents that Paul could refer to those sources. The problem arose with succeeding generations that presented diverse and contradictory representations.

We have seen that for Halbwachs, a group lacks a unified memory but has a plurality of recollections. A group itself does not carry memory¹⁸⁹. However, a group can adopt a formative and normative reference to an image and its past. The normative reference points out the dynamics of relationships within and outside the group¹⁹⁰. It is the normative element that Jan Assmann distinguishes in the works of Halbwachs and rephrases the particular dimension as cultural memory. As Sandra Huebenthal states: "Cultural memory is formal, ceremonial, consists of codified or even canonised signs and is mediated through education"¹⁹¹. In the backdrop of this explanation, identity emerges only through one's relation to the received tradition¹⁹². Butticaaz has argued that relational elements in Paul's writings point to three things as objects of memory. They are the Jesus' event, the apostle himself, and the community he addresses¹⁹³. These relational objects of memory come to the forefront in different contexts and provide temporal and spatial frameworks.

The temporal and spatial aspects explain the transformation of early Christian memory. Judith Lieu has emphasised this dimension and looks into "the construction of the participants in the epistolary dialogue, and to the negotiation of temporal and spatial relationships within the letter"¹⁹⁴. Lieu considers that the creation of memory and its preservation in the letters happens through its formal properties. There are two formal properties: first, the letter is a written document and second, the letter presupposes a distance between the writer and the recipient. A distant space comes into play in the context of an absence of the physical presence of Paul. A conversation occurs between 'I' and 'You' of the dialogue in the letters in this distance¹⁹⁵.

The temporal and the spatial categories provide the hermeneutical key to move beyond assuming the meaning solely by the author's intention and knowledge at the time of writing. Lieu observes that the time of writing is both a moment to look backwards and forward. One looks back at the past circumstances of writing a letter and looks forward to receiving what one

¹⁸⁸ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory' in Early Christianity as Reflected in the Letters of Paul*, in Simon BUTTICAZ and Enrico NORELLI (eds), *Memory and Memories in Early Christianity* (WUNT, 398), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2018, p. 99-131 (here p. 99).

¹⁸⁹ Simon BUTTICAZ and Enrico NORELLI (eds), *Introduction*, in Simon BUTTICAZ and Enrico NORELLI (eds), *Memory and Memories in Early Christianity* (WUNT, 398), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2018, p. 1-14 (here p. 9).

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1-14.

¹⁹¹ Sandra HUEBENTHAL, *Frozen Moments*, p. 17.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory'*, p. 106-107.

¹⁹⁴ Judith LIEU, *Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory*, p. 133.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 136-137.

has written. In this process of writing, there are manifold moments. It means that the process of transmission also fills the space between the writer and the reader¹⁹⁶.

8.2 First Thessalonians

In First Thessalonians, we see that Paul's communication to his addressees reflects a back-and-forth process. Paul acknowledges the community's steadfast hope (1:3). Paul hopes to see the community at the Parousia (2:19). Paul realises the need to strengthen the community's faith (3:5) and offers consolation when the community mourns the deceased members (4:13-18)). Further, Paul instructs the community and prepares them for the Parousia (5:1-11). Notably, in the eschatological discourse, we witness these dynamics through rhetorical contrasts.

The rhetorical distinctions involve temporal and spatial aspects and define the content of hope. These dynamics progress categorically, with an uncompromising division between the believers and others. One needs to observe that Paul's proposal of the apocalyptic arrival of Jesus as an eschatological event completes the believers' election through the common Parousia. It constitutes the origin and the end of the believers' identity. The rhetorical contrasts require this framework of memory application to define hope in the discourse. The distinctions also substantiate already given information: the believers have turned away from the idols (1 Thes 1:9), and now they are not to grieve like others (4:13)¹⁹⁷. These dynamics show that in First Thessalonians, we do not see a static definition of hope but a series of hope dimensions (metonymy).

Besides, in First Thessalonians, we notice the terms, μνήμη and μνημονεύω. We understand μνήμη as a recollection of one's past events, and in a contrary sense, a recollection stands against ignoring and forgetting. It is also a state of commemorating, remembrance, and memorial¹⁹⁸. In this epistle, Paul uses μνημονεύω in 1:3 and 2:9. Here, it means to remember, keep in mind and think of something¹⁹⁹. In the dynamics of μνήμη, memory is both a recollection and its antithesis, trying to forget those events one does not want to remember. In the letter, we see that Paul writes to console in the context of deceased members. Paul outlines a way to deal with their grief. In this context, Paul uses λυπέω with a prohibition (4:13, ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ), in the present subjunctive passive second person plural meaning not to be sad, distressed, grieved²⁰⁰. In these two instances, we see that Paul actively constructs the process of remembering (memory) and offers consolation. In his comforting words, Paul proposes a distinct understanding of hope (ἐλπίς). He uses it categorically²⁰¹. That is, the hope

¹⁹⁶ Judith LIEU, *Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory*, p. 140-141.

¹⁹⁷ Simon BUTTICAZ and Enrico NORELLI (eds), *Introduction*, p. 1-14; Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory'*, p. 99-131. Judith LIEU, *Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory*, p. 133-143.

¹⁹⁸ BDAG 655, μνήμη.

¹⁹⁹ BDAG 655, μνημονεύω.

²⁰⁰ BDAG 604, λυπέω.

²⁰¹ John M.G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 131-153.

(ἐλπίς) that Paul speaks is open to the believers alone. The rhetorical contrasts shape this distinctive dimension of hope.

The letter mirrors both an active and a passive process of remembering. The rhetorical contrasts indicate this process. The positive descriptions point to a dynamic process of remembering, and the negative descriptions reflect a passive process. The inactive phase relates to the Christ-followers' old self, their life before accepting the gospel. The others who have not received the gospel possess the old self. These ways provide the audience with content for their hope. However, the dynamics do not contain explicit polemics. We see only a negated expression of the others that they are those without hope. It does not point out the specific nature of this expression. Hence, I apply the social memory model to analyse the dynamics and to define what hope (ἐλπίς) means in the eschatological discourse.

From a hermeneutical perspective, we approach social memory as a tool of interpretation within social-scientific criticism²⁰². This approach helps us assess divergent backgrounds and a plurality of contexts regarding the descriptions of hope in First Thessalonians. We notice that the rhetorical contrasts point to the different contexts and their formative values to shape memory and the believers' identity. These aspects closely relate memory to other fields of research like identity, oral studies and history. It highlights that the inter-dependency between these concepts is significant to discover the foundational element of memory.

Paul's letters reflect such comparable images as sayings or traditions (1 Thess 4:13-18; Gal 1:4; 1 Cor 3:15; 1 Cor 7:26-31). Notably, the eschatological discourse (4:13-5:11) begins with a definite assertion of the unique hope that the believers possess. Their unique advantage is not available to others who have no hope. This kind of differentiation opens to the social dynamics of plurality and comparison.

In this chapter, I have explained social memory and its benefits for the present research. We have seen the social memory theory and its close links with other studies like orality, tradition and history. I have also shown that social memory as communicative memory involves both oral and written media. They establish a pathway for reconstructing the past, with a significance both for the present and the future. The theory shows how the groups' initial memory construction stages (recent past) consist of multiple perspectives and remain very fluid. Our research considers this dimension and studies how varied antithetical features point to a plurality of contexts. The research looks at these dynamics beginning with an interpretive explanation. In the following three chapters (two, three, and four), I carry a brief exegetical study of 1 Thess 4:13-5:11 to identify and delimit the scope of rhetorical contrasts, antitheses, and their implied traditions.

²⁰² John H. ELLIOT, *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press, 1993.

CHAPTER 2

DELIMITATION OF THE TEXT: 1 THESS 4:13–5:11

INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the delimitation of the text for an exegetical study. First, I explain why this study focuses on eschatology only in First Thessalonians. Second, I argue for the unity of First Thessalonians. Third, I delimit the pericope 1 Thess 4:13–5:11 under two subunits. This section shows how 4:13–18 closely relates to 5:1–11, describing their interconnective elements. Finally, the chapter includes a sense line division of the text (1 Thess 4:13–18 and 5:1–11) which this study deals with in two subsequent chapters.

1. THE THESSALONIAN CORRESPONDENCE

Paul's apocalyptic thought is central to understanding his theology¹. This understanding has a bearing on the eschatology in First and Second Thessalonians². However, with a cursory reading of First and Second Thessalonians, one can quickly notice divergent eschatological perspectives (1 Thess 4:13–5:11; 2 Thess 2:1–12). First Thessalonians mainly highlights an imminent eschatology, whereas Second Thessalonians emphasises a futuristic eschatology. These different perspectives question the centrality of a consistent and coherent apocalyptic Paul in the Thessalonian correspondence. As a result, we witness a continuous dialogue on the relationship between these two letters and their author. The scholarly opinions vary. But a greater consensus regards only First Thessalonians as authentic and Second Thessalonians inauthentic³.

Besides, the concept of imminence is not limited to First Thessalonians (4:17; cf. 1 Cor 7:29; 2 Cor 5:8; Rom 13:11; Phil 1:23; 4:5). All the more, we see in 1 Thess 5:10 that Paul acknowledges that not all will be alive at the coming of the Lord: “so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him” (ἵνα εἴτε γρηγοροῦμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν). In First Thessalonians, we also find small and larger eschatological passages (1:1–10; 2:13–16; 3:13; 4:13–5:11; 5:23). They reflect both a realised and an imminent eschatological perspective. Within a single letter, Paul has included divergent eschatological perceptions.

¹ Paul FOSTER, *Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians? A Fresh Look at an Old Problem*, in *JSNT*, 35.2 (2012), p. 150-175 (here p. 152; see note 2). Cf. Nicholas T. WRIGHT, *Paul in Current Anglophone Scholarship*, in *ExpTim*, 123.8 (2012), p. 367-381 (here p. 372-374).

² Paul FOSTER, *Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians? A Fresh Look at an Old Problem*, p. 152.

³ Régis BURNET, *La Deuxième épître aux Thessaloniens de Paul est-elle la même que la Deuxième aux Thessaloniens de Pseudo-Paul ? Réflexions sur le verdict de pseudépigraphie*, in *ETR*, 91.4 (2016), p. 673-683. See also *id.*, *Pourquoi écrire sous le nom d'un autre ? Hypothèses sur le phénomène de la pseudépigraphie néotestamentaire*, in *ETR*, 88.4 (2013), p. 475-495. Cf. Paul FOSTER, *Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?*, p. 150-175.

However, the idea of a consistent and coherent apocalyptic Paul brings into dialogue the divergent eschatological passages in all the seven authentic letters (First Thessalonians, Galatians, First and Second Corinthians, Romans, Philemon, and Philippians). Besides, the historical interpretations attempt to reconcile Paul's divergent eschatological perspectives. Here, the solution is that the Pauline letters reflect a gradual developmental process in the eschatological thought pattern.

But in Paul's significant eschatological passages (1 Thess 4–5, 1 Cor 15, 2 Cor 5, Rom 13, and Phil 3), we see that Paul consistently adapts to and addresses the particular local context⁴. His eschatological language displays a variety in its statements and structures. It points to both the ethical concerns (paraenetic and polemical in 1 Thess 4–5, 1 Cor 15, Rom 13, Phil 1:15-18; 3:2ff) and Paul's apostolic labour (pastoral and personal in 2 Cor 4–5)⁵. However, this study has a narrow focus. Our aim is not to present an overall or a general Paul's eschatology or his theology. The research focuses on the eschatological content in the Thessalonian correspondence, looks at the debates concerning the authorship of First and Second Thessalonians, and delimits the text to 1 Thess 4:13–5:11, which the subsequent chapters consider for an exegetical explanation.

1.1 The Debates about Authorship

We observe divergent opinions regarding the date, traditions, and eschatological theology in First and Second Thessalonians. The following sections mention the contested issues, and after considering the different views, this study proposes a particular opinion based on the social memory model.

First, we look at the notion of gradual development in Paul's eschatology. William Baird⁶ comments that the concept: the gradual development of Paul's eschatology and traditional chronology understanding go hand in hand. The conventional idea of chronology places First Thessalonians as the earliest and Philippians as the latest in Paul's literary career. Baird chooses another alternative. He thinks that one can explain a gradual development in Paul's eschatological language by the polemical settings of the different Pauline communities rather than by following an evolutionary approach⁷.

To explain the notion of gradual development in Paul's eschatology, Christopher Mearns⁸ considers First and Second Thessalonians to be the earliest New Testament writing. Based on this understanding, he devises a four-phase developmental process in Paul's eschatology. First, in the context of the early demise of believers, Paul re-evaluates his realised eschatology preaching. Second, Paul introduces the imminence of the Day of the Lord. Third, when there is a need

⁴ William BAIRD, *Pauline Eschatology in Hermeneutical Perspective*, in *NTS*, 17 (1971), p. 314-327 (here p. 322).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 322-323.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁸ Christopher L. MEARNS, *Early Eschatological Development in Paul: The Evidence of I and II Thessalonians*, in *NTS*, 27 (1981), p. 137-157 (here p. 157).

to elaborate further, Paul proposes a futuristic eschatology. And finally, Paul elaborates on futuristic eschatology with the figure of anti-Christ.

Further, concerning Paul's early eschatology, Richard Longenecker⁹ takes the two Thessalonian letters as the basis. For him, this does not indicate Paul's chronological order because he considers Galatians as the first. But according to him, the Galatians hardly refers to Paul's early eschatology (Gal 1:4; 6:10). To consider Paul's early eschatological thought, Longenecker takes the two Thessalonian letters on a thematic basis to be the earliest. Besides, he proposes functional Christology as the foundational basis to conceptualise the overall Pauline theology. Both Mearns and Longenecker agree to Pauline authorship of First and Second Thessalonians. This study views the developmental understanding of Paul's eschatology differently in the Thessalonian correspondence and limits its focus on First Thessalonians. First, I reconsider the arguments for the authenticity of Second Thessalonians. Second, I show how social memory can contribute differently to understanding authorship and eschatology in Second Thessalonians.

1.1.1 Authorship and Authenticity

We see that the issue of authenticity is central in discussing Paul's eschatology. The interpretations vary according to several commentaries and related studies on First and Second Thessalonians. Paul Foster¹⁰ and Régis Burnet¹¹ synthesise the divergent perspectives over a long period of historical interpretations. But each draws a different conclusion. Foster supports Pauline authorship of Second Thessalonians, whereas Burnet emphasises the same letter's pseud-epigraphic character. This study does not attempt at such a broad reconsideration of the problem of pseudonymity. As follows, we point to, not exhaustive but only a representative, the divergent opinions:

- a) In favour of un-Pauline authorship of First and Second Thessalonians: Ferdinand Baur¹².
- b) Studies in support of Pauline authorship of First and Second Thessalonians: Ernst von Dobschütz¹³, Béda Rigaux¹⁴, Bruce N. Kaye¹⁵, Ernest Best¹⁶, William Baird¹⁷, Richard

⁹ Richard N. LONGENECKER, *The Nature of Paul's Early Eschatology*, in *NTS*, 31 (1985), p. 85-95 (here p. 87, 93-94).

¹⁰ Paul FOSTER, *Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians? A Fresh Look at an Old Problem*, p. 150-175.

¹¹ Régis BURNET, *La Deuxième épître aux Thessaloniens*, p. 673-683.

¹² Ferdinand C. BAUR, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, p. 251-256.

¹³ Ernst VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *Die Thessalonicher-Briefe*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1909, p. 21-22.

¹⁴ Béda RIGAUX, *Saint Paul, les épîtres aux Thessaloniens*, Paris, Gabalda, 1956, p. 71.

¹⁵ Bruce N. KAYE, *Eschatology and Ethics in 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, in *NovT*, 17.1 (1975), p. 47-57.

¹⁶ Ernest BEST, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, Peabody, MA, Hendrickson Publishers, 1986, p. 58.

¹⁷ William BAIRD, *Pauline Eschatology in Hermeneutical Perspective*, p. 314-327.

Longenecker¹⁸, Robert Jewett¹⁹, Lars Hartman²⁰, Joseph Plevnik²¹, Abraham J. Malherbe²², David Luckensmeyer²³, Collin R. Nicholl²⁴, Gordon D. Fee²⁵, Antony C. Thiselton²⁶, Paul Foster²⁷, Janusz Kucicki²⁸, Jeffrey A. D. Weima²⁹, and Andy Johnson³⁰.

- c) Studies in support of later interpolations by Paul in First Thessalonians: Walter Schmithals³¹, Wolfgang Harnisch³², and Helmut Köster³³.
- d) Studies favouring Second Thessalonians as pseudepigraphic text: Johann E. Christian Schmidt³⁴, Charles Masson³⁵, Willi Marxsen³⁶, Earl J. Richard³⁷, Wolfgang Trilling³⁸,

¹⁸ Richard N. LONGENECKER, *The Nature of Paul's Early Eschatology*, p. 85-95.

¹⁹ Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 91-109, 216-221.

²⁰ Lars HARTMAN, *The Eschatology of 2 Thessalonians as Included in a Communication*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), Leuven, Leuven University Press, p. 470-485.

²¹ Joseph PLEVNIK, *Paul and the Parousia: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation*, Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 1997.

²² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (AB, 32B), New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 2000, p. 350-351.

²³ David LUCKENSMEYER, *The Eschatology on 1 Thessalonians* (Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments, 71), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2009, p. 173-211.

²⁴ Collin R. NICHOLL, *From Hope to Despair*, p. 188.

²⁵ Gordon D. FEE, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (NICNT), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2009, p. 237.

²⁶ Antony C. THISELTON, *1 & 2 Thessalonians Through the Centuries* (BBC), West Sussex, UK, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, p. 11-19 (here p. 15-16).

²⁷ Paul FOSTER, *Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?*, p. 150-175.

²⁸ Janusz KUCICKI, *Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence, A Comparative Study of 1 Thess 4, 13 -5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1-12 to the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Das Alte Testament im Dialog, 7), Bern, Peter Lang, 2014.

²⁹ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1-2 Thessalonians* (BECNT), Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academics, 2014, p. 54.

³⁰ Andy JOHNSON, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (THNTC), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2016, p. 7.

³¹ Walter SCHMITHALS, *Paul and the Gnostics*, John E. Steely (trans.), Nashville, Abingdon, 1972.

³² Wolfgang HARNISCH, *Eschatologische Existenz*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973.

³³ Helmut KÖSTER, *From Paul's Eschatology to the Apocalyptic Schemata of 2 Thessalonians*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 441-458.

³⁴ Johann E. C. SCHMIDT, *Vermuthung über die beiden Briefe an die Thessalonicher in ID., Bibliothek für Kritik und Exegese des Neuen Testaments und älteste Christengeschichte*, vol. 2.3, Hadamar, Neue Gelehrtenbuchhandlung, 1801, p. 380-386; See, Paul FOSTER, *Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?*, p. 154 ; Régis BURNET, *La Deuxième épître aux Thessaloniens*, p. 374.

³⁵ Charles MASSON, *Les deux épîtres de saint Paul aux Thessaloniens*, Paris, Delachaux & Niestle S. A., 1957, p. 8-13.

³⁶ Willi MARXSEN, *Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to Its Problems*, Geoffrey Buswell (trans.), Philadelphia, PA, Fortress Press, 1968, p. 30-35, 37-44. See also *id.*, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (Züricher Bibelkommentare), Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 1979.

³⁷ Earl J. RICHARD, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Sacra Pagina, 11), Collegeville, MN, The Liturgical Press, 1995, p. 29-30.

³⁸ Wolfgang TRILLING, *Der zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher* (EKKNT, Band XIII & XIV), Neukirchen-Vluyn/Ostfildern, Neukirchener Theologie/Patmos Verlag, 2014, p. 22-26.

Glenn Holland³⁹, Charles H. Giblin⁴⁰, Daryl D. Schmidt⁴¹, Christina M. Kreinecker⁴² and Régis Burnet⁴³.

- e) In favour of single authorship of First and Second Thessalonians, but addressed to two different communities: Adolf von Harnack⁴⁴. He proposed two Christian communities in Thessalonica: a gentile majority community received First Thessalonians, and a minority Jewish community received Second Thessalonians.
- f) Studies supporting co-authorship of First and Second Thessalonians: Karl P. Donfried⁴⁵ and Pieter J. J. Botha⁴⁶.
- g) The proposal of pre-dating Second Thessalonians to First Thessalonians: Charles A. Wanamaker⁴⁷.
- h) The proposal of Second Thessalonians as a re-reading of First Thessalonians: Yann Redalié⁴⁸, Hanna Roose⁴⁹, and J. Michael Gilchrist⁵⁰.

The emphasis on the pseudepigraphic elements in the Thessalonian letters historically originated with Johan E. Christian Schmidt⁵¹. Varied opinions largely rest on the perceivable

³⁹ Glenn HOLLAND, "A Letter Supposedly from Us": A Contribution to the Discussion about the Authorship of 2 Thessalonians, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 394-402.

⁴⁰ Charles H. GIBLIN, *2 Thessalonians 2 Re-read as Pseudepigraphal: A Revised Reaffirmation of Threat to Faith*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 459-469.

⁴¹ Daryl D. SCHMIDT, *The Syntactical Style of 2 Thessalonians: How Pauline is it?*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 383-393.

⁴² Christina M. KREINECKER, *The Imitation Hypothesis: Pseudepigraphic Remarks on 2 Thessalonians with Help from Documentary Papyri*, in Stanley E. PORTER and Gregory P. FEWSTER (eds), *Paul and Pseudepigraphy* (Pauline Studies, 8), Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2013, p. 197-220. See also Stanley E. PORTER and Gregory P. FEWSTER, *On Pauline Pseudepigraphy: An Introduction*, in Stanley E. PORTER and Gregory P. FEWSTER (eds), *Paul and Pseudepigraphy* (Pauline Studies, 8), p. 1-10.

⁴³ Régis BURNET, *La Deuxième épître aux Thessaloniens*, 673-683.

⁴⁴ Adolf VON HARNACK, *Das Problem des zweiten Thessalonicherbriefs* in *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, 2010, p. 560-578. See Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 38.

⁴⁵ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-113.

⁴⁶ Pieter J. J. BOTHA, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*, Eugene, OR, Cascade Books, 2012, p. 199.

⁴⁷ Charles A. WANAMAKER, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (NIGTC), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1990, p. 249.

⁴⁸ Yann REDALIÉ, *La deuxième épître aux Thessaloniens* (CNT, 9c), Genève, Labor et Fides, 2011, p. 20 and 27. See also, Daniel GERBER, *Un essai de lecture de 2 Th 1, 1-2, 12*, in Christopher TUCKETT (ed.), *2 Thessalonians And Pauline Eschatology, For Peter Pokorny On His 80th Birthday* (COP, 21), Leuven, Peeters, 2013, p. 13-31.

⁴⁹ Hanna ROOSE, *2 Thessalonians as Pseudepigraphic 'Reading Instruction' for 1 Thessalonians: Methodological Implications and Exemplary Illustration of an Intertextual Concept*, in Thomas L. BRODIE, Dennis R. McDONALD, and Stanley E. PORTER (eds), *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice*, Sheffield, Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006, p. 133-151.

⁵⁰ J. Michael GILCHRIST, *Intertextuality and the Pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians*, in Thomas L. BRODIE, Dennis R. McDONALD, and Stanley E. PORTER (eds), *The Intertextuality of the Epistles*, p. 152-175.

⁵¹ Johann E. C. SCHMIDT, *Vermuthung über die beiden Briefe an die Thessalonicher*, p. 380-386.

theological differences between the two Thessalonians letters. The differences in opinion are regarding God's harsh judgment, the link between the retribution of evil and comfort of the believers (2 Thess 1:5–6), the judgment day's arrival after the rebellion, and the appearance of the lawless one (2 Thess 2:1–12). All these elements differ predominantly from First Thessalonians. Further, we see that Ferdinand Baur⁵² delineated the Pauline corpus into three categories: Paul's main letters (Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans), disputed letters (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Thessalonians) and spurious letters (Pastoral epistles).

On the other side, as Christopher Tuckett⁵³ opines, the interpreters supporting Second Thessalonians' Pauline authorship appeal to the letter's joint authorship (Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy). Those who support authenticity see no significant differences between First and Second Thessalonians. Many commentaries on the First and the Second Epistles to the Thessalonians and studies related to their eschatological thought consider Pauline authorship of the letters. The exegetical commentaries from Best⁵⁴ and Malherbe⁵⁵, which this study consults, sharpen the arguments favouring Pauline authorship. Malherbe⁵⁶ comments as follows: "It is completely unrealistic to expect Paul to write in the same way in all circumstances. It is clear from 1 Thess 4:13–18 that he used material from the traditions available to him, both apocalyptic and consolatory, selecting only that was useful to him as he tried to comfort his readers in their particular circumstances. He does the same thing in Second Thessalonians"⁵⁷.

Recent contributions toward eschatology in the Thessalonian correspondence by David Luckensmeyer⁵⁸ and Collin Nicholl⁵⁹ accept Paul's authorship of First and Second Thessalonians. Concerning the chronology, Nicholl argues that Paul wrote Second Thessalonians immediately after First Thessalonians. He draws several parallels between the two letters to support his point of view favouring Pauline authorship. A further study by Janusz Kucicki⁶⁰ situates Paul's eschatological thinking in both letters, comparing them to other non-biblical Jewish texts to support Pauline authorship. In a slight departure, Karl Donfried⁶¹ has proposed a co-authorship of Second Thessalonians with Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus.

⁵² Ferdinand C. BAUR, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi*, p. 255-259. See also, Stanley E. PORTER and Gregory P. FEWSTER, *On Pauline Pseudepigraphy: An Introduction*, p. 1.

⁵³ Christopher M. TUCKETT, *Introduction*, in Christopher M. TUCKETT (ed.), *2 Thessalonians And Pauline Eschatology*, p. 1-11 (here p. 2 and 4). Cf., Vasily MIHOC, *Thanksgiving and Prayer. Appeal to Discipline the Disorderly* (2 Thess 2, 13– 3, 18), in Christopher M. TUCKETT (ed.), *2 Thessalonians And Pauline Eschatology*, p. 33-70; Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-113.

⁵⁴ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 58.

⁵⁵ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 368-369 and 406-408.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 368-369, 406-408.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁵⁸ David LUCKENSMEYER, *The Eschatology on 1 Thessalonians*, p. 174-211.

⁵⁹ Collin R. NICHOLL, *From Hope to Despair*, p. 188.

⁶⁰ Janusz KUCICKI, *Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 33-49.

⁶¹ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-113.

On the other hand, Wolfgang Trilling⁶² and Daryl Schmidt⁶³ highlight the un-Pauline character of Second Thessalonians. Yann Redalié⁶⁴ considers Second Thessalonians as pseudepigraphic and a re-reading of First Thessalonians. Though this is not a new proposal, he highlights this perspective, pointing that Second Thessalonians contains antithetical parallels and synonyms in excess. Besides, the letter manifests an exceedingly formal and relatively distant tone. There is a greater acceptance among many others⁶⁵ who consider Second Thessalonians a reading guide for First Thessalonians. However, Gregory Fewster⁶⁶ observes that the historical-critical and canonical approaches have relegated the disputed Pauline letters as secondary or supplementary to the authentic Pauline epistles. Instead, he proposes a hermeneutical key of understanding the author as a functional category.

1.1.2 Theological Divergences

First Thessalonians concerns imminence (5:1-11), whereas Second Thessalonians concerns future eschatology (2:1-12). Recent Pauline interpretations and Pauline theologies aim at a coherent and consistent image of Paul and his theology. A general framework of apocalyptic Paul, his vision and theology, strives toward a consensus that Paul intends to address his founded communities' unique and particular environment by divergent eschatological concepts. It points to a possibility that Paul has selected traditions most suited and do justice to the problems communities have faced. Though these attempts acknowledge respective communities' context, they nevertheless aim at a consistent Pauline image.

In First Thessalonians, Paul speaks of God's wrath connecting to the missionary motive, who opposed his apostolic labour, mainly the external opposition (2:1-16; cf. Acts 17:1-10). Besides, Paul has urged the community to be respectful of others (4:9-12; 5:15). First Thessalonians highlights the suddenness of the inbreaking eschatological event. Paul narrates a temporal framework intending to prepare the community for the great event. The narration is consolatory and plans to build up the community (cf. 4:18; 5:11). We read in First Thessalonians 5:2-3, "For you yourselves know very well that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape!"⁶⁷.

⁶² Wolfgang TRILLING, *Der zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher*, p. 22-26.

⁶³ Daryl D. SCHMIDT, *The Syntactical Style of 2 Thessalonians*, p. 383-393.

⁶⁴ Yann REDALIÉ, *La deuxième épître aux Thessaloniciens*, p. 20 and 27. See also Daniel GERBER, *Un essai de lecture de 2 Th 1, 1-2, 12*, p. 13-31.

⁶⁵ Hanna ROOSE, *2 Thessalonians as Pseudepigraphic 'Reading Instruction' for 1 Thessalonians*, p. 133-151; J. Michael GILCHRIST, *Intertextuality and the Pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians*, p. 152-175.

⁶⁶ Gregory P. FEWSTER, *Hermeneutical Issues in Canonical Pseudepigrapha: The Head/Body Motif in the Pauline Corpus as a Test Case*, in Stanley E. PORTER and Gregory P. FEWSTER (eds), *Paul and Pseudepigraphy*, p. 89-112. See also Stanley E. PORTER and Gregory P. FEWSTER, *On Pauline Pseudepigraphy: An Introduction*, in Stanley E. PORTER and Gregory P. FEWSTER (eds), *Paul and Pseudepigraphy*, p. 1-10 (here p. 5).

⁶⁷ 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 — αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἶδατε ὅτι ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως ἔρχεται. ὅταν λέγωσιν· εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια, τότε αἰφνίδιος αὐτοῖς ἐφίσταται ὄλεθρος ὥσπερ ἡ ὥδιν τῇ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσῃ, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγῃσιν.

The aspect of imminence is missing in Second Thessalonians. Here, the author pronounces God's wrath on those who have refused to believe (1:6; 2:10–12) and has demanded that believers maintain a distance from idle believers (3:6). The first aspect refers to the external opposition, and the latter relates to the internal problem. In addition to the external resistance, the conflicting dimension turns inward. We see that in Second Thessalonians that the author warns against the realised eschatological understanding. The letter narrates a temporal order of a series of events to prepare the community for the future eschatological event. We read this in Second Thessalonians 2:3, "Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction"⁶⁸. In this process, the author familiarises the community with the signs that precede the day of the Lord.

Here, between these letters, theological and eschatological visions differ. Both the opinions, for and against authenticity, appeal to this witness. Those who argue for the authenticity of Second Thessalonians emphasise that Paul adapts his theology to the community's changing circumstances. They point to Paul's evolving eschatological thinking⁶⁹. In support of the proposal of divergent temporal frames in Paul's theology, they refer to First Corinthians. We see this in 1 Cor 15:22-24: "For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power"⁷⁰.

On the contrary, those who argue against authenticity say that Paul cannot change his thinking within such a short span, because the argument supporting Paul's authorship of Second Thessalonians rests as follows. The premise is that Paul wrote his second letter to the Thessalonians within a short interval after he wrote the first one. Burnet⁷¹ provides a systematic historical survey of its interpretations. He highlights the pseudepigraphic tendencies in literary works and points to the differences between Paul and pseudo-Paul. Drawing our attention to Second Thessalonians' reception status, he concludes as follows: "the letter is rarely read and seldom quoted"⁷².

1.1.3 Concerning Labour

We find reference to ἀτακτος in 1 Thess 5:14 (cf. 4:11) and 2 Thess 3:6, 7, 11. The exegetical interpreters refer to this word to draw their conclusion depending upon their side of the

⁶⁸ 2 Thessalonians 2:3 — Μή τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον. ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας.

⁶⁹ Christopher L. MEARNs, *Early Eschatological Development in Paul*, p. 137-157. He has proposed a four-phase development in Paul's eschatological thinking.

⁷⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:22-24 — ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. Ἐκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, εἴτα τὸ τέλος, ὅταν παραδιδῷ τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν.

⁷¹ Régis BURNET, *La Deuxième épître aux Thessaloniens*, p. 683.

⁷² *Ibid.*

argument. There are several meanings assigned to it, like loafers or idlers⁷³, obstinate rebels⁷⁴, enthusiasts⁷⁵, disorderly or undisciplined persons⁷⁶. Bruce Kaye⁷⁷ regards that the disorderly behaviour and eschatological matter are unrelated. According to him, the problem relates to the local issues in Thessalonica. Recently, James Harrison⁷⁸ and Karl Donfried⁷⁹ have maintained that Paul's vision stood contrary to the Graeco-Roman imperial patronage and clientage. They consider that Paul envisioned an egalitarian and horizontal dimension in the community's interactions rather than a vertical asymmetrical imperial society⁸⁰.

Karl Donfried⁸¹ emphasises that the historical and social situation required the community to be independent of the imperial patronage and clientage in imperial Thessalonica. As a result, the writer and the leadership condemned the disorderly behaviour and advocated labour for their separate existence.

In First Thessalonians, Paul includes labour metaphors from the very beginning: "Constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ"⁸². The process continues in 2:13, "We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers"⁸³. We see that Paul proposes his own life worthy of imitating (2:1–12; v. 9, "You remember our labour and toil") and re-describes the same about Timothy in 3:3, "And we sent Timothy, our brother and co-worker for God in proclaiming the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of your faith"⁸⁴.

⁷³ Gerhard DELLING, ἄτακτος in *TDNT*, 8 (1972), p. 47-48. But Gerhard Delling views that 2 Thess 3:6 mainly intends a disorderly behaviour in the civil context.

⁷⁴ Ceslas SPICQ, ἄτακτος in *Notes de Lexicographie* 1:159. Spicq notes that the word refers mainly to the behavioural tendency of going against the order of nature or God.

⁷⁵ Rorbert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 104-105.

⁷⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 317; Yann REDALIÉ, *La deuxième épître aux Thessaloniens*, p. 148-150; Vasily MIHOC, *Thanksgiving and Prayer: Appeal to Discipline the Disorderly* (2 Thess 2, 13–3, 18), in Christopher M. TUCKETT (ed.), *2 Thessalonians and Pauline Eschatology* (COP, 21), p. 33-70 (here p. 34 and 46); Benoît STANDAERT, *Les Deuxième lettre aux Thessaloniens*, in Christopher M. TUCKETT (ed.), *2 Thessalonians and Pauline Eschatology* (COP, 21), p. 71-80 (here p. 78-79); Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 99-100. He compares the linguistic world of the Qumran where the disorderly means going against the commandment of God.

⁷⁷ Bruce N. KAYE, *Eschatology and Ethics in 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 47-48.

⁷⁸ James R. HARRISON, *Paul and Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome, A Study in Conflict of Ideology* (WUNT, 273), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

⁷⁹ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 95-101 and 104-107.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104-107.

⁸² 1 Thessalonians 1:3, ἀδιαλείπτως μνημονεύοντες ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

⁸³ 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως, ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.

⁸⁴ 1 Thessalonians 3:2, καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν.

The work metaphors also refer to the community dimension concerning the works of sanctification of love and labour, internal and external behaviour (4:1–12; v. 11, “To work with your hands, as we directed you”). Paul refocuses on the communitarian response and the works concerning hope, sobriety and vigilance (4:13–18; 5:1–11). In the final appeal, Paul recommends that the leadership guide the community with works of charity and labour (5:12–24; v. 14, “We urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers”).

Therefore, the author of Second Thessalonians finds enough ground to imitate Paul. He is not merely imitating. Instead, he has sufficient background in First Thessalonians to imitate and draw Paul’s authority and addresses the community’s current threatening situation, the misunderstanding of Parousia and disorderly behaviour (2 Thess 2:1–12 and 3:6–15).

1.1.4 Language and Style

Both sides of the arguments, authentic and inauthentic, appeal to the language and style in Second Thessalonians. Two illustrations follow, each on the respective side.

Gordon Fee⁸⁵ analyses the content and style in Second Thessalonians 2:2 and 2:17, favouring authenticity. The first one refers to the misunderstanding. The second one refers back to the first. In 2:2, we see an eschatological misinterpretation: “not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here” (εἰς τὸ μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοῦς μηδὲ θροεῖσθαι, μήτε διὰ πνεύματος μήτε διὰ λόγου μήτε δι’ ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι’ ἡμῶν, ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου). We read in 2:17, “comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word” (παρακαλέσαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας καὶ στηρίζαι ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἀγαθῷ). Fee considers as follows: “Thus he (Paul) is not suggesting that either a prophecy, or an oral report or a letter may have originated with him, but that by any one of these unknown means the content of the false teaching has been attributed to him”⁸⁶.

On the opposite side, Christina Kreinecker⁸⁷ refers to the documentary papyri data from III BCE to III CE and highlights the pseudepigraphic character of Second Thessalonians. She compares the data and the undisputed Pauline epistles to the author’s choice of language and phrases in Second Thessalonians. This study proposes an imitation hypothesis and claims that the author of Second Thessalonians to imitate Paul goes against the conventional style. Kreinecker illustrates that the conventional type as in the documentary papyri and the

⁸⁵ Gordon D. FEE, *Pneuma and Eschatology in 2 Thessalonians 2, 1-2: A Proposal about ‘Testing the Prophets’ and the purpose of 2 Thessalonians*, in Thomas E. SCHMIDT and Moisés SILVA (eds), *To Tell the Mystery, Essay on New Testament Eschatology in Honor of Robert H. Gundry* (JSNTSup, 100), Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1994, p. 196-215. See also G. D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 272-277. Here, Fee retains his earlier opinion.

⁸⁶ Gordon D. FEE, *Pneuma and Eschatology in 2 Thessalonians 2, 1-2*, p. 206.

⁸⁷ Christina M. KREINECKER, *The Imitation Hypothesis: Pseudepigraphic Remarks on 2 Thessalonians with Help from Documentary Papyri*, p. 217-219; See also Stanley E. PORTER and Gregory P. FEWSTER, *On Pauline Pseudepigraphy: An Introduction*, p. 6.

undisputed Pauline epistles employ ἐρωτῶ as a request formula and παραγγέλλω for the official and legal document. But in Second Thessalonians, the author applies ἐρωτῶ for doctrinal teaching (2 Thess 2:1) and παραγγέλλω for a personal request (2 Thess 3: 4, 6, 10). Kreinecker decides in favour of the pseudepigraphic character of Second Thessalonians as it appears that the author departs from the conventional style.

Notably, this study has approached the issue of authorship differently and concludes in favour of the pseudepigraphic character of Second Thessalonians. However, Kreinecker avoids discussing the essential differences regarding theological and chronological matters. We can say that the documentary papyri data is helpful concerning the language style and the content form, but there is hardly any focus on the community's dynamics. The present research study takes forward the dialogue concerning the community dimension.

1.2 Social Memory in the Debate: Remembrance with an Antithetical Form

In First Thessalonians, Paul has integrated both social memory and social morality seamlessly⁸⁸. Memory dynamics are visible within the prayer– thanksgiving sections (1:2–3:13). The process continues with “as you indeed know” phrases in the paraenesis (4:1–5:24). Throughout the letter, God, Paul, his co-workers, and the community are part of the remembering process. We read in 1 Thess 1:3 as follows: “We remember before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ”⁸⁹. Again in 1 Thess 2:9, Paul recollects the biographical and foundational memory: “You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God”⁹⁰. This process goes on. We see in 1 Thess 3:6 that both Paul, Timothy and the community actively engage back-and-forth movement as one continuous process: “But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us just as we long to see you”⁹¹.

But in Second Thessalonians 2:5, we see a different style in the antithetical form. We read: “Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you?”⁹². Raymond Collins⁹³

⁸⁸ Régis BURNET, *L'anamnèse: structure fondamentale de la lettre paulinienne*, p. 57-69.

⁸⁹ 1 Thessalonians 1:3 — μνημονεύοντες ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν.

⁹⁰ 1 Thessalonians 2:9 — Μνημονεύετε γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον· νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τίνα ὑμῶν ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

⁹¹ 1 Thessalonians 3:6 — Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφ' ὑμῶν καὶ εὐαγγελισαμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε μνησίαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε, ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς.

⁹² 2 Thessalonians 2:5 — Οὐ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ἔτι ὢν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ταῦτα ἔλεγον ὑμῖν;

⁹³ Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Birth of the New Testament*, p. 11. In notes 31-32 (p. 11 and 218), Collins refers to Nils A. Dahl, who understands this phenomenon as “superfluous rehearsals and reminders” concerning memory. See Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 430-433. In this paper, Collins deals with the shift of paradigm. See also, Richard Howard DAVIS,

thinks that there is a recall motive in Paul's use of *μνημονεύω* (1 Thess 2:9; 1:3; 3:6). We will see in the fifth chapter, that according to Norbert Schneider⁹⁴, this form explains how and why the writer changes the linguistic character of a word by adding *οὐ/μή*. We see this in Second Thessalonians 2:5 with *οὐ μνημονεύετε*. This form initiates a favourable response through a negation. Jeffrey Weima comments that one should see nothing more than an emphatic force here⁹⁵. It means that Paul's question in no way seeks an answer for the question in the negated form. It only functions merely as a rhetorical question aimed at the assertion of the author's statement.

However, I consider the contrary. The negated form makes a statement on the believers' condition, and it also recollects their past. The writer, with his community, intends to reconstruct past events differently. We see that in 1 Thess 4:13, Paul has used a similar form that suggests otherwise⁹⁶. I agree with Niels Hyldahl, who comments as follows: "The Thessalonian Christians have become once again like the Gentiles, that is, without hope of salvation"⁹⁷. In comparison, the author's statement in 2 Thess 2:5 intends more than a rhetorical reassertion. It suggests a social memory dynamic that manifests a different trajectory in Second Thessalonians than in First Thessalonians.

In Second Thessalonians (2:5), the epistle writer presents their biographies as the model to imitate. Here, the writer presents the recollection of a past. It is a conscious effort and unidirectional. The recalled past parallels the tradition, a normative condition for the community to follow. Although the letter shows elements of the verbal message, the Spirit's role, and a letter communication, it becomes an authoritative tradition. Those who do not abide by it face excommunication (the working believers have to keep away from the idle believers). The social practices concern the present and future of the community. The lives of the apostles provide them with a basis and a model to imitate. As Simon Buttica comments, Paul and his co-workers have become the object of remembrance in the *deutero* and *trito* Pauline letters⁹⁸.

Remembering and Acting; A Study of the Moral life in light of 1 Thessalonians (PhD Dissertation), Yale University, 1971; Nils A. DAHL, *The Origin of the Earliest Prologues to the Pauline Letters*, in William A. BEARDSLEE (ed.), *The Poetics of Fatih, Part 1: Rhetoric, Eschatology, and Ethics in the New Testament* (Semeia, 12), Atlanta, SBL Press, 1978, p. 233-277 (here p. 233-237).

⁹⁴ Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, p. 15-25.

⁹⁵ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 523.

⁹⁶ 1 Thessalonians 4:13 — "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope" (Οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων, ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα).

⁹⁷ Niels HYDLAHL, *Auferstehung Christi—Auferstehung der Toten* (1 Thess. 4, 13–18), in Sigfred PEDERSEN (ed.), *Die Paulinische Literatur und Theologie/The Pauline Literature and Theology* (Theologische Studien, 7), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980, p. 119-135 (here p. 123). The statement is as follows: "Die Thessalonischen Christen sind wirklich wieder wie Heiden geworden, d. h. ohne Hoffnung auf Heil".

⁹⁸ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory'*, p. 99-131.

In social memory, a temporal gap divides the nature of communication media. The concept of a generational gap separates the social and collective phases of memory in a group⁹⁹. At the same time, a floating gap separates the collective and cultural memory phases in a society¹⁰⁰. Both social and collective memories together constitute communicative memory. The Pauline letters belong to the communicative memory category, which usually accounts for the foundational and biographical stories¹⁰¹. However, in Second Thessalonians, the writer and the community interact through traditions that point to a normative force. These elements typically belong to the cultural memory phase.

In this background, the dating of Second Thessalonians appears a contested issue. Robert Jewett¹⁰² comments that Paul, while writing First Thessalonians, was aware of the problems discussed in Second Thessalonians. Most recent commentaries and studies on eschatology in First and Second Thessalonians insist that Paul wrote Second Thessalonians immediately after First Thessalonians. Recent studies representing this view are as follows: Collin Nicholl¹⁰³, Ben Witherington III¹⁰⁴, Gordon Fee¹⁰⁵, Michael Pahl¹⁰⁶, Karl Donfried¹⁰⁷, Janusz Kucicki¹⁰⁸, and Jeffrey Weima¹⁰⁹. These studies present a more considerable consensus yet with a slight variation of 49–50 CE or 50–51 CE for First Thessalonians and 51–52 CE for Second Thessalonians¹¹⁰.

On the contrary, Benoît Standaert¹¹¹ proposes a minimum gap of twenty years between the writing of First and Second Thessalonians. But he comments that it cannot be later than 70 CE. His argument rests on the imitation hypothesis, the differences in eschatological teaching, and the community's disorderly behaviour in Second Thessalonians.

As mentioned above, the dating of Second Thessalonians would point to the letter's pseudepigraphic character. Based on the social memory model, our present research considers a gap of

⁹⁹ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 35; Sandra HUEBENTHAL, *Frozen Moments*, p. 26-29.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Sandra HUEBENTHAL, *Frozen Moments*, p. 26-29.

¹⁰² Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 92.

¹⁰³ Colin R. NICHOLL, *From Hope to Despair*, p. 188.

¹⁰⁴ Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 10 and 30.

¹⁰⁵ Gordon D. FEE, *Pneuma and Eschatology in 2 Thessalonians 2.1-2*, p. 196-215. See also Gordon D. FEE, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonian*, p. 272-277.

¹⁰⁶ Michael W. PAHL, *Discerning the 'Word of the Lord': The 'Word of the Lord' in 1 Thessalonians 4:15* (LNTS, 389), New York, NY, T & T Clark, 2009.

¹⁰⁷ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-114. Donfried argues for a joint authorship of Second Thessalonians by Paul, Silvanus and Timothy.

¹⁰⁸ Janusz KUCICKI, *Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence* p. 33-49.

¹⁰⁹ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 40-54.

¹¹⁰ Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 10 and 30. In reference to First Thessalonians and Pauline chronology, see Karl P. DONFRIED, *1 Thessaloniciens et la chronologie paulinienne*, in Andreas DETTWILER, Jean-Daniel KAESTLI and Daniel MARGUERAT (eds), *Paul, une théologie en construction* (Labor et Fides/Le Monde de la Bible, 51), Cerf, Paris, 2004, p. 107-134;.

¹¹¹ Benoît STANDAERT, *La deuxième lettre aux Thessaloniciens*, p. 72-73.

twenty years is agreeable. However, the arguments that this study has discussed are different. We have referred to the notion of a generational gap separating the social and collective memory phase as suggested by Jan Assmann (forty years) and Sandra Huebenthal (thirty to fifty years). A gap of forty or thirty to fifty years looks too distant and is not entirely agreeable. However, it is convenient to understand that the problem in Second Thessalonians is to do with a new grown-up generation unfamiliar with the original teaching (as Paul remained in Thessalonica around four weeks). And much later and after Paul's death, a different Paul writes them and addresses their eschatological and social situation. It is eschatological as it refers to a future parousia and is social as it advocates labour for the community's self-sufficiency. Hence, this study favours the opinion that Second Thessalonians is pseudepigraphic. As a result, we focus only on First Thessalonians' eschatological discourse (4:13–5:11).

2. FIRST THESSALONIANS AND LITERARY UNITY

First Thessalonians is the oldest of Paul's extant letters¹¹². An overwhelming sibling language and kinship metaphors are present throughout the letter (1:4; 2:1, 7, 9, 11, 14, 17; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 6, 10, 13; 5:1, 4, 5, 12, 14, 25, 26, 27; cf. 2 Thess 1:3; 2:1, 13, 15; 3:1, 6). It reflects Paul's affective side and the ecclesiological dimension of the community. These features bind the community relationship and point to a seamless literary unity in the letter as a whole. Besides, the sibling and parental language (familial) and kinship metaphors designate the group's dynamics, identity construction and reformulation in light of their new faith¹¹³.

On the one hand, we see that the conjunctive γάρ binds several parts of the letter¹¹⁴. On the other, περὶ δέ or περί marks essential turns in the issues proposed by Paul, or from thanksgiving to hortatory tone, or a change from the previous to new communication (περὶ δέ in 4:9 and 5:1; περί in 1:2, 2:9, and 4:13)¹¹⁵. Besides, various eschatological units, small and big (1:9-10; 2:14-16; 4:13-18; 5:1-11), provide a functional unity to the letter¹¹⁶. This overall structure of the eschatological perspective marks Paul's rhetorical and pastoral strategy and the dialectics between the indicative and imperative¹¹⁷. Several terminologies like Lord, gospel, Parousia, peace, and security bear an imperial connotation and are prominently present in the letter,

¹¹² Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Power of Images in Paul*, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 2008, p. 11.

¹¹³ Trevor J. BURKE, *Family Matters, A Socio-Historical Study of Kinship Metaphors in 1 Thessalonians* (JSNTSup, 247), New York/London, T & T Clark, 2004, p. 3-5; Reidar AASGAARD, 'My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!' *Christian Siblingship in Paul* (JSNTSup, 265), New York/London, T & T Clark, 2004, p. 121-122; Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Power of Images in Paul*, p. 12-19; Philip A. HARLAND, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians*, p. 63-64 and 94-95; Paul TREBILCO, *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament*, p. 16; Jennifer H. MCNEEL, *Paul as Infant and Nursing Mother, Metaphor, Rhetoric, and Identity in 1 Thessalonians 2:5-8* (SBL, 12), Atlanta, SBL Press, 2014, p. 1-2.

¹¹⁴ Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Birth of the New Testament*, p. 10 and 217. We see the conjunctive γάρ in First Thessalonians 1:8, 9; 2:1, 3, 5, 9, 14, 19; 3:3, 4, 9; 4:2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15; 5:2, 5, 7 and 18.

¹¹⁵ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Concerning περὶ δέ in 1 Corinthians*, p. 229-256. See also *idem*, *Paul and the Emergence of Christian Textuality, Early Christian Literary Culture in Context* (Collected Essays, vol. 1; WUNT, 393), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2017, p. 65-88.

¹¹⁶ David LUCKENMEYER, *The Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, p. 2-3.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* See also Karl P. DONFRIED, *Thessalonians Methodological Debate*, 2000, p. 38-39.

particularly in the eschatological discourse (4:13–5:11)¹¹⁸. All these features point to the unity of the letter. In the following section, I present a representative perspective of the differing perceptions regarding the form and structure of First Thessalonians.

2.1 Form and Structure

Studies on the composition and structure of First Thessalonians centre on the thematic, epistolary, and rhetoric approaches. This study observes how thematic, epistolary, and rhetorical formulations narrowly focus on understanding antitheses, contrasts, and traditions. Several approaches concentrate on certain parts of First Thessalonians and apply the observations to the overall form and structure of the letter. We see that these observations relate not only to the form and structure of the letter but have a consequential effect on the meaning of words in the text. I explain this observation as follows.

2.1.1 Thematic and Epistolary Approaches

This section shows how the thematic and epistolary approaches consider antitheses in First Thessalonians. The thematic composition and structure of First Thessalonians, which Bédarigaux¹¹⁹ has proposed, remains a point of departure to almost all commentaries and studies, including the epistolary and rhetoric approaches¹²⁰. The epistolary strategies uncover the different layers of the letter applying the Graeco-Roman framework of a form and structure in the letter. These considerations divide the letter units into a three-part letter (an opening, body, and closing section) or a four-part letter (an opening, thanksgiving, body, and closing section) or a five-part letter (an opening, thanksgiving, body, paraenesis, and closing section)¹²¹.

Bédarigaux sets a two-part division of the letter, although not systematic as some would consider¹²². The first part corresponds to the relation between the missionaries and the Thessalonians (1:2–3:13). The second section deals with the directions and exhortations (4:1–5:24). The remaining parts, 1:1 and 5:25–28, constitute the introductory and the final salutation, prayers and benedictions. An essential element to note is Bédarigaux's further division of the initial section with a chronological perspective. This section has two sub-parts: during the church's foundation (1:2–2:16) and after the apostles' departure (2:17–3:13). But the later observations treat this section specifically as a thanksgiving unit with two parts.

¹¹⁸ James R. HARRISON, *Paul and Imperial* p. 47–69.

¹¹⁹ Bédarigaux, *Saint Paul, les épîtres aux Thessaloniens*, p. 37–38.

¹²⁰ Albert VANHOYE, *La Composition de 1 Thessaloniens*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 73–86 (here p. 73).

¹²¹ Stanley E. PORTER and Sean A. ADAMS, *Pauline Epistolography: An Introduction*, in Stanley E. PORTER and Sean A. ADAMS (eds), *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form* (Pauline Studies, 6), Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2010, p. 1–8 (here p. 3–4).

¹²² Albert VANHOYE, *La Composition de 1 Thessaloniens*, p. 73–86.

Jan Lambrecht¹²³ observes that the thanksgiving in two parts (1 Thess 1:2-10 and 2:1-3:13) has a unique function in First Thessalonians. Besides, Lambrecht¹²⁴ considers that one can read 1 Thess 2:1-12 as apologetic. He intends to restore the classical position that refers to Paul's self-defence. This argument is not against the notion of self-recommendation, which Johan Vos¹²⁵ and Daniel Marguerat¹²⁶ have proposed. Lambrecht refers to Jeffrey Weima¹²⁷, who has argued that in 2:1-12, Paul presumes potential charges in the future. However, Lambrecht has applied thematic and epistolary approaches to show that two thanksgiving sections serve a vital role in the letter. He also considers a similar strategy to treat the form and structure of First Thessalonians 4-5¹²⁸.

On the one hand, the thematic approach¹²⁹ divides the paraenetic section into three parts: a paraenesis in 4:1-12 and 5:12-22, an eschatology in 4:13-18 and 5:1-11, and an eschatological wish prayer in 5:23-24. Notably, the eschatological sections have similar topics and formal features, including several antitheses that reflect creedal formulas. On the other hand, the epistolary approach¹³⁰ points to five inter-related structural parts with an introductory paraenesis and a final wish prayer: an introductory paraenesis in 4:1-2, a paraenesis in 4:3-12, the final destiny of Christians in 4:13-18, a paraenesis in 5:1-8, the final destiny of Christians in 5:9-11, a paraenesis in 5:12-22, and an eschatological wish prayer in 5:23-24. In this way, Lambrecht considers that a structural division based on a thematic and epistolary adaptation resolves the differences that Bruce Johanson¹³¹ has emphasised. Johnson's linguistic analysis points to a

¹²³ Jan LAMBRECHT, *Thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians 1-3*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 183-205. See also *id.*, *Lack of Logic? Close Reading of 1 Thessalonians 2, 1-12*, in Veronica KOPERSKI (ed.), *Understanding What One Reads II, Essays on the Gospels and Paul*, Leuven, Peeters, 2011, p. 288-298.

¹²⁴ Jan LAMBRECHT, *Lack of Logic? Close Reading of 1 Thessalonians 2, 1-12*, p. 288-298. See also Traugott HOLTZ, *On the Background of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12*, in Karl P. DONFRIED and Johannes BEUTLER (eds), *The Thessalonian Debate, Methodological Discord or Methodological Synthesis?*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2000, p. 69-80.

¹²⁵ Johan S. VOS, *On the Background of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 : A Response to Traugott Holtz*, in Karl P. DONFRIED and Johannes BEUTLER (eds), *The Thessalonian Debate*, p. 81-88.

¹²⁶ Daniel MARGUERAT, *Imiter l'apôtre, mère et père de la communauté: 1 Thess 2:1-12*, in Morna D. HOOKER (ed.), *Not in the Word Alone, The First Epistle to the Thessalonians* (Benedictina 15), Rome, Benedictina Publishing, 2003, p. 25-54. See also, Mary Ann GETTY, *The Imitation of Paul in the Letters to the Thessalonians*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 277-283; Claude COULOT, *Paul à Thessalonique (1 Th 2, 1-12)*, in NTS, 52 (2006), p. 377-393.

¹²⁷ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *The Function of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and the Use of Rhetorical Criticism: A Response to Otto Merk*, in Karl P. DONFRIED and Johannes BEUTLER (eds), *The Thessalonian Debate*, p. 114-131. See also Jan LAMBRECHT, *Lack of Logic? Close Reading of 1 Thessalonians 2, 1-12*, p. 288-298 (here p. 298).

¹²⁸ Jan LAMBRECHT, *A Structural Analysis of 1 Thessalonians 4-5* in Karl P. DONFRIED and Johannes BEUTLER (eds), *The Thessalonian Debate*, p. 163-178.

¹²⁹ Jan LAMBRECHT, *A Structural Analysis of 1 Thessalonians 4-5*, p. 166-172.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 165. See also Bruce C. JOHANSON, *To all Brethren: A Text of Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians* (ConBNT, 16), Stockholm, Almqvist and Wiksell, 1987, p. 160; Albert VANHOYE, *La Composition de 1 Thessaloniciens*, p. 73-86.

ring-composition, a chiasmic structure (A = 4:1-12, B = 4:13–5:11 and A' = 5:12-24). This proposal highlighted that the framing sections, 4:1-12 and 5:12-24, differ from 4:13–5:11¹³².

We see Lambrecht has referred to 4:1–5:24, considering the epistolary approach as a paraenetic section. But the application of the term paraenesis mainly appears with Malherbe¹³³. Considering the historical context, Malherbe considers First Thessalonians as a paraenetic letter. He proposes a two-part division of the letter as *philophraenesis* and *paraenesis*¹³⁴. The first refers to a model of friendship letter, and the second to an advisory form of caring pastoral strategy, a consolatory pattern.

Malherbe proposes and defends that the entire letter is paraenetic. The paraenetic language consists of personal examples, antitheses, qualities of virtuous people and advice from a father to a son. The language of paraenesis also includes a group of terms like παράκλησις, παρακαλῶ, παραμυθία, παραμυθεῖσθαι, παραγγελία, οἶδατε, μνημονεύετε and their cognates¹³⁵. To support the paraenetic approach, Malherbe appeals to patristic exegesis (John Chrysostom¹³⁶ and Theodoret of Cyrus¹³⁷). However, Margaret Mitchell¹³⁸ argues that similar terminologies are also present in the deliberative argumentation. She considers that both the terms, παράνεσις and συμβουλευτική (advice and counsel) have an overlapping or identical application in the ancient texts. Further, she comments that although Malherbe has contributed significantly to understanding consolatory patterns, Paul did not imitate pagan conventions¹³⁹.

We see that both thematic and epistolary approaches consider antitheses. The interpreters try to discover Paul's theological content in the antitheses, particularly in the apologetic section (2:1-12) and the eschatological discourse (4:13–5:11). These passages reflect a greater extent multiple backgrounds, including Graeco-Roman. One can't easily dispense the surrounding contexts in which Paul has preached and written First Thessalonians in this background.

2.1.2 Rhetorical Approaches

¹³² Bruce C. JOHANSON, *To all Brethren*, p. 160; See also, Jan LAMBRECHT, *A Structural Analysis of 1 Thessalonians 4–5*, p.165.

¹³³ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 78-86. See also *id.*, 'Gentle as a Nurse': *The Cynic Background to 1 Thess.2*, in *NovT*, 12 (1970), p. 203-217. Here, Malherbe refers to Dio Chrysostom (*Alexandrian Oration*, 11–12) to defend his proposal of a Graeco-Roman philosophical background to 1 Thess 2:1-12, particularly the imitation model of a philosopher's personal virtues. However, Margaret Mitchell considers that Dio Chrysostom's rhetoric is overly complex and often shifts between epideictic and deliberative oratory. Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Review Essay: Abraham J. Malherbe, The Letters to the Thessalonians*, in *Paul and the Emergency of Christian Textuality, Early Christian Literary Culture in Context*, p. 53-64. The review essay originally appeared in the *SBL Reveiw of Biblical Literature* (2004; p. 3-10).

¹³⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Gentle as a Nurse*, p. 203-217; *id.*, *Thessalonians*, p. 78-86. See also Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 16-21.

¹³⁵ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 81-86 and 155; Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Review Essay: Abraham J. Malherbe*, p. 57.

¹³⁶ John CHRYSOSTOM, *Hom.in 1 Thess 11.2* (in J.-P. MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca* 62: 463).

¹³⁷ Theodoret of CYRUS, *Int.in 1Thess 1.6* (in J.-P. MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca* 82: 632).

¹³⁸ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Review Essay: Abraham J. Malherbe*, p. 63-64.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 60. Cf. Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 286.

The present section explains the consideration of antitheses in First Thessalonians by the rhetorical approaches. The term “rhetoric”¹⁴⁰ derives its reference from the Greek word ῥητορικὸς. It means the art of public speaking and entails a broader knowledge of words and the process of training for persuasion. The ancient art of rhetoric refers to three different genres of rhetoric: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic¹⁴¹. The deliberate genre points to the motivation of the audience with a future orientation. The forensic type refers to the defence or attack of past action in the context of a court language. The epideictic form points to the praise and blame of the audience in the present context. Given this explanation, a rhetorical contrast¹⁴² is a literary unit. It uses an opposing character or content to persuade the audience, whereas an antithesis is a stylistic tool, a “balanced contrast of words and ideas”¹⁴³.

Considering the rhetorical approach, Robert Jewett¹⁴⁴ provides a comprehensive historical synthesis regarding the form and structure of First Thessalonians. Jewett moves away from the thematic and epistolary approach to a demonstrative rhetoric approach. Bruce Johanson¹⁴⁵, Albert Vanhoye¹⁴⁶, Frank Hughes¹⁴⁷, René Kieffer¹⁴⁸ and Ben Witherington¹⁴⁹ present similar syntheses and structural analyses of First Thessalonians based on the rhetorical approach. Witherington¹⁵⁰ approaches First Thessalonians as epideictic rhetoric. Regarding the content and placement of 1 Thess 5:23-28, Witherington¹⁵¹ regards that such content and placement are standard features in the epideictic rhetoric. He argues that the rhetorical structure of the letter succeeds in explaining the gaps that the epistolary approach did not. However, Jeffrey Weima¹⁵² defends the epistolary approach showing that the closing section (5:23-28, final benediction and prayers) reflects and recollects the significant themes of the letter.

¹⁴⁰ Stanley E. PORTER and Bryan R. DYER, *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric, An Introduction to a Continuing Discussion*, in Stanley E. PORTER and Bryan R. DYER (eds), *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric, Theory and Practice in the Hellenistic Context*, New York, NY, Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 1-10 (here p. 7). See also ARISTOTLE, *Rhet.* 3.12; G. A. KENNEDY, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ Stanley E. PORTER and Bryan R. DYER, *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric, An Introduction to a Continuing Discussion*, p. 7; ARISTOTLE, *Rhet.* 3.12; G. A. KENNEDY, *A New History*, p. 4. See also Duane F. WATSON, *The Three Species of Rhetoric and the Study of the Pauline Epistles*, in J. Paul SAMPLEY and Peter LAMPE (eds), *Paul and Rhetoric*, New York/London, T & T Clark, 2010, p. 25-47.

¹⁴² Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Birth of the New Testament*, p. 176.

¹⁴³ George A. KENNEDY, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 29 and 33.

¹⁴⁴ Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 216-221.

¹⁴⁵ Bruce C. JOHANSON, *To all Brethren*, p. 160.

¹⁴⁶ Albert VANHOYE, *La Composition de 1 Thessaloniens*, p. 73-86.

¹⁴⁷ Frank Witt HUGHES, *The Rhetoric of 1 Thessalonians*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 94-116.

¹⁴⁸ René KIEFFER, *L'eschatologie en 1 Thessaloniens dans une perspective rhétorique*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 206-219.

¹⁴⁹ Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 28.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16-21.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 413.

Witherington critiques Malherbe's¹⁵³ two-part division of the letter as *philophaenesis* and *paraenesis*¹⁵⁴. The first model is like a friendship letter, and the second is a consoling pastoral strategy. Both models are paraenetic and include exhortations. However, according to Witherington, exhortations in several parts are a common feature in epideictic rhetoric¹⁵⁵. On this position, Witherington appeals to the argument proposed by Margaret Mitchell¹⁵⁶. She defends her response as follows. She shows that Malherbe's paraenetic consolatory approach does not apply to First Thessalonians as a whole. Mitchell provides two arguments. First, Malherbe mainly discusses the letter's content and not the form or structure. Second, the Church Fathers on whom Malherbe depends (John Chrysostom¹⁵⁷ and Theodoret of Cyrus¹⁵⁸) do not consider First Thessalonians part of the consolatory paraenesis tradition. As a result, one can assume that the consolatory paraenesis applies only to 4:13–5:11. And the unit, 2:1-12 does not explain the letter's overall structure.

I agree that the content, form, and structure in 1 Thess 2:1-12 and 4:13–5:11 are different. I also admit that 2:1-12 does not explain the overall context of the letter. But I can't entirely agree with the proposal that 2:1-12 lacks paraenetic force. As follows, Paul has modelled his narration with enough indicators pointing to the need to imitate him and his gospel. The paraenetic passages (4:1–5:24) highlight the imitation principle from an imperative perspective. Besides, Mitchell's critic indirectly emphasises the writer's scribal practices over the letter's oral performance. On the contrary, the social memory model considers the oral and written process as one act in the communicative process of memory.

We notice that Witherington¹⁵⁹ combines the narrative part with the consolatory paraenesis with this background. The narrative (1:3–3:10) reflects an honorific and affective language, whereas the consolatory paraenesis (4:1–5:15) primarily deals with the funerary rhetoric. Thus, Witherington includes both the epistolary and rhetorical structure as part of epideictic rhetoric and provides the rhetorical structure of First Thessalonians as follows: epistolary prescript and greeting (1:1), thanksgiving report/exordium (1:2-3), narration (1:4–3:10), concluding/prospective wish prayer/transition (3:11-13), exhortation (4:1-8, 4:9-13, 4:13-18, 5:1-11, and 5:12-15), peroration (5:16-21), concluding wish prayer (5:23-24), closing greetings and charges (5:25-27), and finally benediction (5:28).

¹⁵³ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 78-86; *id.*, 'Gentle as a Nurse': *The Cynic Background to 1 Thess. 2* in *NovT*, 12 (1970), p. 203-217; Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Review Essay: Abraham J. Malherbe*, p. 53-64.

¹⁵⁴ Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 16-21.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁵⁶ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Review Essay: Abraham J. Malherbe*, p. 54; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 78-86; Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 16-21.

¹⁵⁷ John CHRYSOSTOM, *Hom.in 1 Thess 11.2*.

¹⁵⁸ Theodoret of CYRUS, *Int.in 1Thess 1.6*.

¹⁵⁹ Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 28.

Further, concerning the rhetorical approaches, I refer to Wilhelm Wuellner¹⁶⁰. He applies the concept of paradoxical encomium to show the significant role of the theme, suffering and joy, and its relevance for the letter's rhetorical structure. The thematic reference is to the oxymoron in the exordium (1:1-10), much suffering with joy (θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς) in 1:6¹⁶¹. This theme appears after the prescript in 1:1 and a dissociative argument in 1:5 (a negation). The paradoxical reference, much suffering with joy, reflects a commonality between Paul and the community. It points to their situation, the purpose of the letter and its argumentation¹⁶².

The paradoxical encomium is a subgenre of epideictic rhetoric¹⁶³. Paul, Christ-followers in Thessalonica, and other trans-local communities share this common paradoxical experience, much suffering with joy (1:6). The importance of applying this oxymoron is to discover its deeper layers in the letter's remaining parts and understand the rhetorical situation of the audience (in 2:1–3:13, 4:1–5:22, and 5:23-28). This essay combines and reconsiders all the rhetorical contrasts, antitheses, and negations from the perspective of this particular oxymoron. However, other antitheses and rhetorical distinctions show a different mechanism toward the dynamics of grief and hope in the eschatological discourse.

Also, concerning the rhetorical structural analysis of First Thessalonians, Thomas Olbricht and Stanley Helton¹⁶⁴ apply the Aristotelian perspective of *enthymeme*, which refers to ordinary principles of the populace in public discourse. As a term, an enthymeme is a mode of argumentation. The address resembles syllogism in formal dialectics but operates only by probable pre-suppositions consisting of examples and paradigms. That is, the premises are not stated but only implied. And as discourse, its primary social location is the identified group¹⁶⁵. In this context, the social location of Paul's speech is the Christ-followers in Thessalonica. Olbricht and Helton introduce two sub-genres of rhetoric in Paul's letters: reconfirmational (First Thessalonians) and confrontational (Galatians and Philemon)¹⁶⁶.

This particular approach with an Aristotelian perspective parallels Malherbe's identification of the Graeco-Roman tradition of moral appeals with Cynic background and consolatory patterns in 2:1-12 and 4:13–5:11, respectively¹⁶⁷. At the same time, they have applied a topical approach from a rhetorical perspective of genre. Accordingly, they deduce First Thessalonians into four structural parts along with four presuppositions: a) 1:1-10 indicates past and present confirmation, b) 2:1-16 shows that believers have confirmed Paul's ministry, c) 2:17–3:13 refers to

¹⁶⁰ Wilhelm WUELLNER, *The Argumentative Structure of 1 Thessalonians as Paradoxical Encomium*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 117-136.

¹⁶¹ 1 Thessalonians 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” (Καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου, δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου).

¹⁶² Wilhelm WUELLNER, *The Argumentative Structure of 1 Thessalonians*, p. 123-125.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas H. OLBRICHT and Stanley N. HELTON, *Navigating First Thessalonians Employing Aristotle's Enthymeme*, in Stanley E. PORTER and Bryan R. DYER (eds), *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric*, p. 228-244.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 228-232.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* See also Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Gentle as a Nurse*, p. 203-217.

reconfirmation by Timothy, and d) 4:1–5:28 relates to reconfirmation by letter. This structural arrangement, in return, implies five presuppositions: a) in 1:1, the foundation of the church; b) in 1:2–10, the community has followed God’s ways; c) in 2:1–3:10, the community is a witness to Paul’s mission apostolate; d) in 3:11–4:12, the community abounds in God’s ways; and e) in 4:13–5:3, the deceased in the community will be resurrected¹⁶⁸.

Like a combination of thematic and epistolary approaches, which Lambrecht¹⁶⁹ has applied to First Thessalonians, Olbricht and Helton¹⁷⁰ have introduced a topical consideration in the rhetorical analysis. However, Olbricht and Helton’s approach appears to contradict the fundamental Aristotelian principle they had referred to, that “one should not speak on the basis of all opinions but of those held by an identified group”¹⁷¹. Here, the topical arrangement of First Thessalonians is not much help to understand the community’s context. Similarly, the letter’s significant concerns reflected in the antitheses receive less focus, particularly suffering and joy, death and hope, darkness and light, wrath, and salvation.

2.2 Concluding Observations

We have observed three different approaches to the form and structure of First Thessalonians: thematic, epistolary, and rhetoric. As follows, I refer to specific observations.

First, I point to the differences between thematic and epistolary approaches. We notice that the thematic analyses refer to Paul, his opponents, and the antitheses he has applied to understand the author’s historical situation and intention. The thematic studies use an apologetic framework and draw certain conclusions on Pauline theology.

Second, both epistolary and rhetorical studies have complemented explaining the literary genre and unity of the letter. But at the same time, there are divergent observations and too many categorisations.

Third, this study distinguishes between rhetorical contrast and antitheses but does not treat them individually. We see that the epistolary approaches show antithesis as Paul’s unique style of theologising. At the same time, different rhetorical techniques treat rhetorical distinctions under different categorisations. But they have not adequately considered the social and apocalyptic dualism in the eschatological discourse. The antitheses in the eschatological discourse bridge the previous and subsequent sections to form a single communication process.

¹⁶⁸ Thomas H. OLBRICHT and Stanley N. HELTON, *Navigating First Thessalonians*, p. 234–236.

¹⁶⁹ Jan LAMBRECHT, *A Structural Analysis of 1 Thessalonians 4–5*, p. 166–172.

¹⁷⁰ Thomas H. OLBRICHT and Stanley N. HELTON, *Navigating First Thessalonians*, p. 228–244.

¹⁷¹ ARISTOTLE, *Rhet.* 2.22.3 (George A. KENNEDY, *Aristotle on Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 187); Thomas H. OLBRICHT and Stanley N. HELTON, *Navigating First Thessalonians*, p. 228–232.

Fourth, this study is conscious of the observations regarding polemics in the authoritative texts, especially in biblical texts¹⁷². But we have to consider how Paul presents a general opposing and conflicting environment in the evangelisation work in its historical context. Internal and external, or explicit and implicit, conflicts reflect two levels of dualism: social and apocalyptic. Notably, there is no trace of opponents in First Thessalonians¹⁷³. The opposition is external and an overall suffering context. At the same time, the letter has few passages that witness an implicit polemic. The polemic refers to the Jews of Judea (2:14-16) and others (4:4-5, 13; 5:10; cf. 1:10). These passages describe them negatively and indict them of God's wrath.

3. DELIMITATION OF THE SELECTED PERICOPE

This study considers 1 Thess 4:13–5:11 for the exegetical study in chapters three and four. The delimitation follows a social memory model basis. Paul has woven the narrative taking care of the earthly and heavenly communion. In First Thessalonians, we see this progression in the eschatological passages included in the five chapters (1:9-10, 2:19, 3:13, 4:13–5:11 and 5:23). Chapter one deals with foundational memory, the election of the community by God. Chapter two concerns the biographical memory of the founding members, Paul and the community. Chapter three details the episodic memory of Timothy's visit to Thessalonica. Chapters four and five show the process of communicative memory. These two chapters include oral and written memory media, the antitheses, contrasts, Jesus' teachings, allusions to biblical and non-biblical texts, and Graeco-Roman surroundings. The majority of these themes appear in section 4:13–5:11.

First Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 is the selected pericope for our exegetical study. The pericope has received significant attention in historical interpretations. Joseph Lightfoot¹⁷⁴ titles the section as the "advent of the Lord" with three independent units: 4:13–18, 5:1–3 and 5:4–11. James Everett Frame¹⁷⁵ considers these units as exhortations but regards 4:13–18 as a distinct unit. He sees Paul's exhortation as new and is not part of the Thessalonians' previous oral communication. However, Frame considers that 4:13–18 closely relates to 5:1–11. For Ernest Best¹⁷⁶, these sections are eschatological, and the entire letter contains an eschatological tone. Charles

¹⁷² Didier POLLEFEYT, *Jews and Christians after Auschwitz: from Substitution to Interreligious Dialogue*, in Didier POLLEFEYT (ed.), *Jews and Christians: Rivals or Partners for the Kingdom of God? In Search of an Alternative for the Theology of Substitution* (LTPM, 21), Leuven, Peeters Press, 1997, p. 10-37; Leon KLENICKI, *On Christianity: Towards a Process of Historical and Spiritual Healing-Understanding the Other as a Person of God* in Didier POLLEFEYT (ed.), *Jews and Christians: Rivals or Partners for the Kingdom of God? In Search of an Alternative for the Theology of Substitution*, p. 62-94; Reimund BIERINGER and Mary ELSBERND, *Introduction: The "Normativity of the Future" Approach: Its Roots, Development, Current State and Challenges*, in BIERINGER and Mary ELSBERND (eds), *Normativity of the Future, Reading Biblical and Other Authoritative Texts in an Eschatological Perspective* (ANL, 61), Leuven, Peeters, 2010, 3-26

¹⁷³ Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 26.

¹⁷⁴ Joseph B. LIGHTFOOT, *Notes on the epistles of St Paul: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians 1-7, Ephesians 1:1-14*, Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 1957, p. 62-63.

¹⁷⁵ James E. FRAME, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, Edinburgh, Clark, 1966, p. 17, 140, and 163.

¹⁷⁶ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 180.

Wanamaker¹⁷⁷ has analysed 4:13–5:11 under two units. The first unit, 4:13–18, deals with the Parousia of the Lord and the believers' assumption. The second unit, 5:1–11, refers to the eschatological expectation and its paraenesis. According to Wanamaker, the theme of Parousia dominates both the units with a paraenetic focus. Malherbe¹⁷⁸ sees this section as a single unit with interlinked eschatological exhortations. Gordon Fee¹⁷⁹ has observed that 4:1–5:11 forms the second section of the letter. He comments that this unit supplies lacking information (4:1–2; 4:3–8; 4:9–12; 4:13–18 and 5:1–11).

Malherbe¹⁸⁰ comments that these two units reflect Paul's eschatological views. They include similar formal features (4:13–18 and 5:1–11). The sections begin with a vocative and *περί* (4:13; 5:1). The latter plays a role in introducing a new topic. The closing verses of these two sections identify with belongingness to the Lord (4:17; 5:10) and the appeal to encourage each other (4:18; 5:11)¹⁸¹. We also notice the interlink in the sense that the first passage intends to correct the misunderstanding. The following unit outlines the ethical conduct which results from their new understanding¹⁸². We focus next on the *περί* formula.

We find *περί* in 1 Thess 4:13 and *περί δέ* in 5:1 (also in 4:9). Margaret Mitchell¹⁸³ has analysed the use of *περί δέ* in First Corinthians (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12). She has also examined existent differing opinions. Mitchell opines that the interpreters argue either for or against the unity of First Corinthians, appealing to *περί δέ* formula. She presents John Hurd¹⁸⁴ (unity of the letter) and Walter Schmithals¹⁸⁵ (collection of letters) concerning their different perception of *περί δέ* and its role in First Corinthians. Mitchell opines that Hurd and Schmithals followed the same assumption but arrived at different conclusions. They assumed that all the later occurrences of *περί δέ* (with 7:1 and the following 7: 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12) must refer back to 1 Cor 7:1. It means that Paul has introduced a topic with *περί δέ* and that Paul responds to the Corinthians point by point with *περί δέ*¹⁸⁶. Mitchell examines these assumptions. She observes that *περί δέ* is not the only introductory formula (cf. 1 Cor 10:1; 15:1)¹⁸⁷. Mitchell critiques Hurd's argument by saying that one cannot clearly distinguish between oral and written requests¹⁸⁸.

¹⁷⁷ Charles A. WANAMAKER, *Thessalonians*, p. 166-176.

¹⁷⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 260-261.

¹⁷⁹ Gordon D. FEE, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 136-182.

¹⁸⁰ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 260-161.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 260-161.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Concerning περί δέ in 1 Corinthians*, in *NovT*, 31.3 (1989), p. 229-256. See also *idem*, *Concerning ΠΕΡΙ ΔΕ in 1 Corinthians* in *idem*, *Paul and the Emergence of Christian Textuality*, p. 65-88.

¹⁸⁴ John C. HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, London, SPCK, 1965, p. 61-94. He argues that Paul responds by the formula of *περί δέ* to the questions or requests made to him by the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians, *περί δέ* occurs six times (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12), twice in 1 Thessalonians (4:9; 5:1) and in the form of *περί γάρ* in 2 Cor. 9:1.

¹⁸⁵ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Concerning περί δέ in 1 Corinthians*, p. 230-231.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* See also John C. HURD, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians*, p. 61-94. The argument of Hurd is that the unity of the First Corinthians can be derived from the formula *περί δέ* and also based on one's ability to distinguish Paul's

In contrast, Mitchell sees oral and written requests as a single process. She also critiques the assumption that Paul responds to the Corinthians on each matter raised to him with *περὶ δέ*. Mitchell opines that it need not be necessarily the topic that Paul is addressing¹⁸⁹. Thus, in her view, the understanding of *περὶ δέ* is essential for investigating the compositional and rhetorical structure of the letter. At the same time, we understand how Paul tries to address the complex situations among the believers¹⁹⁰. We can say that in First Thessalonians 4:13 and 5:1, both *περί* and *περὶ δέ* respectively introduce two aspects of the same eschatological theme.

We can identify two elements from the above considerations. There is a close link between the two units, and both reflect a hortatory tone. We consider these two aspects in identifying the antitheses, their forms and implied traditions. Besides, we look at their function in the early Christian social memory and its impact on their identity. I refer to John Barclay¹⁹¹ concerning the identity and the social context of 1 Thess 4:13–5:11. It reflects Paul’s “reiterated dualism” predominately. According to Barclay, these dualistic features show an exclusive social and eschatological identity. Paul initiates these features in 4:13 and continues to do so throughout the discourse¹⁹².

4. SENSE LINE DIVISION OF THE TEXT (4:13–5:11)

This section deals with the sense line division of the selected text. A sense line division does not refer to a literary or figurative sense but functions as an analytical tool. I describe it as follows. A sense line division is an analytical tool that restructures the complex structure of a verse (in prose or narrative unit) into smaller units where each line consists of a syntactic structure of predication with one or more obligatory constituents (subject, object, complements) that are not necessarily expressed always. In this process, the elements, namely form of address, exclamations, interjections, are outside the syntax of a sentence. Still, they are considered independent single small literary units, are part of the analysis and are numbered separately within a verse¹⁹³. In this regard, for a sense line division of the selected text, our study depends on the following interpretations. In line with Raymond Collins¹⁹⁴, this study considers that the

responses to oral and written requests. But Mitchell considers that one cannot clearly separate the two types of information.

¹⁸⁹ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Concerning περὶ δέ in 1 Corinthians*, p. 230-231. Mitchell concludes that the composition, structure and arrangement of the First Corinthians are largely driven by the rhetorical purpose than by Corinthians letter to Paul. She finally comments that *περὶ δέ* may be of help in certain ways (that it introduces the topic of the following argument or the sub argument) toward the composition of the First Corinthians but itself it does not point to any source.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 254-256.

¹⁹¹ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Concerning the semantic relation between different elements within a discourse unit see Richard A. YOUNG, *Intermediate New Testament Greek, A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, Nashville, TN, Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994, p. 255-264. Regarding the sense construction see Evert VAN EMDE BOAS *et al*, *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, p. 320-327.

¹⁹⁴ Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Birth of the New Testament*, p.10.

various introductory formula and conjunctive γάρ indicate the letter unity in First Thessalonians. These particles also point to the historical and literal unity of the letter. At the same time, they mark a transition in the thought pattern weaving them into a single seemingly whole. Margaret Mitchell has argued that περί points to a new beginning for the different thematic passages in Pauline letters. I consider this proposal along with other introductory formulas, vocative direct address, and conjunctive γάρ. Our study also relies on rhetorical contrasts and antithetical forms (1 Thess 4:13–5:11). Besides, we observe how the introductory formulas and vocative direct address function as oral and written literary forms. As follows, we find the pericope into smaller units and their English translations provided within the parenthesis.

4:13a Οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν,
 4:13b ἀδελφοί,
 4:13c περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων,
 4:13d ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε
 4:13e καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα.

[4:13a But we do not want you to be uninformed,
 4:13b brothers and sisters,
 4:13c about those who have died,
 4:13d so that you may not grieve
 4:13e as others do who have no hope.]

4:14a εἰ γὰρ πιστεύομεν
 4:14b ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν
 4:14c καὶ ἀνέστη,
 4:14d οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτοῖς.

[4:14a For since we believe
 4:14b that Jesus died
 4:14c and rose again,
 4:14d even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.]

4:15a Τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου,
 4:15b ὅτι ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες
 4:15c οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου
 4:15d οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας·
 4:16a ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ,
 καταβήσεται ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ
 4:16b καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον,
 4:17a ἔπειτα ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἁρπαγησόμεθα ἐν νεφέλαις
 εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου εἰς ἀέρα·
 4:17b καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα.

[4:15a For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord,

4:15b that we who are alive,
 4:15c who are left until the coming of the Lord,
 4:15d will by no means precede those who have died.
 4:16a 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,
 4:16b and the dead in Christ will rise first.
 4:17a 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;
 4:17b and so we will be with the Lord forever.]

4:18 Ὡστε παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις.
 [4:18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.]

5:1a₁ Περὶ δὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν,
 5:1b ἀδελφοί,
 5:1a₂ οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε
 5:1c ὑμῖν γράφεσθαι,

[5:1a₁ Now concerning the times and the seasons,
 5:1b brothers and sisters,
 5:1a₂ you do not need to have anything
 5:1c written to you.]

5:2a αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἶδατε
 5:2b ὅτι ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτης ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως ἔρχεται.
 5:3a ὅταν λέγωσιν·
 5:3b Εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια,
 5:3c τότε αἰφνίδιος αὐτοῖς ἐφίσταται ὄλεθρος
 5:3d ὥσπερ ἡ ὥδιν τῇ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσῃ,
 5:3e καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγῃσιν.

[5:2a For you yourselves know very well
 5:2b that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.
 5:3a When they say,
 5:3b "There is peace and security,"
 5:3c then sudden destruction will come upon them,
 5:3d as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman,
 5:3e and there will be no escape!]

5:4a₁ ὑμεῖς δέ,
 5:4b ἀδελφοί,
 5:4a₂ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σκότει,
 5:4c ἵνα ἡ ἡμέρα ὑμᾶς ὡς κλέπτης καταλάβῃ·

[5:4a₁ But you,
5:4b beloved,
5:4a₂ are not in darkness,
5:4c for that day to surprise you like a thief;]

5:5a πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς υἱοὶ φωτός ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας.
5:5b Οὐκ ἐσμὲν νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκότους·
5:6a ἄρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ
5:6b ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν.

[5:5a for you are all children of light and children of the day;
5:5b We are not of the night nor darkness.
5:6a So then let us not fall asleep as others do,
5:6b but let us keep awake and be sober;]

5:7a Οἱ γὰρ καθεύδοντες νυκτὸς καθεύδουσιν
5:7b καὶ οἱ μεθυσκόμενοι νυκτὸς μεθύουσιν·
5:8a ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡμέρας ὄντες
5:8b νήφωμεν
5:8c ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας·

[5:7a for those who sleep sleep at night,
5:7b and those who are drunk get drunk at night.
5:8a But since we belong to the day,
5:8b let us be sober,
5:8c and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.]

5:9a ὅτι οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὀργήν
5:9b ἀλλ' εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
5:10a τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν,

[5:9a For God has destined us not for wrath
5:9b but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
5:10a who died for us,]

5:10b ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν
5:10c εἴτε καθεύδωμεν
5:10d ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν.

[5:10b so that whether we are awake
5:10c or asleep
5:10d we may live together with him.]

5:11a Διὸ παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους

5:11b καὶ οἰκοδομεῖτε εἷς τὸν ἕνα,
5:11c καθὼς καὶ ποιεῖτε.

[5:11a Therefore encourage one another
5:11b and build up each other,
5:11c as indeed you are doing.]

CONCLUSION

This study will reconsider the understanding of form and traditions in form-criticism. The antitheses in form-criticism and the rhetorical contrasts in the rhetoric criticism refer to the source and persuasive function, respectively. The social memory model reconsiders these features and shows that they are not merely literary features but conscious reconstructions to build up Christ-followers' situations. For this purpose, this study re-examines the earlier opinions regarding various introductory and disclosure formulas, creedal formulations, identity, rhetoric, and social role of the eschatological discourse (cf. 1 Thess 4:13–5:11). As these formulas refer to the oral and written communication model, this study reconsiders them as a series of episodes within the communicative memory process. The following chapters, three and four (4:13–18 and 5:1–11, respectively), point to the significance and functioning role of antitheses and rhetorical contrasts within the eschatological discourse. The purpose is to identify the antitheses and traditions, reconsider them within the social memory model, and delimit them for further observations in chapters five and six.

CHAPTER 3

AN EXEGESIS OF 1 THESS 4:13–18

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I undertake a brief exegetical study of First Thessalonians 4:13–18¹. Similarly, the following chapter deals with 1 Thess 5:1–11. The study observes the earlier interpretations regarding rhetorical contrasts, antitheses and traditions, and reconsiders them with the social memory model. Our exegetical study identifies the particular expressions of antitheses in the discourse. In the process, we focus on text-critical issues, philological aspects, grammatical structure, theological content, and parallels to identify the antitheses and their different formulations.

The sense-line division of the text considers 4:13–18 with a further four-part subdivision: 4:13, 4:14, 4:15–17 and 4:18. The communicative verbs designate each of these sections respectively: a negated θέλω with ἀγνοέω, πιστεύω, λέγω, and παρακαλέω (we do not wish you be ignorant, believe, declare, and encourage). In this context, I designate them as communicative because each refers to a piece of objective information. The information is progressive and constructive. In other words, there are four successive stages: our wish, our faith, our declaration, and our encouragement, as well as their constructivist phases. This implied genitive nature designates the “material objects”² of the eschatological discourse (4:13–5:11): God, Paul and co-workers, and the community, including those who have died.

Similarly, the “we – you” communication chain in 4:13a is not the same in 4:17a and 4:17b. All of them point to a unique temporal framework. The first one designates Paul and his co-workers (4:13a), and the process interrupts with a comparison with “as the others do who have no hope” (καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα). The second one is purely ecclesiological and eschatological, those alive when the Lord comes (4:17a). The third one refers to the soteriological communion, and we will be with Lord forever (4:17b).

Further, we see that the designation of those who have died changes. We find the term “those who have died” (τῶν κοιμωμένων) in 4:13c, 4:14d, and 4:15d. But it is no more the same in 4:16b (dead in Christ/ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ), 4:17a (they/others /αὐτός), and 4:17b (we will be with the Lord forever/ πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα).

¹ In this chapter and the following, I work with the exegetical analyses initially done in my Masters’ thesis and submitted at the KU Leuven.

² Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of ‘Collective Memory’ in Early Christianity*, p. 99–131. See also Normand BONNEAU, *Narrative Time in the New Testament. Essays on Mark, John, and Paul* (Terra Nova, 8), Leuven, Peeters, 2020, p. 101–113.

Second, the “we – you” communication chain points to supplying continuous information. The flow of information is both a communicative and constructive process. We read in 4:13a, “We do not want you to be uninformed” (οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν). The given data is in 4:14 (a – d), we believe that Jesus died, rose again, and through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. The foundational faith-formula (that Jesus died, rose and will come again) extends further (that Jesus died, rose again, and through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died). But the given data presents through a prophetic declaration formula in 4:15a, “We declare to you by the word of the Lord” (ὁμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου). In other words, the “we” in 4:13a (we wish/want), 4:14a (we believe), and 4:15a (we declare) finally culminate in 4:18, “encourage one another with these words”/ παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις (you encourage/you declare; we declare/we encourage).

Third, in this process of communication, God is active and also the Lord, Jesus. We find reference to God and Lord (ὁ θεὸς and ὁ κύριος). We see two references to God in 4:14d and 4:16a (ὁ θεὸς and ἡ σάλπιγξ τοῦ θεοῦ). Concerning Jesus, we have six indications in 4:14b, 4:15c, 4:16a, 4:16b, 4:17a and 4:17b. Overall, we see that the material objects mutually engage in this pericope (4:13-18).

As mentioned, the study considers this open-ended communicative pattern “I – You”³ (we – you) and the “material objects”⁴ (God, Paul/co-workers, and the community including those who have died) of the document, 1 Thessalonians. This chapter applies this particular schema for interpretive analysis of 4:13-18. I present it as follows:

- a) We want/wish – 4:13 (Paul/Co-workers to Christ-followers)
- b) We believe – 4:14 (Paul/Co-workers and Christ-followers)
- c) We declare – 4:15-17 (Paul/Co-workers to Christ-followers)
- d) You encourage – 4:18 (Between Christ-followers)

1. WE WANT/WISH (4:13): BIOGRAPHICAL

4:13a	Οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν,
4:13b	ἀδελφοί,
4:13c	περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων,
4:13d	ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε
4:13e	καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα.
[4:13a	But we do not want you to be uninformed,
4:13b	brothers and sisters,
4:13c	about those who have died,

³ Judith LIEU, *Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory*, p. 133-143.

⁴ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of ‘Collective Memory’*, p. 99-131.

4:13d so that you may not grieve
 4:13e as others do who have no hope.]

1.1 Affective Media Of The Designations

Paul begins his address to the Thessalonians with the vocative plural, ἀδελφοί (brothers and sisters). In First Thessalonians, Paul uses this terminology to a significant effect⁵. Malherbe views that Paul's use of the vocative plural ἀδελφοί in 4:13b is suggestive of a transition similar to other occurrences in the letter (2:1, 17; 4:1; 5:12, 14)⁶. It reflects Paul's affective side and the ecclesiological dimension of the community. These features bind the community. Significantly, the sibling and parental language (familial) and kinship metaphors designate the group's dynamics and identity construction⁷. Here, the affective language includes both the ecclesiological and eschatological perspectives.

1.2 Literary Media of the Designations

In addition to direct address with vocative plural (ἀδελφοί), Paul begins the discourse with an introductory formula. The formula is in a negated form in 4:13a, "But we do not want you to be uninformed" (οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν). According to Mitchell⁸, there are many introductory formulas in Paul's letters. One of them is, "οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν" (Rom 1:13; 1 Cor 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor 1:8). We see that Mitchell refutes the assumption of περί or περί δέ as the only introductory formula. In this case, the address includes both the direct address in vocative plural and an introductory formula. As this formula points to something new to come, Jeffrey Weima⁹ interprets it as a disclosure formula.

Concerning this negated expression, Joseph Barber Lightfoot¹⁰ suggests a corrective procedure toward the false impressions. He sees the Thessalonians as restless given to "feverish anticipation of the immediate coming of Christ"¹¹. However, the negated expression, "οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν" (4:13a) intends a positive statement¹². Paul has applied both negated (Rom 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor 1:8)¹³ and positive forms of communication (1 Cor 11:3; cf. Col

⁵ We see an overwhelming sibling language and kinship metaphors present throughout the letter, 1 Thessalonians (1:4; 2:1, 7, 9, 11, 14, 17; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 6, 10, 13; 5:1, 4, 5, 12, 14, 25, 26, 27).

⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 262.

⁷ Trevor J. BURKE, *Family Matters*, p. 3-5; Reidar AASGAARD, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!*, p. 121-122; Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Power of Images in Paul*, p. 12-19; Philip A. HARLAND, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians*, p. 63-64 and 94-95; Paul TREBILCO, *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament*, p. 16; Jennifer H. MCNEEL, *Paul as Infant and Nursing Mother*, p. 1-2.

⁸ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Concerning περί δέ in 1 Corinthians*, p. 230-231.

⁹ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1-2 Thessalonians*, p. 307.

¹⁰ Joseph Barber LIGHTFOOT, *Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, p. 63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 262. We see two negations in the negated expression, 'do not want' and 'uninformed'. They both are negation but the two of them together assert something positive like, 'we want you to be informed'.

¹³ *Ibid.*

2:11)¹⁴. The forms do not differentiate their significance¹⁵. Here the negated form infuses urgency in the communicative process. According to Malherbe¹⁶, this use of negated form in the Pauline letters in this way is for emphasis. It introduces new ideas, new sections or new information. He agrees with von Dobschütz¹⁷, who has considered this section a new beginning within the letter. This new beginning is not new information but a re-emphasis of the already shared information with an ‘eschatological fervour’¹⁸.

1.3 Those who are asleep: Textual Evidence

The subject of this discourse is about those who have died. The textual evidence as attested in the textual apparatus of *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28) gives two forms of the same verb, κοιμωμενων (A, B, 33, 326) and κεκοιμημενων (D, F, G, K, L, Ψ, 104, 365). We see that *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28) has opted for κοιμωμενων¹⁹. Κεκοιμημένων means ‘having fallen asleep’ and is the perfect participle passive deponent of κοιμάομαι²⁰. Κοιμωμένων means ‘being asleep’ and is the present participle passive deponent of κοιμάομαι²¹. According to Malherbe, the older manuscripts have used κεκοιμημένων²². We find that Paul chooses κοιμάομαι for the Thessalonians ‘who have died’ and for the death of Jesus, ἀπέθανεν. Malherbe opines that Paul never uses ‘having fallen asleep’ for Jesus. But we find a closer expression in 1 Cor 15:20, where Jesus is “the first fruits of those who have died”²³. Malherbe points to Theodoret of Cyrus’ interpretation: “Paul used ἀπέθανεν to stress the reality of Jesus’ death but used somewhat softer κοιμωμένοι psychologically, to encourage the Thessalonians who were discouraged”²⁴.

In περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων the present participle of κοιμάομαι denotes a state of being with the meaning, ‘die’²⁵. In this, Malherbe focuses on two issues, the word ‘sleep’ and the preference for the present form of the verb. He refers to Frame’s view of the ‘timeless’ in the verb’s present form²⁶. Frame considers the present participle as timeless of ‘the sleepers’ to be a euphemism. It differentiates the deceased’s status before death and the “Christian dead before the Parousia”²⁷. Fee notes the following samples of the variations in translation, ‘those who fall asleep’ (NIV), ‘who have died’ (NRSV), ‘about those who are sleeping’ (TNIV)²⁸. The choice of the terms does not indicate the circumstance leading to death. Paul departed from Thessalonica,

¹⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 262.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Ernst von DOBSCHÜTZ, *Die Thessalonicher-Briefe*, p. 184.

¹⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 262.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ BDAG 551, Κοιμάω 2.b.

²² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 236.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; Theodoret of CYRUS, *Int. of 1 Thess.4* (J.-P. MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca* 82: 648).

²⁵ BDAG 551, Κοιμάω 2.b.

²⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263.

²⁷ James E. FRAME, *Thessalonians*, p. 166.

²⁸ Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 167-168.

and immediately after that, some have died unexpectedly in the community. For Fee, what is clear is that the word repeats and that the coming of Christ is not far away. In this way, Fee emphasises that Paul has addressed what concerns after death in light of his preached faith²⁹.

The information concerns the deceased. The use of *περί* suggests that Paul is trying to respond concerning those who have died in the community³⁰. Fee addresses two issues regarding this phrase: the bringer of the information and the word choice in the verb's translated form. Concerning the bringer of the news, it is either the Thessalonians themselves or Timothy. Fee agrees with Lightfoot and chooses the second one³¹. Lightfoot believes that the subject is indirect and that it is not the Thessalonians who informed Paul. He argues that Timothy has visited Thessalonica and has reported back to Paul³². These issues emerge due to various opinions concerning the usage of *περί* (*δέ*) in verses 4:9 and 5:1³³.

In this discourse, Paul is not addressing the dead in general but only those of the community. A distinction between 'you and the rest' makes clear this point. Besides, we find a reference to "the dead in Christ"³⁴. But the word 'sleep', meaning death, is not limited to New Testament writings alone³⁵. Based on a survey of the ancient popular religion and philosophy, Horst Balz observes that the state of death is closer to sleep. Since death is a perception of the end, the sleep of death is not merely a euphemism for death but stands as an actual corresponding state to it³⁶. Malherbe considers that with the use of *ἵνα*, Paul is trying to communicate new information³⁷. On the other hand, for Wanamaker, it indicates a particular difficulty that Paul intends to address among the Thessalonian believers³⁸.

We find an antithetical positioning of 'the Christian dead' to the 'dead in general' in the pericope. This position becomes evident in the following distinction, you and the rest (4:13) and the dead in Christ (4:16)³⁹. Here, death and life are the primary antithetical pair. We can draw a further antithetical pair, the dead in general and the dead in Christ. This antithetical pair recapitulates that the believers have died in Christ. However, in this passage, there is no indication of how the believers have died.

²⁹ Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 166.

³⁰ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263. It is Timothy who has conveyed to Paul about the deceased and the grief of the Thessalonians.

³¹ Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 165.

³² Joseph B. LIGHTFOOT, *Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, p. 62.

³³ Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 165.

³⁴ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 131-153; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263.

³⁵ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263. See also Frederick F. BRUCE (*1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 95) who is of the opinion that the use of 'sleep' as euphemism of death was commonly used in the ancient world including Old Testament.

³⁶ Horst BALZ, *ἵνα*, in *TDNT*, 8 (1972), p. 545-556 (here p. 548-549).

³⁷ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263.

³⁸ Charles A. WANAMAKER, *Thessalonians*, p. 167.

³⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263.

In this regard, there are divergent opinions: a natural death, an indirect effect of a heightened social conflict, and martyrdom. John Barclay⁴⁰ assumes the possibilities for conflicts, suffering, and social dislocation. But he does not correlate death to martyrdom. Others like Karl Donfried⁴¹, James Harrison⁴² and Judy Diehl⁴³ draw direct parallels between persecution and martyrdom (ἡ θλίψις/persecution in 1 Thess 1:6, 3:3, 4, and 7). They appeal to an anti-imperial language through the terms mainly present in First Thessalonians 4:13–5:11, like τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (gospel in 1:5), ἡ παρουσία (parousia), ὁ κύριος (lord), ἡ ἀπάντησις (meeting), ὁ χρόνος καὶ ὁ καιρὸς (times and seasons), and ἡ εἰρήνη καὶ ἡ ἀσφάλεια (peace and security). An anti-imperial reading claims that the Christ-followers have moved away from a Roman-beneficence model to an egalitarian model that Paul has proposed. This change of allegiance results in conflict between the two groups, and possibly some believers have become victims. As a result, the anti-imperial perspective takes this historical background to claim the martyrdom of the deceased in 4:13.

Seyoon Kim⁴⁴ argues the opposite. He critiques the anti-imperial reading based on *parallelomania*. Those who support anti-imperial reading⁴⁵ take specific terms (gospel, parousia, meeting, peace and security present in 4:13–5:11) and directly correlate them to the imperial context and conflicts. Kim argues that for the apostle Paul, the imperial context has dramatically helped his missions. To support this argument, Kim considers 1 Thessalonians 5:3 and Romans 13:1–7 as parallel. However, this reasoning is also a *parallelomania* on which he has rejected an anti-imperial reading of 1 Thess 4:13–5:11. This study does not take the two extreme positions for or against the imperial context. The main concern is to understand how Paul constructs a theology of hope for the community in Thessalonica. Chapter five will consider this issue and show that polemical language appears to be a general phenomenon among several groups within the Graeco-Roman context. This widespread phenomenon points to both associations and disassociations reflected through a prohibitory language.

⁴⁰ John M. G. BARCLAY, *Conflict in Thessalonica*, p. 512-530 (here p. 517).

⁴¹ Karl P. DONFRIED, *The Cults of Thessalonica*, p. 336-356; *id.*, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 90-95. See also Edwin A. JUDGE, *The Decrees of Caesar at Thessalonica*, in *RTR*, 30 (1971), p. 1-7.

⁴² James R. HARRISON, *Paul and the Imperial Gospel*, p. 71-96; *id.*, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, p. 1-7.

⁴³ Judy DIEHL, *Anti-Imperial Rhetoric in the New Testament*, p. 9-52; *idem.*, *Empire and Epistles*, p. 217-263.

⁴⁴ Seyoon KIM, *Christ and Caesar, The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke*, Grand Rapids, MI-Cambridge, UK, Eerdmans, 2008, p. 3-10, 70-71. See also Adrian GOLDSWORTHY, *Pax Romana, War, Peace and Conquest in the Roman World*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2016, p. 9-18 and 409-415. He has argued that the imperial Rome generally encouraged a peaceful order and discouraged all types of local threats and revolts against imperial order.

⁴⁵ See Peter OAKES, *Re-Mapping the Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians*, in *JSNT*, 27.3 (2005), p. 301-322; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, 'Peace and Security' (1 Thess 5, 3): *Prophetic Warning or Political Propaganda?*, in *NTS*, 58.3 (2012), p. 331-359. On the consideration of imperial images and their impact on social dynamics during Greco-Roman period, see Monica HELLSTRÖM and Amy RUSSELL, *Introduction: The Social Dynamics of Roman Imperial Imagery*, in Monica HELLSTRÖM and Amy RUSSELL (eds), *The Social Dynamics of Roman Imperial Imagery*, New York, NY-Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020, p. 1-24.

1.4 Communication by Negation: Not to Grieve

The present subjunctive of λυπέω (grieve) with μή denotes a discontinuity with something that is in progress. This prohibitive subjunctive is in the present middle of λυπέω and is less harsh than the aorist subjunctive. The present imperative stands to command something to continue or to prohibit something in continuity⁴⁶. In light of this understanding, we can say that Paul is reorienting the Thessalonians to be different in their outlook toward grief. The manner and the status of the expression of grief have raised a specific curiosity among the interpreters.

Albertus Klijn has argued that the Thessalonians' grief is not due to Paul's failure to preach. Their grief resulted from a false idea, "supposed inequality between those who died and those who would still be alive at the coming of the Lord"⁴⁷. This tension of inequality among the Thessalonians persists throughout. In other words, it is inconclusive. On the one hand, grief exists. On the other, the question of status keeps continuing till 'the end of time'⁴⁸. Klijn shifts the tension beyond the current problem and ascribes it to the nature of apocalyptic literature. He comments as follows: "We can say that difficulties with regard to the living and the dead at the end of time are the result of the merging of two different ideas about the end of time, namely that of a coming happy future for those who are living at the time, the so-called prophetic eschatology, and that of resurrection of all men (people) followed by a judgment, the apocalyptic idea"⁴⁹.

Here, there are two antitheses: grief and hope, and the death and resurrection of Jesus. Both relate to the life of believers. Frederick Bruce situates the believers' hope in the hope of the resurrection of Jesus⁵⁰. It may be easy to preclude that believers have hope in a pagan world, or others do not have hope even though Bruce attests hopelessness in the pagan world. But the present subjunctive of λυπέω with prohibition is suggestive of a new orientation that needs to be in the mind of the believers in a tangible way⁵¹. What appears then is an attempt to prohibit grief. Nevertheless, grief remains in the face of death. If then, what is the status of grief here? Malherbe maintains a middle path. It is not that 'no grief at all' but "not to grieve with the same motive, manner, and measure as the pagans"⁵². Malherbe argues that Paul has no interest in grief as a mental state. It is not an issue of the total absence of distress at the time of death. But it is in the face of death prohibiting grief in response to the concerns that have reached Paul⁵³.

⁴⁶ James H. MOULTON and Nigel TURNER, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. 3, Edinburgh, Clarke, 1963, p. 74-75. See also Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263-264.

⁴⁷ Albertus F. J. KLIJN, *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*, p. 67.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁵⁰ Frederick F. BRUCE, *Thessalonians*, p. 96.

⁵¹ See James H. MOULTON and Nigel TURNER (vol. 3, p. 74-75) and also Abraham J. MALHERBE (*Thessalonians*, p. 263-264). The present subjunctive with the prohibition is less rude than the aorist subjunctive. In this case, James E. FRAME mentions that an emphasis on the difference or the distinction is strengthened further with καθὼς καί (*Thessalonians*, p. 167).

⁵² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 264.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

In chapter five, we will focus on the importance of the prohibition form, different antithetical forms and pairs related to grief and hope, death, and life (hope).

Concerning grief, Lightfoot⁵⁴ and Barclay⁵⁵ do highlight a gloomy outlook or despair shown by the tomb inscriptions. Lightfoot describes the natural phenomena of resuscitation of plants, rising and setting of the Sun (setting and rising of the Sun) as an analogy to the Christian hope of the resurrection at a tomb scene⁵⁶. Barclay, however, focuses on Christian identity made explicit at the tomb scene by its funeral rites with an aura of sobriety⁵⁷. Christian hope in this way begins to derive a specific nature juxtaposed between death and hope of the resurrection and carries an eschatological tone. Hence, one can consider that Thessalonian believers are set against the general public in one or the other. It is not based on human conditions but relates to a uniquely human response that flows specifically from what Paul has already communicated.

Further, the perception of grief links and delinks both καθὼς καί (like) and οἱ λοιποὶ (others). In the context of deceased members, the understanding of grief among the believers stands contrary to the grief commonly expressed in ancient Thessalonica. There are various opinions in this regard. Lightfoot considers that this is not a total prohibition of grief. It intends a distance from overindulgence in grief as customary among the non-believers. In this way, Lightfoot affirms that a specific expression of grief remains, and it is humanitarian to have some grief at such painful moments⁵⁸.

Malherbe sees the understanding of καθὼς καί as central since opinions differ considerably among the interpreters. He thinks that Paul means to express an absolute prohibition of grief concerning the question placed before Paul. But at the same time, Malherbe does not rule out context as a determining factor. He compares both καθάπερ καί (4:5, like) and καθὼς καί (4:13, as). According to him, these forms frame an unfavourable comparison of others and express an antithetical function. However, the two verses that focus on ‘others’ are not entirely similar to the kind of prohibitions they make⁵⁹. Frame sees that καθὼς καί not only initiates a comparison but sets that comparison antithetically. According to him, the hope of being with Christ is the determining factor that sets the believers apart from others⁶⁰. Here for Frame, it is not the hope about immortality that matters but being with Christ is more significant⁶¹.

1.5 The distinction between Believers and Others

We now focus on οἱ λοιποὶ. Barclay sees the distinction between you and others as a “great divide”⁶². He interprets this divide as Paul’s rhetoric to club the entire non-Christian

⁵⁴ Joseph B. LIGHTFOOT, *Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, p. 63-64.

⁵⁵ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 131-133.

⁵⁶ Joseph B. LIGHTFOOT, *Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, p. 63-64.

⁵⁷ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 131-133.

⁵⁸ Joseph B. LIGHTFOOT, *Notes on the epistles of St Paul*, p. 63.

⁵⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 264.

⁶⁰ James E. FRAME, *Thessalonians*, p. 167.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

community into a single entity. All the more, the phrase “who have no hope”, according to Barclay, appears to be a definition of others “in an undifferentiated manner”⁶³. Therefore, this distinction is an implicit one. It does not express clearly who the others are. There is no mention of Jews in this divide (cf. 2:14–16). Agreeing with Lightfoot⁶⁴, Barclay assumes, as do most interpreters, that Paul is addressing the Gentiles and not the Jews. He affirms at the same time Paul’s knowledge of Jewish hopes for an afterlife⁶⁵. Concerning the absence of Jews in this section, Barclay acknowledges that Paul, when required, makes a clear distinction between Jews and Gentiles (cf. 1Cor 1:22–24; Rom 1:14).⁶⁶

According to Malherbe, there are specific indications of the distinctions mentioned within the letter somewhat differently. He brings to attention that Paul has used in-group language to describe the non-Christians. For the description of non-Christians, Paul employs ‘those who do not know God’ in 4:5 and ‘the outsiders’ in 4:12. This narrative extends further and includes ‘the rest’ in 4:13⁶⁷. In this gradual narrative progress, the distinction in 4:13 appears in a pivotal position. This particular distinction is an intermediate. It appears at a critical juncture in an ascending narrative path. We see similar distinctions in 5:1–11, where the destiny of wrath is in a key position. Barclay agrees that the ancient world had one or the other forms of hope for an afterlife. Barclay mentions that “Paul is not offering an anthropological observation, but a rhetorical, and pejorative, generalisation”⁶⁸.

On the contrary, Collins argues that οἱ λωιτοὶ relates to the context of Thessalonica. Paul appears to have divided the inhabitants of Thessalonica into two groups, “those who grieve and Christians who should have no such grief”⁶⁹. In this background, it is clear that the believers perceive themselves distinctively from other Thessalonian inhabitants.

Further, Barclay outlines three distinguishing marks that differentiate the Thessalonian Christians from others. First, the Thessalonian believers have turned away from idols to the true and living God (1:9). Second, their specific nature lies in their moral conduct. Finally, they understand and look forward to the “eschatological fate and confidence for the future” taught by Paul⁷⁰. Here, the Christians perceive themselves in a distinct manner radically different from others. This passage displays a radical stand and a decisive turn. Barclay understands this process as a significant “Christian strategy”⁷¹ to the world. He further comments that this strategy

⁶³ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* John Barclay refers to Joseph Lightfoot (note 18) that “had St Paul been addressing a Jewish population he could not have spoken so strongly”. Barclay then adds “most commentaries assume his comments refer only to the ‘pagan’ world”. Lightfoot asserts that the doctrine of the resurrection has implicit pointers in the Old Testament. It adds not only nationalistic impressions but has left deep marks in the individual hearts for the coming of the Messiah and who look forward to participating in that extraordinary event kept alive such expectation of a deliverer. See Joseph B. LIGHTFOOT, *Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, p. 64.

⁶⁵ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 264.

⁶⁸ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 139.

⁶⁹ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 157.

⁷⁰ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 143.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

not only points out the portraits of anxiety and despair but also earlier “Christian traditions, creedal confessions (4:14; 5:10), apocalyptic metaphors (5:2) and miniature portraits of the Parousia (4:16-17), which offer a window onto those first explosive years of the Christian movement”⁷². There are two ways here: Barclay sees a new strategy, a future-oriented constructive path, and Malherbe observes the relevance of the proclamation only to the in-group.

Further, Malherbe differentiates between non-Christians as a social group and others to whom the message’s proclamation does not apply⁷³. But a consideration of the antithetical stand suggests otherwise. That is, it does not express a lowering of the intensity of distinction. Malherbe depends on Matthew Black’s interpretation of οἱ λοιποὶ⁷⁴. Black has surveyed the use of ἔθνικοί in Mt 6:7 and has paralleled it with οἱ λοιποὶ in Lk 11:2. Black refers to their synonymous meaning in Paul’s writings. However, Black adds that οἱ λοιποὶ contains a “contemptuous ring”⁷⁵. According to von Dobschütz, οἱ λοιποὶ includes both the Gentiles and also non-believing aspect⁷⁶. On the other hand, Traugott Holtz proposes the inclusion of Jews in this division⁷⁷. We see that the divergent viewpoints that emerge in identifying “you and the rest” are very much inconclusive. We do not have a clear indication of who constitutes each group. Interpreters essentially try to distinguish but have shown far-reaching consequences of distinguishing between the believers and the rest. Here, we see an antithetical pair based on belief and non-belief: believers and Gentiles.

This study considers this social dualism particularly important for the in-group and out-group language as a memory framework. Paul has used only those negative attributes that refer to the believers’ past. It points to their earlier state before coming into the Christian faith. We will see in chapter five concerning this type of language in the imperial period. Francis Cairns⁷⁸ refers to it as a deformative technique. It is evident in the tomb inscriptions and how the tomb becomes the locus or symbol of new life. The deceased members are a memory locus in a secular context. Paul has reshaped it for his community.

2. WE BELIEVE (4:14): FOUNDATIONAL

- 4:14a εἰ γὰρ πιστεύομεν
- 4:14b ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν
- 4:14c καὶ ἀνέστη,
- 4:14d οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτοῖς.

⁷² John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 143.

⁷³ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 265.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Mathew BLACK, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1967, p. 176-77; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 265.

⁷⁶ Ernst VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *Die Thessalonicher-Briefe*, p. 188; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 265.

⁷⁷ Traugott HOLTZ (*Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, Zürich, Benziger, 1986, p. 189) comments as follows: “Dann aber sind nicht nur die Heiden eingeschlossen, sondern auch die Juden”. See also Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 265. However, both the authors do maintain the exclusivity of the Christian hope irrespective who is and who is not included.

⁷⁸ Francis CAIRNS, *Hellenistic Epigram: Contexts of Exploration*, p. 173-175

[4:14a For since we believe
 4:14b that Jesus died
 4:14c and rose again,
 4:14d even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.]

2.1 The Reason for the Prohibition of Grief

Paul's intervention centres on a prohibition. The Thessalonians are not to grieve like the rest. He makes explicit the reason for the statement with the use of εἰ. Its use in the present indicative active refers to a causal 'since' and relates to an introduced reality⁷⁹. In other words, it takes up the subject it introduces. According to Malherbe, the issue here with the first person plural present indicative active verb form πιστεύομεν intends the inclusion of the Thessalonian believers. It is similar to the case in 1 Cor 15:11⁸⁰. Paul's reference is to the creedal formula, "Jesus died and rose again". It is a recollection of a message about Jesus by Paul to the Thessalonians, which they have already accepted (1 Thess 1:10)⁸¹. We will see in chapter five how prohibitions form a different type of language in approaching the deity. The form and expression of such language emerge from the constructive group. Notably, the social memory model considers groups' memories as unique to their identities.

We have seen that Paul uses κοιμωμένων (present participle middle genitive plural of κοιμάομαι) for the deceased among the Thessalonians and ἀπέθανεν for Jesus⁸². Concerning the word ἀνέστη, Malherbe thinks that it refers to the resurrection. For him, ἀνίστημι for the resurrection is found here in 4:14c and 4:16b. He compares it with Rom 15:12 and 1 Cor 10:7, where the same word does not mean resurrection. But a similar meaning appears elsewhere with the noun form, ἀνάστασις (Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 15:12, 13, 21). Concerning other writings, Malherbe notes specific citations (Mk 9:9, 10; Lk 24:46; Acts 2: 24, 32), expressing the meaning of resurrection. The typical expression for Paul, according to Malherbe, is ἐγείρω both in the active (1 Cor 6:14) and passive forms (Rom 6:4, 9; 1 Cor 15:4, 12, 13)⁸³. Further, Malherbe considers the phrasing of "Jesus died and rose again" to be a "traditional Christian language" style⁸⁴. He refers to Werner Kramer, who has analysed, "Jesus associated with statements from the *pistis*-formula (faith formula)"⁸⁵.

2.2 Faith-formula and Hope-formula

The faith (πίστις) formula and the hope (ἐλπίς) formula are distinct, yet recollect the content mutually. A death and resurrection antithesis with a memory framework contains the essential elements of hope in both formulas. From the social memory perspective, Paul frames believers' death like Jesus' death and resurrection. The state of being asleep partly points to the mini

⁷⁹ BDF § 372.1.

⁸⁰ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 265.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*; Cf. Theodoret of CYRUS, *PG* 82:648.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Werner KRAMER, *Christ, Lord, Son of God*, London, SCM, 1966, p. 199.

process of Jesus' death and resurrection. Therefore, hope is both imminent and future. It is a realised hope in so far, its foundation in Jesus' events.

Werner Kramer opines as follows: "Only in 1 Thess 4:14a is Jesus the subject of the statement about death, and therefore a deviation from the wording of the *pistis-formula*, which gives Christ in that context"⁸⁶. Kramer clarifies that the references to the titles of Jesus, Christ, and Jesus Christ in the Pauline corpus designate the same person whom the salvific events have occurred, especially death and resurrection⁸⁷. Malherbe sees 4:14d as a comparative clause and grammatically inconsistent with the previous conditional clause. In his opinion, the two take different contents (4:14b and 4:14d). In the usual case, to believe in Jesus' death and resurrection is to make way for the believers' resurrection. It appears in 1 Cor 6:14 and 2 Cor 4:14 with *σὺν αὐτῷ*. But this comparative clause, like elsewhere (Rom 1:15; 6:11), draws an inference from the previous clause⁸⁸. Therefore, *οὕτως καί* has an inferential sense. It takes up a different issue but somehow relates to the preceding one⁸⁹. For Béda Rigaux and Malherbe, with *καί*, a more significant impact is made in the second clause as it introduces a new subject (God) and emphasises all that will follow after that to what God does⁹⁰.

Commenting on *ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ*, (literally, "God those who had fallen asleep through Jesus will gather with him"⁹¹) Malherbe does not clarify the position of *διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*. It is not clear whether it points to *τοὺς κοιμηθέντας* (preceding words, "those who had fallen asleep"⁹²) or with *ἄξει* (proceeding word, "will gather"⁹³). Best points out the role of *διὰ* with "have fallen asleep" and "will bring". According to Best, the association of *διὰ* with "will bring" denotes the instrumentality of Jesus, through whom God channels humanity's salvation⁹⁴. On the other hand, *διὰ* with "have fallen asleep" opens to more explanations. According to Best, "have fallen asleep" may refer to martyrs, including the dead in general.

However, Best considers that there is no clear evidence to take sides either way. In general, it is plausible that, like other Christian communities, there could have been martyrs in Thessalonica. He clarifies this by comparing *ἐν Χριστῷ* and *σύν Χριστῷ*⁹⁵. According to him in line with *ἐν Χριστῷ* in 1 Cor 15:18, *σύν Χριστῷ* also refers to the Christian dead. If it means

⁸⁶ Werner KRAMER, *Christ, Lord, Son of God*, p. 199.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 199-202.

⁸⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 266.

⁸⁹ *LSJ* 1276-1277, *οὕτως* 2. See also Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 266.

⁹⁰ Béda RIGAUX, *Saint Paul, les épîtres aux Thessaloniens*, p. 535. Rigaux thinks that it refers to the action of God (cf. Gal 4:3; Rom 6:11; 1 Cor 2:11; 9:14; 14:12; 15:42, 45). See also Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 266.

⁹¹ I have taken this translation from Abraham J. MALHERBE (*Thessalonians*, p. 266). For him the literal meaning of *ἄξει* is 'will lead' but chooses to take instead 'will gather'. The reason is the eschatological background which speaks about the theme of 'God gathering his people' in Old Testament (Isa 11:12; 43:5; Jer 38:10; Ezek 11:17; Zech 12:3; cf. 2 Mac 2:7, 18) and in New Testament (Mt 24:31; Mk 13:27).

⁹² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 266.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 188.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

Christian dead in this context, Best notes that ‘with Christ’ should have appeared in 1 Thess 4:13, but it does not. He thinks that placing of *διὰ Χριστοῦ* with *ἐν Χριστῷ*, which is Paul’s favourite expression, may refer to the personal relationship of believers to Christ. However, this expression can also signify that the believers died while in a relationship with Christ. It means that there is an emphasis on the continuity of association with Christ⁹⁶.

Another combination is placing *διὰ Χριστοῦ* on par with *σύν Χριστῷ*⁹⁷. Best proposes a parallel that emphasises that the believers “have fallen asleep” like Jesus, who too “fell asleep”. The believers then are identified with Christ, meaning that “they are still with him, so they can appear with him”⁹⁸. Both Rigaux⁹⁹ and Best¹⁰⁰ intend a causal sense in the preposition. It points to believers’ faith in Jesus, and as a result, the perception of death happens through the window of hope.¹⁰¹ Best rules out all the above explanations and associates “through Jesus” with “will bring”¹⁰². Best has highlighted two things. First, God saves by the instrumentality of Jesus. Second, it emphasises that the “Christian dead will be brought back to appear with Jesus at the time of Parousia together with the Christian living”¹⁰³. The coming of Jesus and the reappearance of the deceased constitute two aspects of the same event for the living members. These aspects enact a renewed assurance and replace grief in the community¹⁰⁴. Hence, we notice that the faith-formula transforms into a hope-formula. We read in 4:14d: “through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died”. The statement reflects a constructivist past. That it is a restatement of what we see in 4:14a-c, “We believe that Jesus died and rose again”.

To conclude, we have seen that *λυπῆσθε* (present subjunctive) with *μή* as an expression denotes discontinuity. We referred to 1 Thess 4:5 (*μή ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας καθάπερ καὶ*) as an antithetical feature to substantiate the antithetical form in 4:13¹⁰⁵. The latter is a simple but long antithesis. In 4:13, we find *μή λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα* which has certain antithetical features. We also refer to Frame that in this expression, *καθὼς καὶ* initiates a comparison antithetically¹⁰⁶. There is a comparison between believers and others by way of placing them antithetically. We have identified specific antitheses here and will deal with them later in the fifth chapter, antithesis and social memory. In the following section, we will see that Paul, while making a declaration by the word of the Lord, supplies a narrative to the Thessalonians to salvage their grieving context.

⁹⁶ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 189. See also Charles F. D. MOULE, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1953. He has observed that *διὰ* in v.14 in line with *ἐν Χριστῷ* in v.16 points toward some kind of contact with Jesus. But he does not reject its connection to *ἄξει*. However, he considers the difference between ‘accompaniment and instrumentality’ to be very minimum.

⁹⁷ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 189. See also James H. MOULTON and Nigel TURNER (vol. 3, p. 267) who see that *διὰ* in *τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* can mean ‘with Jesus’.

⁹⁸ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 189.

⁹⁹ Béda RIGAUX, *Saint Paul, les épîtres aux Thessaloniens*, p. 536.

¹⁰⁰ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p.189.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 229.

¹⁰⁶ James E. FRAME, *Thessalonians*, p. 167.

3. WE DECLARE: THE WORD OF THE LORD (4:15-17)

With γάρ, a postpositive, Paul introduces the theme of the Word of the Lord. A simple coordinating particle, γάρ, has more applications in Pauline usages than ἀλλά¹⁰⁷. In the word order, it is usually second-place conjunction¹⁰⁸. Here, as a coordinating particle, it elaborates the issues raised already in the previous verses. The information it introduces now is “how the eschatological association with Jesus will come about”¹⁰⁹. This very happening unravels through the ‘word of the Lord’. We will treat this section (4:15–17) as the word of the Lord. Our aim here will be to identify the antithetical features and understand their location in this particular unit.

3.1 The Word of the Lord

We have seen that the previous verse, 4:14a-d, refers to faith-formula and hope-formula. In this background, the specific description given in 4:15-17 is a proleptic episode. It progresses from a belief in the general resurrection in 4:14 to an eschatological communion of all believers in 4:15-17. Similarly, Paul’s application of ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου implies plausible Christological, prophetic eschatological and apocalyptic traditions. In this regard, there are three possibilities: a statement by Jesus unrecorded or recorded, traditions closely related to gospels, and Paul’s summary of Jesus teachings or a prophetic word by Paul¹¹⁰.

The first possibility implies that Paul means a statement by Jesus (1Cor 7:10; 9:14; 11:23). It refers directly to the teaching of Jesus¹¹¹. For the supposed sources of 1 Thess 4:15–17, as Ulrich Luz attests, Paul depends on possible gospel traditions¹¹². Luz assumes the references but does not provide a detailed exposition on them¹¹³. Ian Marshall rejects Luz’s proposals.

¹⁰⁷ MOULTON and TURNER, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3, p. 331.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

¹⁰⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 267.

¹¹⁰ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 267-269. In this regard, Ernest BEST (*Thessalonians*, p. 189-190) considers similar possibilities. Both, MALHERBE and BEST, see these possibilities with a hindsight, in some ways, that they lead toward reconstructing the original source and form of Jesus’ sayings. See also Collin R. NICHOLL, *From Hope to Despair*, p. 38-41; Michael W. PAHL, *Discerning the ‘Word of the Lord’*, p. 105-139 and 156-171; David LUCKENSMAYER, *The Eschatology on 1 Thessalonians*, p.173-211 and 269-270; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 320-322. In particular, both Pahl and Luckensmeyer consider this logion as Paul’s proclaimed gospel. For a more recent synthesis on Pauline sources and imageries behind this logion, see Michael E. PEACH, *Paul and the Apocalyptic Triumph, An Investigation of the Usage of Jewish and Greco-Roman Imagery in 1 Thess. 4:13–18*, New York, NY, Peter Lang, 2016, p. 1-8. This study reviews the earlier one-sided approaches regarding the Jewish or Graeco-Roman sources and imageries and concludes with a synthesis that Paul has applied both these sources. On the side of Jewish and Old Testament scripture sources, see Jeseoph PLEVNIK, *Paul and Parousia*, p. 89-90. On the other hand, concerning Graeco-Roman ideologies and imageries see James R. HARRISON, *Paul and Imperial Authorities*, p. 1-7.

¹¹¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 267.

¹¹² Ulrich LUZ, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, München, Kaiser, 1968, p. 327-328. Luz puts forward the following proposals: Mt. 10:39; 16:25; 16:28; 20:1f; 24: 31, 34; 25:6; 26:64; Lk. 13:30; Jn.5:25; 6:39f; 11:25f. See also Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 267.

¹¹³ Ulrich LUZ, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, p. 327.

Marshall considers that they are not at all parallel to gospel traditions¹¹⁴. Concerning Jesus' sayings, Robert Gundry proposes another alternative. Gundry opines that Paul shares something familiar with John (11:25-26)¹¹⁵. According to Gundry, the use of 'word of the Lord' in this unit speaks of Paul's attempt to revisit the context intermittently with the "portrayal of an imperial visit in the Hellenistic style"¹¹⁶. In this way, Gundry concludes that this is how God will place believers with Jesus¹¹⁷. Another proposal concerning Jesus' sayings is that the gospels do not record multiple Jesus' sayings behind this *logion*. In this regard, the unrecorded sayings are known as *agraphon*¹¹⁸. Malherbe disagrees with this proposal. He also rejects Rigaux's opinion. Rigaux considers this expression under the general theme of eschatology which Jesus has expressed and is present in the gospels. Malherbe thinks that this understanding may raise questions regarding Paul's familiarity with Jesus' teachings¹¹⁹.

In contrast, Cerfaux views this *logion* to be equivalent to the gospel¹²⁰. Best critiques Cerfaux's argument that this phrase is identical to the gospel precisely because of its use in an entirely different fashion¹²¹. Concerning the precise expression of the 'word of the Lord' in 1 Thess 4:15, Cerfaux thinks one should never take it as a personal revelation to Paul. Cerfaux notes a consensus in the apostolic tradition and early Christianity regarding the actual content about Jesus. The apostolic tradition favours and sees no objection to using Jesus' name while preaching¹²².

The second possibility is an acquaintance with Jewish literature. Lars Hartman has surveyed the association of Dan 7:13 with 1 Thess 4:14 and emphasises familiarity with Jewish Literature¹²³. However, he opines that this expression does not indicate a received tradition (1 Cor 11 and 15) or Paul's wording to assist his intended plan. Instead, Hartman proposes that this is

¹¹⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 267; Ian Howard MARSHALL, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (NCB), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1983, p. 125-127.

¹¹⁵ Robert H. GUNDRY, *The Hellenization of Dominical Tradition and Christianization of Jewish Tradition in the Eschatology of 1-2 Thessalonians*, in *NTS*, 33 (1987), p. 164; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 267.

¹¹⁶ Robert H. GUNDRY, *The Hellenization of Dominical Tradition*, p. 165. We see similar assertions of an imperial connotation by James R. HARRISON, *Paul, and the Imperial Gospel at Thessaloniki*, p. 71-96; *id.*, *Paul and Imperial Authorities*, p. 1-7; Judy DIEHL, *Empire and Epistles*, p. 217-263; Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-113.

¹¹⁷ Robert H. GUNDRY, *The Hellenization of Dominical Tradition*, p. 165.

¹¹⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, 267. See also Leon MORRIS, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (TNTC), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1958, p. 86-87. Morris regards that by *agraphon* Paul makes his intervention more authoritative. On the other, James E. FRAME (*Thessalonians*, p. 171-172) insists that this expression points to historical Jesus' words.

¹¹⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 268; Béda RIGAUX, *Saint Paul, les épîtres aux Thessaloniens*, p. 538-539.

¹²⁰ Lucien CERFAUX, *Christ in the theology of St. Paul*, p. 403. Cerfaux considers that the content of gospel and mystery are not different because of the element of same Christ or the same salvation through Christ. In this background, gospel, word of the Lord, and mystery are parallel.

¹²¹ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 191.

¹²² Lucien CERFAUX, *Christ in the theology of St. Paul*, p. 186-187.

¹²³ Lars HARTMAN, *Prophecy Interpreted: the Formation of Some Jewish Apocalyptic Texts and of the Eschatological Discourse Mark 13 par* (ConBNT, 1), Lund, Gleerup, 1966, p. 187-190; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 268.

Paul's "dictum on a logos from the Lord"¹²⁴. In this logion, Hartman considers that Paul has applied such sayings in parts and presents them as teachings or instructions¹²⁵.

The third possibility is the notion of prophetic wording¹²⁶. Both Luz and Malherbe relate this to I Cor 7:10 (cf. 7:6, 12, 25; 9:14) and consider this a standard formula in the Septuagint and the prophetic tradition. In this case, it is not a revelation to Paul, but the wording shows familiarity with prophetic literature¹²⁷. The formula of expression, ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου stands for God in the Old Testament (1 Kgs 21:35; cf. 13:1, 2, 5, 32; Hos 1:1; Ezek 34:1; 35:1)¹²⁸. It refers to the declarations made in the name of God¹²⁹. According to Malherbe, this reference is not Jesus but an exalted Lord¹³⁰. But the process of receiving from the exalted Lord finds no explanation. In the opinion of Malherbe, it is not that Paul has directly received something from the Lord, but that Paul interprets his experiences in light of the prophetic revelation. This view correlates 1 Thess 4:15-17 to 1 Cor 15:51-52 regarding the word mystery¹³¹. Further, it appears that Paul has applied the logion to continue the Old Testament prophetic tradition or initiate Christian prophetic literature¹³².

3.2 Word of the Lord and Paul

According to Best, we see four possibilities concerning the relationship between Paul and the *logion*, "word of the Lord". They are as follows: a) Paul's familiarity with the collections of Jesus' sayings; b) exalted Jesus' sayings (post-resurrection) revealed or communicated to Christian prophets, possibly apostles; c) Paul's close relation to Jesus and the experiences resulting out of it help Paul to speak on parousia, and finally d) it appears that Paul takes recourse to Jewish or early Christian apocalyptic writings (which are not extant)¹³³. If we take the first option, it indicates a source other than Paul. For the second option, Best considers that "the association of an apocalyptic saying with a Christian prophet"¹³⁴ is not something strange. Best thinks that in 1 Thess 4:18, Paul slips into one of the roles of prophets. In this instance, the role refers to comforting and consolation. However, both instructions and comforting words seem

¹²⁴ Lars HARTMAN, *Prophecy Interpreted*, p. 187.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.182.

¹²⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 268.

¹²⁷ Ulrich LUZ, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, p. 327-328; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 268.

¹²⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 268; Peter SIBER, *Mit Christus Leben: Eine Studie zur paulinischen Auferstehungshoffnung* (ATANT, 61), Zurich, Theologischer Verlag, 1971, p. 39-43. Abraham J. MALHERBE refers to Siber in this context. Peter Siber considers that this formula closely relates to Prophets, Kings and charismatic leaders who employ such sayings formula. See also Ernest BEST (*Thessalonians*, p. 192) who comments that the prophets apply such logion to communicate to God's people.

¹²⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 268.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.* See also Thomas W. GILLESPIE, *The First Theologians: A Study in Early Christian Prophecy*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1994, p. 193-197. Gillespie emphasises a call narrative background and its illustrations. He notes that Paul is someone who has strongly advocated the relevance of early Christian prophecy.

¹³³ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 189-190.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.191.

to flow one after another. Besides, it presents a slight difference in what the preachers say from the earthly Jesus's saying¹³⁵. It is precisely because the early believers could hardly distinguish the sayings of Jesus or the preachers in the gospel's content. The third option is about Paul's own experience. It alludes to Paul's Damascene episode, personal communication of Jesus to Paul¹³⁶. Best rules out the fourth option as he considers it less assuring. He chooses the second option to assert the divine authority of the content communicated to the Thessalonians¹³⁷.

As mentioned, one finds that both the divine authority and Christian prophecy co-existed in preaching the gospel. Concerning Paul and his relationship to Jesus, Helmut Merklein¹³⁸ has emphasised this element of Christian prophecy and comments as follows: "Paul is a prophetic theologian, that is to say, that the theology that Paul speaks as a prophet, is not always and not everywhere; but if there has been theological progress in knowledge of Paul, then the prophecy is an essential part of it. In the field of eschatology, this is especially true". As a result, we see that Paul represents the charismatic nature of prophecy and, subsequently, the communities he has founded.

Besides, there is a close link between the spirit of exalted Jesus' sayings, Christian prophecy, and various communal gatherings of the early Christ-followers. Like baptismal and meal contexts, the ritual significance has constituted the general framework and social location for the early Christ-followers to experience Jesus. It is true in Paul's case¹³⁹. Paul has modelled and shared this medium as a way to realise Jesus.

The Christ-followers have a model in Paul and the Lord's word to counter their contrary cultural backgrounds. This particular experience helps believers' identity and enables them to distance themselves from the surrounding socio-political realities¹⁴⁰. This distance and detachment lead them to a different hope of life after death or vice versa. Paul has taken this critical distance from the current socio-political realities and recommends the community to do so. In this background, one can say that the relationship between Jesus and Paul is visible through these contrary realities more than a direct link to the earthly Jesus and His earthly teachings.

¹³⁵ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 191-192.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.192.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 189-193.

¹³⁸ Helmut MERKLEIN, *Der Theologie als Prophet. Zur Funktion prophetischen Redens im theologischen Diskurs des Paulus*, in *NTS*, 38 (1992), p. 402-429 (here p. 427-428). The citation is as follows: "Paulus ist als Theologe Prophet, bzw. der Theologie Paulus spricht als Prophet, nicht immer und nicht überall; aber wenn es einen theologischen Erkenntnisfortschritt des Paulus gegeben hat, dann ist daran die Prophetie ganz wesentlich beteiligt. Das gilt ganz besonders für den Bereich der Eschatologie".

¹³⁹ Georgia M. KEIGHTLEY, *The Church's Memory of Jesus: A Social Science Analysis of 1 Thessalonians*, in *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17.4 (1987), p. 149-156; *idem.*, *Christian Collective Memory and Paul's Knowledge of Jesus*, in Alan KIRK and Tom THATCHER (eds), *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*, p. 129-150.

¹⁴⁰ Stefan SCHREIBER, *Eine neue Jenseitshoffnung in Thessaloniki und ihre Probleme (1 Thess 4,13-18)*, in *Biblica*, 88.3 (2007), p. 326-350 (here p. 350).

3.3 Word of the Lord: Its Precise Location

We focus on the location of the word of the Lord. In our sense-line division of the unit, it occurs in 15a with its precise expression. Since the interest is to locate its content, there are different interpretations. Malherbe determines the location with the help of grammatical analysis. He traces its general location by referring to ὅτι in 4:16a and ὥστε in 4:18. Here, ὅτι initiates a new stage of argument and ὥστε refers to the preceding words and as a result, brings an enclosure. In this analysis, the actual content is in 4:15 or 4:16-17¹⁴¹. Collins considers that 4:15-17 explain the position on the ground of σὺν αὐτῷ in 4:14d. He sees that this σὺν αὐτῷ anticipates σὺν κυρίῳ in 4:17b and σὺν αὐτῷ in 5:10d. He concludes that Jesus is the instrumentality for God to bring about the eschatological deeds. These occur in 4:15-17 with apocalyptic motifs, and the Word of the Lord points to them. Since we have discussed this topic, we explore how these verses account for Paul's role more than the early Christian proclamation¹⁴². Willi Marxsen mentions that Paul has inherited traditions and interconnected apocalyptic ideas. Thus, Paul refers to the cloud and provides a narrative context that people will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord¹⁴³. Attempting to reconstruct the precise location of the 'word of the Lord', Malherbe refers to pre-Pauline tradition. He traces this further by referring to Marxsen, who cites the Son of Man tradition as the background. Marxsen argues that the Son of man tradition makes way to the Lord's tradition in the later stages¹⁴⁴.

Malherbe follows the redaction criticism in an attempt to recover the original layer. The intention is to reconstruct by removing the Pauline layer and uncovering the original logion. Malherbe comments the following: "The Lord, with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel and the trumpet of God will descend from heaven. The dead in Christ will be raised. Those who are left will be snatched together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air"¹⁴⁵. Jesus' sayings are reconstructions of the actual sayings. Paul has reconstructed those in this passage with new information. But the information proceeds from the pre-existing memory. The process points to a pattern of social memory and its past-constructivist view. Also, there are social, collective, communicative, and cultural memory elements here. It is social and communicative as it includes the foundational and biographical accounts of Jesus and his adherents. The narrative path reflects the Old Testament theophanic scenes, Jewish apocalyptic motifs and Graeco-Roman ceremonial receptions, pointing to the cultural memory process. These elements predate Paul and belong to the common topoi.

¹⁴¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE (*Thessalonians*, p. 269) locates the precise logion of 'the word of the Lord' in 4:15b. See also Peter SIBER (*Mit Christus Leben: Eine Studie zur paulinischen Auferstehungshoffnung*, p. 38) and his observation regarding 4:17b. Paul is clearly drawing a summary of the Lord's saying and presents it in his own way ("v.17b gehört dagegen nicht mehr zum überlieferten Herrenwort, sondern stellt die paulinische Schlußfolgerung dar, mit der Paulus das Fazit aus dem Herrenwort zieht, daß wir es in v.17b mit genuin paulinischer Formulierung zu tun haben läßt sich sprachlich ziemlich eindeutig nachweisen).

¹⁴² Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 159.

¹⁴³ Willi MARXSEN, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (Zürcher Bibelkommentare), Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 1979, p. 67-68.

¹⁴⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 269.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

In comparison, we look at the assumptions by Best, who assumes the logion to be from a prophet. The premise is as follows: “The Lord himself, accompanied by a command, the cry of an archangel and the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead (in Christ) will rise and living will be snatched up simultaneously with them in the clouds to a meeting with the Lord in the air”¹⁴⁶.

As mentioned, the divergent opinions reflect no significant differences between them. They represent different perceptions in locating the actual logion or traditions behind the text¹⁴⁷. However, Malherbe considers that the way Paul presents this text makes any tradition obscure or irrecoverable. It is plausible that Paul, in his own way, attempts to console the Thessalonians, and that seems to be an apparent purpose behind this wording¹⁴⁸. As a result, the ‘word of the Lord’ context mediates a change in the Thessalonian believers. And Paul has framed the logion for the sake of recollecting it (5:27). The purpose is to form a new unit of discourse, a theological content for hope amidst suffering and loss due to the deceased.

3.4 Temporal, Spatial and Eschatological Existence

Concerning the original logion, we have seen that Malherbe¹⁴⁹ gives precedence to ὅτι and Collins¹⁵⁰ to σύν. Now we look at its functioning. In our sense line division, we see that 4:15 contains the plural pronoun ἡμεῖς. The pronoun ‘we’ includes both “we who are alive” and “we who are left”. For Malherbe, their existence is eschatological. It means that their temporal existence lasts between Jesus’ resurrection and his coming. We (who are alive, who are left) have this material perception of reality until the Lord comes. On the other hand, it also presents what the living will not do. That is, they will not precede those who have died. Paul applies a negated expression in 4:15d that they will “by no means precede those who have died” (οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας). We also find in 4:16b what God does, that “the dead in Christ will rise first”. Further, we see in 4:17a, the living and the deceased “will be caught up in the clouds together”. Paul writes as follows: “then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them (the dead) to meet the Lord in the air”. There are three eschatological time frames in this account. The first one is from Jesus’ resurrection to his second coming. Next, it is from Jesus’ death, resurrection to the parousia. Finally, it relates to believers’ death and parousia, pointing to the general resurrection and the communion with the Lord.

Here we find that ‘we’ remains in contrast to the dead in the very expression of οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν (we will not precede). This negated expression is with οὐ μὴ and points to an inward dimension. The categorical division present in 4:13 undergoes a further transformation. First, the first-person pronoun includes Paul¹⁵¹. Second, there is a milder separation between “we” and the deceased as compared to 4:13d (οὐ μὴ λυπησθε). Further, Paul, those who accompany Paul in

¹⁴⁶ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 194.

¹⁴⁷ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 269-270.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

¹⁵⁰ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 159.

¹⁵¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 270.

the missionary journey and the Thessalonians become a single entity. In that case, the application goes beyond the Thessalonian believers. Besides, the negated expression has a milder form. Grammatically it is not an imperative. By this, we can see that with ὅτι (that) present throughout 4:15-17, the negated expression οὐ μὴ indicates a specific contrast between the living and the deceased. And this contrast appears in an antithetical form. This application of the antithesis in a negated form refers to those alive and dead until the parousia. Whereas in 4:13, Paul distinguishes between the believers and others. Here, characterisation refers to grief without hope. On the other hand, we see in 4:15-17 that hope has its reference in the future event, general resurrection and communion with the Lord. It points to hope without grief (belongingness with the Lord forever).

We have seen earlier that σὺν αὐτῷ in 4:14d explains 4:15-17. According to Collins, σὺν αὐτῷ anticipates σὺν κυρίῳ in 4:17 and σὺν αὐτῷ in 5:10d. He concludes that Jesus is God's instrumentality to bring about the eschatological deeds¹⁵². Collins considers that the existence of the deceased and the living depends on finding their existence with Lord (σὺν αὐτῷ in 4:14d and σὺν κυρίῳ in 4:17b). Collins links both σὺν αὐτῷ and the 'word of the Lord' in an attempt to reconstruct the original logion.

However, Paul primarily constructs a reality regarding the living and the dead. The logion is only instrumental. In this way, the antithesis between you and the rest continues until Lord comes. Hence, it is not merely for an anthropological consideration of believers' social identity. But there is a social and apocalyptic dualistic time frame with a significant focus that turns inward and contrasts an opposing external reality.

As mentioned, 'we' (ἡμεῖς) in 4:15b regroups Paul with the community at the Parousia event¹⁵³. We see a parallel in 1 Cor 15:52¹⁵⁴. But Paul also identifies himself with those in the resurrected group (1Cor 6:14; 2Cor 4:14; 5:1; Phil 1:20)¹⁵⁵. There are variations in Paul's identification, with the living and with those deceased. These differences have led to the thinking that Paul develops his eschatological thinking in successive stages. I have already referred to these assumptions in the second chapter concerning eschatology in the Thessalonian correspondence¹⁵⁶. This chapter focuses only on identifying the antithetical expressions. In this regard, I

¹⁵² Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 159.

¹⁵³ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 270.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Christopher L. MEARNES, *Early Eschatological Development in Paul*, p. 137-157. See also Charles Harold DODD, *New Testament Studies*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1953, p. 108-111. We read that in the initial preaching, Paul shows Parousia to be expected immediately like almost in line with Jewish writings in the Book of Enoch, Apocalypse of Baruch and the Apocalypse of Ezra (II Esdras). It indicates that God will raise the righteous to share his triumph in the radical renewal. Dodd sees that for the Thessalonians 'the Day of the Lord' already a present reality. Later, Paul shifts the course differently, before the age to come. The anti-Christ will come, but Christ is already at work. In this way, together with the Thessalonians, Paul places himself in the group: we who are alive will be caught in the air to meet the Lord. Further in 1 Cor 15:51-52, it is not all but some. Besides, it is also general, 'we shall all be changed'. The confidence and conviction in Paul on the nearness of Parousia seems to filter down according to the circumstances.

refer to John Gillman¹⁵⁷. He considers 4:13 and 4:18 as two framing verses for the pericope, 1 Thess 4:13–18. It expresses Paul’s purpose by way of inclusion, unity of the text. Here, 4:13 is in a negated form of the verb wish and 4:18 compliments it by comforting one another. It is an imperative and a positive command¹⁵⁸. There are two functions: not to grieve like others and to console one another. The community distances itself from a local mourning pattern. Here Paul redrafts their funerary framework with a unique communitarian experience placed in the future. The narration begins with a wish in negative form, and it concludes in a positive hortatory tone in 4:18. Here grief gives into consolation, so also their accompanying words. In this way, Paul constructs a new memory framework for the community.

We now consider the word, περιλειπόμενοι in 4:15c in consultation with οἱ ζῶντες in 4:15b and κοιμωμένων in 4:13c. Notably, ‘we’ is present in both groups: ‘who are alive’ and ‘who are left’. In these expressions, Marshall identifies an idea of survival. He observes that by such a term, Paul intends both himself and his hearers. It presumes a sense that they may be asleep or awake at the times of the Lord’s coming¹⁵⁹. Here it is not clearly stated what Marshall thinks of Paul’s position.

Contrary to this, we have Malherbe, who hints at a majority opinion. The proposition is that Paul places himself in the group that remains alive¹⁶⁰. Paul’s position is relatively among those who expect to survive and see the Lord’s day if we consider this opinion. As follows, we explore what ‘who are left’ means in the context of the Lord’s arrival.

3.5 Consideration of Περιλειπόμενοι

Περιλειπόμενοι in 4:15c is the present participle middle/passive of περιλείπομαι, meaning what is left over, what remains or surplus. Περιλείμμα is a compound of λείμμα¹⁶¹. In this case, λείπω¹⁶², which generally means to leave behind or fall short or be inferior or lack in middle and passive refers to “left behind”. It intends those who would remain to see parousia.

¹⁵⁷ John GILLMAN, *Signals of Transformation in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*, in *CBQ*, 47 (1985): p. 263-281. Here in the background of our analysis in 4:17a, the living and the dead will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. John Gillman sees this as “assumption of the living and the dead”. He considers this in tension with “transformation of the living and the dead” in 1 Cor 15:51-52. The tension that lies within these two expressions shows a marked difference in the development in Pauline letters. The developmental view largely depends on the chronological order of the Pauline letters. Malherbe is of the opinion that Gillman presents a survey of the Paul’s thinking and the eschatological development. But Gillmann depends on Christopher L. Mearns and his ‘hypothetical four level development’ in Pauline thinking with regard to the eschatology. Gillman considers that Mearns looks at the development namely, realized eschatology in the first place and next futuristic eschatology in stages two, three and four. But Gillman critiques Mearns in the sense that Mearns in the reconstruction of stages leaves out the significant factor of Paul’s understanding of the resurrected body of Christians.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

¹⁵⁹ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 127-128; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 270.

¹⁶⁰ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 270. Malherbe agrees with Holtz, Best and Ellicott that Paul has included himself among those who are to be alive and are left in contrast to those who have died.

¹⁶¹ Gottlob SCHRENK, *λείμμα*. *Greek Usage*, in *TDNT*, 4 (1967), p. 194-196.

¹⁶² BDAG 590, λείπω 1.a.

In the Old Testament, the remnant refers to those left or delivered or having escaped. Volkmar Hertrich¹⁶³ gives four roots פלט, שאר, שרד, יתר of which שאר, occurs 220 times in its different derivatives. Further explanations are derived from the same author that the idea of the remnant has the following significance. It has its existence precisely because of God's saving action and not due to the righteousness of the saved (Am 5:15). It is grounded in God's action and has two distinct ways of judgment and deliverance. This notion of the remnant is present in the prophets' call (Is 8:16-18). Eschatologically it is a present as well as a future reality. It is a current reality for Amos (5:15), the prophet and his disciples (Is 8:16-18). The remnant at times relates to the temporal location (Is 1:8), in Jerusalem or Zion. Since it is grounded in God's action, conversion is not an essential precondition but signifies an attitude of patient waiting (Is 8:16-18)¹⁶⁴. In Rom 9–11, Paul develops this idea of the remnant from a different angle. He distinguishes between a physical Israel and a true Israel. The context for this is the "rejection of the righteousness of God (in Jesus)"¹⁶⁵. In this distinction, true Israel is the believers in Christ.

But the context of "who are left" is directly about those who survive to witness parousia. Some believers remain alive in contrast to others and in comparison to the dead. The phrase indicates the dead's resurrection, their gathering with the living in the clouds together with the Lord. Malherbe refers to the passive of περιλείπω as something which remains, a result of subtraction¹⁶⁶. But according to him, there exists a particular uncertainty in this section: one, whether περιλείπεσθαι is for consolatory purpose; second, it points to a similar application in 4 Ezra 6:25¹⁶⁷ and its immediate apocalyptic relevance. In this case, the verb form (present infinitive middle/passive) varies. According to Malherbe, in this apocalyptic passage, it is absent. If it is present, it does communicate an apocalyptic idea¹⁶⁸. We see in 4:13c τῶν κοιμωμένων, in 4:13e οἱ λοιποί, in 4:15b οἱ ζῶντες and 4:15c οἱ περιλειπόμενοι. In the above descriptions, generally, we find a double fold contrast. On the one hand, the believers differ from others because they are not to grieve like them. And on the other hand, the living ones are set in contrast to those who have died. Further, the living believers derive a different expression, those "who are left". Here 'who are left' are not merely the living but the survivors¹⁶⁹. Those who persevere and await the Lord's coming.

3.6 The Coming of the Lord in 4:15c

Παρουσία means "the state of being present at a place or presence" or "arrival as the first stage in presence, coming, advent"¹⁷⁰. It points to "of Christ, and nearly always of his Messianic

¹⁶³ Volkmar HERTRICH, *λεῖμμα. The 'Remnant' in the Old Testament*, in *TDNT*, 4 (1967), p. 196-209.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*.

¹⁶⁵ Gottlob SCHRENK, *λεῖμμα. The Thought of the Remnant in Paul as compared with its Occurrence in Apocalyptic and the Rabbis*, in *TDNT*, 4 (1967), p. 209-214.

¹⁶⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 271.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* ("And it shall be that whoever remains after all I have foretold you shall himself be saved and shall see my salvation at the end of the world").

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 270.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* See also *BDAG* 780-781, παρουσία 1 & 2, 2.b.a.

Advent in glory to judge the world at the end of this age”¹⁷¹. Paul is the first to use *παρουσία* as a technical term in New Testament writings, but the idea of coming does not arise from him¹⁷². Apart from the word *parousia*, the concept of coming was prevalent in the “Aramaic-speaking church before Paul”¹⁷³. Paul has used it as arrival or presence in 1 Cor 16:17, 2 Cor 7:6 and 7, and 10:10, and Phil 1:26 and 2:12¹⁷⁴. As a technical term in the eschatological sense, we find it in Jas 5:7, 2 Pet 1:16 and 3:4 and 1 John 2:28¹⁷⁵. The *parousia*’s eschatological idea is present mainly in First Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; also in 1 Cor 15:23; cf. 2 Thess 2:1)¹⁷⁶. However, it is not merely limited to Christ but also to the coming of the lawless one (cf. 2 Thess 2:9).¹⁷⁷ Within the text, the word *come/coming* occurs twice: one is coming of the Lord and the second, *ὅτι ἡμέρα κυρίου...ἔρχεται* in 5:2b (coming of the Lord’s day).

Similarly, Paul has also described the same event by other words like *ἔρχεσθαι* (1 Cor 4:5 and 11:26; cf. 2 Thess 1:10)¹⁷⁸ and *ἀποκάλυψις* (1 Cor 1:7; Rom 2:5; cf. 2 Thess 1:7)¹⁷⁹. The term *parousia* is of Greek origin¹⁸⁰. In this way, Paul uses a standard ceremonial practice of receiving a king or a dignitary to communicate the intended arrival of the Lord. Besides, Paul consoles his readers with this imagery¹⁸¹. It is a need for consolation, and the Lord’s coming poses a precedence problem between the deceased and the living.

3.7 The Question of Precedence

The negated phrase (*οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν*/ by no means precede) in 4:15d identifies the problem of precedence. Malherbe observes in this negated expression and also by *καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγῳσιν* in 5:3e (and there will be no escape), some presupposed understandings among Thessalonians which are contrary to Paul’s teaching¹⁸². It emerges in the context of the present communication to the believers about those who have died. We have observed earlier that Paul takes all the believers (who have died, who are alive and who are left) and places them with the Lord’s coming. Here *οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν* is a direct reference to those who are alive and left in contrast to those who have died. The Thessalonians have a problem. It is their grief for the deceased. The reason for their suffering is the wrong notion associated with the Lord’s day or false propaganda contrary to what Paul has preached to them. Thus for Malherbe, in this specific expression, Paul seems to correct their ill notions¹⁸³.

¹⁷¹ BDAG 780-781, *παρουσία* 2.b.α.

¹⁷² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 271-272.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 272-273.

3.8 The Descent of the Lord

With ὅτι begins an explanation of apocalyptic imagery in 4:16-17. This apocalyptic imagery continues to be part of the word of God initiated in 4:15a with γάρ¹⁸⁴. In 4:14, we see the instrumentality of Jesus. Here, the Lord himself is the agent of the day and the happenings. There are two factors here: one, the Lord's descent and second, his accompaniment. We read in 4:16b that the Lord will descend from heaven (ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ). For Malherbe, as to the location, Paul and other Christians have considered the place of Jesus in heaven (Rom 8:34; 10:6; cf. Acts 2:33; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1)¹⁸⁵. Best points to the early Christian faith: Jesus is exalted and is with God in heaven¹⁸⁶. Here ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ (from heaven) is in genitive singular without the article. Paul uses ἐξ οὐρανοῦ in 1 Cor 15:47, 2 Cor 5:2, Gal 1:8 and also the plural, τῶν οὐρανῶν in 1 Thess 1:10¹⁸⁷. We also find the allusion to the Son of Man coming in clouds or appearing in heaven in the Synoptic Gospels (Mk 13:26; Mt 24:30; Lk 21:27)¹⁸⁸.

According to Best, αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος in 4:16a indicates the significant role God will play at the end of times. It is unlike the Jewish apocalypse, where the Messiah has no role to play¹⁸⁹. We have mentioned earlier that parousia has its origin in the Greek context, especially with a ceremonial appearance of a public figure. We find here κελεύσματος, φωνῇ and σάλπιγγι (command, sound, and trumpet) and ἐν precedes all the three, that accompany the Lord's coming from heaven. Best notes that the exalted position of Jesus in heaven reveals itself through the imagery accompanying His coming. The term 'archangel' is used here but is nameless in this apocalyptic context. It is similar to other instances in the Old and New Testaments as a whole. That is, we scarcely trace the names. Here, we find a reference to archangels as vehicles of God's voice, closely following from the 'cry of command'. Their role is very minimal, better termed as decorative¹⁹⁰. The trumpets are associated with theophanies (Exod 19:13, 16, 19; 20:18) and the announcement of calamities (cf. Rev 8–9). Malherbe opines that Paul seems to have watered down such dramatic elements in the later apocalyptic passages (1 Cor 15:52)¹⁹¹. However, if the content is paraenetic, these theatrical elements assemble and convey the event's nearness. The readers can situate the event in the absence of an expected appearance that is yet to come.

3.9 The Resurrection of the Dead

As to the continuity of existence, καί facilitates the process. It conjoins to communicate continuity in the happenings that accompany the Lord's coming and the consequent action, the resurrection of the dead. We find verbal forms ἀνέστη in 4:14c and ἀναστήσονται in 4:16b. For

¹⁸⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 273.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 196.

¹⁸⁷ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 273.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 273-274.

¹⁸⁹ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 196.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 274.

Malherbe, the use of the intransitive, ἀναστήσονται in place of ζωοποιηθήσονται¹⁹² makes possible the retention of the similar expression in 4:14c and 4:16b. In 1 Cor 15:22, we find ζωοποιηθήσονται. It means “make alive or give life to”, especially God who gives supernatural life or dead persons who are called to life, from the verb, ζωοποιέω¹⁹³.

In 4:16b, we find ἐν Χριστῷ. Paul uses it extensively in his letters. Here, it is an instrumental dative¹⁹⁴. But ἐν Χριστῷ signifies more. It refers to the Christian dead, but that the Christian dead continue to be with Jesus now becomes a fact by God’s deeds in Jesus who will raise them¹⁹⁵. It has its equivalent expressions in “those who have fallen asleep in Christ (1 Cor 15:18)”¹⁹⁶ and “the dead who die in the Lord” (Rev 14:13)¹⁹⁷. Malherbe considers that the Thessalonian problem is not regarding the resurrection of the dead. But how the living and the dead are to take part on the Lord’s day. It becomes clear by οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν in 4:15d and is now explicitly mentioned by the sequence. Two words indicate the order of succession, πρῶτον (first) in 4:16b and ἔπειτα (then) in 4:17a, wherein the living follows the dead, a serial order of gathering with Lord at the parousia¹⁹⁸.

The action initiated by ἐν Χριστῷ aspect continues to affect the living ones. The gathering now takes place and has its location in the clouds. The living ones (who are alive and who are left) have now a description. It is unlike in 4:15c-d. There, we find that they are not to precede the dead at the Parousia. The actions that follow have a sense of togetherness, and it is evident with ἅμα σὺν. The word ἅμα is grouped under ‘improper preposition’¹⁹⁹ because it is used only once in the New Testament as a preposition with dative, meaning “simultaneously with” (Mt 13:29)²⁰⁰. In all other cases, it has an adverbial function. Here, it has the adverbial role²⁰¹. We find it in 4:17a and 5:10d as ἅμα σὺν, and it is a compound preposition. It means “simultaneously with”²⁰² and, in our translation, “together with”.

In the scenario where the dead and the living come together, specific issues concerning the deceased appear. It relates to their condition after their physical death and before their resurrection. Best considers some distinction in the dead’s status prior and post-Parousia, but it appears that Paul has not focused on it as this issue does not directly correlate to the Thessalonians’ crisis²⁰³. The verb form ἀρπαγησόμεθα (‘will be caught up’) is from ἀρπάζω meaning

¹⁹² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 274.

¹⁹³ BDAG 431, ζωοποιέω 1.

¹⁹⁴ BDF 219.4, p. 117-118.

¹⁹⁵ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 275.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ Charles F. D. MOULE, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 81-82; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 275.

²⁰⁰ Charles F. D. MOULE, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 81.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81-82; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 275.

²⁰² Charles F. D. MOULE, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 82; Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 198 (ἅμα σὺν is not a compound preposition but is an adverb and means, ‘simultaneously’).

²⁰³ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 198.

snatch, seize or take suddenly and vehemently²⁰⁴. Malherbe thinks that it communicates “the sense of sudden and violent action”²⁰⁵. Best refers to its application in 2 Cor 12:2 and 4. It means “temporary spiritual experience”. In Acts 8:39, it is in the context of “material and irreversible event”. These two references help determine its use in 4:17 to mean somewhere between the two meanings referred above²⁰⁶. In this action of being caught up, Best opines that Paul leaves out the aspect of the bodily form of the previously dead²⁰⁷. The distinction between the dead and the living is not part of the discussion by Paul. But Malherbe considers this experience as rupture aligning to Jewish apocalyptic literature background (e.g. 4 Ezra 6:26; 14:9)²⁰⁸. Here, it emphasises the consolatory aspect indicating that Paul has used traditional images for pastoral purposes²⁰⁹.

3.10 Parousia and the Cosmic Elements

The content in 4:16a (κελεύσματος, φωνῇ and σάλπιγγι) relates to and recollects the elements of theophanies (e.g. Ex 19:16; 24:15; 40:34; esp. Dan 7:13)²¹⁰. Malherbe considers that the cosmic details at the Parousia event are also present in Mark’s Son of Man tradition (13:24-27)²¹¹. Here, as we see, Paul’s purpose is not mainly an elaboration of the cosmic manifestation at Parousia but the aspect of a gathering of all believers (of the deceased and those alive by God’s action in Jesus)²¹². God is yet to fulfil this ultimate act. Here, God comes to accompany His suffering community actively. In this eschatological scenario, the created world becomes part of the process. All God’s agents, angels, and emissaries join and attend Jesus, with whom the living community finally gathers for a “forever moment”. The parousia imagery captures this significance and portrays the imagery through a visual and symbolic world familiar to Paul and his community.

The word, ἀπάντησις means meeting (frequently in friendly and hostile meaning) or meeting only in the formal setting. In 4:17a, we find the expression to meet the Lord in the air²¹³. Along with its cognates, it indicates an ordinary sense of the meeting²¹⁴. In this case, the gathering points to a location in the air. According to Best, εἰς here serves as ἐν to mean ‘in’²¹⁵. By air, Best understands a place which remains midway, that is, between heaven and earth. He further considers air as “the area of the planets and the stars, the dwelling place of evil spirits and supernatural powers” (cf. Eph. 2.2). Malherbe understands that this word technically points to

²⁰⁴ BDAG 134, ἀρπάζω 2.b.

²⁰⁵ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 275 (Mt 11:12; Jn 6:15; 10:12; Acts 8:39; 23:10; 2 Cor 14:4; Rev 12:5).

²⁰⁶ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 198.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 276.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 276-277.

²¹³ BDAG 97, ἀπάντησις.

²¹⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 277 (Mt 8:28; 25:1; 28:9; Mk 14:13; Lk 8:27; 14:12).

²¹⁵ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 199.

Hellenistic processions. It refers to the dignitaries' meeting, especially the king, midway by the priest or by a city's inhabitants²¹⁶.

The meaning of οὕτως here applies the sense of "summarising a thought expressed in what precedes"²¹⁷. The primary element here is that the Christians are to meet the Lord in the air. The gathering with the Lord in the air does not presuppose any prior suffering (a communion without prior suffering). Paul expresses this in other instances (Rom 6:3-11; 8:17; Gal 2:19; cf. Col 2:12-3:5)²¹⁸. The phrase σὺν κυρίῳ is characteristic of Paul to describe the relationship of believers with Christ, especially post-resurrection (Rom 6:8; 8:32; 2 Cor 4:14; 13:4; cf. Col 3:3-4)²¹⁹. The content that "the faithful will be with the Lord forever" has origin in the Jewish apocalyptic literature, that the risen are to live with Messiah (4 Ezra 14:9; 6:26; 1En 39:6-7; 62:13-14; 71:16)²²⁰. For Best, the eschatological life with Christ does not refer to the fellowship between two Christians. In this text, we find it twice, in 4:14d and 4:17b and also in 5:10d. Best considers that the message it conveys is not to refer to something new to the Thessalonians²²¹. He comments that it is "an accidental formation and does not refer to the nature of life together"²²².

In this section, we have seen that when Paul declares the message, he has mentioned words and phrases like death, life, resurrection, parousia, who are left and who are alive, and the dead will rise first. These, either by idea or as words, display distinction and contrast, possibly pointing to certain types of antitheses. We consider these words that indicate contrast or contradiction particularly, with the notion of communion without prior suffering (being with the Lord forever in 4:17b). This element relates to the dimension of hope, and the imagery of God's arrival ensures that all believers are part of this process without any discrimination. The message declared by Paul and his co-workers is God's message to the believing community and its members. Subsequently to this process, the Lord's word (ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου) transforms as "these words" (οἱ λόγοι οὗτοι in the dative) in 4:18. Notably, the declarative message changes into a conversational mode. Two reasons suffice this understanding.

On the one hand, the proclaimed message emphasises the ongoing relationship between God and the messengers. On the other hand, the relationship does not end there. It steps out of that zone to enter the living community. The word of the Lord becomes "these words". These words point to God's wish, and as expressed by Paul, they are not grieving anymore. In other words, it becomes simple so that the community can recollect and imitate them. The words supply them with the power and transform them as agents of consolation despite their suffering context.

²¹⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 277.

²¹⁷ BDAG 741-742, οὕτως 1.b.

²¹⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 277.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 200-201.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 202.

Further, this conversational style of communication reflects God's cooperation with his messengers and the community. Paul applies this mix of oral and written media as a model for imitation and recommendation among Christ-followers. Here, the "I/we – You" mode of engaging is open-ended, which is open to God's interventions, or as is the case here, God's arrival. In this way, Paul reconstructs the apocalyptic imagery and the eschatological time frame to the service of his community in Thessalonica.

4. ENCOURAGING AND COMFORTING

The expression, 'word of the Lord', authenticates Paul's communication with the believers. This communication happens in the context of some having died. Malherbe comments that in the pagan world, wise men have also served this purpose, offering consoling words²²³. For the believers, Paul plays the role of a wise man and offers a basis to encourage one another. We find that ὥστε introduces this action. According to Malherbe, from the eschatological point of view, Paul applies ὥστε in other instances (1Cor 15:58; cf. 4:5; 10:12; 11:33; Phil 2:12; 4:1)²²⁴. The translation of παρακαλεῖτε in NRSV is 'to encourage'. Among numerous meanings of παρακαλέω, here, it means to instil someone with courage or cheer, comfort, to encourage or cheer up. This instance refers to comforting someone with words or, in passive, comforting, receiving comforting words or favourable responses²²⁵.

Reimund Bieringer²²⁶, concerning παρακαλέω and παράκλησις, focuses on the Pauline homologies and shows that it occurs forty times, including both in verb and noun form. In First Thessalonians, it appears eight times, and in the particular section we are dealing with, it occurs twice, namely in 4:18 and 5:11. In both these contexts, Bieringer ascribes the meaning 'comfort' and not 'encourage' to the verb, παρακαλέω (here in 4:18, παρακαλεῖτε)²²⁷. On the other hand, we observe that Malherbe has chosen 'exhortation' (παράκλησις) as a proper Greek translation. He contends that the ancient world classifies consolation as an appeal. The wise people play the role of offering consolation based on specific patterns²²⁸. This symbolic world of the wise men and their communication pattern is now open to all Christians. Best opines that preaching of the Word, community gatherings constitute the environment for appeals and consolations (1 Cor 14:3; Rom 12:8)²²⁹. We find this dynamism twice in this eschatological discourse (4:18 and 5:11). The conceptual world of consolation or comfort to mitigate the

²²³ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 278.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ BDAG 764-765, παρακαλέω, 1-4. It means as follows. First, it is to ask, to be present where the speaker is present. Second, it is to urge strongly, appeal, to exhort, encourage as is the case in 1 Thess 5:11. Third, it is to make a strong request for something: request, implore, entreat. Finally, it is to instill someone with courage or cheer, comfort, or to encourage or cheer up as is the case in 1 Thess 4:18, to mean comfort someone with words, or in passive be comforted or receive comforting words or a favorable response.

²²⁶ Reimund BIERINGER, *The comforted comforter: The meaning of παρακαλέω or παράκλησις terminology in 2 Corinthians*, in *HTS Theologisches Studien/Theological Studies*, 67.1 (2011), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v67i1.969>.

²²⁷ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 278.

²²⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 278.

²²⁹ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 202.

suffering context is not separable from encouragement or exhortation²³⁰. The intention is to console the broken community (in the context of death) and serve the future contexts, the Day of the Lord and the need for an imitation model. I will elaborate on this issue in the next chapter, in association with 1 Thess 5:11.

CONCLUSION

In the initial part of this chapter, I explained the importance of the “I/We – You” conversational and communicative pattern. With this schematic formulation, we saw how the material objects of the document, God, Paul and his co-workers and the community, constantly engage between themselves, leaving out the others who have not accepted the gospel. However, the exclusion of others is undifferentiated and remains open-ended. It does not mean a material exclusion but withholding contrary realities until the actual message or the model unfolds. We have observed that the unfolding happens through the “I/We – You” mode: we wish, we believe, we declare, and we encourage. Besides, each stage has shown the dynamics of contrasts and antitheses as follows: a) hope and grief, grieving without hope, and hope without despair, community and others, believers and Gentiles; b) death and resurrection, life and death, the dead in Christ and the deceased in general; c) the order of precession and communion of all, the asymmetrical and egalitarian models; and d) comforting words with hope and words having no hope. I will consider these antitheses with the model of social memory in the fifth chapter.

²³⁰ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Exhortation in First Thessalonians*, in *NovT*, 25.3 (1983), p. 238-256; *id.*, *Thessalonians*, p. 285-286.

CHAPTER 4

A BRIEF EXEGESIS OF 1 THESS 5:1–11

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I undertake a brief exegetical study of First Thessalonians 5:1–11¹. The study considers the earlier interpretations regarding rhetorical contrasts, antitheses and traditions, and reconsiders them with the social memory model. Our exegetical study identifies the particular expressions of antitheses in the discourse.

The sense-line division of the text considers 5:1–11 with a further four-part sub-divisions: a) 5:1 and 5:2-3; b) 5:4 and 5:5-6; c) 5:7-8 and 5:9-10 (9-10a and 10b-10d), and d) 5:11. In this chapter, I also repeat the similar approach adapted concerning the pericope, 4:13–18, but with one variation in the chain of communication: a) we write, b) we declare, c) we believe, and d) you encourage and build-up (we encourage). As follows, the verbs as highlighted here, designate each of these stages respectively: a) γράφω, οἴδατε, and λέγω; b) εἰμι/εἶναι, γρηγορέω, νήφω, ἐνδύω in contrast to καθεύδω and μεθύω; c) τίθημι, περιποίησις, ἀποθνήσκω about γρηγορέω, καθεύδω, and ζάω; and d) παρακαλέω and οἰκοδομέω².

As mentioned, these verbs are communicative because they point to a recollecting and constructivist past. They also point to contrary representations in the letter's social location. Here too, the information is progressive and constructive. In other words, there are four successive stages: our writing, our declaration, our faith, and our encouragement, and their respective constructivist phases. This implied genitive nature designates the “material objects”³ of First Thessalonians: God, Paul and co-workers, and the community, excluding others who have not accepted Paul's preaching. In this case, too, the communication is open-ended: “I – You”⁴ (we – you) concerning the “material objects”⁵ of the letter (God, Paul/co-workers, and the community excluding those who have not accepted Paul's gospel).

As mentioned, the chapter applies this scheme for interpretive analysis of 5:1–11. I present it as follows:

- a) We write — (i) 5:1 and (ii) 5:2-3 (You know; others do not know)

¹ In this chapter, like in the previous one, I work with the exegetical study initially done in my Masters' thesis and submitted at the KU Leuven.

² The translation is as follows: (a) write, know, and speak/say; (b) to be, awake, sober, put on, sleep, and get drunk/intoxicate; (c) be placed, be in destiny, die, awake, asleep, and live; and (d) encourage and build-up.

³ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory'*, p. 99-131.

⁴ Judith LIEU, *Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory*, p. 133-143. See also Normand BONNEAU, *Narrative Time in the New Testament. Essays on Mark, John, and Paul*, p. 101-113

⁵ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory'*, p. 99-131.

- b) We declare — (i) 5:4 and (ii) 5:5-6 (You are — We are; others are not)
- c) We believe — (i) 5:7-8 and (ii) 5:9-10a and 5:10b-10d (salvation and life)
- d) You encourage — 5:11 (between Christ-followers)

1. WE WRITE: ABOUT TIMES AND SEASONS

Paul writes about the times and seasons. We find that in 1 Thess 5:1, *περὶ δέ* (now concerning) points to this discussion. By *περὶ δέ*, we understand that it marks a response to the earlier requests. We know from Mitchell⁶ that *περὶ δέ* introduces a topic. Similarly, Collins⁷ considers that with 5:1, Paul addresses a new issue. Three features mark the beginning of new topic: first, the use of *περὶ δέ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν* (now concerning the times and seasons) as a presentation formula; second, the vocative *ἀδελφοί* (brothers and sisters); and third, *οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε ὑμῖν γράφεσθαι* (you do not need to have anything written to you). Besides, Christopher Tuckett⁸ has compared the use of *περὶ δέ* in Paul and the gospels. He considers that, unlike the gospels where *περί* has a strong link with the verb, for Paul, a *περί* phrase usually plays the role of a title to a paragraph. It is also a usual way of introducing the topics. With *περὶ δέ*, Malherbe⁹ opines that more than a new subject, it is a new stage within the same discussion.

Here the overall debate is about the Thessalonians' eschatological concerns. We consider that *περὶ δέ* here continues to deal with the issues as in 1 Thess 4:13–18. Both are important to Paul and the Thessalonians. Paul is making a move from appeal to a particular kind of behaviour¹⁰. The Thessalonians must recollect the behavioural strategy initiated in 4:13d, “that you may not grieve”. The present passage also links various themes that are associated with the Parousia, the eschatological motif. They are the time aspect, day of the Lord, peace and security, watchfulness, representation of the believers and building up the community. We look at these issues as follows.

1.1 Times and Seasons (5:1)

We find in 5:1a₁, *ὁ χρόνος καὶ ὁ καιρός* (times and seasons) in the genitive plural. According to Best¹¹, it indicates a disturbing situation among the Thessalonians. The question that persists in the minds of the Thessalonians appears to be evident with the use of *ὁ χρόνος καὶ ὁ καιρός*¹². Here, *ὁ χρόνος* indicates the chronological aspect of time and *ὁ καιρός*, a qualitative aspect of time¹³. The English rendering of this phrase is ‘the times and the seasons’ in 5:1a₁. Morris

⁶ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Concerning περὶ δέ in 1 Corinthians*, p. 229-256.

⁷ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 163.

⁸ Christopher M. TUCKETT, *Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 160-182 (here p. 169).

⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 287.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 285-286.

¹¹ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 203.

¹² Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 132;

¹³ *Ibid.*; Leon MORRIS, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, p. 149.

opines that the word ‘seasons’ in English has a more limited scope than καιρός in Greek. Hence it refers to the kind of events taking place rather than the measurable duration¹⁴.

Further, we focus on the purpose of these terms. Marshall agrees with von Dobschütz and comments that both words communicate the same. For von Dobschütz, there is no substantive or significant difference between the two¹⁵. On the one hand, in this particular expression, as Marshall considers, we see that Paul has used this idiomatic expression under the Old Testament influence (Est 10:3; Dan 2:21; 7:12; Wis 8:8; cf. Mk 13:32; Acts 1:7)¹⁶. On the other hand, as Best opines, the idea of a definite end passes from the Jewish apocalyptic literature (2 Bar 24:4; 4 Ezra 6:59) to the Christian apocalyptic literature¹⁷. Although it is about the timing of Parousia, the Thessalonians have a concern about their participation in the event¹⁸. Here, there appears a shift in the circumstances of the believers. Previously, their anxiety was about the deceased and the fear of losing their participation in the Parousia. Now, that fear shifts to those who are alive. They want to know the exact time of the Lord’s coming so that they do not miss it¹⁹. According to Marshall²⁰, the Thessalonians’ concern is not the long delay but their thinking that they are unworthy of such a great event. Consequently, they are eager to know more details, but a lack of information gives them anxiety.

Here, Paul uses ὁ χρόνος καὶ ὁ καιρός in an eschatological sense (ὁ χρόνος in Acts 3:21 and 1 Pet 1:20; ὁ καιρός in Lk 19:44 and 1 Pet 1:5). According to Malherbe²¹, these are *hendiadys*, which indicates that two different words express a similar idea. He observes that ὁ χρόνος καὶ ὁ καιρός can point to the attempts to precisely calculate these events. These attempts arise mainly due to the false allusions that God has fixed a definite period for such events to occur (Jer 25:11; Dan 9:24-27). Besides, Malherbe comments that these words here and in Act 5:7 (cf. Mk 13:4; Mt 24:3; Lk 21:7) have heightened the anxiety and curiosity associated with the apocalyptic events²². However, by γράφεσθαι with οὐ χρειάν, Paul appears to undervalue the aspect of a definite end²³. Paul’s reason to write in this manner does not correlate with the events’ specific timing. It is about a way of life that the believers have to adopt because of the uncertainty, immediacy, and surprise surrounding the Lord’s Day²⁴.

¹⁴ Leon MORRIS, *Thessalonians*, p. 149.

¹⁵ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 132; Ernst VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *Die Thessalonicher-Briefe*, p. 204.

¹⁶ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 132; Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 163; Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 203. Best presents the continuity of the Jewish acceptance of the definite end with the example and reference to Daniel’s reinterpretation of the seventy weeks mentioned by Jeremiah (Jer 25:11; Dan 9:24; cf. 2 Bar 25; 4 Ezra 4:51; Mk 13; Rev 4).

¹⁷ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 203.

¹⁸ James E. FRAME, *Thessalonians*, p. 178; Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 203; Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 132; Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 163. Collins speaks of giving more attention to the aspects of ‘when and how’.

¹⁹ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 132.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

²¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 288-289; Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 163.

²² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 289.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

1.2 The Day of the Lord (5:2-3)

Paul introduces ἡ ἡμέρα κυρίου (the Lord's Day) with γάρ in 5:2a²⁵. It points to Paul's intention to undervalue the aspect of a definite end. At the same time, it brings in the issue of the day of the Lord (ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου). Fee considers that with γράφεσθαι (written) and ἀκριβῶς οἶδατε (you know very well), Paul is reminding the Thessalonians of the previous proclamation²⁶. By ἀκριβῶς, Marshall²⁷ thinks that the Thessalonians are aware of all that Paul has communicated to them previously (orally). Since the Thessalonians presume the matter already, this can mean 'more details' rather than 'in detail'. Marshall considers that Paul has no interest to provide exact and exhaustive details about the Parousia. Thereby, Marshall cautions Christian writers about "going beyond what is written" (cf. 1 Cor 4:6, literal rendering).

On the other hand, Malherbe²⁸, by αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἶδατε, identifies two main aspects: first, the association of αὐτοί with οἶδατε; and second, by the use of οἶδατε, Paul is referring to his readers' knowledge about the issues under discussion. Malherbe observes that Paul has associated only in the Thessalonian letters the emphatic αὐτοί with οἶδατε. He considers that Paul makes this association either for an emphasis (1 Thess 3:3; cf. 2 Thess 3:7) or for a contrast (1 Thess 2:1). In this particular instance, it serves both an emphatic and a paraenetic force²⁹.

The day of the Lord's arrival is like the coming of a thief in the night. It is a simile³⁰. Paul applies the phrase "the Day of the Lord" the first time in this context³¹. According to Marshall³², as an Old Testament phrase, it points to the time in the future that heralds God's manifestation of power and judgment (Am 5:18-20; Isa 13:6-16; Jl 1:15) and salvation (Ob 15-21; Zech 14). As to the New Testament, Marshall opines that the Lord's Day means the Parousia. We see this reference as follows: "that day" in Lk 10:12 and 2 Thess 1:10; the day of the Son of Man in Lk 17:24 and 30; in the plural as 'the days' in Mt 24:27, 37 and 39; and finally "the end" in Rev 16:14.

Further, Candida Moss and Joel Baden³³ apply a rabbinic perspective. They see an association between the following: a) the day of the Lord, b) the image of flying as a cloud, and c) the day of Yahweh (Is 60:8). According to them, the image not only alludes to the Temple's restoration but points to the eschatological times of the world to come. Similar phrases in the Synoptics may indicate a close link between the synoptic traditions and this particular instance in the

²⁵ Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 186.

²⁶ Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 186.

²⁷ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 132-133.

²⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 289-290.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 164; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 290; Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 133.

³¹ Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 186 (the phrase also occurs in 2 Thess 2:2).

³² Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 133.

³³ Candida R. MOSS and Joel S. BADEN, *1 Thessalonians 4.13–18 in Rabbinic Perspective*, in *NTS*, 58.2 (2012), p. 199-212 (here p. 206).

discourse. Tuckett³⁴ considers five possible parallels between 1 Thess 5:1-7 and Synoptic traditions. He argues that Paul has accessed more than one source for this particular section. For Marshall³⁵, the term “lord” within the phrase has an Old Testament origin. The early church has connected the two words, the Lord and Jesus, and has applied this association to different contexts with some alteration (1Cor 1:8; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16). At certain times, it directly references Jesus (1Cor 5:5; cf. 2 Thess 2:2).

In this discourse, the Lord’s Day parallels the image of a thief in the night only to describe the manner of its arrival. Κλέπτης (thief) here refers to the breaking of a thief as a figure for something sudden, surprising and unexpected. We notice this in 5:2b, and it indicates the manner of the arrival of the Parousia³⁶. Malherbe³⁷ observes that the simile with the association of ἡμέρα κυρίου and κλέπτης has its first occurrence here to communicate the sense to unexpectedness. We find that a reference to theft under cover of darkness occurs in other instances: in a parable in Lk 12:39ff and Mt 24:43, and further as a metaphor in 2 Pet 3:10, Rev 3:3 and 16:15³⁸.

According to Marshall³⁹, this expression indicates that the unexpected time suddenly leaves believers unprepared to receive such an event. But this negative element here intends a positive warning. He agrees with Arthur Moore⁴⁰, who sees that the image in this expression has its origin in the gospel tradition and contains an authentic saying of Jesus. Besides, Marshall⁴¹ proposes that Paul is communicating unpredictable aspects rather than the event’s actual time. On the other hand, Moore does not make any direct reference to this particular image. He observes that failure to understand the person and the work of Christ results in a faulty understanding of the end and sometimes ends up anticipating the end (cf. 2 Thess 2:2)⁴².

Regarding the unpredictable aspect of the end, it is essential to consider ἡμέρα κυρίου in 5:2b with ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου (by the word of the Lord) in 4:15a. Seyoon Kim⁴³ comments that ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου in 4:15a reflects some of Jesus’ sayings handed over through the Synoptic gospel traditions. He connects Jesus’ eschatological sayings in the Synoptic gospels with 1 Thess 5:1–

³⁴ Christopher M. TUCKETT, *Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 169-172. He parallels περί in 5:1a₁ to Mt 24:36 and the association of the ‘day of the Lord’ with the coming of thief as referred in 5:2b to Mt 24:43-44 and Lk 12:39-40. Further, he parallels the sudden destruction mentioned in 5:3c to Lk 21:34-36, the call to be awake as found in 5:6b to Mt 24:42, Mk 13:34-36, and Lk 12:36-38. Finally, the warning against drunkenness and the call toward sobriety in 5:6-7 parallel to Mt 24:45-51, and Lk 12:42-46 and 21:34. See also Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 290; Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 164-166.

³⁵ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 133.

³⁶ BDAG 547, κλέπτης.

³⁷ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 290.

³⁸ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 133.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Arthur L. MOORE, *The Parousia in the New Testament*, Leiden, Brill, 1966, p. 172-173. Moore considers the time aspect either in the sense of the nearness of the End or the definitive End, or event of the End in general, are dependent on the person of Christ. At the same time, they are independent of temporal delimitation. This would mean Paul does not delimit the time but leaves it open.

⁴¹ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 133-134.

⁴² Arthur L. MOORE, *The Parousia in the New Testament*, p. 172-173.

⁴³ Seyoon KIM, *The Jesus Tradition in 1 Thess 4:13-5:11*, in *NTS*, 48 (2002), p. 225-242.

11. About 1 Thess 5:2 that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief, interpreters⁴⁴ have tried to draw certain opinions compared to the Son of Man coming in an unexpected hour like a thief in the night (Mt 24:43; Lk 12:39-40). Further, the mention of sudden destruction in 5:3c (cf. Mk 13:32-37; Mt 24:36-44; Lk 21:34-36) follows the explanation of an unexpected hour. However, the Synoptics do not associate the Son of Man's arrival with the deceased's general resurrection⁴⁵. What we find here is the juxtaposition of the Day of the Lord to the thief in the night image with the verb ἔρχεται. We can draw here the following conclusions. According to Malherbe, this verb form in the present suggests certainty of the coming and the irony resulting from the association of two happenings⁴⁶. With Tuckett, we can assume that Paul tries to project the appeal to be awake as a daytime activity by associating the two happenings⁴⁷. But the association of night and day with the images of thief and the Lord respectively in some way suggest antithetical postures as outlined in the subsequent verses (5:4-6). This association reflects the traditional antitheses as they consist of conventional apocalyptic motifs⁴⁸.

We find the description, the day of the Lord, in 5:2a-3e. From a Christian perspective, this description has three qualifications. They are that the day of the Lord is like a thief coming in the night, that the day occurs with sudden destruction, and that it resembles a woman's labour pains at the time of giving birth⁴⁹. We observe that the simile of a thief coming in the night explains the arrival of Lord's day. Followed by this, we find that Paul refers to peace, security, and sudden destruction to highlight the aspect of unexpectedness. This subject matter begins within ὅταν...τότε in 5:3a-3c. According to Malherbe⁵⁰, this is an eschatological scheme. The unravelling of the eschatological plot and the unexpectedness are not a future projection. They act upon the people within the existing reality. The verb form ἐφίσταται from ἐφίστημι (5:3c) in the present points to this process. Something similar is the case with the verb ἔρχεται in 5:2b that highlights the current reality of the Lord's day⁵¹.

⁴⁴ Seyoon KIM, *The Jesus Tradition*, p. 225-242. Kim considers that 4:13-5:11 reflects some saying so Jesus. See also Lars HARTMAN, *Prophecy Interpreted*, p. 178-205, 192-193. In addition to the sayings of Jesus, Hartmann presupposes early Christian catechetical and paraenetic traditions behind this passage. Arthur L. MOORE (*The Parousia in the New Testament*, p. 108-114) thinks that there will be an upsurge in evil before the Son of Man coming alludes to destruction. Christopher M. TUCKETT (*Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 168-176) is of the opinion that in this particular passage only the image of the day of the Lord coming like a thief in the night may suggest a real link to Synoptics. With regard to the source of this saying, he is of the view that Paul appears to quote from a tradition that has been well regarded as the Jesus Tradition. But at the same time Paul seems to make his own modifications. Especially, when the passage refers to the exhortation to be awake and sober, it is not merely a reference to night-time activities, but it is about daytime activities. Raymond F. COLLINS (*Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 164) opines that along with the apocalyptic traditions, Paul reworks the images to serve his purpose. John M. G. BARCLAY (*That You May Not Grieve*, p. 141) considers that the apocalyptic images and similes reflect the chasm that exists between the believers and the non-believers.

⁴⁵ Seyoon KIM, *The Jesus Tradition*, p. 239.

⁴⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 290.

⁴⁷ Christopher M. TUCKETT, *Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 172.

⁴⁸ Raymond F. COLLINS (*Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166) highlights the following as the traditional antitheses: light – darkness, being awake – being asleep, and sobriety – drunkenness. See also Abraham J. MALHERBE (*Thessalonians*, p. 291) who is of the opinion that Paul is using traditional material here.

⁴⁹ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 164.

⁵⁰ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 292.

⁵¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 292.

The aspect of unexpectedness repeats its description once again with sudden destruction that catches people unaware. In this sense, it is not merely catastrophic. Such events intensify under false impressions, and people disregard God's righteous judgment⁵². It is not new that catastrophes surprise people. That in the circumstances of destruction to occur, people usually pursue daily activities without any suspicion. In Noah's days, when the great flood took place, people were busy eating and drinking. They ignored the warnings⁵³. Concerning the reference to destruction here, Best opines that there is no indication of total destruction. If there is no indication, Best prefers not to look for a theological meaning in this case⁵⁴. But Frame considers otherwise. For him here, destruction does not refer to "total annihilation of the existence but separation from the presence of Christ"⁵⁵. In this case, it is ambiguous. We do not know who is to face the final destruction. On the other hand, we cannot deny the unexpectedness, and this aspect is inescapable. This inescapable reality is visible in the close association of εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια (peace and security in 5:3b).

The word ἀσφάλεια (security) in 5:3b points to a stable and salutary circumstance, safety, and security. Paul has paired term with peace⁵⁶. According to Marshall, the use of peace and security alludes to the Old Testament usage (cf. Jer 6:14; 8:11; Ezek 13:10 and Mic 3:5)⁵⁷. It also points to the false prophets' attitude. Despite moral decadence among the people and establishments, they do not warn people but have appeased them with false prophecy. Marshall comments that the use of peace and security (cf. 2 Pet. 3:3f) also refers to the general false impression of the world that there is to be no destruction despite moral decadence. Besides, destruction may also mean the sinners' ultimate fate (1 Cor 5:5; cf. 2 Thess 1:9; 1 Tim 6:9)⁵⁸. Paul introduces this expression with ὅταν λέγωσιν in 5:3a. It can mean "when people say" or a proverbial statement like "as often as people say"⁵⁹. But the ὅταν in 5:3a with λέγωσιν does not communicate that sense (cf. Mk 13:4; Jn 7:27 and 31)⁶⁰. In this instance, it simply means that people say that there is peace and security.

We observe that Paul has clustered two terms, peace and security. According to Best⁶¹, Paul is not quoting a maxim. He has phrased this expression out of the broad experience, preferably due to the Old Testament's influence. But according to Jeffrey Weima⁶², εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια in 5:3b has been so far interpreted mainly from the Old Testament background. This view

⁵² Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 188-189; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 292.

⁵³ Frederick F. BRUCE, *Thessalonians*, p. 110; Peter GORDAY (ed.), *Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (ANCCS.NT, 9), Downers Grove, IL, Inter Varsity Press, 2000, p. 92.

⁵⁴ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 208.

⁵⁵ James E. FRAME, *Thessalonians*, p. 182.

⁵⁶ BDAG 147, ἀσφάλεια 1.

⁵⁷ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 134.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 292. Malherbe is of the opinion that in this context peace signifies a kind of relationship with God made possible by Christ.

⁵⁹ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 134; Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 207.

⁶⁰ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 134.

⁶¹ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 207-208.

⁶² Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, 'Peace and Security' (1 Thess 5.3): Prophetic Warning or Political Propaganda?, in *NTS*, 58.3 (2012), p. 331-359; *id.*, 1-2 Thessalonians, p. 347-353; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 292. Malherbe considers that these words are a combination and refer to the celebration of Pax Romana.

partially supports what Best has expressed. Although εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια are parallel expressions, opinions differ on the perception of the homologoumena ἀσφάλεια. Weima insists that this expression bears a secular connotation. This connotation is not from the Old Testament background of prophetic warning but has a clear allusion to the Roman political language. In this background, I refer to Klaus Wengst⁶³. He has argued that these words combine and make a conservative slogan to affirm the Roman imperial political order. This order correlates the Roman power and peace, and presents peace as a permanent state. Paul has not accepted this order explicitly but undervalues it. Besides, this slogan does not belong to the Christ-followers. It means that Paul has no trust in the imperial context and its realm of justice. Wengst notes further that Paul values Christ and His relationship, requiring a detachment from the current world order. I agree with Wengst's proposal. Above all, one can say that this order ceases to exist with the day of the Lord.

On the contrary, according to Rudolf Hoppe⁶⁴, this phrase consists of a form of the prophetic judgment pronouncement (cf. 1 Kings 21:20f). Hoppe identifies four distinct elements that relate to prophecy, which in return unifies 1 Thess 5:1–11: a) a prophetic proclamation in 5:2; b) a prophetic judgment word in 5:3; c) prophetic reminders of the shared identity of salvation in 5:4; and d) an indirect paraenesis against the others in 5:7. In this way, Hoppe emphasises the prophetic identification of this unit and the Old Testament influence behind the phrase “peace and security”. Here, we notice that destruction and security (peace) make an antithetical pair. But these also form a single unit of simultaneous events. On the one hand, they are antithetical, and on the other hand, they reflect the framework of unexpectedness.

In this exegetical study, we consider the day of the Lord. We do not deal here with the source of the expression, εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια. Another comparison that Paul uses for unexpectedness is a familiar biblical metaphor, ‘pains as of a woman in labour’ (Ps 48:6; Isa 13:8; 26:17-18; Jer 6:24; 22:23; Mic 4:9; cf. 1 En 62:4)⁶⁵. John Chrysostom limits the reference of simile only to the manner of how the destruction would arrive. In this sense, the general scheme is that destruction occurs unnoticed when people lead luxurious lives⁶⁶. For Marshall, this simile, “As labour pains come upon a pregnant woman”, communicates the pain resulting from the unexpected moments. He refers to Mk 13:8 to highlight the catastrophic events that come before the Parousia. They also point to the unpleasantness of judgment⁶⁷.

⁶³ Klaus WENGST, *Pax Romana. Anspruch und Wirklichkeit. Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen des Friedens bei Jesus und im Urchristentum*, Munich, Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1986. ET: *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, John Bowden (trans.), London, SCM, 1987, p. 76-79.

⁶⁴ Rudolf HOPPE, *1 Thess 5, 1-11 im Kontext der Eschatologie des 1. Thessalonicherbriefes*, in Christopher M. TUCKETT (ed.), *2 Thessalonians and Pauline Eschatology* (COP, 21), p. 115-138 (here p. 123-124).

⁶⁵ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 134; Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 208; Charles A. WANAMAKER, *Thessalonians*, p. 180.

⁶⁶ Peter GORDAY (ed.), *Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, p. 92; John CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Matthew 77.2* (NPNF1 10:464).

⁶⁷ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 134-135.

Although it is sudden and unexpected, Paul treats it as natural, bound to happen, and inevitable. We read this explicit statement in 5:3e, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν (“And there will be no escape!”)⁶⁸. In this instance, Best considers both καί and οὐ μὴ (strong negative) make this assertion very emphatic. It means that humanity cannot escape the judgment that comes with Parousia⁶⁹. It is in this background that Paul is encouraging the believers for a particular kind of moral life. The invitation or appeal is to a virtuous life. It is not a mere description of the ethics to follow, but it characterises the believers in contrast to others. It is this antithetical framework that Paul has outlined and declares in the subsequent verses of the pericope.

2. WE DECLARE: REPRESENTATION OF THE BELIEVERS (5:4-6)

We have observed that “the day of the Lord” correlates to Jesus’ sayings. It refers to both unexpectedness and an inescapable judgment⁷⁰. Paul highlights this with the identity of the believers. He uses ἀδελφοί in 5:1b for believers and ἀντοῖς in 5:3c for others. Further, it is ἀντοῖς in 5:2a as people and οἱ λοιποὶ in 4:13e as others. The believers’ representation becomes more evident in 5:4-10. These representations begin with an emphatic ὑμεῖς and the vocative, ἀδελφοί accompanies them. Collins considers that 5:4-10 includes three significant subunits. The units refer to the believers’ eschatological condition (5:4-5), a baptismal paraenesis (5:6-8), and a Christological foundation (5:9-10)⁷¹.

The representation of the believers is in contrast to others. The believers are the children of light, and others are the children of darkness. The believers are awake and sober while the others are asleep and drunk. The believers share a destiny of salvation while the others, a destiny of wrath. In 5:4–10, we find that this framework repeats through references to the day and night, light and darkness, sobriety and drunkenness. This kind of imagery is common to religions. Best sees that Paul largely depends on his Jewish background and appeals to Gentiles who can easily understand what these images indicate⁷².

According to Collins, the believers’ description centres on traditional antitheses: light–darkness, awake–asleep, and sobriety–drunkenness⁷³. These are present in the Old Testament and Judaism (Ps 27:1; 112:4; Prov 4:18f; Isa 9:2; 5:20; 1QS 3:13-4:26)⁷⁴. Further, Marshall considers that the believers’ identity as a contrast to darkness extends the burglar metaphor. He opines that day and light refer to the divine revelation, night and darkness with ignorance of

⁶⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 293; Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, 208; Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 135.

⁶⁹ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 208.

⁷⁰ Seyoon KIM, *The Jesus Tradition*, p. 225-242; Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 208; Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 135.

⁷¹ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166; Charles A. WANAMAKER, *Thessalonians*, p. 181; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 293. Wanamaker considers that Paul begins here the actual paraenesis. According to Malherbe, Paul focuses here on exhortation to the community and δέ, ὑμεῖς and ἀδελφοί indicate this process.

⁷² Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 209.

⁷³ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166.

⁷⁴ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 135.

God and sinfulness⁷⁵. We find in v.4c, κλέπτης⁷⁶. Marshall opines that κλέπτης (thief/burglar) does not centre on the character of a thief. This image has to communicate the nature of the Lord's day, its arrival and its unpredictability⁷⁷. This motive is made clear with the verb form καταλάβη from καταλαμβάνω. The verb form in 5:4c communicates the sense of hostile intent to overtake or come upon. On an unexpected day, the children of darkness will be ignorant of the event and stand to face destruction⁷⁸.

2.1 Children of the Day and Children of the light

Paul describes the believers as υἱοὶ φωτός καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας in 5:5a (children of light and children of the day). It alludes further to God's revelation associated with light (Lk 2:32; Jn 1:4-9; 8:12; 1 Jn 2:8)⁷⁹ and righteous behaviour with light (Mt 5:14-16; Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 6:14)⁸⁰. Therefore, God's people are sons of light (1 Thess 5:5; Lk 16:8; Eph 5:8)⁸¹. Because they are sons of light, they are not in darkness. That is that they are not caught unaware of the Day. In 5:4c, the word κλέπτης (thief) is not followed by the phrase ἐν νυκτί (in the night) as is the case in 5:2b. What we see is a direct reference to ἡ ἡμέρα (the day). It usually refers to a natural day, an interval between the rising and setting of the sun. However, in a figurative sense, it characterises the believers (5:5a)⁸². According to Best, it is not daylight but the day of the Lord⁸³. The arrival of the day of the Lord in 5:4c replaces the unpredictability of the thief breaking in the night. It signifies that the believers are not in darkness (5:4a₁ and 4a₂) or ignorant of the manner of the Day's arrival. In this way, Paul is trying to assuage the fear and anxiety of the Thessalonians. For them, the day of the Lord is never a surprise if they lead their life in a manner that Paul has recommended to them.

Paul repeats his theological motives spelt out in 5:4, a contrast between light and darkness. We see that Paul positively describes the believers as sons of light and sons of the day. With the first-person plural, Paul groups believers with an "all" dimension. According to Marshall, it is a familiar way in Paul (1 Thess 1:2; Rom 1:8; Gal 3:26, 28; Phil 1:4; cf. 2 Thess 1:3)⁸⁴. Best considers πάντες in 5:5a to be inclusive⁸⁵. For Marshall, it has a specific force⁸⁶. According to Frame, it is a reference to the discouraged and anxious lot⁸⁷. Marshall takes Frame's opinion to be a reference to each believer⁸⁸. According to Malherbe, υἱοὶ φωτός is an eschatological

⁷⁵ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 135.

⁷⁶ N²⁸ indicates variations in other witnesses: κλεπτᾶς in A B bo^{pt}.

⁷⁷ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 135-136.

⁷⁸ BDAG 520, καταλαμβάνω 3.b.

⁷⁹ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 135.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² BDAG 430-431, ἡμέρα 1.b.

⁸³ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 209; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 293.

⁸⁴ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 136.

⁸⁵ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 209-210.

⁸⁶ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 136.

⁸⁷ James E. FRAME, *Thessalonians*, p. 184.

⁸⁸ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 136.

term and also common in the Dead Sea Writings⁸⁹. Marshall calls it a Semitic construction (1QS 1:9f; 1QM 1:1)⁹⁰ and comments that by this expression, the believers “belong to the sphere of righteousness and salvation (cf. Eph 5:8; Lk 16:8)”⁹¹. By describing this way, Marshall sees that the believers derive certain benefits from their association with the Lord. In return, these mark a distinctively Christian way of life⁹². The above references indicate that the believers are not only to derive benefits but to experience them closely. But the contrast goes beyond the distinctive character of the believers. It marks out believers’ recognition of their changed circumstances.

Concerning the eschatological status, Camille Focant⁹³ argues that Christ-followers already share the state as “children of the day” because they have adopted faith, hope and charity, the attitude of sobriety. This attitude has unified them with Christ and serves the purpose of reassurance and exhortation. We can say that sobriety has deferred their sorrow and has opened them to God’s given salvific virtues.

In 5:4a₁, Paul begins his address with the second person plural, ὑμεῖς, and it continues until 5:5a. From 5:5b there is a change of person with οὐκ ἐσμεν (ἡμεῖς; we are not). It continues from 5:5b until 5:10d. There is a syntactic disengagement between 5:5a and 5:5b. That is, the preceding affirmation does not continue. Malherbe considers this syntactic disengagement as a characteristic feature of the didactic and paraenetic style⁹⁴. We also notice in 5:5 (v. 5a and v. 5b) an antithetic style expression⁹⁵. In 5:5a, there is a positive description of the believers, and in 5:5b, their description has a negated form (οὐκ ἐσμεν νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκότους/we are not of the night nor darkness). The transition is noticeable with ἄρα οὖν in 5:6a (so then). It is a Pauline feature that mostly marks the transitions and combines with imperatives to initiate a paraenesis (Rom 5:18; 7:3, 25; 8:12; 9:16, 18; 14:12; cf. Eph 2:19)⁹⁶. Marshall opines that ἄρα οὖν marks an exhortation and thereby, the believers are known as the sons of light, and they must lead their lives in that direction. He also considers that this introduces the “inescapable moral consequence of a piece of teaching” (Gal. 6:10; 2 Thess 2:15) or draws a logical conclusion⁹⁷. We also notice a change in the verb from indicative in 5:5 to the subjunctive in 5:6-8. Malherbe associates these features together and opines that “the hortatory subjunctives are imperatival in force”⁹⁸. And the imperatival force follows an antithetical form in 5:6-8⁹⁹.

⁸⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 294.

⁹⁰ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 136.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Camille FOCANT, *Les fils du Jour (1 Thes 5, 5)*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 348-355 (here 354-355).

⁹⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 294; Charles A. WANAMAKER, *Thessalonians*, p. 183. He is of the opinion that a change from the second person plural to the first-person plural facilitates the way for exhortative material.

⁹⁵ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 294.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 295; Charles A. WANAMAKER, *Thessalonians*, p. 183; Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 193. He considers that with ἄρα οὖν Paul offers a series of applications of the day/light, light – darkness imagery.

⁹⁷ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 136-137.

⁹⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 295; Charles A. WANAMAKER, *Thessalonians*, p. 183.

⁹⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 295.

The antithetical form we find here is οὖν μή ... ἄλλα (ἄρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὥς οἱ λοιποὶ, ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν)¹⁰⁰. According to Malherbe, this antithetical form emphasises the second unit of the antithesis pair and occurs many times in First Thessalonians (1:5, 8; 2:2, 4, 13; 4:7, 8; cf. 5:9, 15)¹⁰¹. Here the members of this antithetical expression are “we and others”. The emphasis on the second member (as others) clarifies the nature of sleep that Paul has in mind. In other words, the exhortation (not to sleep) is not a total prohibition to sleep but a prohibition in so far as others do¹⁰². The ban against sleeping is unnatural, improbable, but only practical to a specific nature of the significant activity. This pragmatic sense of the ability to be awake now relates to eschatological wakefulness. We have seen that Paul applies a similar application in 4:13d, “that you may not grieve” (ἵνα μὴ λυπῇσθε).

In this instance, the verb form for sleep in the antithetical positioning (οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὥς οἱ λοιποὶ) is καθεύδωμεν. This verb indicates to cease being awake, to sleep (1 Thess 5:7), to be spiritually lazy or be indifferent (1 Thess 5:6) and figuratively (1 Thess 5:10) as a euphemistic expression¹⁰³. We have seen that for sleep, Paul uses κοιμωμένων in 4:13c, κοιμηθέντας in 4:14d, and κοιμηθέντας in 4:15d. These verb forms are from κοιμάομαι and refer to the deceased in the community (those who have died, fallen asleep). In the present case, the verb καθεύδω, according to Malherbe, occurs only here. It appears not only in three different forms but has different applications.

In terms of forms, they are καθεύδωμεν in 5:6a, καθεύδουσιν in 5:7a, and καθεύδοντες in 5:10c. We see their varied applications in 5:6a (metaphorical), in 5:7a (literal sense), and 5:10c (as a euphemism for death)¹⁰⁴. In 4:13, Paul defined “the rest” as those who have no hope and here in 5:6a, they are those who fall asleep. They fail to keep awake. They stand in contrast to those who have hope and remain vigilant. Paul keeps sleep semantically on par with the others or in comparison to the believers. According to Marshall, it communicates a “moral sleep” (cf. Eph 5:18), a state where the human being is unresponsive to God’s call. Since believers are the sons of light, sleep is improper to their state of life. They have received light and are conscious of the new relationship with God. This relationship is vigilant and wakeful (Mt 25:13; Mk 13:35; 1 Pet. 5:8)¹⁰⁵.

This wakefulness helps the believers to welcome Parousia without much anxiety. Their state of readiness is a present salvific virtue that they are “children of light and children of the day”. At the same time, they are “not of the night nor darkness”. These contrasting dynamics make the first and second half of 5:5, and augment the structural parts shown in 5:4. As Weima emphasises, we see an antithetical chiastic structure in these dynamics (A B B’ A’)¹⁰⁶, but he rejects any actual new content in this chiastic structure. However, he agrees that there is a subtle change and shifts from the second-person “you” to the first-person “we”. Here, a shift from the

¹⁰⁰ 1 Thessalonians 5:6— So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

¹⁰¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 295.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ BDAG 490, καθεύδω 1-3.

¹⁰⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 295.

¹⁰⁵ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 137.

¹⁰⁶ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 356-357.

second-person plural to the first-person plural is not without significance. I explain as follows. We notice that 5:2-3 centres on the “they say” slogan formula, and 5:4 indirectly presents a didactic programme of the “we say to you” process. The process affirms the changing nature of “you”, a direct reference and immediate impact of the word spoken by the apostles, the “we declare” functioning of God’s word mediation. That impact is simultaneous, and “we” represents this togetherness of the effect. This change is visible between 5:5a and 5:5b, and the process continues without interruption in the eschatological affirmation of the entire community. In Paul’s current statement, we also see a confirmation of the previous assertions extended to all believers local, trans-local, and eschatological (1:7-8; 2:14-16; 4:10; 4:15-17; 5:8-10). The affirmation and confirmation process continues and helps the believers experience the nearness of salvation through the salvific virtues of faith, love, and hope (5:8).

2.2 Wakefulness and Sobriety

In 5:6a, we find the description of the believers through a negated application (μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὥς οἱ λοιποί/not fall asleep as others do). With γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν (keep awake and be sober) in 5:6b, we see a positive narrative. Here γρηγορῶμεν is figurative and means to be on the alert, be watchful (cf. keep one’s eyes open in Mt 24:42; 25:13; Mk 13:35 and 37)¹⁰⁷. Malherbe draws specific distinctions by the use of γρηγορέω in the Synoptics and the present context of First Thessalonians. For Synoptics, wakefulness is a direct contrast to the ignorance of when the end comes.

On the contrary, here, watchfulness or wakefulness along with being sober (νήφωμεν) is the mark or the identity of the believers¹⁰⁸. Frame considers that γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν is moral alertness contrary to moral laxity indicated by καθεύδειν¹⁰⁹. Best thinks that wakefulness is a common expression in the eschatological context. It also refers to the traditional eschatological material¹¹⁰. Collins believes that 5:6-8 reflect a baptismal paraenesis¹¹¹, but it is also a distinct mark of Paul. He comments that “Paul’s language is that of his sources, but the thought is his own”¹¹². To supplement this view, Collins points to Rom 13:11-14 and 1 Thess 5:1-11, which bear significant linguistic parallels¹¹³.

In the believers’ description of being awake and sober, Tuckett sees a probable reflection of the tradition but not a necessary link¹¹⁴. The pairing of words links the tradition: watching and sleeping, being sober and being drunk. The association is that the believers are children of light and the day and are sober. They are not of the night, not of the darkness, and not drunk in negated forms. These words might reckon that the parable of the watching servants influences

¹⁰⁷ BDAG 208, γρηγορέω 2.

¹⁰⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 295; Christopher M. TUCKETT, *Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁹ James E. FRAME, *Thessalonians*, p. 185.

¹¹⁰ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 211.

¹¹¹ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 166-172.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Christopher M. TUCKETT, *Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 170.

Paul's language here¹¹⁵. Except for the imagery of thief and motif of watching/sleeping, Tuckett sees no link between the Synoptics and the Thessalonians' present context¹¹⁶. However, he has not ruled out the probability. We can say that there is a certain amount of likelihood to link this passage to the traditional material. However, the appeal to be sober, or the motif of drunkenness, is not limited to the biblical world alone but is also evident in non-biblical contexts¹¹⁷. We will see that there are allusions to sobriety in non-biblical Greek contexts in chapters five and six.

We observe that Paul pairs darkness (5:4a₂) with sleep, night and drunkenness in 5:7. Marshall thinks that Paul is applying ordinary language and is communicating that the believers do not share these adverse conditions. At the same time, these images function as illustrative¹¹⁸. Marshall believes that Paul is not condemning here 'sleep' as such but thinks of the night as the spiritual antithesis of the Lord's day and its symbolic light¹¹⁹. The nature of the day further becomes visible through metaphorical language, recounting the traditional material on spiritual combat, divine wrath and salvation.

3. WE BELIEVE: SALVATION AND LIFE (5:7-10)

The language of wakefulness and sobriety draws military metaphors in 5:8¹²⁰. This metaphorical language separates 5:7-8 as one subunit, and 5:9-10 as another. The adversative δέ initiates it in 5:8a along with the change toward first-person plural and a turn to hortatory subjunctive as in 5:6b. These changes, according to Malherbe, indicate the second part of the appeal¹²¹.

We read γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν in 5:6b, and νήφωμεν occurs again in 5:8b. In 5:8a, there is a direct identification of the believers with the day. Here, Paul repeats his appeal to be sober. We also notice the faith-love-hope triad formula along with military armour or overtones¹²². However, this metaphorical war language emphasises God as the ultimate guarantor of the promised salvific life (5:9-10). We see the "we declare" that "you are" in 5:4-6 now turns to "we believe" confirmation in 5:7-10.

3.1 Military Metaphor (5:7-8)

The military motif is conventional within the apocalyptic context (cf. Isa 59, Wis 5:17-20; Eph 6:14)¹²³. In this background, Best correlates sobriety and vigilance. He observes that Paul moves from vigilance to sentry duty. The imagery of armour and breastplate substantiate this

¹¹⁵ Christopher M. TUCKETT, *Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 170.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 169-172; Seyoon KIM, *The Jesus Tradition*, p. 231.

¹¹⁷ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 212.

¹¹⁸ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 137.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹²⁰ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 213-216; Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 138-139; Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 168-171; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 297-298.

¹²¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 296.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 296-297; Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 168.

¹²³ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166-168.

shift¹²⁴. This expression has a parallel in Rom 13:11-14¹²⁵. The metaphors, putting on clothing (Gal 3:27; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10, 12)¹²⁶ and putting on the armour (Rom 6:13; 7:23; 1 Cor 9:7; 1 Tim 1:18; 2 Tim 2:3; 4:7)¹²⁷ are common in the Pauline corpus. And these two come together in the imagery of Christian armour (Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4; Eph 6:13-17)¹²⁸. The imagery in 5:7-8 resembles this metaphorical association and also indicates a baptismal paraenesis.

Both Collins and Marshall emphasise this aspect¹²⁹. Collins regards that faith, love, and hope characterise the believers in their eschatological existence. And by the hope they share, they have a path toward salvation. Paul points to this reality by ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας (the hope of salvation) in 5:8c and the same repeats in 5:9a. Collins understands σωτηρία as “the event and gift of the final times”¹³⁰. The verb form ἐνδυσάμενοι (“put on” in 5:8c) is in the first aorist participle middle. Marshall argues that it primarily refers to a sober attitude more than putting on the spiritual armour¹³¹. He also considers that Paul has reworked “breastplate and armour”, which we find in Isa 59:17. In this instance, Paul has added together faith, love, and hope, focusing on the three theological virtues¹³². Collins opines that these virtues now derive an apocalyptic motif and relate to the context of σωτηρία (salvation) and stand in opposition to ἡ ὀργή (wrath)¹³³.

Albrecht Oepke and Karl G. Kuhn describe πανοπλία referring to “full equipment of the heavily armoured foot-soldier”¹³⁴. It shows that since humanity naturally projects itself onto God, the wartime material and gods functioned closely. It results in the military equipment of the deity¹³⁵. There are references to the association of war equipment to Yahweh (Isa 34:6; 59:7; Ezek 21:8; Hab 3:9; Ps 7:12; 35:1)¹³⁶. But the spiritual association which we see in Isa 59:7 is closely linked to a sect of Palestinian Judaism as represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls¹³⁷. The sect’s representation as ‘sons of light’ finds close links to the New Testament community, and this aspect is reflected here. The binding factor behind such an association is their worldview: the world as a conflict situation¹³⁸. Many parallels for the community of God drawn from the ‘Manual of Discipline’ and ‘Milhama’ like hosts of the saints, sons of heaven, sacred people, the sons of Levi and the sons of Judah, host of the sons of light are depictions in a double sense: of the military camp and the camp in the desert. In its appeal for victory and the experience of

¹²⁴ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 213; Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 138.

¹²⁵ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 170; Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p.138.

¹²⁶ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 138.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 262-264.

¹²⁸ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 138; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 263.

¹²⁹ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166; Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p.138.

¹³⁰ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 168.

¹³¹ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 138.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 138-139.

¹³³ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 168.

¹³⁴ Albrecht OEPKE and Karl Georg KUHN, *πανοπλία-περικεφαλαία*, *TDNT* 5 (1967, reprint 1981), p. 292-315.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

¹³⁸ Albrecht OEPKE and Karl Georg KUHN, *πανοπλία-περικεφαλαία*, p. 298.

success, we can say that the community is strongly associated with God. This association is made visible in the depiction of military attire, which is greatly spiritualised¹³⁹.

In the New Testament, the term depicts a spiritual meaning (Lk 11:12; Eph 6:10) and closely functions with appeals (1 Cor 15:58; 16:13 Rev 13:11; 16:20)¹⁴⁰, but the theme of armour and the triad of faith, love, and hope have a new interpretation here. From being divine attributes in Isa 59:17, they now appear as defensive equipment pieces, especially for the believers. For this purpose, Paul applies metaphors and analogies in a Christian way. God protects the believers so that they can face the assaults of evil¹⁴¹. The appeal with these images represents the community and presents salvation (ἡ σωτηρία) as the event and gift of the final times¹⁴².

We find that ἡ σωτηρία in v. 8c appears again in v.9b. With this, there is an assertion that Paul makes about the believers. And in this appeal of moral behaviour, Paul sets the believers antithetically to non-believers. The affirmation about the believers is expressed antithetically with a negated statement, ὅτι οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας in 5:9¹⁴³. We find here once again the antithetical form, οὐκ – ἀλλά¹⁴⁴, indicating further a shift in the focus, emphasizing the positive half¹⁴⁵. Malherbe thinks that with ὅτι Paul brings the eschatological dimension of the hope of salvation within God's salvific plan¹⁴⁶.

According to Marshall, Paul is sustaining the momentum of Thessalonians' relationship with God by mentioning this. The destiny held out to the Thessalonians is the sole act of God. Paul narrates it saying their election in God (1:4), their afflictions as part of destiny (3:3), and now the future of salvation (5:9), which appeared earlier with a negated expression as "deliverance from God's wrath" (1:10)¹⁴⁷. Their relationship to God and their present transformation is "through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us" (5:9b-10a, διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν). This statement reconfirms their faith formula and follows the sober attitude in 5:8b and the triadic virtues of faith, love, and hope in 5:8c.

The Thessalonians obtaining salvation is primarily God's act. However, as Marshall states, Paul presses the Thessalonians to play an active role. For this purpose, Marshall clarifies the meaning of the verb "to obtain". For him, it is a Greek noun phrase meaning "for the possession of" and here "for the acquiring of salvation"¹⁴⁸. He refers further to its common understanding to mean possession or the thing possessed (Eph 1:14; 1 Pet 2:9)¹⁴⁹. Its usage here includes an

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 300-301.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

¹⁴² Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 168.

¹⁴³ 1 Thessalonians 5:9 — "For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation".

¹⁴⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 295 and 299.

¹⁴⁵ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 365.

¹⁴⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 298; Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 213-216. Best considers that salvation is not an unrelated blessing, because the believers share this destiny.

¹⁴⁷ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 139.

¹⁴⁸ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 139.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 299.

active role from the side of the believers¹⁵⁰. We also notice that the believers share a destiny of salvation. It is in antithesis to others who have a future of wrath (5:9a). At the same time, it is not clear how far Paul has come into conflict with pagans to view God's wrath on them for refusing the gospel¹⁵¹.

According to Marshall, the believers' description that they share a destiny of salvation may result in the idea of predestination¹⁵². But in the present context, it need not necessarily be so. On the one hand, one sees continuity in the association of the war motif with the believers. Best views that διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ follows σωτηρία and for Paul, it goes well with the verb rather than the phrase. In 5:9, we see the verb ἔθετο and the noun περιποίησιν. For Best, the verb "to obtain" appears more appropriate instead of "to destine". He concludes that there is no indication that Paul speaks of humanity's election to God's anger¹⁵³. On the other hand, Jesus' death guarantees believers future salvation. That is, Jesus' death has saved the believers from God's wrath¹⁵⁴.

The death of Jesus has a direct consequence for believers, and it is evident by περὶ ἡμῶν in 5:10a. It means, therefore, that Jesus' death was for the benefit of the believers. Marshall opines that believers have life in the death of Jesus (Rom 3:24-26; 2 Cor 5:19-21)¹⁵⁵. Best considers that the salvation for which the believers are destined implies unity, the relationship between Christ and the believers¹⁵⁶. Harald Riesenfeld sees in τοῦ ἀποθανόντος περὶ ἡμῶν a reflection of Christology in the use of a participial clause and earliest Christian tradition¹⁵⁷. Riesenfeld mentions the following meanings for ὑπέρ with the genitive: "over or beyond, on behalf of, in the place of, with reference to and on account of"¹⁵⁸. He sees the mention of ὑπέρ ἡμῶν here to allude to the gospel tradition (the cup tradition in Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20) and the development of the catechetical faith formation of the tradition that Jesus died for our sins (1 Cor 15:3). The combination of ὑπέρ with πολλῶν (cf. Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20) in the cup saying, and ὑπέρ with ἡμῶν (in 1 Cor 11:24; Lk 22:19) in the bread saying has resulted in a close observation of Pauline Tradition and Synoptic parallels¹⁵⁹.

We are not looking into these aspects but focus further on the description of the believers in 5:10a-10d. Here, we find that Paul appeals to the believers restating their eschatological condition. Awake or asleep, the believers' state represents a new state of relationship with Jesus.

¹⁵⁰ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 139.

¹⁵¹ John Granger COOK, *Pagan Philosophers and 1 Thessalonians*, in *NTS*, 52.4 (2006), p. 514-532 (here p. 525).

¹⁵² Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 139.

¹⁵³ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 217.

¹⁵⁴ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 140.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 218; Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 141.

¹⁵⁷ Harald RIESENFELD, *ὑπερ*, in *TDNT*, 8 (1972), p. 507-516 (here p. 510-511).

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, *ὑπερ*, 510-511.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

3.2 Salvation and life

In 5:10, believers' description centres on two verbs, ἀποθανόντος and ζήσωμεν. It is an antithetical pair. ζήσωμεν in antithesis to ἀποθανόντος, according to Malherbe, indicates the life for which Christ died¹⁶⁰. But this antithetical pair is different. Here, the antithesis has a quasi-status, "life from death". The antithetical feature εἶτε-εἶτε explains this process.

J. G. Van Der Watt observes the application of ζάω in First Thessalonians (1:9; 3:8 4:15-17; 5:10). He comments that Paul uses this word for different categories of life (emotional, physical, eternal). According to him, to determine the preferred meaning in a context, one must be mindful of the quality of life¹⁶¹. Van Der Watt sees "Jesus as the living one who gives or mediates salvation or life"¹⁶². Although there is no direct reference to this, it is present in 1 Thess 1:9-10 and 5:9-10¹⁶³.

Van der Watt opines that in contrast to death, Jesus, having risen, possesses eschatological life capable of fulfilling His expectations¹⁶⁴. Here, the word "life" signifies Christ's existence and expresses the mediatory role of the believers' salvation in Him¹⁶⁵. We have seen already that, according to Collins, salvation is the gift of final times¹⁶⁶. Van der Watt refers to life (ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν in 5:10d) both as present and future reality. In 2 Cor 13:4, Paul communicates about the present reality, and in 1 Thess 5:10, he probably presents a futuristic use. It means that the hope for eternal life reaches its definite end at the end of time. We find this application in 5:10d with σὺν αὐτῷ as is the case in 4:14d and 4:17b. Irrespective of the believers' condition (awake or asleep), they all will live with Him¹⁶⁷. As Collins has pointed out, we observe the Christological foundation of salvation in 5: 9-10¹⁶⁸.

We shall consider further the aspect of life. Henk de Jonge¹⁶⁹ makes certain observations on Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀποθανόντος περὶ ἡμῶν (Jesus Christ who died for us) in 5:9b-10a based on the "Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ Formula". This 'dying formula' occurs eight times in Paul's authentic letters (1 Thess 5:10; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14, 15; Rom 5:6; 5:8; 14:14; cf. 1 Pet 2:21; 3:18; Heb 2:9)¹⁷⁰. This phrase was generally used about the martyrs' death, and it goes back to pre-Pauline origin. A general observation is that within the transmission of the Greek text, ὑπὲρ was the standard replacement for περὶ more than vice versa. This clarification is because of the phrases περὶ ἡμῶν and ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. In this process, it appears that ὑπὲρ seems to have derived

¹⁶⁰ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 300.

¹⁶¹ Jan G. VAN DER WATT, *The Use of Ζάω in 1 Thessalonians, A Comparison with Ζάω/Ζωή in the Gospel of John*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonians Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 356-369 (here p. 357).

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 360.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 168.

¹⁶⁷ Jan G. VAN DER WATT, *The Use of Ζάω in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 363-364.

¹⁶⁸ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 168.

¹⁶⁹ Henk J. DE JONGE, *The Original Setting of the Χριστός Ἀπέθανεν Ὑπὲρ Formula*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonians Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 229-235.

¹⁷⁰ Henk J. DE JONGE, *The Original Setting of the Χριστός Ἀπέθανεν Ὑπὲρ Formula*, p. 229 and 235.

higher literary value than *περί*¹⁷¹. The formula connects the not-yet and already dimensions of the Christian salvific life. According to de Jonge, the dying formula often points to the dimension of already¹⁷². On the other, Nicholas Wright considers that the life for which Christ died represents itself through the resurrection imagery of sleeping and awakening. This view emphasises that the believers are already people who are awake¹⁷³.

We explain this observation as follows. The believers, whether awake or asleep, will be with the Lord. The expression of *εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν* (whether awake) in 5:10b and *εἴτε καθεύδωμεν* (whether asleep) in 5:10c indicates a form of antithesis (*εἴτε – εἴτε*, cf. 2 Cor 5:9; Rom 14:7-8)¹⁷⁴. In antithesis to His death (in 5:10a), there stands a life (in 5:10d) for which Christ died¹⁷⁵.

In this section, we have observed a reconstructed “we believe”. The dying-formula refers to this reconstructivist inward dimension of the community. The external other is only a literary counter-foil. In this process, we find that an after-life hope has a basis only in the death of Jesus, who died for us. The consequence is also visible in “whether we are awake or asleep (alive or dead); we remain with Jesus forever”. This statement recounts the past, present and future realities of hope with the person of Jesus. We notice that from 4:13 until 5:10, one or the other antithesis form involves making an appeal or facilitating a shift in focus. In this process, the issue of death and life has received particular attention. And having resolved these special issues to a certain extent, Paul makes a final appeal with the assertion of *διὸ παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους* (therefore encourage one another) in 5:11a.

4. YOU ENCOURAGE: BUILDING-UP OF THE COMMUNITY

We see *παρακαλεῖτε* with *ὥστε* in 4:18 and, in 5:11a it is with *διό*. Thematically, they communicate the same. But according to Fee, the latter has a stronger emphasis¹⁷⁶. Malherbe considers that the appeal initiated in 5:11a has a broader scope than in 4:18. It means that *παρακαλεῖτε* has an additional combination with *οἰκοδομεῖτε* in 5:11b. Both in 4:18 and 5:11, *παρακαλέω* means to comfort and encourage with a purpose to build-up the community. Marshall points out that the metaphor of the church as a building intends an aspect of cooperation. Here, just as Paul tries to build up one another, each believer must build up the community¹⁷⁷. Here, *παρακαλέω*¹⁷⁸ means to urge strongly, appeal to, exhort and encourage. And *οἰκοδομέω*¹⁷⁹ is to help improve the ability to function in living responsibly and effectively, strengthen, build up, make more able.

¹⁷¹ Henk J. DE JONGE, *The Original Setting of the Χριστός Ἀπέθανεν “Υπερ Formula*, p. 230.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

¹⁷³ Nicholas T. WRIGHT, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press, 2003, p. 216-217.

¹⁷⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 300.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 199.

¹⁷⁷ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 142. See more references on this comment: 1 Cor 8:1; 10:23; 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26; Eph 4:12, 16, 29, and also Rom 15:20; 1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; Eph 2:21, and 1 Pet 2:5, 7.

¹⁷⁸ BDAG 764-765, *παρακαλέω* 2.

¹⁷⁹ BDAG 696, *οἰκοδομέω* 3.

In light of the consolatory pattern, Malherbe translates παρακαλεῖτε as “to exhort”¹⁸⁰. Bieringer argues for “to comfort” as a better translation¹⁸¹. In the context of social memory associated with suffering, both comforting and exhorting are significant. That is, God’s word is multidimensional and functions dynamically. Further, as Best comments, the consolation as an exhortation was open to all believers by preaching God’s word¹⁸². Here, it indicates that Paul wanted the believers to grow beyond the issues concerning death, grief, and the day of the Lord.

Juan Chapa¹⁸³ remarks that the exhortation that Paul has used was familiar to his readers. Still, at the same time, Paul applies it quite differently from other preachers of the secular context. Regarding the content, Chapa believes that Paul is not providing information to his readers but consoling them¹⁸⁴. Chapa evaluates the assumption that there are philosophical traditions from the Hellenistic background behind this passage. This assumption stems from the consolatory pattern that the authors know. It points to the ancient secular worldview: “Deceased has been snatched away by death (and)... is now dwelling with gods (and)... will be joined by those who are alive”¹⁸⁵.

For Chapa, 1 Thess 4:13-5:11 is closer to the Jewish tradition. He draws a specific distinction between the consolatory pattern of the secular world and Paul. The exhortation in the Graeco-Roman world refers to the words of comfort provided by a friend. These words result from the shared human experience. In First Thessalonians, Paul offers consolation based on Christ’s resurrection and His coming¹⁸⁶. Chapa also opines that there is an example of consolation in the Jewish tradition (2 Mac 7: 5, 14, 20). This illustration indicates the consolatory features based on the resurrection hope in the face of death¹⁸⁷. Though Chapa recognises the Jewish background, he also accepts the Hellenistic consolatory patterns. He comments as follows: “Christian consolation springs from a Jewish root, which is approached by a Hellenistic man”¹⁸⁸.

Further, Richard Ascough deals with the question of grief among the Thessalonian believers quite differently. For him, the issue is not personal salvation but belongingness¹⁸⁹. Here, the social context of Paul’s eschatological description has more attention. Ascough opines that the ancient world has faced high mortality rates and slim chances of survival. It also implies that persons have died without anyone from the family performing their burial rites. The ancient

¹⁸⁰ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 278.

¹⁸¹ BDAG 696, οἰκοδομέω 3.

¹⁸² Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 202.

¹⁸³ Juan CHAPA, *Consolatory Patterns? 1 Thess 4,13. 18; 5,11*, in Raymond F. COLLINS (ed.), *The Thessalonians Correspondence* (BETL, 87), p. 220-228.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 227-228. See 2 Mac 7:5 — “The smoke from the frying-pan spread widely, but the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die nobly”. 2 Mac 7:14 — “It is desirable that those who die at the hands of human beings should cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him”. 2 Mac 7:20 — “The mother was especially admirable and worthy of honourable memory”.

¹⁸⁸ Juan CHAPA, *Consolatory Patterns? 1 Thess 4,13. 18; 5,11*, p. 227-228.

¹⁸⁹ Richard S. ASCOUGH, *A Question of Death: Paul’s Community Building Language*, p. 509-530.

funerary associations fill this void¹⁹⁰. It refers to the burial practices and tomb inscriptions. Ascough comments that the burial associations reflect a language of belongingness. It derives its basis from social differentiation and stratification. The associations facilitate the group's identity within the larger context of the society, and the burial events become the locus for social reconstruction¹⁹¹. In the eschatological discourse, Paul offers hope and intends to build up believers' communal life in Christ. For this purpose, Paul addresses them and tries to assuage their grief. Paul also builds up the community appealing to them to be blameless before the Lord¹⁹².

In this background, the appeal to encourage one another refers back to grief and hope. At the same time, it concludes the larger pericope 4:13–5:11, confirming once again the primary antitheses of grief and hope, and death and life. In these antitheses, Jesus' events mediate a renewed understanding, and Paul depends on this path to recommend the Christ-followers to imitate the same. The translations, comforting or consoling, indicate two different interactions. I suggest that "comfort with these words" primarily centres on the repetitive action in the context of the deceased in the community and the resulting grief, whereas "console with these words" centres mainly on the repetitious pattern of the recommended words. The exact words are likely to repeat in similar yet changing circumstances mediated by the critical group. In this case, it is Paul and his co-workers.

CONCLUSION

This brief exegetical explanation of 1 Thess 5:1–11 in this chapter, and 4:13–18 in the previous chapter, identifies and explains the essential antitheses. We have noticed in 4:13 a categorical antithesis between grief and hope. We also see that in 4:15, there is a kind of tension between those who have died, who are alive, and who are left. It concerns the question of precedence at the time of Parousia. In 5:2, we see the interactive reference between the Lord's day and the imagery of a thief in the night. It follows the day-night antithesis with additional contrasting imagery of peace and security and destruction. From 5:4 to 5:8, we encounter a series of antitheses that highlight believers' identity. We have seen that the light–darkness antithesis closely references the day–night antithesis. It is the same with being awake–being asleep, and being sober–being drunk. All of them imply the central antithesis, life and death. In 5:9, salvation and God's wrath seem to categorise the believers' destiny and the others, respectively. In 5:10, we find being awake – being asleep is quite a different form than what we see in 5:4–8. We notice that each stage of the appeal involves different types and forms of antitheses. At the same time, these antitheses and their various forms act as memory media in the changing contexts and construct believers' hope and identity. We will consider these dynamics and their constructivist role in the coming chapter.

¹⁹⁰ Richard S. ASCOUGH, *A Question of Death: Paul's Community Building Language*, p. 515.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 517–519.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 521.

CHAPTER 5 ANTITHESES AND SOCIAL MEMORY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the antitheses identified in the pericope 1 Thess 4:13–5:11 and their relevance concerning the group’s social memory. First, I define the relevant terms concerning antithesis. Second, I mention the identified forms of antithesis in the eschatological discourse. Third, we explore that their relevance to Paul’s theology presents a specific type of constructive negation. Fourth, I show that fundamental analyses of the antithetical features establish a similarly constructive role. The constructive role demonstrates that both indicative and imperative aspects are discernible by the contrasts’ antithetical arrangement. The contrasts are in organised parallel and cluster groupings: positive, negative, symbolic, and oppositional. In First Thessalonians 4:13, with a prohibition of grief, we have a path toward a constructive negation, recurring subsequently within the eschatological discourse.

1. ANTITHESIS, RHETORICAL CONTRAST AND SOCIAL MEMORY

An antithesis is a stylistic tool. George Kennedy¹ considers antithetical structures next to Greek syntax and defines them as a “balanced contrast of words and ideas”. In the eschatological discourse (4:13–5:11), we find several antithetical features. As some interpreters designate them, these features are characteristic marks of “social dualism”², “reiterated dualism”³, and “social belongingness”⁴. The antitheses also show how Paul shapes the discourse with apocalyptic imagery pointing to Christ-followers’ eschatological status and identity formation⁵. In this way, the discussion refers to Paul’s writing style, compelling character, and a tendency toward dualism to construct a negation. A strategy of negation confronts the present oppositional realities and, at the same time, offers encouragement through comforting words (theology). This negation is consequential to their newfound allegiance to Christ alone (monotheistic).

¹ George KENNEDY, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, p. 29 and 33.

² Charles A. WANAMAKER, *Apocalyptic Discourse, Paraenesis and Identity*, p. 134-136.

³ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

⁴ Richard S. ASCOUGH, *A Question of Death*, p. 523.

⁵ Garry S. SELBY, *Blameless at His Coming*, p. 397.

Both persuasive and dualistic elements add to the divergent perceptions of Paul's apocalyptic thought. Particularly in First Thessalonians, antitheses require our attention to understand Paul's style and thought patterns. The antitheses shape believers' outlook toward a persuasive reality and connect both ways: retrospective and prospective. The retrospective of the Christ event is His Death and Resurrection. The prospective of the Christ event is His Parousia, the resurrection of the dead, the communion of all believers, and the ultimate hope – God's salvation for believers and God's judgment of the other (contrary realities).

Our focus on rhetorical persuasion reinforces what we have mentioned above. It is visible not only by appropriate metaphors in the discourse but also how metaphors appear as clusters of contrast in organised antithetical parallels. The organisation of contradictions and their contents outline a social dimension of the community and Paul's theological approach. These dynamics display Paul's communicative purpose and a distinctive memory matrix concerning the community. The process refers to an engaging hope consisting of non-grieving, comforting, and building up the community toward the promise of salvation.

In this way, Paul's paraenesis in 1 Thess 4:13–5:11 aims at consoling his followers. The paraenetic section demonstrates pertinent aspects of social memory as a “remembered past” and its constructive role in historical, rhetorical, and social situations. The focus is on a compelling character, socio-historical conflict, and opposition in a rhetorical study. Antithetical features show both directions, persuasive and oppositional. There is growing consensus today that First Thessalonians is mostly a non-polemical text. However, it has not stopped scholars from exploring persecution in absolute terms (1:6-8)⁶. Non-polemical interpretations propose a social dislocation as the leading cause of distress. Besides, their distinctive character of faith separates them from the broader surroundings⁷. These interpretations show that 2:1–17 and 4:13–5:11 are integral to the letter and place them side by side to argue for a collective and cosmic identity. Besides, their suffering (local) is not different from the other Christ-followers worldwide (trans-local) in Macedonia, Achaia, and Judea as a whole. So, antitheses present in the discourse explain both the believers' cosmic and constructive memory (universal and specific episodes concerning identity).

1.1 Antithetical Features in Paul's Letters

We generally understand antithetical features as contrasts in an oppositional arrangement. Jean Nélis⁸ and Norbert Schneider⁹ suggest that antitheses are relevant in Pauline letters to understand Paul's style and theology. Schneider provides a comprehensive study of antithesis concerning Paul's letters in their stylistic and theological significance. He treats these two issues

⁶ Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Birth of the New Testament*, p. 81; Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-113.

⁷ David LUCKENSMAYER and Bronwen NEIL, *Reading First Thessalonians as a Consolatory Letter in Light of Seneca and Ancient Handbooks on Letter-Writing*, in *NTS*, 62 (2016), p. 31-48.

⁸ Jean NÉLIS, *Les antithèses littéraires dans les épîtres de Saint Paul*, p. 3-30.

⁹ Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, p. 1.

in two separate sections¹⁰. Schneider relies upon the terminologies provided by Heinrich Lausberg to explain antithesis as a Greek rhetorical method. Also, he emphasises antithesis as a stylistic and theological character of Paul by referring to historical research studies by Johannes Weiß, Eduard Norden, Rudolf Bultmann, Jean Nélis, and Willard Taylor¹¹. According to Jeffrey Asher, Nélis, Taylor, and Schneider's explanations show that Paul applies both stylistic and dualistic tendencies of the Greco-Roman world and his own experience¹². It is worth mentioning that the antithetical style is instrumental in understanding Paul's theology. Nélis¹³ has observed that Paul's experiences alone do not explain the use of antitheses in the letters. Therefore, he argues that combining both the Greco-Roman context and Paul's experiences is helpful to understand the frequency of antitheses in the Pauline letters¹⁴.

Taylor¹⁵ considers Paul's antitheses as a tool for theological analysis. He also sees a Greek influence in the antithetical formulations. Nevertheless, Paul's experiences, especially his conversion, are the most critical factor influencing Paul's use of antitheses. Taylor reflects this consideration in referring to Pauline thoughts in two major sections, on soteriology and anthropology¹⁶. From Rudolf Bultmann's perspective, Paul's use of antitheses reflects a similar Cynic-Stoic diatribe's characteristic style¹⁷.

Generally, scholarly opinions depend upon causal questions to understand and interpret opposition and opponents or antitheses in the New Testament, particularly Paul. It concerns why Paul has used antitheses. The responses are mainly threefold: (1) Paul has followed Greek rhetoric or the dualistic tendencies of his time; (2) the origin of the antithetical pattern is traced to Paul's experience or his conversion; and (3) it is a combination of rhetoric, dualism and experience¹⁸. Additionally, the causal question arises given the perception that antithesis appears as

¹⁰ Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, p. 8-125.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1-7; Heinrich LAUSBERG, *A Comprehensive Handbook of Rhetoric (Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik. Vol. 1-2)*, Munich, Max Hueber, 1960; Eduard NORDEN, *Die antike Kunstprosa vom IV Jahrhundert v.Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance*, Vol. 1-2, Leipzig, Teubner, 1898 (Vol. 1, p. 20-23; Vol. 2, p. 509); Johannes WEISS, *History of Primitive Christianity*, Vol. 1-2, Rudolf KNOPF (ed.), Frederick C. Grant (trans.), New York, NY, Wilson-Erickson, 1937, p. 411; Rudolf BULTMANN, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (FRLANT, 13), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910, p. 30, 80-81; Willard H. TAYLOR, *The Antithetic Method in Pauline Theology*, PhD Dissertation, Evanston, IL, Northwestern University, 1959; Jean NÉLIS, *Les antithèses littéraires dans les épîtres de Saint Paul*, p. 3-30. See also Jeffrey R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15: A Study of Metaphysics, Rhetoric and Resurrection* (HUT, 42), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2000, p. 9-11.

¹² Jeffrey R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change*, p. 10.

¹³ Jean NÉLIS, *Les antithèses littéraires dans les épîtres de Saint Paul*, p. 6; Jeffrey R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change*, p. 10.

¹⁴ Jean NÉLIS, *Les antithèses littéraires dans les épîtres de Saint Paul*, p. 6-7; Jeffrey R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change*, p. 10.

¹⁵ Willard H. TAYLOR, *The Antithetic Method in Pauline Theology*, p. 32, 36, 186.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54-252. See Jeffrey R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change*, p. 10.

¹⁷ Jeffrey R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change*, p. 9; Rudolf BULTMANN, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*, p. 80-81.

¹⁸ Jeffrey R. ASHER, *Polarity and Change*, p. 9.

Paul's most distinctive style and characteristic of his speaking and thinking. Both form and theology have dominated in consideration of antitheses in Paul.

In Norbert Schneider's opinion¹⁹, most studies have emphasised either style or theology or, when considered together, only one element dominates the focus. His research attempts to synthesise earlier approaches to antithesis: Paul's stylistic features and his theological content. However, Schneider shows that an antithesis as a rhetorical feature and thought rests on a strict division outlined in the Greek method. But a separation between these elements fails to explain their combined role simultaneously and adequately. In the second part (pages 68-125), Schneider examines Pauline letters. But we see that the research lacks adequate consideration of 1 Thessalonians. Schneider does not include specific Pauline passages in 1 Thessalonians to explain the content of Paul's theology. However, the second part of this monograph ends with some notable remarks: that the Pauline prohibitions require further explanation, especially their relationship to the law²⁰. It is observable that the components of Paul's thinking reflect, as noted in Schneider's conclusion, the importance of the prohibitions which Paul has intended.

In First Thessalonians 4:13, Paul begins with a prohibition. I consider this a starting point toward a theology of constructive negation. We find that it reconciles the community's visible and invisible elements of crisis, opposition, and division. It examines how Paul demonstrates his style and thinking through the antitheses present in the eschatological discourse. However, in communicative memory, the constructive role is both oral and written. In this process, the experiences denoted by Paul and the community are of the recent past, they are less formulaic, and the normative nature is elusive but implied. The antitheses in the discourse demonstrate all these temporal and spatial characters, and construct their social location.

1.2 Antithetical Features in the Discourse

The literal and social aspects of the discourse show a progressive movement of the communicative process. The problem is how to integrate differing traditions that the rhetorical contrasts possibly suggest. We see that the apocalyptic motifs enforce eschatological dualism²¹, the rhetorical tool of antithesis points to rhetorical dualism²², and the insider-outsider perspective refers to social dualism²³. Notably, the dualistic tendency includes both polemical and non-polemical contexts. Although First Thessalonians has no explicit polemics, it contains several antithetical oppositions and opponents from a general perspective of the community's suffering context. The only ground that suffices its non-polemical context is that we do not find an explicit mention of Paul's opponents. To explain the ambiguity and a lack of direct evidence,

¹⁹ Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, p. 1-8, 123-125.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

²¹ Albertus F. J. KLIJN, *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and its Background in Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 67-73; Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 154-172.

²² Thomas H. OLBRICHT and Stanley N. HELTON, *Navigating First Thessalonians*, p. 228-244. See J. Paul SAMPLEY and Peter LAMPE (eds), *Paul and Rhetoric*, New York-London, T & T Clark, 2010; Stanley E. PORTER and Bryan R. DYER (eds), *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric: Theory and Practice in the Hellenistic Context*, New York, NY, Cambridge University Press, 2016.

²³ Paul R. TREBILCO, *The Insider Outsider Designations*, p. 240-241.

interpreters reconcile this problem by acknowledging either persecution or social dislocation, or both²⁴.

The discourse remains open-ended, giving a possibility to interpret the suffering and conflicting context either as a social dislocation or real persecution. Furthermore, the apocalyptic motifs may suggest a violent or non-violent reading of the text. In this context, Emma Wassermann²⁵ proposes a) that we read the apocalyptic biblical sources and apocalyptic literature in Paul from a perspective of a single world ruled by a supreme God with lesser-known gods; b) or a political system with both hierarchical order and anthropomorphic forms. If we follow this, then the polemics in the apocalyptic texts will end up as a drama in the higher realms of God's power. However, the apocalyptic imagery in the eschatological ethical paraenesis has a functional role. Notably, Christ-followers have to follow the community's social organisation around the gospel that Paul has taught despite the suffering and opposition. The opposition they face is a consequence of their acceptance of the gospel and adherence to a distinct moral lifestyle. The familial and kinship metaphors emphasise this affinity in the rhetorical persuasiveness embedded in the letter. They designate the community's ethical and moral life, and serve its members' destiny, to be blameless before the Lord (3:13 and 5:23).

1.3 Consolatory Paraenesis and Contrasts

In First Thessalonians, Paul's gospel of hope focuses on remembering, imitating, encouraging, and prohibiting specific behavioural patterns. The letter begins with a large thanksgiving section (chapters 1–3). A paraenesis (chapters 4–5) follows with consolatory patterns²⁶. For the latter part, scholarly opinions differ in terms of their classification, deliberative or epideictic. The deliberative speech genre links the letter's form and structure with the community's faith (3:8) and paraenesis. Both George Kennedy and Bruce Johanson classify the paraenetic as deliberative²⁷. For Johanson, a deliberative classification is due to Paul's strategy to console and correct the community without reproof. He also considers 4:13–5:11 as the major crisis.

Nevertheless, Duane Watson disagrees with this observation of crisis. Others classify First Thessalonians as epideictic rhetoric, the rhetoric of praise and blame.²⁸ For George Lyons, paraenesis in First Thessalonians can be deliberative or epideictic²⁹. In these attempts to classify, the overlapping temporal dimension follows a strict division. The rhetorical strategies

²⁴ Those who support a real persecution include: R. F. Collins, A. J. Malherbe, and K. P. Donfried. But a vast majority of interpreters simply see the nature of the Thessalonian believers' suffering as a social dislocation.

²⁵ Emma WASSERMAN, *Apocalypse as Holy War: Divine Politics and Polemics in the Letters of Paul*, Yale, Yale University Press, 2018, p. 1-17 and 59.

²⁶ Juan CHAPA, *Is First Thessalonians a Letter of Consolation?*, in *NTS*, 40 (1994), p. 150-160; *id.*, *Consolatory Patterns?*, p. 220-228.

²⁷ George KENNEDY, *New Testament Interpretation*, p. 142-144; Bruce JOHANSON, *To All Brethren*, p. 165-167.

²⁸ Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 71-72; Frank W. HUGHES, *The Rhetoric of 1 Thessalonians*, p. 97; Charles A. WANAMAKER, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 46-48; Karl P. DONFRIED, *Theology of 1 Thessalonians*, p. 3-5; Duane F. WATSON, *The Three Species of Rhetoric*, p. 25-47 (here p. 30).

²⁹ George LYONS, *Pauline: Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding* (SBLDS, 73), Atlanta, Scholars, 1985, p. 219-221.

understand the text vis-à-vis other literary documents and interpretations within their historical proximity. However, we see that in social memory, a narrative has an overlapping temporal dimension, leaning in both directions, backward and forward.

In this regard, Thomas Olbricht³⁰ explains a further classification, a new category of “church rhetorics”. The church rhetorics in itself does not have an independent explanation but a separate classification contrary to the Graeco-Roman rhetorical genre and types. Notably, the understanding of church rhetorics depends upon the reception of First Thessalonians by the early Church fathers. As a result, First Thessalonians cannot be strictly classified as one of the rhetorical types: deliberative, forensic and epideictic. We have seen that Abraham Malherbe³¹ explains his paraenetic approach appealing to the Church Fathers’ interpretation, John Chrysostom and Theodoret of Cyrus. Besides, Wilhelm Wuellner³² has emphasised that 1 Thessalonians reflects the nature of “paradoxical encomium”. It is a subgenre of epideictic rhetoric that combines two opposite polar centric words to communicate a nuanced meaning. I have referred to it in the section, form and structure in chapter two. The primary argument flows from 1 Thess 1:6, “with much suffering and joy”. This particular affirmation refers to the nature of welcoming Paul’s gospel by the Thessalonian believers. Wuellner applies this understanding to the overall structure of First Thessalonians and its consolatory paraenesis. This specific approach is one-sided. It fails to account for the apocalyptic nature of the letter.

Further, we observe that Duane F. Watson³³ has also considered the letter as epideictic rhetoric. Besides, he has emphasised Paul’s apocalyptic strategy. Affirming an apocalyptic discourse of epideictic nature, Watson argues that Paul helps his followers confirm their values. Their confirmation in faith takes place in a symbolic world. In this way, the believers understand their afflictions and the delay of Parousia. Here, Watson finds no course correction but only a reaffirmation of their faithfulness³⁴.

As mentioned, the paraenetic approach with an epideictic subgenre is gaining more support³⁵. The epideictic type explains the consolatory context mainly as an interaction between suffering and joy. In this process, one replaces the other. However, our study does not impose this particular structure upon the meaning of these terms. In this regard, our primary focus is on rhetorical contrasts and not much on rhetorical criticism. Besides, our study focuses broadly on the context of grief and hope, non-grieving and hope, and rejoicing always. The antithetical

³⁰ Thomas OLBRICHT, *An Aristotelian Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Thessalonians*, in David L. BALCH, Everret FERGUSON, and Wayne A. MEEKS (eds), *Greek, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham Malherbe*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1990, p. 216, 224-227.

³¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 96.

³² Wilhelm WUELLNER, *The Argumentative Structure of 1 Thessalonians as Paradoxical Encomium*, p. 123-128.

³³ Duane F. WATSON, *The Three Species of Rhetoric*, p. 25-47; *id.*, *Paul’s Appropriation of Apocalyptic Discourse: The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Thessalonians*, in Greg CAREY and L. Gregory BLOOMQUIST (eds), *Visions and Persuasion: Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse*, St. Louis, Chalice, 1999, p. 61-65.

³⁴ Duane F. WATSON, *Paul’s Appropriation of Apocalyptic Discourse*, p. 61-65; *id.*, *The Three Species of Rhetoric*, p. 31.

³⁵ Peter LAMPE, *Rhetorical Analysis of Pauline Texts – Quo Vadit? Methodological Reflections*, in J. Paul SAMPLEY and Peter LAMPE (eds), *Paul and Rhetoric*, p. 3-21.

features reinforce these rhetorical distinctions and their subsequent value. As a result, we must analyse the antithetical style or feature regarding the concept of hope in First Thessalonians³⁶. We hardly find any reference to First Thessalonians in Schneider's consideration of antithetical features³⁷. In the commentary on the Thessalonian letters, we find that Malherbe has a narrow focus on antithetical elements within the subject of Paul's stylistic features. Besides, he does not refer to the significance of antitheses toward the concept of hope in First Thessalonians³⁸. In this background, the chapter provides a further elaboration of the antithetical contrasts. The chapter also shows how these contrasts enable us to construct a theological concept of hope employing negation.

2. ANTITHESES IN THE ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

The antitheses in the eschatological discourse are easily identifiable through specific negated descriptions of the others (4:13 d-e and 5:6a-b). It is a clear representation of the people based solely on antithetical contrasts. Our exegetical explanation of 1 Thess 4:13–5:11 (in chapters three and four) provides us with ten significant antitheses on a thematic basis. They are as follows:

Grief and hope
 Death and resurrection
 Life and death
 Peace and security, and destruction
 Day and night
 Light and darkness
 Sober and drunk
 Children of the day/light, children of the night/darkness
 Awake and asleep, and
 Destiny of Salvation and wrath.

Further, I identify eight antitheses in the pericope (4:13–5:11) based on a formal character³⁹. They are as follows:

- (1) μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ (μὴ and καθὼς καὶ in 4:13d-e);
- (2) οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν (οὐ μὴ in 4:15d);
- (3) Death – Resurrection antithesis (in 4:15-17);
- (4) Peace and Security, Destruction (they say – we say in 5:2-3, οὐ μὴ in 5:3e);
- (5) οὐκ ἔστέ ἐν σκότει (οὐκ in 5:4a2);

³⁶ Duane F. WATSON, *The Three Species of Rhetoric*, p. 30-31; *id.*, *The Role of Style in the Pauline Epistles*, in J. Paul SAMPLEY and Peter LAMPE (eds), *Paul and Rhetoric*, p. 119-139 (here p. 132).

³⁷ Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, p. 68-125.

³⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 91-92, and 154-155.

³⁹ The categorization of antitheses follows the scheme proposed by Norbert Schneider and Abraham J. Malherbe. Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, p. 34-36; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 92.

- (6) οὐκ ἐσμὲν νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκότους, ἄρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ, ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν (οὐκ, οὐδὲ, μὴ – ἀλλά in 5:5b-6b);
- (7) ὅτι οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (οὐκ – ἀλλά in 5:9a-b); and,
- (8) εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν (εἴτε – εἴτε in 5:10b-c).

In the antitheses mentioned above, the death–resurrection antithesis does not follow form-based identification but go by a theological approach proposed by Lucien Cerfaux, further followed by Abraham Malherbe. Cerfaux opines that the resurrection preaching succeeds the Parousia theme in Paul’s missionary gospel and his apostolic career in this antithesis⁴⁰. Though this antithesis has a thematic structure, I consider it form-based. Because here, death and resurrection are two distinct features, not opposed to each other but refer to a transition in Paul’s apostolic mission and preaching content.

This study combines the thematic content and antithetical forms, and explains the antitheses with seven sub-divisions.

2.1 Antithesis– 1: Grief and Hope

The distinction between hope and grief appears in 1 Thess 4:13. We read, “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters; about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope” (Οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων, ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα). I explain the antithetical structure as follows.

The form of the antithesis in 4:13:

Οὐ θέλομεν (we do not want) — This is an antithesis by a lexical form, and the word expresses the opposition by changing its character. The changing of nature happens by negation with the particle, οὐ/μή⁴¹.

Μὴ λυπῆσθε (you may not grieve) — the negation takes place with the particle, οὐ/μή.

Μὴ ἔχοντες (who have no) — we see a repetition of the same form as above.

As follows, we see that “so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope” (ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα) is a complex antithesis⁴². Here, the antithetical form is not merely a change of character of a word but involves significant issues and their respective groups placed in a parallel contrast. We see a designation of contrary distinction, “as others” (καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ) along with other antithetical forms denoted by negation

⁴⁰ Lucien CERFAUX, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul*, p. 190-191 and 400; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 92.

⁴¹ Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Anthithese*, p. 17.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 18 and 44; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 92 and 105.

particles (οὐ/μή). We notice there are several elements: contrasting comparison, negation particles, and an oppositional group. All these features make this antithesis complex.

The content of the antithesis in 4:13:

With the rhetorical contrast in 1 Thess 4:13, Paul begins his third exhortation (4:1-8; 4:9-12). It introduces new information and shapes a response to the report given by Timothy (cf. 3:1-5). The context refers to the deceased among the community, resulting in grief and further compounded by persecutions. Paul addresses the community fearing believers' defection from their allegiance to the new faith (new God; cf. 3:3). Therefore, Paul informs them of the status of those who have died. He also shapes their response marked by a prohibition of grief. The answer is definite, either hope or despair. The contradiction points to a constructive negation. The informative communication (a wish to inform something new) constitutes several elements as a unified whole: reconstructed kinship or a newfound familial affinity (brothers and sisters), a non-grieving communitarian response to those who have died, and a perception of others who have no hope. These elements point to a repetitive social dualism and highlight a new hope by negating grief. It is non-grieving (4:13), a contrary construction in the face of despair. However, we also see that Paul has shaped a concrete and positive response in 5:16, "always rejoicing".

Paul endorses this attitude as an essential character of the gift of the Holy Spirit and holiness (being blameless at the coming of the Lord; cf. 3:10; 5:25). In the context of crisis, suffering and death, the believers' non-grieving character has a positive impact. It follows the examples set by Jesus and Paul. The particular attitude recollects believers' foundational story, that despite the persecution, they have received the word with joy (cf. 1:6). That believers' faith is exemplary despite suffering and death (cf. 2:14-17; 4:13). The positive response is a witness to Jesus's death and resurrection (cf. 4:14; 5:10). The repetitive mention of suffering has a role in constructing proximity with their newfound God. In times of social alienation and persecution, believers experience an approximate mystical space with God⁴³. The rhetorical contrast both in form and content introduce this new mystical space for the Christ-followers. Their perception of a loss is done away with an assuring conviction (new knowledge) and a unique mystical experience provided by an apocalyptic and eschatological literary context, Parousia.

Hope and Memory in 4:13

Paul offers the Thessalonian Christ-followers a new orientation, a reconstructed past. Despite suffering and persecution, they are to remain blameless and non-grieving (3:10; 4:13). This reorientation is both literal and eschatological, social and mystical. A non-grieving attitude becomes a visible character for the hope of salvation (cf. 4:13; 5:10). Paul endorses this new orientation through warnings and corrections. For example, there are appeals like non-grieving in 4:13 and rejoicing always as in 5:16. The antitheses form two different responses yet a single set of opposites serving the community.

⁴³ Karl P. DONFRIED, *The Issues of Authorship*, p. 81-113.

These responses highlight an eschatological tension between hope and grief. Even though hope and despair are poles apart, they involve a mechanism of dual representation, a perception of believers and others. In this way, the dimension of hope introduces two sides: people with hope and without hope when facing opposition, suffering and death. The constructed narration flows from an insider perspective and shows their side of the story, both social and eschatological. Notably, we see both the world of Paul and the world of the believers interacting constantly.

A Problem of Categorical Division

The subject of division arises due to a certain kind of distinction placed between believers and others in 4:13^{d-e}, ἵνα μὴ λυπησθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα. We have seen that Barclay considers this distinction between believers and others as a “great divide”⁴⁴. In his view, this expression seems to single out the believers separate from the entire non-Christian community. The latter, for him, refers to those who have no hope in an “undifferentiated manner”⁴⁵. This view is different from what Collins has suggested. According to him, the inhabitants of Thessalonica are in two groups – “those who grieve and Christians who should have no such grief”⁴⁶. Barclay and Collins agree on a certain kind of distinction but differ in their interpretation.

The categorical division between believers and others emerges from the complex expression given in the text. However, here there is no focus on the inhabitants of Thessalonica as Collins⁴⁷ shows or as Malherbe⁴⁸ focuses. They describe non-Christians as an opposite social group based on the expression of grief. The interpretations of grief and categorical division between believers and others can impact our understanding of the eschatological discourse. However, we notice here a process toward prospective memory: hope with non-grieving. In this way, both prohibition and contrast formulate the expression of constructive negation. They reflect a communicative election theology in diverse applications: foundational, vocational, and eschatological narratives (1:10, 4:5, 4:13 and 5:10).

2.1.1 The Expression of Grief

We see a form of negation with μὴ λυπησθε (you may not grieve in 4:13d). This prohibition is in the present subjunctive, middle/passive⁴⁹. There are two notable points here in this prohibition. One is on the discontinuity, and the other is the emphasis that this form carries. Gregory Bloomquist⁵⁰ comments that this phrase maintains an antithetical posture. In this prohibition,

⁴⁴ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 157.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 265.

⁴⁹ James H. MOULTON and Nigel TURNER, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek 3*, p. 74-75; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263-264.

⁵⁰ L. Gregory BLOOMQUIST, *Antithesis*, 185.

believers must respond differently to the situation. That is, they are not to express grief like others who have no hope.

Along with an order to discontinue grieving, the recommended behaviour sets an opposing temper. It moves toward placing a different ideological stand. We see that Paul prohibits grieving in the context of some having died in the community. Notably, the prohibition is set in contrast: not grieve like others who do not have hope. In this instance, the dimension of hope is specific and particular. It refers to hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, a living God whom the others do not know; that is, the others have not accepted Jesus as their God (1:3; cf. 1:10, 4:5). Here, the reference of “God” to Jesus does not refer to the status of Jesus within the Trinitarian concept but one that uniquely characterises Jesus as a living God as against idols that non-believers worshipped. The believers have accepted Jesus, know Him and imitate Him. The prohibition follows this dimension and points to a monotheistic tendency, an allegiance to only one God. The early Christ-followers have begun to experience these dimensions through their newly constructed social habit, not-grieving (4:13). In this regard, we can ask whether Paul’s proposed prohibition and contrast is more categorical or less categorical.

Moulton and Turner consider that the form in this prohibition shows a lesser scale of intensity than an aorist subjunctive⁵¹. If that is the case, then the categorical division has a minimal impact on this account. Besides, in this present prohibitive subjunctive, Malherbe considers that the form does not describe grief but explains the consolation context⁵². It appears here that there is more than the context of comfort. However, it is less definitive. The distinction does not orient to an anthropological condition but a response to the gospel that Paul has preached. In this direction, Barclay proceeds to outline its relevance for initiating a unique Christian funerary setting in contrast to the prevalent dominant culture⁵³. But the categorical division in a pejorative sense fails to explain the importance of the prohibition form. Notably, it avoids explaining the Christ-followers’ eschatological status. It is not the only prohibition but one of many within the scheme of the eschatological discourse. It adds up to a series of counter-responses which equip the believers for the Day of the Lord.

2.1.2 An Antithetic Designation of Others

We see that the form of antithesis is *μὴ...καθὼς καὶ* in 1 Thess 4:13^{d-e} (*μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα*). I have already referred to this form, and in Barclay’s opinion, this sets a categorical division and a definition of others⁵⁴. Besides, the antithesis’ form, according to Malherbe, is lengthy but straightforward⁵⁵. For Frame, it initiates a comparison

⁵¹ James H. MOULTON and Nigel TURNER, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* 3, p. 74-75; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263-264.

⁵² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 264.

⁵³ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*.

⁵⁵ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 154-155.

antithetically⁵⁶. We observe in this antithesis a contrast which both Collins⁵⁷ and Barclay⁵⁸ emphasise to support their descriptive strategy. Collins seeks to highlight the distinction based on traditional literature to explain the believers' eschatological condition.

On the other hand, Barclay emphasises a categorical division and argues for the source of the Christian funerary setting⁵⁹. Collins points to a retrospective aspect, whereas Barclay, to a prospective movement for the narrative. In the discourse, Paul intends both persuasion and consolation. We can evaluate this viewpoint further with the explanation provided by Malherbe. He compares both *καθάπερ καί* ("like" in 4:5) and *καθὼς καί* ("as" in 4:13). According to Malherbe, both add up to the antithetical function concerning *οἱ λοιποὶ* (the others). However, they appear to be dissimilar in the kind of negations they form. The prohibition that comes with *καθάπερ καί* seems to carry more emphasis than the latter⁶⁰. We see two separate distinctions. Both do not intend the same paraenetic force.

The first one concerns God (with *καθάπερ καί*), and a behavioural pattern that emanates from one's body. Their allegiance to their God is primary and demands absolute fidelity and belongingness (monotheistic). In respect to this allegiance, the behavioural patterns focus on the compliance of bodily sanctity. Here, Paul shapes the contrast from a secular context but focuses on one's living body and the sanctity that God wishes.

The second one relates to a behavioural pattern (with *καθὼς καί*) which has its primary focus on the condition of deceased members. Here, Paul shapes the contrast from a secular context where the difference relates to grief and hope. A negated grief is the primary object of reference. In this, we see that Paul desires this negation as the community's proper response, which recollects their identical behaviour (much suffering with joy in 1:6). This behavioural adaptation prepares the community and enables them to receive the Lord's word that Paul intends to declare in 4:15-17. In this way, we see that 1 Thess 1:6 constitutes a background as follows: first, to receive the coming Lord (1:9-10) and second, to the imitation model offered by Paul (2:1-12). Similarly, 1 Thess 4:13 constitutes a background: first, to imitate the model provided by Paul and second, to meet the descending Lord.

We see that both forms *καθάπερ καί* ("like" in 4:5) and *καθὼς καί* ("as" in 4:13) highlight the identity within the antitheses they form⁶¹. Here, Barclay agrees upon the rhetorical aspect, but he focuses more on categorical division and its social impact⁶². However, as Moule⁶³ considers, there is nothing more than the antitheses' rhetorical effect. The explanations show that the issue

⁵⁶James E. FRAME, *Thessalonians*, p. 167.

⁵⁷Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166-167.

⁵⁸John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 229 and 264.

⁶¹BDF, § 259.

⁶²John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

⁶³Charles F. D. MOULE, *An Idiom of New Testament Greek*, p. 194.

is far from providing any conclusive stand. The categorical division is more internal and has its relevant framework limits to this specific group and its memory.

2.2 Antithesis– 2: The Problem of Precedence

The form of antithesis is οὐ μὴ as in οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν (we will by no means precede) in 4:15d. It is an antithesis by a lexical form. The word displays an opposition changing its character. Here, the negation happens with the particle, οὐ/μή⁶⁴.

Further, the form οὐ μὴ plus φθάσωμεν is a double negation (οὐ μὴ) with φθάσωμεν (verb: a subjunctive aorist active first-person plural of φθάνω). Here, φθάνω means “to be beforehand in moving to a position, come before or precede”⁶⁵. The antithesis is in the strongest form of negation possible concerning a legal language of prohibition. This type of construction occurs mainly in the future indicative and an aorist subjunctive⁶⁶. In this way, the linguistic structure (grammatical) points to an emphatic future negation⁶⁷. The phrase emphasises the certainty of what it communicates: denial of an opinion or an assertion of a saying. Thereby, οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν can mean “will certainly not precede”⁶⁸. This form of language appears mainly with citations of Jesus’ sayings or from the LXX. In the present instance, it relates to the Lord’s word (4:15-17). Notably, it appears in 4:15d and also in 5:3e, οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν/ there will be no escape (cf. 1 Cor 8:13 and Gal 5:16).

We find in First Thessalonians that ὑμεῖς (you in 4:13a), τῶν κοιμωμένων (those deceased in 4:13c), οἱ λοιποὶ (others in 4:13e), οἱ ζῶντες (who are living in 4:15b) and οἱ περιλειπόμενοι (who are remaining in 4:15c) refer to the distinctive designations. These relate to an insider perspective of the community and its dynamics within the larger surroundings. The contrasts and their rhetorical force depend on the differing perceptions concerning the deceased. There is a distinction between the living and the dead and a dual representation of the community. It refers to both an external and internal context. Hence, the deceased’s state and their ill-conceived disadvantage resolve in the future, eschatological times. We have referred to this instance as a double fold contrast⁶⁹. The changing dynamics within the community, in a way, construct the group’s social identity. The focus shifts more toward what God does to the believers in common (4:16-17) than the others do, namely the persecution.

Further, the episode of Christ’s return has temporal and spatial significance. Here, once more, Paul establishes a close link between the living and the dead (4:17a) but with a positive

⁶⁴ Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Anthithese*, p. 17.

⁶⁵ BDAG 1053, φθάνω 1.

⁶⁶ BDF, § 362 and 365; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 272; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 323 and 352.

⁶⁷ BDF, § 362 and 365.

⁶⁸ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 323 and 352.

⁶⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 272.

connotation: “then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them (the dead) to meet the Lord in the air”. Yet this positive outcome has a negated expression in 4:15d as οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν. The distinction has a greater intensity than denoted by μὴ λυπησθε in 4:13d⁷⁰. The order of precedence is for a spatial approximation of the deceased members to the present community. The procession order works differently than the prohibition form in 4:13, where the community disassociates from others. At the same time, we have seen that the rhetorical force of λυπησθε (verb in present subjunctive passive second person plural of λυπέω meaning grieve) is less intense compared to 4:5, not knowing God. However, as compared to 4:13, the antithetical form, οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν in 4:17d is more intense as it is in a subjunctive aorist mood⁷¹. Remarkably, this refers to a further dimension regarding the close relationship between the deceased and the community. Here, both aspects of absence and presence are active within the dynamics of the believing community, and they refer to the temporal and spatial communion at the Parousia.

These dynamics show a shift from a distant to an approximate localisation. The attention moves away from the second person plural, ὑμᾶς in 4:13a toward the first-person plural, ἡμεῖς in 4:15b. This phenomenon is not a case of further division but points out Paul’s location among the believers. Here it is not a question of categorical division but identification to form a different contrast: the deceased believers and the living are together. We also find an antithetical expression in the form of οὐ μὴ. The believers mentioned in the first-person plural in nominative come after the deceased in the procession order at the Parousia. As a result, there is a specific contrast between the living and the dead. This identification takes together both the living and the dead until the coming of the Lord. As a media, it can be a process of continuity and discontinuity⁷². However, on the other hand, within the context of eschatological discourse, this process continues. It is not a question of one against another but one of “first and then”. It refers here to the sequence of the precedence on the Day of the Lord. This precedence is not between believers and others. It is among the believers, and that contrast is drawn temporally and not categorically. There is a temporary distinction between the living and the dead. Both life and death are fundamental to human existence, but orientation largely depends on the outlook and experiences people and societies uphold.

2.3 Antithesis– 3: Death and Resurrection

In antithesis 3, we observe that the antithetical form is both thematic and linguistic. It does not reflect a format that we see in the manner of expressing grief, as shown in 4:13. It is about the death–resurrection antithesis. We have already referred to Cerfaux, who proposes that Paul while preaching, seems to have made specific shifts in his preaching content. Cerfaux observes these shifts as such, involving the application of antitheses⁷³. Here the focus is not on the antithetical contrast between believers and others. That is, the distinction is not between people but

⁷⁰ James H. MOULTON and Nigel TURNER, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek 3*, p. 74-75; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263-264.

⁷¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 272; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 323 and 352.

⁷² L. Gregory BLOOMQUIST, *Antithesis*, p. 185.

⁷³ Lucien CERFAUX, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul*, p. 190.

on the content and its development. Hence the focus here is on the imagery active within the death– resurrection antithesis⁷⁴. The imagery points to the exalted position of Jesus on the Day of the Lord. The emphasis purely rests on God, who is the agent, who brings with Him the deceased, and that the living will be caught up with Him together (4:17a-b).

The arrangement of contrast involves a thematic application. We have here a process of continuity and discontinuity⁷⁵. We can also see that the essence of emphasis slowly shifts toward what God can do. That is, the focus lies not on death but the resurrection⁷⁶. This antithesis does not show any general form that Malherbe has discussed (not only – but also), but within the eschatological discourse, a new paradigm emerges. In this, we see that the antithetical expression consisting of two words to formulate a contrast does not require a negative form. Here this scheme does not present any aspect of a categorical division or show any negated expressions but speaks of reality in different phases of life for the believing group. That is, they refer to the fact of Jesus in this eschatological discourse. In this antithesis, the believers benefit from Christ’s death, resurrection, and His coming.

2.4 Antithesis– 4: Peace and Security, and Destruction

The form of antithesis– 4 is mainly the “they say – we say”. We observe that the topical antithesis consists of, on the one hand, peace and security and, on the other hand, destruction. Here, the “they say” form relates to the “peace and security” slogan. Further, we derive the “we say” formula implied in the knowledge that the community possesses already. We see this in 5:2a, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἶδατε (for you yourselves know very well). The present communication reminds the community, which Paul has already preached concerning the Lord’s day. We also notice that the antithesis is dense with several images: Lord’s day and thief in the night in 5:2b, peace and security in 5:3b, sudden destruction in 5:3c, and labour pains of a pregnant woman in 5:3d. This lush imagery plays out between the dynamics of “they say” and “we say”. That is, they say “peace and security” as in 5:3b, and we say “there will be no escape” as in 5:3e.

Further, the form οὐ μὴ plus ἐκφύγωσιν is a double negation (οὐ μὴ) with ἐκφύγωσιν (verb: a subjunctive aorist active third-person plural of ἐκφεύγω). Here, ἐκφεύγω means “to become free from danger by avoiding some peril”⁷⁷. But the antithesis with οὐ μὴ form denotes the most potent form of negation, the certainty of danger. We have seen that it refers to a legal language of prohibition as in 4:17d with οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν (we will by no means precede). The negated lexical construction appears within the future indicative and an aorist subjunctive⁷⁸. In

⁷⁴ Lucien CERFAUX, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul*, p. 190.

⁷⁵ L. Gregory BLOOMQUIST, *Antithesis*, p. 185.

⁷⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 91-92.

⁷⁷ BDAG 312, ἐκφεύγω 2.

⁷⁸ BDF, § 362 and 365; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 272; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 323 and 352.

this way, the linguistic structure is an emphatic future negation⁷⁹. It is also a double-fold contrast⁸⁰. The phrase intends and affirms the previous communication: denial of an opinion or an assertion of a saying. Thereby, οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν can mean “They will certainly not escape”⁸¹. We have seen that this form of language links Jesus’ sayings or points to citations from the LXX. In the present instance, it recollects plausible Jesus’ sayings (Mt 24:43, Lk 12:39-40, Q 12:39; cf. 2 Pet 3:10, Rev 3:3, 16:5). The eschatological discourse shows the antithetical formulation in 4:15d and 5:3e (cf. 1 Cor 8:13 and Gal 5:16).

2.5 Antithesis– 5: Night and Darkness, Day and Light

The antithesis– 5 is a representation of the believers in negated forms. In this antithesis, there are two identical statements in the form of negated expression. We also see a positive manner of description in 5:5a as υἱοὶ φωτός ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας (children of the light and children of the day).

The form of antithesis is by a negation particle οὐ (οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σκότει in 5:4a₂). The form repeats in 5:5b (οὐκ ἐσμὲν νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκότους). These negated forms link the community with the founders. First, there is a unique community identification, “you are not in darkness” in 5:4a₁₋₂. Second, we see distinct belongingness in the description, “We are not of the night nor darkness” in 5:5b. This representation, “you are not” and “we are not”, reflects the “I/We – You” communicative dynamics. The process continues until the final destination, as shown in the discourse. Here, the emphasis is entirely on the second member of the antithesis; believers are not in darkness.

As Collins⁸² considers, the thematic contrasts like day-night and light-darkness imply traditional religious motives. Whereas for Malherbe⁸³, these motives indicate instances of appeal. These interpretations explore the purposes behind their occurrences but reason differently. Here, we observe that two different words formulate the antitheses, and similarly, two separate verses can also express it. Both are instrumental in showing the element of contrast as well as where the emphasis rests. The negated particle οὐ links the antitheses. Here, Paul clusters two representations in close range and catalogues them formally. The experiences of darkness and night emerge from a natural world. But they act prospectively, considering eschatological motifs and a corresponding social impact.

The above distinction is also retrospective. We have seen that the form of antithesis in 4:13 is in the present subjunctive middle. It is not merely a negated expression but also contains a prohibition. Here the antithetical structure consists of a negated expression. But we see no

⁷⁹ BDF, § 362 and 365.

⁸⁰ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 272.

⁸¹ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 352.

⁸² Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166. Collins describes the traditional antitheses as follows: light–darkness, being awake–being asleep and sobriety–drunkenness. See Abraham J. MALHERBE (*Thessalonians*, p. 291) on Paul’s use of traditional material.

⁸³ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 291.

subjunctive mood. As a result, the rhetorical force works differently⁸⁴. There is an assertion that the believers do not belong to the darkness of the night. The statement in negated form recapitulates the knowledge the community possesses. We have already seen the unexpectedness of the day's arrival apparent in the thief's imagery in the night. In addition to this, an allusion to peace and security and sudden destruction (5:2-3) also heighten this aspect. On the one hand, we can see a reference to such events, and on the other hand, their occurrence seems simultaneous. In this way, the symbolic images are both antithetical and highlight the anticipated events' inevitability⁸⁵.

The antithesis set between day and night is not unexpected but a consistent and daily experience. Their association antithetically tends to define the cultural identity of the believers. Besides, they reflect the traditional motives and also symbolise paraenetic force through antithetical contrasts⁸⁶. Here, the day and light association with the believers functions differently than the distinction in 4:13. There is no categorical division between believers and the rest. The focus is directly on the inner dimension of the community. Here, unexpectedness is at the forefront. The antithetical contrasts may suggest ways to characterise the believers of their concrete or changing circumstances within their temporal and spatial terms⁸⁷.

2.6 Antithesis– 6: Being Asleep and Being Awake

This section deals with the antithesis: being asleep and drunk in contrast to being awake and sober. The antithetical statement is as follows: *μὴ καθεύδωμεν ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν* in 5:6a-b (“So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober”). The form of the antithesis is *οὐ/ οὐκ / μὴ μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καὶ* (not only but also). Besides, we find two additional elements, *ὡς* and *οἱ λοιποί* (as and others). These together make this antithesis more emphatic. We also identify the hortatory subjunctives *γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν* (let us keep awake and let us be sober). Besides, there are two different associations: first, we find a link between the imagery of night, sleep and drinking; second, there is a symbolic connection between the day, sobriety and awakened state.

At the same time, the antithesis– 6 connects antithesis– 5 with antithesis– 7. The first one refers to an antithesis between light and darkness. The second one points to salvation and wrath. These antitheses together emphasise the declarative dimension, “We declare”. They also form a basis for an eschatological perspective of the “we believe” content in 5:9a-10d that consists of two antitheses (salvation and wrath; either asleep or awake).

⁸⁴ James H. MOULTON and Nigel TURNER, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek 3*, p. 74-75; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263-264.

⁸⁵ James H. MOULTON and Nigel TURNER, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek 3*, p. 74-75; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263-264.

⁸⁶ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138; Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 91-92.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

We observe that the antithesis– 6 is a representation of the believers. There is a reference to οἱ λοιποί. The contrast is that they are not to sleep like others but are to be awake and sober. However, in γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν appeal does not imply that the believers are not to sleep at all. It reflects their eschatological condition⁸⁸. Marshall⁸⁹ thinks that sleep stands in antithesis to light in association with the day of the Lord. If then, there is no categorical division here. Tuckett⁹⁰ sees that the appeal is associated with daytime activity, while Collins⁹¹ refers to this activity as reflecting a baptismal paraenesis. Wright⁹² considers that wakefulness intends to minimise the element of surprise associated with the day of the Lord.

In the above opinions, the believers assume the character of alertness as a distinguishing mark of identity⁹³. In these positive descriptions of the believers, οἱ λοιποί is still significant in this antithetical formulation. First, we observe that there is a recollection of the foundational experience through a baptismal narrative paraenesis. Second, this formulation also refocuses on the state of deceased members through a negated description of the others.

Further, concerning the form of antithesis– 6, we notice that Malherbe considers it as a standard or general structure of the μή – ἀλλά antithetical form⁹⁴. The general or standard form of antitheses in contrasting sentences usually follows the outline of οὐ or μή or οὐτε – ἀλλά. In First Thessalonians, we see this usual form in 2:1-2, 3-4, 5-7, 13, and 5:6, 9, 15. Besides, we identify οὐ μόνον – ἀλλά in 1:8, and οὐ μόνον – ἀλλά καὶ in 1:5 and 2:8⁹⁵. For Malherbe, this antithetical general form mainly serves the function of contrast and emphasis within the context of persuasion. However, there is a subtle allusion to discontinuity in 5:6a-b. The believers are not to sleep like others (moral state). There is a comparison, a contrast between the believers and the rest. The distinction drawn here with this form of antithetical expression is less intense than the form in 4:13. Also, the believers have a positive representation, as in 4:13.

Notably, it is the form that supplies the intensity to the contrast mentioned. Similarly, there are a series of distinctions drawn between the believers and others. We look at similar dynamics within the antithetical contrasts: grief and hope, and asleep and awake. It is normal to grieve in the context of losing dear ones. It is also customary to sleep at night. But the contrast drawn reconstructs a dissimilar nature, so far the believers are concerned, as required by their eschatological thought pattern. The eschatological condition redefines the similar contents in the antithesis, asleep and awake, and progressively reorient the community. The explanation is as follows.

⁸⁸ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 211.

⁸⁹ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 137.

⁹⁰ Christopher M. TUCKETT, *Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 172.

⁹¹ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166.

⁹² Nicholas T. WRIGHT, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, p. 216-217.

⁹³ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 295; Christopher M. TUCKETT, *Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 169.

⁹⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 91-92.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

We find the antithetical statement as follows, εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν in 5:10b-c. Malherbe identifies εἴτε – εἴτε as a form of antithesis (2 Cor 5:9; Rom 14:7-8)⁹⁶. Moule mainly categorises it as a style. It is a rhetorical antithesis or parallelism trying to exhibit an inseparable connection between the two⁹⁷. The antithetical form indicates as follows.

The community's distinctive character is primarily integration (God, Paul, and all the believers). We observe this radical extension of the presence of God mediated by Jesus in all spectrums of existence (diachronic and synchronic). This antithesis presents this ultimate reconciliation. The intimate relationship intended here relates to the condition of the believers. We have shown in the previous antithesis that the death of Jesus benefits the believers. The salvific benefits establish a close nearness or relationship with God, both spatially and temporally. This dimension of the believers intensifies their social and mystical localisation, the immanence of the new and destined reality.

The antithesis reconciles the reality of the believers without attempting any further contrary representation between believers and others. It directly concerns believers. It is straightforward and tends toward reconciliation. But this reconciliation is a result of several constructive negations present in the discourse. The believers awake or asleep are assured to be with the Lord. The antithesis here contains a form and presents that death and life stand in antithesis to each other. However, death here is reconciled to life which stems from the life of Jesus for which he has died⁹⁸. The differences among the believers, dead or alive, are cancelled out. Divisions and contrasts within the eschatological discourse are pushed forward and finally reconciled through the repeated and recollected experiences of the community (God, Paul, and believers). This remembrance takes place both in local and trans-local dimensions through significant temporal aspects.

2.7 Antithesis– 7: Salvation and Wrath

We find the antithesis– 7 of the eschatological discourse in the statement οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὀργὴν ἀλλ' εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας in 5:9a-b (“God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation”).

In this antithesis, we find once again the general form of οὐ or μή or οὐτε – ἀλλά scheme. There is a further progression of the believers' social and eschatological location. Also, the antithetical form and content reflect strikingly a positive future outcome for the believers as against the others. The believers have salvation as their destiny. We notice that “wrath” designates others, and this description results from the nature of the future they share.

⁹⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 300.

⁹⁷ Charles F. D. MOULE, *An Idiom of the New Testament Greek*, p. 193-195.

⁹⁸ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 330.

We have identified that both Barclay and Malherbe have emphasised a categorical and social division between the believers and others, respectively⁹⁹. This description of others as such based on the insider perspective appears too contrary. The subject of traditions and contexts that distinguish the believers from the others primarily depends upon the believers' complete allegiance to God and Paul, temporally and spatially (1:10, 2:19, 3:13, and 5:10)¹⁰⁰. Here, the destiny of salvation is a positive attribute for believers. It describes their origin, their future, and outlines their communicative memory. Their foundational narrative, coming to faith with much suffering and joy (cf. 1:6), is both their representation and, at the same time, remembers the fact of Jesus' death and resurrection (5:10a) constructively. It adds new content, the Lord's coming, the hope of believers' salvation juxtaposed with the destiny of the others, wrath.

This antithesis mainly focuses on God's wish for the community. We notice this wish in a negated form. There is a shift from the "I/We – You" declarative to the faith formula, "we believe that God has destined us". Thereby, the reference to others recedes to the background. Compared to the antithesis present in 4:13, here it is God's plan and wish and not merely the objective of the apostolic founders. However, the declarative content of hope, as shown in 5:4-8, now transforms as reconstructed faith content. We notice that Paul mentions "wrath" (ὀργή) in 1:10 and 2:16. The first one emphasises the role of Jesus, who rescues the community from the coming wrath. The second one highlights the self-destructive outcome of those who have objected to Jesus and His gospel. Finally, in this particular instance (5:9), God's intended wrath, as the believing community perceives it and its in-group language may indicate, is the self-destructive outcome of those who oppose the existence of the believing community in a specific location, Thessalonica. Here, all three instances indicate Paul's constructive role in formulating the consolatory message, "hope" in 5:8 (ἐλπίς). The triadic formula of faith, love, and hope in 5:8 also emphasise this communicative memory process.

Besides, in this particular case, the antithetical form is not in the present subjunctive. It only follows a general format. In 4:13, we find the definition of others as those who do not have hope¹⁰¹. However, here we see 'wrath' in contrast to salvation, the destiny of the believers. If one follows the scheme of categorical division, then the definition of others extends and includes the narrative of wrath. But the description of divine anger is not the main focus. The narration focuses mainly on God's wish and the future reality of the believers, both the deceased and the living. Their differences disappear, and a reconciling trend results toward the end of the eschatological discourse. This dimension is visible in the following antithesis.

The dynamics mentioned above explain the dual representations adopted by Paul to address the community's unique problems. The dual representation media active through repetitive antitheses (antithetic parallels) indicates a constructive negation. It is not in "what hope is" that

⁹⁹ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 91-92. See also Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166.

¹⁰⁰ John Granger COOK, *Pagan Philosophers and 1 Thessalonians*, p. 514-532, 525. See Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety*, p. 91-109, for more information on social conflicts and the Thessalonians.

¹⁰¹ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

we find more explanations. We have more answers with ‘what hope is not’. We understand this mode as follows: (a) through appeals – prohibitions, corrections, and warnings; (b) through others (who do not know God and who have no hope). In his operative mechanism, we have a way toward a conceptual understanding of a theology of hope using constructive negation.

3. ANTITHESES AND PAULINE THEOLOGY

The antitheses in Pauline theology are instrumental for causal, temporal, functional, and pedagogical explanations. We have seen that the antitheses have both lexical and non-lexical forms. The forms explain a copulative, adversative, and disjunctive role. In Paul’s theology, most types are antithetical parallels and corrections, while less frequent are subjection, commutation, and oxymoron (much suffering with joy)¹⁰². The correction formula (negation) is more significant for constructing a theology of hope and an equal relevance for a communicative memory in First Thessalonians.

3.1 A Theology through Constructive Negation

First Thessalonians has a large thanksgiving section (chapters 1–3) displaying several episodic memories. Paul remembers, recollects, and communicates them once again by writing to his followers. The subsequent division of the letter has several exhortations reinforced, also with an updated eschatological orientation. Given the abrupt separation of Paul from the community in Thessalonica (cf. 3:1–10; Acts 17:1–9) and the unforeseen death of some in the community, the familial metaphors, words of comfort and encouragement fill up the void. But the consolatory patterns, as shown by Luckensmeyer¹⁰³, fail to include the role of journey experiences that preachers experience with their communities, both in their presence and absence. From the point of the journey or travelogue in First Thessalonians: chapter one concerns the foundational journey; chapter two presents a comparison between the preaching missionaries in general and Paul, and also the communities that follow them; chapter three concerns the report from Timothy; chapters four and five are about the journey of the community concerning moral and spiritual holiness, as well as labour and eschatological communion.

Additionally, 1 Thess 4:4-5 (who do not know God) and 4:13 (who have no hope) not only show a negated predicate but initiate an uncompromising point of departure (retrospective experience). It is a recollected experience to restrain a reversal or relapse because the experience of both God and hope is an insider perspective in a true spirit. It is to confirm their state of blamelessness and non-grieving. Here, the founder admonishes or corrects the community by writing them. The style and constructive negation (antithetical and correction parallels) reflect a kind of comparison. But it excludes the other and gives no room for linking two contrary

¹⁰² Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, p. 8-125.

¹⁰³ David LUCKENSMEYER and Bronwen NEIL, *Reading First Thessalonians as a Consolatory Letter*, p. 31-48.

perspectives. The eschatological discourse maintains this dynamism and keeps the tension between two contrasting realities throughout employing antitheses.

Here, a theology of negation, along with the apocalyptic motif of dualism, places the community in a prospective direction, understanding the final day in the present. Using admonitions, Paul stabilises the community keeping away the contrary realities and relegating them to the sphere of “others”. Both situational experiences and occasional responses show that grief has no place in the community (4:13; cf. Phil 2:27). Here, prohibition is not grief per se as Barclay understands it but grief concerning “the dead in Christ”. At the beginning of the pericope, in 4:13a, Paul writes, “but we do not want you to be uninformed”. It is not new information, but it intensifies the matter under consideration. Paul learns from Timothy (3:1-5) that some believers have died in Thessalonica and that the community is under distress. Consequently, Paul constructs his response revealing the contours of hope in Parousia.

3.2 Continuity and Discontinuity in 4:13– 5:11

The dimension of hope here is most visible through a perspective of continuity and discontinuity. Here, the perspective of continuity relates to the teachings of Paul that the community has to persevere. The standpoint of discontinuity refers to those elements that the community has to avoid, particularly practices related to idols and impurity. Both perspectives, continuity and discontinuity, connect to the realm of representation. That is, they refer to the visible aspects perceivable in the social sphere. The continuity dimension concerning hope is as follows: the first is the endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1:3); the second is the hope (joy, crown) as anticipation and subject of boasting for Paul about the community being present in full at the Parousia event (2:19); the third relates to the hope of salvation of all the believers (5:10); the fourth aspect refers to other eschatological episodes (1:10; 3:13; 5:23) of awaiting and being blameless before the coming Lord; and the final dimension emphasises participation and belongingness to the descending Lord (4:15 –17; 5:10).

If Paul’s response is in this light, and if the dead believers are separate from the dead in general, then it is plausible that the description of others as hopeless must be a follow-up of that distinction. In this regard, the non-believers’ hopelessness corresponds to the hopeless afterlife considerations contrary to the gospel of Jesus. The particular hopeless dimension also recollects the general opposition the others impose on those who preach the gospel. Here, a contrast between grief and hope (ἐλπίς) must follow this restricted sense of application. Besides, it is worth considering that the word ‘sleep’ about the dead is a common expression in the ancient Greek world¹⁰⁴. Horst Balz observes this phenomenon and comments that ‘sleep’ is not merely a euphemism but also refers to actual death. In his opinion, ‘state of sleep’ and ‘sleep of death’ point to a similar corresponding state and apply to actual death¹⁰⁵. To support further, Weima

¹⁰⁴ Frederick F. BRUCE, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 95. He considers that the use of ‘sleep’ as a euphemism of death is common in the ancient world including the Old Testament.

¹⁰⁵ Horst BALZ, *ὄπνος*, in *TDNT*, 8 (1976), p. 545-556 (here p. 548-549).

contends that ‘sleep’ as a euphemism has no place in the NT passages (cf. Mt 17:1-8; Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:20-23; Rev 6:9-11; these refer to “conscious and blessed existence of believers during the intermediate state”)¹⁰⁶. Based on these opinions, one can assume that Paul is addressing the status of the dead in an absolute sense. Paul has emphasised that God will raise the deceased and transfer them together with the living to meet the Lord. In this way, Paul’s admonition intends a constructive response concerning those who have died.

3.3 Grief and Discontinuity in 4:13

Along with the expected anticipation, Paul outlines how believers are to respond to those who have died. As shown in 4:13d, he urges them not to grieve (ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε) in a specific way. The explanation sets a contrast that describes others who have no hope. It is not clear why Paul asks the Thessalonian believers not to grieve. Since 4:13 employs most features in a restricted sense, it is plausible that the believers discontinue a way of grieving when some of their members have died. What we see here is the present subjunctive λυπῆσθε with μὴ to denote a discontinuity. It is a weaker emphasis compared to the aorist subjunctive¹⁰⁷. Here, Paul asks the Thessalonians to change their response toward the dead by not grieving how others grieve and have no hope.

What is not clear is the real reason behind their grief. We see several solutions as a result of reconstructing this situation. In this regard, Weima lists six hypotheses that have emerged as a result of the scholarly efforts. They are as follows: (a) The reference is an influence of Gnostic teachers who claim that the Parousia has already taken place and the deceased members have missed the chance of being saved¹⁰⁸; (b) Paul did not teach anything about the transformation of the deceased members¹⁰⁹; (c) Paul taught them about the resurrection, but they experienced overwhelming grief¹¹⁰; (d) the problem is not about the transformation, but losing confidence about in the return of Christ¹¹¹; (e) the assumption relates to the ill-conceived notion that only the living members join at Christ’s return¹¹²; and finally, (f) that the deceased members are at

¹⁰⁶ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 309.

¹⁰⁷ James H. MOULTON and Nigel TURNER, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*–3, p. 74-75; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263-264.

¹⁰⁸ Walter SCHMITHALS, *Paul and the Gnostics*, p. 16-51; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 310.

¹⁰⁹ Willi MARXEN, *Auslegung von 1 Thess 4, 13-18*, in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 66 (1969), p. 22-37; Jürgen BECKER, *Auferstehung der Toten im Urchristentum*, Stuttgart, KBW Verlag, 1976, p. 46-54; Gerd LÜDEMANN, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology*, F. Stanley Jones (trans.), Philadelphia, Fortress, 1984, p. 212-238; Christopher L. MEARNES, *Early Eschatological Development in Paul*, p. 137-157; Colin R. NICHOLL, *From Hope to Despair*, p. 35 -38; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 310-311.

¹¹⁰ Ian H. MARSHALL, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 120-121; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 311.

¹¹¹ Niels HYLDAHL, *Auferstehung Christi - Auferstehung der Toten (1 Thess 4:13-18)*, in Sigfred PEDERSEN (ed.), *Die paulinische Literatur und Theologie/The Pauline Literature and Theology* (Teologiske Studien, 7), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980, p. 119-135; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 311.

¹¹² Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 312; Joseph PLEVNIK, *The Taking up of the Faithful and the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*, in *CBQ*, 46 (1984), p. 274-283; *id.*, *1 Thessalonians 4, 17: The Bringing of the Lord or the Bringing of the Faithful?*, in *Biblica*, 80.4 (1999), p. 537-546; *id.*, *The Destination of*

a disadvantage in comparison with the living members¹¹³. According to Weima, grief emerges due to the Thessalonians' lack of knowledge about the deceased members¹¹⁴. However, it also intends to a new orientation toward their behavioural patterns. Their new faith context projects a corrective response with ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε (that you may not grieve) and strengthens their anticipation of the salvific hope (ἐλπίς in 1:9-10).

We find that the present subjunctive of λυπέω with μὴ is suggestive of a new orientation¹¹⁵. It means that the approach to sorrow must be different. Bultmann emphasises a Christian response amidst sadness and grief as follows: “a turning from the world, a break with it, and ... a constant maintaining of this attitude to the world”¹¹⁶. However, one notices an attempt to regulate grief through consolatory patterns, and that prohibition does not mean “no grief at all”¹¹⁷. What we understand by this is “not to grieve with the same motive, manner, and measure as the pagans (do)”¹¹⁸. The contrast mentioned in 4:13e (καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα) reflects this possible dimension of grief. But both Lightfoot and Barclay¹¹⁹ consider that the prohibition of grief as reflected in this particular antithesis points to an absolute discontinuity. They understand the antithesis as categorical, setting two separate exclusive social identities. This exclusiveness lays a viable foundation toward a unique Christian sobriety, funerary oratory and rites as characteristic marks of Christian identity.

However, Paul does not indicate a total prohibition. We notice only an abrupt discontinuity. We see this as follows: a) Paul comforts the community (Lord's Word in 4:15a-17b and παρακαλέω in 4:18 and 5:11a); b) Paul encourages the community to mutual building-up (οικοδομεῖτε in 5:11b). It is plausible that these do not suggest a total prohibition of grief. They only moderate a distinct behavioural pattern. Their response to the deceased now moves toward revealed anticipation, giving both comfort and a reason to build up each other's lives as suggested by Paul¹²⁰. The answer forwarded by Paul is both communicative and initiates a new

the Apostle and of the Faithful: Second Corinthians 4:13b-14 and 1 Thessalonians 4:14, in *CBQ*, 62 (2000), p. 83-95; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 312-313.

¹¹³ Albertus F. J. KLIJN, *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and its Background in Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 67; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 284; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 312-313.

¹¹⁴ Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 313.

¹¹⁵ James H. MOULTON and Nigel TURNER, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek 3*, p. 74-75. Abraham J. MALHERBE (*Thessalonians*, p. 263-264) mentions that the present subjunctive with the prohibition is less rude than the aorist subjunctive. In this case, the difference or the distinction derives force with καθὼς καί. See James E. FRAME, *Thessalonians*, p. 167.

¹¹⁶ Rudolf BULTMANN, “λύπη, λυπέω,” p. 313-322 (here p. 320).

¹¹⁷ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 264.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Joseph B. LIGHTFOOT, *Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 63; John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 138.

¹²⁰ BDAG 764-765, παρακαλέω 1-4; BDAG 696, οικοδομέω 3; Juan CHAPA, *Consolatory Patterns? 1 Thess 4, 13, 18; 5, 11*, p. 220-228; *id.*, *Is First Thessalonians a Letter of Consolation?*, p. 150-160. Chapa considers that the consolatory patterns which Paul employs here reflect Jewish traditions. Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 278. He observes here a reflection of Greek consolatory letters and their pattern in Paul's own way. Richard S. ASCOUGH (*A Question of Death: Paul's Community Building Language in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*, p. 509-530)

cultural setting for the nascent group and is already commemorative ('rejoice always' and the following exhortations in 5:16–22).

At the same time, the believers' response to the deceased is two-fold. In the first place, they are not to grieve like others who have no hope, but they are to comfort each other using the Word of the Lord that Paul has communicated (4:13e and 4:18). In the second place, they are to console each other through the salvific means of faith, love, and hope (πίστις, ἀγάπη and ἐλπίς). This dynamic pathway enables them to share their destiny, "not for wrath" but the "hope of salvation" (5:8c and 5:11a-11b;). In these instances, the emphasis is on the dimension of hope (ἐλπίς)¹²¹. In the first instance, hope (ἐλπίς) appears within a contrast which refers to others as hopeless. The second instance presents hope in the ascending order within the triad formula and has salvation as destiny (σωτηρία, 4:13e and 5:8c) and as its object. The dimension of hope (ἐλπίς) in these two instances shows why it has priority in First Thessalonians as well as its relation to the Thessalonian believers. Primarily, Paul has commended the Thessalonians for their steadfastness of hope (1:3). This moment is repetitive and adapts to changing circumstances. We see this process with 'not to grieve' (4:13) and with a further appeal to "rejoice always" (5:16). As a result, the believers now have a transformed and constructive response to grief.

However, grief in the face of death is a natural experience. Stephen Barton emphasises the relational aspect of emotions in the early Christian period. In this context, Barton considers Paul (in 1 Thess 4:13–18) like a fatherly figure (cf. 2:11), offering consolation and giving directions to moderate their grief. Here, a moderation of grief is vital for their self-understanding and identity, a memory that will shape and determine their future existence. Barton also contextualises their situation in their broader Greek culture. In this direction, evidence given in 4:13d-e is not an isolated case so far as the moderation of grief is concerned. The attempts to moderate grief are through a specified duration and restrictions that concern mourning. However, through contrast, as Barton agrees with Malherbe, believers must cease practices associated with mourning in their surrounding culture¹²². Hence, the Thessalonian believers' perception of grief and their antithetical response to it directly depend upon two comparative elements: καθὼς καὶ and οἱ λοιποὶ (like and others). Grief is real, and on the humanitarian ground, we cannot deny that reality.

Contrary to that, we have seen that Lightfoot proposes a total prohibition of grief. Here, he means taking a total distance from the pagan world and its ways of dealing with grief by indulging in funerary cults¹²³. This opinion rests mainly on the contrast introduced by καθὼς καὶ with οἱ λοιποὶ (like with others). Malherbe considers καθὼς καὶ as central and suggests an absolute prohibition of grief here. However, in this absolute prohibition, he concedes that it is

contends that the main issue is not consolation but belongingness. See also Reimund BIERINGER, *The comforted comforter: The meaning of παρακαλέω or παράκλησις terminology in 2 Corinthians*, in *HTS*, 67.1 (2011).

¹²¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 103; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 87 and 364.

¹²² Stephen C. BARTON, *Eschatology and the Emotions in Early Christianity*, in *JBL*, 130.3 (2011), p. 571-591, (here p. 586-591); Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 263-264.

¹²³ Joseph B. LIGHTFOOT, *Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, p. 63.

not as arbitrary as the contrast introduced by *καθάπερ καὶ* in 4:5¹²⁴. In 4:5, one reads τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότες τὸν θεόν (the Gentiles who do not know God) which has a close resemblance to καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα in 4:13e (as others do who have no hope). However, both refer to different contexts: the first case relates to Paul's exhortation concerning holiness; the second case refers to matters concerning the deceased. Do they point to a common ground?

Looking at the strategy that Paul applies and is in concurrence with traditions outlined for the gentile preaching (cf. Acts 15:1–41, the council in Jerusalem) presumably, τὰ ἔθνη and οἱ λοιποὶ may represent a transition. The progression happens within the dynamics of constructive negations that Paul has employed in his paraenesis. These present believers' contrary realities retrospectively and prospectively. They depict both looking backwards and forward but through distinctive constructive negations cast onto the realm of others. That in 4:5 with τὰ ἔθνη, Paul ascribes to others as those who do not know God and lead a lustful life. In 4:13 with οἱ λοιποὶ, Paul portrays 'others' as those who have no hope (possibly an overindulgence in grief).

However, both instances form a link to the believers' behavioural patterns. In this case, it reflects a relational dimension. About τὰ ἔθνη and οἱ λοιποὶ, the contexts project their identity using negated expressions in both cases. Concerning this, Frame opines that καθὼς καὶ sets the contrast antithetically. Additionally, this antithetical expression shows what distance believers have from others' hope (ἐλπίς) is their hope of being with Christ¹²⁵. Hope (ἐλπίς) in non-biblical Greek contexts has a significant cultural background. However, the ancient Greek world has expressed the dimension of hope (ἐλπίς) quite differently, and the afterlife aspirations mainly refer to meeting the dead in Hades or being concerned about the immortality of fame. The dimension of others' hope (ἐλπίς) represents afterlife spatial locations in this way. The antithetical expressions reinforce these projections of others through negative representations¹²⁶. Besides, the media of dual imagery (antithetical) presents others against the believing community's salvific benefits. The salvific benefits are that they know and serve true and living God (1:10), they please God (4:1), they are blameless (3:13; 5:23), and they are hope-filled (1:3; 2:19; 4:13; 5:16). However, these states reflect the social dimension of memory. The rhetorical contrasts and antithetical features further represent these inner dynamics of the believing community.

4. ANTITHESES AND SOCIAL MEMORY

The rhetorical contrasts outline a clear trajectory of Paul's approach establishing the developing community that mainly consists of Gentiles. Their definitive self-description recorded by Paul emphasises that they have "turned away from idols, to serve a living and true God" (1

¹²⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 264.

¹²⁵ James E. FRAME, *Thessalonians*, p. 167.

¹²⁶ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 264.

Thess 1:9)¹²⁷. This statement frames their foundational experience. It acts in two ways: it substantiates their movement toward Christ and allows Paul to conform the group further to the ethos of his gospel. It is in this direction we approach the entire eschatological discourse (1 Thess 4:13–5:11) and specifically, 4:13^{d-e}, “that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope” (μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα). This statement by Paul highlights the formative and normative elements of these contrasts that define the identity of early Christ-followers.

Here, the understanding of identity, according to Barclay, needs a review. The identification of dualism conveys a rhetorical and pejorative sense by introducing a definite distinction between a Christian and non-Christian humanity. This explanation limits and eludes the eschatological dimension of the believers, which περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων denotes (about those who have died, 4:13^c). The literary strategy of the antithetical features presents this in 4:13. I address this issue, assuming that the distinction in the context of the opposition reflects a particular literary approach of using antitheses in 1 Thess 4:13 and the rest of the discourse. With the application of the social memory model, I propose to show that the dialogue reflects the following trends: (a) continuity in terms of doctrinal character (inner dimension); and (b) discontinuity in terms of a behavioural pattern (external dimension).

Continuity in terms of doctrinal character:

Paul narrates his inner dimensions and followers through autobiographical (2:1-12) and biographical memories (1:2-10) of the foundational origins. In First Thessalonians, Paul and the community have several illustrations displaying their self-designations, missionary dynamics, and eschatological status. Their newly founded existence is one of continuity shared by the life and memory of Jesus, both as the object and content of their persevering hope. This memory helps them replace old ways with new habits informed by Paul’s teachings of the Gospel of Jesus. In this background, I refer to Birger Gerhardson¹²⁸. He tries to trace the early Church traditions in Paul (Gal 1:1,13; 1Cor 15:3; Phil 3:5-6) in search of a successful model to study the origin and transmission of the gospel traditions, but, in his opinion, the viable model lies in the oral and written Torah traditions. Gerhardson highlights this aspect through several literary elements. They include contrasts, antitheses, and antithetic parallels. These elements preserve the oral nature of the communicative memory and mnemonic structuring of traditions¹²⁹. These forms contain a dense pattern, a condensed form, repetitive and recollective, and suggestive tracing of gospel traditions and oral transmission.

Discontinuity in terms of behavioural pattern:

¹²⁷ 1 Thess 1:9 — πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεῦειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ.

¹²⁸ Birger GERHARDSSON, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, Lund, Gleerup, 1961, p. 324-325.

¹²⁹ Werner H. KELBER, *The Works of Memory: Christian Origins as MnemoHistory – A Response*, p. 233.

We have observed that antithetical features in 4:5 (the Gentile who do not know God) and 4:13 (like others who have no hope) reconstruct a retrospective image of the community background before coming to faith in their new God, Jesus Christ. Now, their new reality is a radical departure from their old ways. Their recent experience and new faith expressions are contrary to the general society with which they identified before. I explain this phenomenon by referring to Halbwachs¹³⁰. He observes the changes in rural and urban ways of life. The observation concerns a preoccupation with social morphology, which forms a factual basis for understanding social memory development. Halbwachs has emphasised that social memories become localised, and they take roots in the group's consciousness. This social factor rests precisely upon the constituent and enduring dimension that a group consists of remembering individuals. They construct a unique perception of the world as demanded by their present needs. At the same time, they also develop corresponding behavioural patterns, having an origin in social context and structure¹³¹. In this way, one can see how Paul reframes the social habits of his followers concerning the issues of sanctification and sexual immorality, and hope and grief (4:1-12, 13-18).

The above dimensions of continuity and discontinuity manifest different types of memories present within the discourse. The antitheses discover those layers. Regarding memories identifiable in cultural memory, we have seen that Jan Assmann¹³² has identified the following types: mimetic memory, the memory of things, communicative memory, cultural memory, and political memory. He focuses on memory's internal and external contexts and further dimensions like temporal depth and cultural distance. An internalising memory and an externalising memory have a bottom-up approach. An institutionalising political memory will have a top-down approach that may still have internalising and externalising focus. Here, Assmann notes that the top-down memories are asymmetrical and ambiguous, whereas bottom-up memories are symmetrical and transparent.

In First Thessalonians, normative prescriptions, prohibitions, and admonitions hint at a top-down and asymmetrical relation. However, Paul has balanced these asymmetrical dimensions with familial terms that point to and emphasise proportional relationships. Paul applies these dual forces to construct the memory and identity of the developing community. The process unfolds through Paul's fatherly figure and gentile reminders through appeals, prohibitions, and consolatory patterns. At the same time, Paul desires communion with the community, earthly and eschatological (3:1-5; 4:15-17 and 5:10). In First Thessalonians, this dual nature of the constructive memory process shapes the group's theological understanding of hope.

4.1 Hope: Dual Representations

¹³⁰ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 14.

¹³¹ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 19, 23, and 48.

¹³² Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 1-11 (here p. 6-7).

The double features of collective memory relate to the characteristics of a recollected past: continuity and discontinuity. Concerning these commemoration and collective memory dynamics, Barry Schwartz emphasises that there remain specific fundamental characteristics of an image in “the double character of collective memory”¹³³. The stable character of an image survives the differing perception of subsequent generations. It refers to remembering as the unique, essential and dynamic act between “a constructive process as opposed to a retrieval process”¹³⁴. In this perspective, I suggest that applying the double character of memory strictly is problematic for this study. In First Thessalonians, we notice the different mechanisms of the presence of antithetical groups. Paul presents several dual representations through antithetical and contrast parallels, corrections and prohibitions, and qualitative and quantitative descriptions in the letter. The parallels that offer a negation link Paul’s thinking pattern and theology. They also point to formative and normative elements like grace, prohibitions, and law¹³⁵.

4.2 Material Objects of Communicative Memory

A written document in general and here in particular, First Thessalonians, is a material object. We have seen that the Pauline letters mainly belong to the communicative memory phase. The letters as communicative memory consist of biographical and foundational narratives. As documents, the letters refer primarily to the founding origins: God, Paul and the communities Paul has established. All three function as objects for memory; through these individual entities found in the document, we have access to a particular type of memory¹³⁶. The material things give memory access. Halbwachs has highlighted that only the individual possesses memory and that memory is socially constructed and reinforced by the respective groups. Besides, human beings have access to historical memory through written records, kept alive through commemorative enactment. In this regard, the autobiographical memory is quite distinct from the previous one as it is a memory that members have personally experienced¹³⁷. But in both forms, biographical and commemorative, the collective memories establish a link between creative times and ordinary events of daily life. The ceremonial acts develop this link, and their symbolic display forms a transit between generations¹³⁸. However, regarding First Thessalonians, we are dealing with the first-generation Christians. Notably, the early Christ-followers in Thessalonica have access to Jesus’ memory through Paul. Mainly, Jesus, Paul and the early Christ-followers form a unified material process of remembrance for us to access. All three are the primary constituents whose experiences, interactions, and memory documented in the letter reflect a positive reality concerning the dimension of hope.

¹³³ Barry SCHWARTZ, *The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory*, in *Social Forces* 61.2 (1982), p. 374-397.

¹³⁴ Barry SCHWARTZ, *The Social Context of Commemoration*, p. 374-397.

¹³⁵ Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, p. 123-125.

¹³⁶ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of ‘Collective Memory’ in Early Christianity*, p. 106.

¹³⁷ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 23.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Conversely, as in the antitheses explained already, contrary realities like idols, false teachers, and others play constructive negation. Here, prohibitions, corrections, and antitheses work as means of persuasiveness for social belongingness. In the contexts of suffering and persecution, the community members understand all contrary realities in the guise of others and manage their social dislocation. The members expand their foundational experience further. These moments address a constructive Christian attitude within a double crisis, formative and normative. The former focuses on self-descriptions, while the latter hints at precise norms to follow¹³⁹. Such foundational experiences shape a group's social memory, and also, in turn, the community transform itself as a locus for the memory process¹⁴⁰. In this regard, the document witnesses this particular communicative memory process, and the primary constituents are its objects.

4.3 Formal Properties of the Text

We have seen that the antitheses point to the content regarding the primary constituents of the document, First Thessalonians. The primary components are Jesus, Paul and the early Christ-followers in Thessalonica. Their interactions and communicative process also reflect a formal process. The formal process also establishes recognizable identities. In other words, the recognizable identities are the social realities, the social frameworks that shape the memory content. The frameworks are time, space, and language with which the primary constituents interact. We recognise this formal process in the document, First Thessalonians. Therefore, time, space, and language are the formal properties of the text (document, letter). These formal elements constitute the interaction between the presence and distance of the founder to the addressees. The particular dynamic process is designated as "I – You relations". In this context, the dynamics of presence and absence between the founder and the community also preserve the nature of communicative memory¹⁴¹. The imagery of Parousia highlights this process in both social and eschatological dimensions.

In this regard, I refer to Margaret Mitchell¹⁴². She thinks that the imagery of Parousia points to both Paul's social and eschatological intent. In these realms, the gospel nurtures episodic narratives that unravel the dynamics of the divine through Jesus Christ. These elements manifest the aspects of incorporated language (forms of shorthand and longhand), ritual settings (baptism, the Lord's meal, the invocation of the name), social composition (the ecclesia as local

¹³⁹ Jan ASSMANN, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, p. 36; Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory' in Early Christianity*, p. 101. See also Pierre NORA, *Entre mémoire et histoire : la problématique des lieux*, in Pierre NORA (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire : La République*, Vol.1, Paris, Gallimard, 1984, p. xvii-xlii. Nora has coined this terminology.

¹⁴⁰ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory' in Early Christianity*, p. 101.

¹⁴¹ Judith LIEU, *Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory*, p. 133-143.

¹⁴² Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Paul and the Emergence of Christian Textuality*, p. xiv – xv. Concerning the ritual contexts and Paul's media of social memory to the Thessalonians, we find similar assertions in Georgia M. KEIGHTLEY, *The Church's Memory of Jesus: A Social Science Analysis of 1 Thessalonians*, p. 149-156; *idem.*, *Christian Collective Memory and Paul's Knowledge of Jesus*, p. 129-150.

and trans-local reality), and ethical dimensions (prescribed, forbidden, and recommended forms of behaviour). The entire spectrum of Paul's role and mission recapture these moments. Mitchell has termed this process as a *synecdochical logic* where a part implies the whole of the gospel narrative. Therefore, the imagery of Parousia reflects a *synecdochical* approach in which the antitheses and the rhetorical contrasts have a significant role in establishing a formal process. The process points to a unique space, a particular time, and a unique language that refer to an incorporative dimension.

The particular reasoning engages an extensive range of contexts, mediating presence and absence central to Pauline literary settings. Notably, we see a similar process concerning the multiple images of the eschatological discourse. The imagery links the Parousia, the Lord's Day, the thief in the night, the labour pain of a pregnant woman, children of light, and darkness. All these images form a single unit, and they also function independently, both in space and time, specific to the believing community.

4.4 Constructed and Eschatological Time

Social memories involve a constructive process with temporal elements in focus (past, present and future). We see that the social memory conception of time is a presentist-constructive approach by Halbwachs¹⁴³. However, we now see a more considerable consensus to understand the temporal dimension as past-constructivist¹⁴⁴. At the same time increasingly, one considers the interconnected aspects of the "remembered or recollected past" as inter-influential¹⁴⁵.

In addition, concerning societies and generations, a further dimension is their diverse yet unique attributions to the concept of time. Philip Esler¹⁴⁶ emphasises this nature of time. The perception depends upon the community's interpretation of time, primarily influenced by the sociological precedence. For example, the notion of time in agricultural and pre-industrial opinion centres mainly on the phenomenon of repeated reversals like day and night, light and darkness. This conception of time continues until the modern Newtonian linear times. By those notions, the outcome of the durative time is understandable (in 1 Thess 5:1–11, times and seasons). There is an assured process of a durative moment, metaphorically expressed (like a thief in the night; women with birth pangs). These moments signal the visible anticipation of the invisible initiated but not yet to come to the whole reality¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴³ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 23.

¹⁴⁴ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 1-11.

¹⁴⁵ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke, There's Fire*, p. 7-37.

¹⁴⁶ Philip F. ESLER, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, p. 253-266.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Furthermore, the episodic narratives reconcile several issues, like distance and presence, locus and temporality, solidarity and textuality¹⁴⁸. In this regard, Mitchell¹⁴⁹ considers that Paul's writing in First Thessalonians reflects multiple temporal dimensions: diachronic, synchronic, and a *dia-synthesis*. In the eschatological discourse, we see several episodic moments, constructive and formative. They relate to Paul and the community, and reflect different temporal dimensions. The temporal dimension concerns the deceased members and their place at the Parousia in 4:15-17. It refers to the community's understanding of "times and seasons" in 5:1 and the "day of the Lord" in 5:4-8. All these dimensions of time have corresponding spatial particularities that signify participation and belongingness.

There are multiple episodic moments in First Thessalonians. They refer to the moments of arrival. We also see the eschatological moments of arrival that interconnect and interrupt these spatial-temporal dimensions. We see this relational dimension in the letter in the indications as follows:

- 1:10 – And to wait for his Son from heaven (καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν).
- 2:1 – You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain (αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν).
- 3:13 – 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 (εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ).
- 4:15 – Will by no means precede those who have died (οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας).
- 5:1 – Now concerning the times and the seasons (περὶ δὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν).
- 5:5 – For you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness (πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς υἱοὶ φωτός ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας. Οὐκ ἐσμὲν νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκότους).
- 5:10 – So that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live with him (ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν).

The antithetical features interact with these spatial-temporal moments and contribute to the conceptual understanding of time. The antitheses also indicate a shift in focus, temporal and spatial, formally enhanced by forms like "not only – but also" and "do not – like others". In this way, in the letter, some significant terms connected to the subject of hope appear in clusters:

- a) We see a set (cluster) of interactive lexical terms:
 - Faith, love, endurance, and hope (πίστις, ἀγάπη, ὑπομονή καὶ ἐλπίς) in 1:3, "remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and

¹⁴⁸ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory' in Early Christianity*, p. 102-105.

¹⁴⁹ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Paul and the Emergence of Christian Textuality*, p. xiv-xv.

steadfastness of hope” (μνημονεύοντες ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος).

- Hope, joy and crown (ἐλπίς, χαρὰ καὶ στέφανος) in 2:19, “For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?” (τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπίς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως- ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς- ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ;).
 - Faith, love, hope and salvation (πίστις, ἀγάπη, ἐλπίς καὶ σωτηρία) in 5:8, “But 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” (ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡμέρας ὄντες νήφωμεν ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας).
- b) There are multiple occurrences of non-lexical antithetical form like in 4:13 (οὐ θέλομεν).
- c) We observe a general antithetical form (οὐ/οὐκ μόνον– ἀλλὰ/ ἀλλὰ καί):
- In 1:5, “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” (ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ, καθὼς οἴδατε οἱ ἐγενήθημεν [ἐν] ὑμῖν δι’ ὑμᾶς).
 - In 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” (ἀφ’ ὑμῶν γὰρ ἐξήχεται ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ [ἐν τῇ] Ἀχαΐᾳ, ἀλλ’ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἢ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν, ὥστε μὴ χρεῖαν ἔχειν ἡμᾶς λαλεῖν τι).
- d) We also see a complex antithetical form in 4:5 and 4:13.
- μὴ– καθάπερ καὶ in 4:5, “not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God” (μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα τὸν θεόν).
 - μὴ– καθὼς καὶ in 4:13, “so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope” (ἵνα μὴ λυπῇσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα).
- e) We observe a unique antithetical form in 5:10, εἴτε– εἴτε, “so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live with him” (ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν).

As mentioned above, we observe two elements. The first relates to approximating the lexical terms that interact within the same conceptual world as faith, love, and hope. This phenomenon indicates the spatial dynamics of the inner dimension within the faith community. The second one refers to the nearness of the temporal dimension mainly characterised by the antithetical forms like “not only – but also (οὐ/οὐκ μόνον – ἀλλὰ/ἀλλὰ καί) and “whether – or” (εἴτε –

εἶτε). These particular antithetical forms show Paul's theologising style regarding time, eschatological hope and the content.

4.5 The Community and the Coming Lord

The believers' community in Thessalonica has three distinct participants: God, Paul (co-workers), Thessalonian believers (deceased and alive). They stand contrary to a prohibited space (idols, false teachers, Satan, and others). Similarly, the letter reflects several spatial dimensions. The local community in Thessalonica has corresponding trans-local communities of the same faith (Macedonia, Achaia, Judea) and contrary opposing compatriots of a trans-local nature. Here, the spatial framework of memory arises as the individual members localise their memories in and through society¹⁵⁰. This dynamism points to the collective framework of memories. As Halbwachs refers to, these combine all personal recollections of many members of the same community¹⁵¹. These frameworks consist of significant others like families, religious groups and social classes that reconstruct an image of the past in unity with each age¹⁵².

We notice mainly the dynamics of a collective framework of memories in First Thessalonians in the thanksgiving passages. These passages recollect and repeat a memory language with several cognates. In 1:1–10, we observe *μνείαν ποιούμενοι, μνημονεύοντες, εἰδότες, οἶδατε*. In 2:1–12, we see *οἶδατε, καθὼς οἶδατε, μνημονεύετε, and καθάπερ οἶδατε*¹⁵³. According to Simon Buttica, these terms point to and also emphasise Pauline *anamnesis* in First Thessalonians. The language of memory, as seen here, reconfigures the universe of meaning and a unique temporality for the community. In this regard, the retrospective and prospective movements of the election and vocation of the community address a twofold crisis nature. First, the dual nature emphasises the elected community dimension (1:10; 4:13) and a community of imitation in suffering (1:4,10; 2:14-16)¹⁵⁴. Second, constant appeals strengthen the language of remembering in the community (memory site) in addition to knowledge or other close affinities toward remembrance. Paul has incorporated these affinities and displays them throughout the letter. We notice this process in the following indications:

1:2, “We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly” (*Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν μνείαν ποιούμενοι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν, ἀδιαλείπτως*).

2:1, “You yourselves know, brothers and sisters” (*Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε, ἀδελφοί*).

¹⁵⁰ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 38.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁵³ Régis BURNET, *L'anamnèse*, p. 63; *id.*, *Epîtres et lettres*, p. 162-166. See also Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory' in Early Christianity*, p. 108.

¹⁵⁴ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of 'Collective Memory' in Early Christianity*, p. 112.

- 2:13, “We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God’s word, which is also at work in you believers” (Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως, ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν).
- 3:1, “Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we decided to be left alone in Athens” (διὸ μηκέτι στέγοντες εὐδοκήσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις μόνοι).
- 4:1, “Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus” (Λοιπὸν οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐρωτῶμεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ).
- 4:9, “You do not need to have anyone write to you” (οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε γράφειν ὑμῖν).
- 4:13, “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters” (οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν).
- 5:1, “You do not need to have anything written to you” (οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε ὑμῖν γράφεσθαι).
- 5:12, “But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters” (Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί).
- 5:27, “I solemnly command you ” (Ἐνορκίζω ὑμᾶς).

CONCLUSION

In First Thessalonians, Paul tends to cluster and catalogue significant concepts to build repetitive literal links between God, himself and recipients of his letter. These conceptual categories are present through antithetical features. They indicate both a formative and a normative process and a social and eschatological identity formation. We see these corrective measures and paraenetic features repeated and recollected within 1 Thess 4:13–5:11 (Gal 5:16–26; cf. Eph 2:11–13). They intend Paul’s theologising style to explain what hope is for the community. We also see that Timothy’s literal background furnishes an update. That is, Timothy returns from Thessalonica and reports to Paul (3:1–5). After that, Paul responds to the crisis, a new phase of apostolic mission. The process designates the dialects of presence and absence in the document, which Paul sends to his recipients. Paul writes to his followers in Thessalonica in the context of some believers’ death and overwhelming persecution¹⁵⁵. Paul’s writing displays the words of comfort and consolation, which enable the community to recollect and reconnect their foundational experience with God, the founders and the community itself.

¹⁵⁵ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 110.

In the eschatological discourse, in 4:13, Paul initiates this process and continues similarly. Paul refers to this episodic event with a prohibition, “not to grieve”. He has shaped his response with a contrast, “do not grieve like others who have no hope”. This intervention anticipates the Parousia event. At the same time, we see that this constitutes a middle ground between their foundational experience and the forthcoming Parousia event. In this dynamic process, the antithetical features are repetitive and recollective. They shape a specific eschatological memory of hope as an equivalent intermediate ground experience, employing a constructive negation with two-fold representations. The dual nature of contrasts hung in the form of clusters address both crises and anticipated benefits. The parallels play a constructive negation positively for the group’s internal cohesion and negatively distance the group from their adversaries (others, imperial or cosmic powers, and Satan).

We see that Halbwachs observes two-fold forces active in representing a community and its theological sense. He refers to it as follows: “Both dogmatic and mystic thoughts, two currents of Christian thought reengage the origins of Christianity”¹⁵⁶. For him, religious truth is both a traditional remembrance and a general notion supplied by the present¹⁵⁷. Concerning First Thessalonians, the trajectory of such a process already unfolds (1:10), with a foundational memory apparent throughout the entire letter with a “mythical–historical setting”¹⁵⁸. Simon Butticaaz understands this phenomenon as an extension of communicative memory into cultural memory form¹⁵⁹. Stefan Alkier refers to the imagery of a fictional setting. It reflects the oral nature of communicative memory in First Thessalonians. Remarkably, the antitheses reflect and point to the mythical and historical settings in the eschatological discourse.

The antitheses establish the incorporative dimension of the deity within the believing community. The deity, Jesus as God, has already attained a mythical narrative. We see that the antitheses construct this specific social reality for the community. The constructed reality refers to space, time, and language that is unique, specific, and exclusively sacred. In this way, the incorporative dimension is both human and divine. The constructed reality emphasises the unique human dimension of the community in their broader social setting. We see a similar process regarding the exclusive sacred dimension of the community, their unique belongingness to Jesus, both now and in the times to come. The antitheses construct this new reality by negations. The renewed reality remains communicative; that is, the new reality is persevering as always and everywhere. The community identifies its unique status in the praxis of antitheses that recollect and reinforce their unique memory content employing negations grounded in their social setting: not only but also, and do not. In this way, the antitheses constitute a dynamic, communicative and persevering reality between the deity, its agents, and the worshipping community. Thereby, the renewed reality remains identifiable and communicative in the very formal structure of the antitheses reflecting both the oral and written media of the social memory

¹⁵⁶ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 103 – 105.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁵⁸ Stefan ALKIER, *Der 1. Thessalonicherbrief als kulturels Gedächtnis*, in Gerhard SELLIN and François VOUGA (eds), *Logos und Buchstabe. Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im Judentum und Christentum der Antike* (TANZ, 20), Tübingen-Basel, Francke Verlag, 1997, p. 175–194.

¹⁵⁹ Simon BUTTICAZ, *The Transformation of ‘Collective Memory’ in Early Christianity*, p. 109.

of the Christ-followers in Thessalonica. The mythical and social setting point to interactions between multiple traditions in the eschatological discourse in this process. The implied traditions may refer to the world of Paul and of the Christ-followers in Thessalonica. It relates to their relationship to the deity, Jesus and the impact of that particular relationship.

In this regard, the implied traditions in the discourse require further attention in light of the antitheses' dynamics. The interrelated aspects of communicative memory (oral and written media) bear relevance for identity formation. The original context of the literary unit and its forms also require further observation¹⁶⁰. In this way, the social memory method may discover successive links between different types of memories in the discourse that ultimately transform the Christ-followers as a community of memory¹⁶¹. We see such indications in the letter. One such instance is in 1 Thess 1:8. It refers to a process of changing the group as a community of memory (ὥστε γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς τύπον πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ). The eschatological discourse consists of similar links between forms of memories in line with previous narratives. It does not replace one with others, but through antithetical features (lexical, non-lexical, general, special and other forms), it sustains the initial oral communication. These formulaic features add to an evolving dynamic process. It reflects a unique medium with its conditions and open-ended possibilities¹⁶².

Notably, in this chapter, we have seen how Paul using negations expresses his intended wish, "do not grieve". The negated form signifies the "we wish" communicative and constructive process between Paul, his co-workers, and the community. Remarkably, the apostolic will extends the divine will as expressed in 4:5 regarding the subject of sanctity. The following chapter explores similar dynamic forces within the "we believe, and we declare" framework regarding traditions in the eschatological discourse.

¹⁶⁰ Stefan ALKIER, *Der 1. Thessalonicherbrief als kulturels Gedächtnis*, p. 183 and 188.

¹⁶¹ Stefan ALKIER, *Der 1. Thessalonicherbrief als kulturels Gedächtnis*, p. 191.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 193.

CHAPTER 6

TRADITIONS AND SOCIAL MEMORY

INTRODUCTION

We have seen previously that the antithetical features indicate a unique communicative memory process. The process points to traditional content with repetitive antithetical imagery. The narrative demonstrates the community's unique spatial and temporal dimension as constructive, communicative, and persevering. Notably, the process points to a narrative that reconstitutes the world of Paul and the Christ-followers in Thessalonica. The narrative highlights their relationship to the deity, Jesus as God. The present chapter deals with this interactive process between Jesus, Paul and the community from their traditional and historical settings. We look at the constructed narrative traditions these interactions may imply. In this regard, the chapter considers some witnesses from non-biblical as well as biblical sources and analyses their significance toward understanding the early Christ-followers in Thessalonica. First, I illustrate how antitheses reflect certain traditions. Second, I refer to the Graeco-Roman culture identifying relevant pointers to the polemical discourse. In these illustrations, we explore those competitive polemics and compare their relevance to the eschatological discourse. I show how the historical and literary traditions (non-biblical and biblical) shape this eschatological narrative. Third, we look at how Paul constructs a social reality of *ὁ λόγος κυρίου* addressing a specific outlook toward grief, hope, death, and life. Finally, we execute a moderate social-scientific analysis regarding *ὁ λόγος κυρίου* that explains the antitheses as a communicative media constructing a particular theological content for the believers.

1. ANTITHESES AND TRADITIONS

The eschatological discourse in First Thessalonians (4:13–5:11) contains several rhetorical contrasts and antithetical features. These features help us see how Paul applies short literary compositions and reconstructs a particular eschatological perspective for his community in Thessalonica. Paul has two primary concerns in the discourse: those who have died and the times of the Lord's arrival, the Parousia. Both issues interact and are interdependent. The circumstances indicate that several traditions can interact and form short literary units addressing suffering and hope, thereby reconstructing a thought pattern for the community. In this regard, the contrasts and antitheses function as fast-phased ruptures. They connect multiple relevant commonplace images, outline a communicative process, and conceptualise a memory of hope.

We view that several individual units within the discourse indicate and conceptualise the main events and historical turns. The literary formulations reflect shaping a particular behavioural pattern of the community. I point to them as follows¹:

4:13 — “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope” (Οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων, ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα).

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” (εἰ γὰρ πιστεύομεν ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἀνέστη, οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτοῖς).

4:15 — “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” (Τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, ὅτι ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας).

5:1 — “Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you” (Περὶ δὲ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχετε ὑμῖν γράφεσθαι).

5:5 — “For you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness” (πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς υἱοὶ φωτός ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας. Οὐκ ἐσμὲν νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκότους).

5:8 — “But 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” (ἡμεῖς δὲ ἡμέρας ὄντες νήφωμεν ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας).

5:11 (cf. 4:18) — “Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing” (Διὸ παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους καὶ οἰκοδομεῖτε εἷς τὸν ἕνα, καθὼς καὶ ποιεῖτε).

As mentioned above, these verses point to a trajectory like “we wish, we believe, we declare, and we encourage”. We notice this dynamic communicative process narrating and, according, a premier place to the theological virtue of hope in the discourse. The rhetorical contrasts and the antithetical features function as a pathway formulating this particular way of narrating hope to the new faith community in Thessalonica. Besides, the discursive narrative consists of traditional material that recollects the background and simultaneously anticipates the future concerning Jesus, Paul, and the early Christ-followers. In the following sections, I explain and show how divergent perceptions concerning grief and hope from the Graeco-Roman world help

¹ These biblical verses represent the multiple aspects of the eschatological narrative (4:13-18 and 5:1-11). In 1 Cor 15:1-58, Paul provides a longer parallel on the subject of the resurrection of the dead and the cosmic times. Further, we also find an enlarged section in Rom 5:1–8:39.

us understand the dynamic and ambivalent nature of suffering, hope, life, and death. The following sections also provide a descriptive path from a select source to highlight how different suffering contexts enable humanity to choose, prioritise and honour values, including hope.

2. THOSE WHO HAVE DIED: GRIEF AND HOPE

In the antithesis structure–1 (grief and hope), we have examined how the antithetical forms introduce appropriate content, traits of memory, and a dimension of hope. Together, they present an interactive process between different traditions.

The eschatological discourse has several traditions embedded in its content². Barclay observes such a trend through a sociological approach. He has interpreted the division between the believers and the rest (1 Thess 4:13) as a categorical division that paves the way for a distinctly Christian culture by projecting two categories of humanity³. However, the description of others as having no hope raises specific challenges. We have also examined that divergent theological, epistolary, rhetorical, and sociological approaches consider the particular contesting subject and restrict the meaning of hope to their methodological observations. It points to what the interpreters consider most important in the eschatological discourse.

Consequently, their approach toward the understanding of others as having no hope proceeds from that background. Here, we focus on the theme of hope (ἐλπίς) and its implied traditions in the eschatological discourse (1 Thess 4:13–5:11). Our investigation begins with the negated description of others and its possible polemical background in 1 Thess 4:13. After that, we observe what ἐλπίς means from non-biblical Greek sources, compare it with οἱ λοιποὶ (others), and see in what ways it broadly refers to the opposition in Thessalonica.

2.1 Perception of Hope

2.1.1 Hope in Classical Greek Literature

According to Bultmann⁴, understanding the Greek notion of hope depends on how humans approach their future possibilities with anticipations that reflect a positive outcome. The outcome, both anticipated and expected positively, refers to this worldly existence. In this process, the expectations and hope of the future depend upon the subjective side of one's good or bad expectations. Both hope and fearful expectations are part of human nature. Bultmann

² Raymond F. COLLINS, *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians* (BETL, 66), Leuven, Leuven University Press-Peeters, 1984, p. 3-75 (here p. 12).

³ John M.G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 131-153.

⁴ Rudolf BULTMANN and Karl H. RENGSTORF, ἐλπίς, ἐλπίζω, in *TDNT* 2 (1964), p. 517-529 (here p. 518). We see a detailed study on the semantic and conceptual vocabulary of hope from the biblical and non-biblical perspective in François VAN MENXEL, *Elpis. Espoir. Espérance. Études sémantiques et théologiques du vocabulaire de l'espérance dans l'Hellénisme et le Judaïsme avant le Nouveau Testament* (Europäische Hochschulschriften, 23), Bern, Peter Lang, 1983.

conceptualises a Greek notion of hope as ἐλπίς ἀγαθή (good hope)⁵. This perception emerges from the positive attributes that modify ἐλπίς. The modifiers that project a positive outlook toward the future with a good feeling closely relate to ἐλπίς and thereby project an anticipated hope as ἐλπίς ἀγαθή. For example, we see that Aristotle⁶ considers ἐλπίς as a pleasant thing in the future. He distinguishes between memory, hope, and sensation. For him, memory belongs to the past, hope to the end, and feeling to the present. However, in his writings, we find no explicit reference to the notion of ἐλπίς as a sensation of the pleasant things to come (*Rhet* 1.11.10ff).

The positive modifiers represent a pleasant or a unique perspective of hope. The modifiers that are likely to qualify and characterise ἐλπίς are ἀγαθή, καλή, γλυκεῖα, χρηστή and κακή (good, better or beautiful, sweet, kind and wrong respectively)⁷. For instance, Plato (*Laws* 4.718a)⁸ shows that ἐλπίς indicates a possibility of a better future, as “the enjoyment of hopes of happiness”⁹. This perspective directly correlates with keeping up with the enjoining laws and paying due respect to the deceased. In this sense, ἐλπίς and ἀγαθή (hope and good) together evoke an understanding of the harmonised world.

In addition to this description of hope, Plato emphasises that when philosophers live in justice and piety, they have ἐλπίς as their sweet companion in the old age (*Rep.* 1.331a)¹⁰. Philosophers, apart from others (κακῆς ἐλπίδος/bad hopes), in their old age or their dying moments have their hopes characterised by γλυκεῖα, “sweet hope”¹¹.

Here, the dimension of hope has a close conceptual relation to justice and piety. Hope is also an essential category for the perceptions of a group. Further, in Plato, we see that both pleasure and anticipated pain relate to the future (*Phileb.* 39d–40a)¹². For him, humanity as a whole, including the just and unjust ones, is filled with many hopes. Among the many hopes for humankind, the just and the pious are called the friends of gods, and they remain closer to gods (*Phileb.* 39e, Δίκαιος ἀνὴρ καὶ εὐσεβὴς καὶ ἀγαθὸς πάντως ἄρ’ οὐ θεοφιλὴς ἐστίν)¹³. This more intimate relationship and friendship link the content of life and death with ἐλπίς.

⁵ Rudolf BULTMANN and Karl H. RENGSTORF, *ἐλπίς. ἐλπίζω*, p. 517-518.

⁶ ARISTOTLE, *On Rhetoric*, George A. Kennedy (trans.), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 93-97; ARISTOTLE, *Art of Rhetoric* (LCL, 193), John H. Freese (trans.), London, William Heinemann, 1926, p. 118-129.

⁷ Rudolf BULTMANN and Karl H. RENGSTORF, *ἐλπίς. ἐλπίζω*, p. 518.

⁸ PLATO, *Laws I* (LCL, 187), R. Gilbert Murray (trans.), London, William Heinemann/Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1926, reprint 1961, p. 300-301; Rudolf BULTMANN and Karl H. RENGSTORF, *ἐλπίς. ἐλπίζω*, p. 518.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

¹⁰ PLATO, *Republic 1-5* (LCL, 237), Bhris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy (trans.), London, William Heinemann/Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2013, p. 16-17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16-17.

¹² PLATO, *Philebus* (LCL, 164), Harold N. Fowler (trans.), London, William Heinemann/Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, 1925, p. 197-399, 300-303.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 302-303.

Further, Isocrates¹⁴ also describes ἐλπίς within the context of a comparison between the just and the unjust. If just people suffer injustice without any better advantage over the unjust, they surpass the unjust in their higher hopes. In this regard, George Norlin comments that a just living ensures a suitable passage between death to life. In this instance, Norlin considers that life beyond this life is ἐλπίς. We find this emphasis in Isocrates, who presents that a life of piety and justice secures the just the possibility of sweeter hopes of eternity. At the same time, those who indulge in injustice after a brief moment of pleasure become the subjects of despair¹⁵. This afterlife concept carries a sense of the immortality of fame. It does not in any way suggest a bodily existence after this life. We find that a comparison between the just and unjust reflects an identifiable objective content in the dimension of ἐλπίς. According to Bultmann, the distinction between the just and the unjust stands to provide an understanding of ἐλπίς from a non-biblical Greek perspective as προσδοκία ἀγαθοῦ (“anticipated good”)¹⁶.

Besides, one may also consider the functional role of ἔχειν indicating a possessive connotation. For Isocrates, the higher hopes of the just lives also link certain initiation rites that provide a cultic passage of sweeter hopes at the end of life and eternity (cf. *Isoc.* 1.39, 4.28, 8.34)¹⁷. We see that the eternity and afterlife dimensions depend upon goodwill and attain a good report in this life. An excellent account preserves the memory of the dead beyond this mortal life. Further, the goodwill and positive descriptions in this life allow one to pass the passage of time and be closer to the possibilities of immortal life. Notably, George Norlin comments that this dimension of eternal life results from keeping one’s memory and fame alive after one passes this mortal state (*Isoc.* 5.134)¹⁸.

Further, we observe that Thucydides depicts the context of wars that present ἐλπίς as a phenomenon reckoned in times of uncertainty. However, in the war contexts, ἐλπίς is subsidiary to the virtue of courage for the reason that it lacks an assured tone (*Thuc.* 2.62.4-5)¹⁹. We also find that Thucydides considers death as a result of many offences. He portrays poverty, covetousness, and fortune as the leading ends that drive men to the perils of wars (*Thuc.* 3.45)²⁰. Several epigraphic evidence and personal details in the funerary inscriptions indicate this trajectory and the efforts to avoid the shameful circumstances leading to death. In the section on epigraphic evidence, we will illustrate the details of the causes of death, the notion of fate and fortune. The fate– fortune antithesis plays a significant role in the Hellenistic conception of hope. We identify in Theocritus that hopes are for this life and that hope does not exist beyond

¹⁴ ISOCRATES, *Oration I: To Demonicus* (LCL, 209), George Norlin (trans.), London, William Heinemann/Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1928, reprint 1966, p. 28-29.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Rudolf BULTMANN and Karl H. RENGSTORF, ἐλπίς. ἐλπίζω, p. 518.

¹⁷ ISOCRATES, *Oration I: On the Peace* (LCL, 209), George Norlin (trans.), London, William Heinemann/Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1929, reprint 1962, p. 28-29.

¹⁸ ISOCRATES, *Oration V: To Philip* (LCL, 209), George Norlin (trans.), London, William Heinemann/Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1928, reprint 1966, p. 326-327.

¹⁹ THUCYDIDES, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (LCL, 108), Charles Forster Smith (trans.), London, William Heinemann/Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; 1919, reprint 1969, p. 368–369.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76–81.

this life. Besides, ἐλπίς is a new morning that brings good luck and allows the possibility of being comforted (*Id.* 4.41-42)²¹. We also find that Xenophon describes ἐλπίς as the power of inspiring men (*Xen. Cyr.*1.6.19)²².

In this section, I have shown that some ancient Greek literary works establish a close link between a specific positive attribute and ἐλπίς, thereby outlining a particular perspective of ἐλπίς. An important observation regarding ἐλπίς is what nature it assumes in a given context. The different settings are war, ordinary dialogues, a conversation about death, fortune and ill fate, uncertainty, and just and unjust living. It is observable that ἐλπίς, ἀγαθή, and paying due respects to the deceased tend to harmonise (*Plat. Laws.*4.718a). The modifiers κακή and γλυκεῖα with ἐλπίς establish a distinction between just and unjust living (*Plat. Rep.*1.331a). About the afterlife dimension, ἐλπίς exceptionally refers to a life after this life, only in terms of fame and memory (*Isoc.* 1.39, 8.34, 5.134, 4.28). Also, the afterlife dimension closely depends upon a just living. We also notice that the sweeter hopes serve as a passage to eternity. These descriptions indicate two outcomes: that ἐλπίς allows humanity to adventure and face perils of death, and at the same time, it provides the means to overcome false hopes. Here, the cults and initiation rites have a functional role. In this way, ἐλπίς is dynamic and serves as προσδοκία ἀγαθοῦ (anticipated good) in different contexts²³.

Additionally, about the uncertainty of time in the Graeco-Roman world, we find the most despairing moments in the premature death of infants and youth, deaths during wars, and sailors dying at the harbourside. Shipwrecks at the shore and accidental deaths at the harbourside are also the most blurring examples. An essential reference is to the sailors. They are the master artisans of sailing yet die prematurely and accidentally fall and drown in the sea due to their drunken state, possibly caused by overdrinking wine. What is crucial in these references is that the modifiers directly provide a conceptual understanding of hope. The author supplies these modifiers to serve his intention and provide motivation for the readers. Besides, spatial approximation and temporal uncertainty add to the dimension of hope and the respective behavioural pattern. For example, the shore and harbour constitute a middle space to these ambivalent dynamics of tension: losing life to the perils of the ocean and losing life by accidentally falling in the sea by the harbourside when drunk.

First Thessalonians 5:3-10 refers to rhetorical contrasts like day and night, and light and darkness. The particular imagery constructs a conceptual world around the dimensions of “awake and asleep and sober and drunk”. It indicates that the moral character of the members has a direct implication for their present life and their existence beyond this life. Further, in First Thessalonians 5:8, we see the metaphors of war imagery like the breastplate of faith and love, and a helmet of the hope of salvation. By these means, Paul always urges the community to be

²¹ THEOCRITUS, *The Idylls of Theocritus* (LCL, 28, The Greek Bucolic Poets), John Maxwell Edmonds (trans.), London, William Heinemann/Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, 1912, p. 5-362 (here p. 56-57).

²² XENOPHON, *Cyropaedia* (LCL, 52), Walter Miller (trans.), London, William Heinemann/Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, 1914, reprint 1960, p. 104-107.

²³ Rudolf BULTMANN and Karl H. RENGSTORF, *ἐλπίς. ἐλπίζω*, p. 518.

ready, even though uncertain. The metaphors and the associated imagery like a thief in the night, being drunk and falling asleep in the night add to the persuasion of a vigilant perception and a sober condition.

Here, Paul provides us with a narrative context of hope in two ways: positively, the substance of hope has proximity and immediate association to the believers (cf. 1:3; 2:19; 5:8) and negatively, such positive traits exclude the others (cf. 4:5; 4:13). In this way, the dimension of hope and its character proceed through a contrary construction in literal and social space and time. The apocalyptic imagery extends these dynamics to the eschatological times and adds force to the moral appeal. Here, we have a Pauline interpretation of the conceptual understanding of hope, constructing a sober attitude concerning grief but with an upward heavenly orientation (the domain of God).

2.1.2 Hope in Greek Anthologies

In this section, we explore the dimension of ἐλπίς from various Greek anthologies. First, I refer to the epigraphs by unknown authors. Second, we see some epigraphs by specific authors. Third, I briefly attend to the epigraphs by Antipater of Thessalonica, presuming that his works may reflect the mind of the Thessalonians in general concerning life and death.

Herman Beckby in the *Anthologia Graeca*²⁴ includes certain epigraphs that refer to ἐλπίς. The epigraph (49. ΑΔΗΛΟΝ²⁵), by an anonymous author, indicates that hope and happiness have a close link. The epigraphic text shows that ἐλπίς has a functional role in providing comfort and a pleasant feeling. We see this in the dialogue between Corydon and Battus. Their conversation depicts and shows ἐλπίς as a new morning that brings good luck and allows the possibility of being comforted (cf. *Idylls of Theocritus*, Id.4.41–42²⁶).

Another epigraph (134. ΑΔΗΛΟΝ²⁷) also presents that hope and happiness journey together. In another epigraph (146. ΑΔΕΣΠΙΟΤΟΝ²⁸), the unknown author emphasises that ἐλπίς stands for the hopes for what one has not. One particular epigraph (145. ΑΔΗΛΟΝ²⁹) describes the sensitive nature of ἐλπίς and how the charms of the gods draw men nearer to them. But hopes are considered vain, and the act relying on vain hopes is interpreted as a useless enterprise.

In yet another epigraph (420. ΔΙΟΤΙΜΟΥ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΔΙΟΠΕΙΘΟΥΣ³⁰), Hades and Acheron valley find mentioned. They portray dark silence. These locations also indicate the imaginations and thoughts of the people about the fate of the dead. However, these locations

²⁴ Hermann BECKBY, *Anthologia Graeca, Griechisch–Deutsch*, vol. 1–4, München, Ernst Heimeran Verlag, 1957–1958.

²⁵ Hermann BECKBY, *Anthologia Graeca* 1, p. 38–39.

²⁶ THEOCRITUS, *The Idylls of Theocritus*, p. 56–57.

²⁷ Hermann BECKBY, *Anthologia Graeca* 3, p. 86–87.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92–93.

²⁹ Hermann BECKBY, *Anthologia Graeca* 4, p. 88–89.

³⁰ Hermann BECKBY, *Anthologia Graeca* 2, p. 248–249.

indicate only the select company of a few people and do not apply to people as a whole. It shows that not all people, after their death, reach Hades. We observe a similar dimension in the epigraph by Diotimos of Athens, son of Diopeithes, which also speaks of the hopes of gods' people.

The epigraph (453. ΚΑΛΛΙΜΑΧΟΥ³¹) by Callimachus portrays the emotions of Philippos over the death of his twelve-year-old son, Nikoteles, who was his real hope. Andrew Gow and Denys Page comment that the epigraphic evidence represents a direct link between the ἐλπίς of the boy and the father. The application of ἀπέθηκε creates a connection. Furthermore, the noun, ἐλπίς indicates the basis of hope in the epigraph (8. ΤΟΥΑΥΤΟΥ³²) by Julios Polyainos, where ἐλπίς has a negative description. There are two elements mentioned in the epigraph: first, that ἐλπίς steals the time of life and halts all plans; second, ἐλπίς ceases to be with the moment of death. This moment figuratively is "the last morning". The epigraph (172. ΤΟΥΑΥΤΟΥ³³) by Palladas shows the limitation of ἐλπίς in the light of its elusive and uncertain character. This epigraph reflects how far hope and happiness can traverse until death. In other words, ἐλπίς has a role until one reaches the harbour (death) and nothing beyond that.

An epigraph (234. ΚΡΙΝΑΓΟΡΟΥ³⁴) by Krinagoras reflects faint and vain hopes that the poor entertain with a desire to gain wealth and possession. However, the epigraph shows that these vain hopes drag souls to a meaningless world. Another epigraph (439. ΚΡΙΝΑΓΟΡΟΥ³⁵) by Krinagoras portrays an after-death gloomy nature. The after-death state resembles the skull imagery, as an empty vessel for the eyes and a lifeless enclosure of the soul.

The epigraphic evidence of the anthologies by those unknown and known authors reflects the narrative's poetic nature. We notice that not more than two or three values are under consideration at the time of death. While grief and hope and death and life dominate consolatory conversations, significant attention rests on the deceased individual's details and the dialogue between the tomb inscription and its public gaze (those related to the dead and the public, passersby).

2.1.3 *Epigraphs by Antipater of Thessalonica*

Antipater of Thessalonica has authored some epigraphs that concern the human dead and various animate and inanimate objects and statue dedications. In an epigraph (XXXVII) that emphasises a short and merry life as the best, Antipater of Thessalonica treats after-death scenarios

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 270-271. See XLVI.19 in Andrew S. F. GOW and Denys L. PAGE (eds), *The Greek Anthology, Hellenistic Epigrams 1, Introduction, Text, and Indexes of Sources and Epigrammatists*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1965, p. 68. See also XLVI.19 in Andrew S. F. GOW and Denys L. PAGE (eds), *The Greek Anthology, Hellenistic Epigrams 2, Commentary and Indexes*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1965, p. 199.

³² Hermann BECKBY, *Anthologia Graeca* 3, München, Ernst Heimeran Verlag, 1958, p. 16-17.

³³ Hermann BECKBY, *Anthologia Graeca* 3, p. 108-109 (ET: "I'm beyond hope and happiness; I cannot cheat on their lies; I finally reached the harbour").

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144-145.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 274-275.

equally. Part of the epigraph echoes this stance: εἰς Αἴδην μία πᾶσικαταΐβασις, εἰδὲ ταχίων ἡμετέρῃ Μίνωθᾶσσον ἐποψόμεθα (“All men have the same way down to Hades; if mine is quicker than others, I shall be face to face with Minos the sooner”)³⁶.

Further, in another epigraph, Antipater of Thessalonica portrays an after-death scenario in much the same fashion but with a particular reference to Niobe: ὃ βαρὺδα κρῦσασαγεν ἐθλίον, ἄπνοος αὐτάπετπος ἔσῃ, Νιόβα, κάδεϊ τειρομένα (“Deep-lamenting the day you were born, your own body shall become a lifeless rock, Niobe, worn out by sorrowful cares”)³⁷. This epigraph refers to a single subject, Niobe. However, Niobe also means figuratively “the mother of many” (ὃ πολὺτεκνε).

In another epigraph (CIV), Antipater of Thessalonica speaks of the context of a blind and barren woman having benefited from Artemis double blessings of sight and the birth of a child. Both favours that the woman seeks from Artemis are too distant. It is an expectation of hope against odds. Lines three to four of the epigraph, CIV (τίκτε γὰρ ἱεὺθὺς† ἄελπταμετ’οὐπολὸν καὶ τριπόθῃ τον αὐτῇ μαργλυκερὸν φέγγος ἐσεῖδεφάους) indicate the outcome employing the expression of ἄελπταμετ’οὐπολὸν (against all hope)³⁸.

The epigraphs I have mentioned above are mainly from Beckby, Gow, and Page. They show various circumstantial evidence that may lead to one’s death and the expression of grief. They overwhelmingly portray the emotional outcry of those bereaved, mainly from a subjective perspective. Although Antipater of Thessalonica makes scant reference to ἐλπίς, he provides an essential piece of evidence utilising the expression of ἄελπταμετ’οὐπολὸν (against all hope)³⁹.

The epigraphs both from known and unknown authors highlight mainly the elusive and uncertain character of ἐλπίς. They often portray pessimistic post-death scenarios. The perspective points to a functional role of ἐλπίς until it reaches the harbour (death)⁴⁰. In the subsequent section, we focus on how ἐλπίς, after entering its sanctuary, in this case, the tomb, begins to project itself using tomb inscriptions.

2.1.4 Hope in the Tomb Inscriptions

Despite the limitations of the genre of funerary inscriptions, it is worth considering that the notion of hope finds its place. Hans-Josef Klauck⁴¹ opines that only a tiny portion of the tomb inscriptions refer to an afterlife hope. However, Klauck has not paid much attention to ἐλπίς, and it is mentioned very briefly in a general way. Also, when it comes to any traces of the

³⁶ Andrew S. F. GOW and Denys L. PAGE, *Garland of Philip 1*, p. 34-35.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66-67.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76-79.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Hermann BECKBY, *Anthologia Graeca 3*, p. 108-109.

⁴¹ Hans-Josef KLAUCK, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, Brian McNeil (trans.), Minneapolis, Minn, Fortress, 2003, p. 79-80. (*Die religiöse Umwelt des Urchristentums*, Kohlhamme Studienbücher Theologie, vols. 9.1 and 9.2, Stuttgart, 1995 and 1996).

Greek notion of ἐλπίς in the New Testament, we recognise that only 1 Cor 15:32 mentions it briefly. Klauck only emphasises the general mood of pessimism and resignation of the populace that existed around that time⁴². However, Richard Ascough critiques Klauck's observation of the tomb inscriptions and thinks otherwise on the evidence of hope or afterlife dimensions⁴³.

In addition, I refer to Imre Peres⁴⁴. He has observed the afterlife notion of the tomb inscriptions from a Christian perspective. Peres focuses on deification, exaltation, heavenly abodes, and different expressions that express the communion between God and humanity. These elements find mention within the Hellenistic and the early imperial period. The study also includes a contrast between the Greek and the Christian understanding of ἐλπίς⁴⁵. Here, I show how the tomb inscriptions embody the notion of ἐλπίς, and in what ways they indicate a non-biblical Greek concept of ἐλπίς. In the inscription given below, the expression of “ἐ[λ]πίδας εἶχον πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας” echoes the parental sentiments for their lost child:

γηπαιὸς [‘αμφοτέρους?'] | τοὺς στεφάν[ους ὁ]λέσας |
ταῦτα γὰρ ἢ ὅτε τέ[κνα] καλὰ | τρέφον, ἐ[λ]πίδας εἶχον |
πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας, | ὥλεσα πάντα ὁμοῦ⁴⁶.

We identify that the ἐλπίς in the above inscription points to a subjective perspective and highlights personal grief and remorse. These elements also highlight the personal statement concerning ἐλπίς. There is no contrasting dynamism involved here, but the expression πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας (many and great) regarding ἐλπίς denote that Greeks nurtured many high hopes. These hopes are objectified in an individual subject, in this case, a child. Here, the death of a person also stands for the loss of hope marking the end of a journey.

As follows, the tomb inscription with grief for the lost child refers to the journey of ἐλπίς. It ends in Hades or traverses up to the grave and exits with the funeral pyre. The inscription also shows that when the child was alive, hopes appeared significant. But with the death of the child, the painful loss reduces the prospects of hope. In this context, hopes seem too small or insignificant. As follows, the inscription shows that pain and suffering contexts reduce hopes to a lesser degree.

Παιδο κομησαμένη Ποσιδώνιον ἠταλαπενθής

⁴² Hans-Josef KLAUCK, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity*, p. 80.

⁴³ Richard S. ASCOUGH, *Paul's 'Apocalypticism' and the Jesus Associations at Thessalonica and Corinth in Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians* (Early Christianity and its Literature, 5), Atlanta, SBL, 2011, p. 151-186 (here 159).

⁴⁴ Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften und neutestamentliche Eschatologie* (WUNT, 157), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2003.

⁴⁵ Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften*, p. 248.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 248. See also Reinhold MERKELBACH and Josef STAUBER, *11/01/01 (Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten, Band II, Die Nordküste Kleinasiens, Marmarameer and Pontos)*, Leipzig-München, K. G. Saur Verlag, 2001 (hereafter as SGO II); See also Werner PEEK, *GV 315 (Griechische Vers-Inschriften I Grab-Epigramme)*, Berlin/Chicago, Ares Publishers, 1955, reprint 1988, p. 82.

ἦνδρως' εἰς Αἴδην Μόσχιον υἷα φίλον,
ἐλπίδας ἐν θεμένη πυρί καὶ τάφῳ· ἥδ' ἐπὶ τέκνῳ
ὕψηλῃ τὸ πάρος καὶ φρονέου σαμέγα
νῦν ὀλίγη καὶ ἄπαις ἐνὶ πένθεσιν. ὦ βίεθνητῶν
ἄστατ' ἐνὶ πτηνῇ κείμενε λυπρὲ τύχῃ⁴⁷.

[The loving nurse, her child, the swept away Moschion,
has raised her beloved son Posidonios just for Hades.
She puts her hopes on the pyre and the grave.
Which once seemed big with her child and was proud,
is now small in her pain and without the child. O life of mortals,
sad life, how quickly is your fleeting happiness gone.]

We have noticed that ἐλπίς becomes bleak at the death of someone beloved and makes its final mark at the grave and Hades. Besides, the nature of hope appears to be deceptive when overwhelmed by grief and sadness resulting from someone's death. Those bereaved also experience themselves as unfortunate in the death of someone close to them.

The following epigraphic evidence highlights these traces:

μητρὸς ἐόν|τανέον μετὸν ἄθλιον ἦρπα|σεδαίμων,
μητρὸς ἀπὸς|πλάγχων καὶ πατρὸς - - -
ἄστα|τοι ἐλπίδες εἰσὶ βροτῶν ἰς ἄ|δηλα βλέπουσιν·
οὐκέτι | γὰρ γενόμην νῦν φιος, ἀλλὰ | νέκυς·
Πενθαλέους ἐλιπον | θαλάμους καὶ δάκρυα μητρὶ |
δυστήνῳ, πάσαις ἐλπίσι | ψευσαμέναις⁴⁸.

[Me, the unfortunate boy, who was still with the mother,
the demon (death) has carried away
from the womb of the mother and the father.
The hopes of the people do not stand and look into the unknown;
I am no longer a bridegroom but dead.
The chambers (I) have left behind as sad ones and the
unfortunate mother
tears; Hopes have been deceptive.]

The uncertain character of ἐλπίς is its elusive nature. It results from the threatening fates that affect the common flock's normal life cycle in the ancient Greek population. Notably, the

⁴⁷ Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften*, 249; Werner PEEK, GG 447 (GG– *Griechische Grabgedichte*), Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1960, p. 260-261; Werner PEEK, GV 1923, p. 591; Reinhold MERKELBACH and Josef STAUBER, 08/01/51 (lines 1-6, in SGO II), p. 64-65.

⁴⁸ Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften*, p. 251 (note 715). See also Reinhold MERKELBACH and Josef STAUBER, 02/14/12 (lines 1-6; SGO I) in *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten. Band I. Die Westküste Kleinasien von Knidos bis Ilion*, Stuttgart-Leipzig, B. G. Teubner, 1998, p. 285.

expression, οὐκέτι γὰρ γενόμεν νύν φιος, ἀλλὰ νέκυς (I am no longer a bridegroom but dead) consists of an antithetical form, οὐκ – ἀλλὰ. This formula links two different statuses of an individual that cannot co-exist (being a bridegroom and a deceased one simultaneously). Excessive focus on the fate aspect as a threat to human ἐλπίς frequently appears in the tomb inscriptions (τοῖ ὅςτοι θνητῶν μογερὸς βίος, ὧν ἀτέλεστοι ἐλπίδες, αἷς Μοιρῶννήματ' ἐπικρέματα)⁴⁹. The description also points to the fact that hopes remain primarily unfulfilled, surrounded by dreadful fates.

In addition to the deceptive and uncertain character of ἐλπίς, afterlife imaginations in Greek thought enlighten further on ἐλπίς and the fate of the dead. The journey of ἐλπίς up to the grave is a clear notion. The inscription taken from the tomb altar set for Asklepiodotos of Kios highlights that ἐλπίς with death is buried in the earth (τὴν πᾶσαν εἰς γῆν ἐλπίδων κρύψας χαράν)⁵⁰. This expression makes it clear that ἐλπίς in the Greek perspective provided by this inscription and others shown above indicate that the afterlife imaginations often end with grief and gloom and experience of the loss of hope.

The tombs are a social location and express the general understanding of the populace about the fate of the deceased. Consequently, tomb inscriptions act as the locus for the general public to grieve their loss of hope with the dead. The imagination of an afterlife status moves to Hades, and subsequently, the movement of ἐλπίς goes in that direction. Tomb inscriptions display such traces. We examine this direction in the following evidence: σοὶ γὰρ ἐς Ἄϊδαν ἦλθον ὁμοῦ ζωᾶς ἐλπίδες ἀμετέρας (because with you, are also my life hopes, all went to Hades)⁵¹.

In addition, the epigraphic evidence given below highlights three critical elements from that perspective: first, the blossoming hopes are closely associated with young age (youth); second, this epigraphic evidence shows that the tomb contains the corpse (ἔχει τὸ ἐμὸν δέμας) and the emphatic ἔχει expresses this clearly; third, in the post-burial scenario the souls of the deceased are destined to the island of the blessed. This locus is an addition to Hades that we also find in the epigraphic statement: ἀλλ' Ἀΐδης οὐκ ἔλεεῖν ἐμ[α]θ[εν], [ἀ]λλὰ με δωδεκέτηρον ὑπὸ χθονὸς ἦγαγε (Not only Hades has learned no mercy, but he led me, the twelve-year-old, under the earth)⁵². Thus, this tomb inscription not only represents a gloomy post-death scenario but also leaves valuable insights concerning the post-death status. Here the corpse reaches the tomb, and the souls of the deceased go to the blessed island. However, any reference to ἐλπίς appears to be absent in the post-death scenario. The epigraph given below represents this dimension:

⁴⁹ Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften*, see note 727 on 254; Werner PEEK, *GG* 316, p. 184-187; Werner PEEK, *GV* 1162, p. 338.

⁵⁰ Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften und neutestamentliche Eschatologie*, note 711, 250; Reinhold MERKELBACH and Josef STAUBER, *09/01/03* (line 6; SGO II), p. 136; Werner PEEK, *GV* 661, p. 165; Werner PEEK, *GG* 231, p. 148-149.

⁵¹ Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften und neutestamentliche Eschatologie*, p. 250 (note 712); Werner PEEK, *GG* 438, p. 252-253; Werner PEEK, *GV* 1874, p. 565-566.

⁵² Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften und neutestamentliche Eschatologie*, p. 253 (note 722); Werner PEEK, *GV* 665, p. 166.

ὀφθανερὸς χωῆς μετὸν ἄθλιον | ἔφθασε δαίμων
ἄρτι θαλεῖς κλάσ|σας ἐλπίδας ἡλικίης·
καὶ νῦν τύμ|βος ἔχει τὸ ἐμὸν δέμας, ἐν μακά|ρωνδέ
νήσιος ναιετάει ψυχὴ ἀποφθιμένου⁵³.

[The life envious demon has overtaken me unhappy too fast,
the just blossoming hopes of youth breaking.
And now the tomb has my body, but the soul of the Deceased
lives on the islands of the blessed.]

In the epigraphic evidence provided by Imre Peres and presented so far, we do not find any contrast that highlights a comparison between groups of people. But about life and death, the notion of ἐλπίς reflects a certain kind of disparity. It acknowledges the fact that humans have hoped. At the same time, between life and death, there is the interplay of a presence and absence of ἐλπίς. In this interplay between the presence and absence of ἐλπίς is the fact of life and death. Based on this interaction between life and death, ἐλπίς has a lesser status compared to τύχη (fate). The following epigraphic evidence highlights this aspect. Here, we see that τύχη has a more substantial dimension than ἐλπίς:

οὐκ ἔστ' οὐδεν ἔρμα βίου θνητῶν ἐπινοίαις,
ἀλλὰ Τύχη κρείσσων ἐλπίδος ἐξεφάνη⁵⁴.

[The thoughts of mortals know no limit of life,
but Fate proves stronger than all hope.]

In the above epigraph, we identify οὐκ – ἀλλὰ (not – but) dynamics. This process points to a method or a pathway of selecting, prioritising, and grading between relevant values under consideration. We see a similar approach in First Thessalonians 4:13, prioritising between grief and hope when both seem natural in the context of death.

2.1.5 Epigraphs and Polemics

In the section on Greek Anthologies, I have referred to some epigraphs by unknown and known authors. Among the known authors are Callimachus, Julios Ployainos, Palladas, Krinagoras, and Antipater of Thessalonica. In terms of the dynamics of polemics in this category of literary genre, Callimachus and Antipater of Thessalonica are essential.

Francis Cairns⁵⁵ has explored the various contexts of the Hellenistic epigrams on a thematic basis. The general features that stand out in commemorating the dead are eulogy, civic identity

⁵³ Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften und neutestamentliche Eschatologie*, p. 252-253 (note 720); Werner PEEK, *GV 955*, p. 263; Reinhold MERKELBACH and Josef STAUBER, *09/01/08 (SGO II)*, p. 139.

⁵⁴ Imre PERES, *Griechische Grabinschriften und neutestamentliche Eschatologie*, p. 255 (note 729); Werner PEEK, *GG 95*, p. 80-81; id., *GV 1639*, p. 491.

⁵⁵ Francis CAIRNS, *Hellenistic Epigram: Contexts of Exploration*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016.

of the deceased, belief and aspirations of the deceased and the surviving family, and poetic originality to attract the public⁵⁶. Cairns deals with the polemical tendency among ancient Greek epigraphers in two chapters and observes the following. The ancient Greek epigraphers' attempts often involve modifying and distorting disputed concepts and language and foisting literary adversaries positions they do not hold. In extreme cases, we notice a misrepresentation of an opponent's work, and his critical terminology blatantly turned against him. These processes, particularly the misrepresentation of opponents, have been detected in Augustan Latin literary programmes and refer to a characteristic tendency known as deformation. That term is applicable in similar contentious issues regarding language and concepts found in some Hellenistic epigrams⁵⁷.

In the process of misrepresenting and deforming the opponents, Cairns refers to Callimacheism and anti-Callimacheism. He considers this dualistic mechanism a historical turn in the mixed literary-polemical contexts in the intersection period of BCE and CE by the epigrammatist poets. The analysis points to the literary preferences of Caligula and August in the Graeco-Roman imperial period⁵⁸. The following epigraph (AP 11.20) by Antipater of Thessalonica is a representative sample:

φεύγεθ' ὅσοι λόκκας ἢ λοφνίδας ἢ καμασῆνας
 ἄδετε, ποιητῶν φύλον ἀκανθολόγων,
 οἳ τ' ἐπέων κόσμον λελυγισμένον ἀσκήσαντες
 κρήνης ἐξ ἱερῆς πίνετε λιτὸν ὕδωρ.
 σήμερον Ἀρχιλόχοιο καὶ ἄρσενος ἥμαρ Ὀμήρου
 σπένδομεν· ὁ κρητὴρ οὐ δέχεθ' ὕδροπότας.

[Away with all of you who sing of loccae (cloaks) or lophnides (torches) or camasenes (fish), you tribe of thorn-collecting poets; and you practitioners of a perverted ordering of verses who drink plain water from a holy spring. Today we pour libations to honour the birthdays of Archilochus and manly Homer. Our wine bowl does not welcome water drinkers.]

Cairns opines that in the epigraph AP 11.20, Antipater of Thessalonica seems to have turned Callimachean ideas against Callimachus himself. In lines 5-6, the epigraph points to the author's intention to place Callimachus in an opposite group, a conscious decision based on a polemical attitude. Here, we notice two camps. The first refers to Archilochus and Homer. The second relates to Callimachus. The epigraphic text also has two deformative applications. First, it constructs an opposition between Callimachus and Homer. Second, it associates Callimachus with water drinking instead of wine drinking. Both cases present a deformative technique.

⁵⁶ Francis CAIRNS, *Hellenistic Epigram: Contexts of Exploration*, p. 32.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

Cairns comments that it is an anachronistic relation to Homer, and given the water-drinking, it is not a proper position of Callimachus⁵⁹.

2.1.6 *Epigraphs and Mythical Imagery*

We have seen that there is a kind of shift from providing more personal details to polemical representations in the epigraphs. In this section, we deal with an inscription that reflects a further movement to include mythical figures. The mythological figures evoke a spatial accompaniment to the mourning context of the deceased. In this direction, Brittney Szempruch⁶⁰ explains that epigraphic literary works take a historical turn. They shift from providing more personal details of the deceased to evoking the topological characteristics of a familiar landscape. Brittney Szempruch situates the epigraph SGO 05/01/55, a funerary inscription from the first or second century CE.

This imperial period inscription shows that the dedicator, likely a woman, takes Niobe and kingfisher similes to mourn the loss of her child. The place of the epitaph is Smyrna, the native home of Homer where Mount Sipylus is situated. The mountain carries the Niobe rock formation portraying the imagery of a crying woman. The epigraph describing both Niobe and kingfisher similes has highlighted the rich local mythic traditions. The dual deictic reference of the inscription, a literal and a physical topography, engages the reader with visual memories that keep alive the mother's grief⁶¹. As follows, the text of the epigraph given below and the translation are from Brittney Szempruch⁶².

1 τέκνον ἐμὸν Παῦλα, φθιν<ύ>θω δακρύοι<ς> σε βοῶσα,
τοῖά τις ἀλκυὼν παῖδας ὀδυρομένη.
κωφ<αι> δ' ἀνταχοῦσι πέτρ<αι> κ<αι> τύνβος ἀπεχθής,
ὃς τὸν ἐμῶν τοκετῶν ἔσβεσεν ἡέλιον.
5 ἀεὶ δ' ὥς Νιόβη πέτρινον δάκρυ πᾶσιν ὀρώμαι
ἀνθρώποις ἀχ<έ>ων πένθος ἔχουσα μόνη.
ὦ τάφε καὶ δαίμων, μικρὸν μέθες <ε>ἰς φάος ἐλθεῖν
παῖδαν ἐμὴν Παῦλαν, δοῖς δέ μοι εἰσιδ<έ>ειν.
οὔ σοι Φερσεφόνη τόδε μέμψεται οὐδέ τις Ἄδη,
10 ἦν τόσον <ἀνστήσης> παῖδα ἐμὴν κατ' ὄναρ.

Παῦλα χρηστή χαῖρε

[My child Paula, I waste away crying out for you with tears,
just as some kingfisher lamenting over her children.
The mute rocks resound, and the hateful tomb,

⁵⁹ Francis CAIRNS, *Hellenistic Epigram: Contexts of Exploration*, p. 173-175.

⁶⁰ Brittney SZEMPRUCH, *Literary Commemoration in Imperial Greek Epigram: Niobe in the Living Landscape (SGO 05/01/55)*, in *American Journal of Philology*, 140 (2019), p. 227-253.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 227-228.

which extinguished the light of my childbirth.
 But always like Niobe will I appear to all men, a stony tear,
 holding the grief of my troubles alone.
 O grave and *daimon*, let my child Paula go
 for but a short time into the light; grant me to see her.
 Neither Persephone nor anyone else will reproach you for this, Hades,
 if you raise up my daughter for just such a time, in a dream.

Dear Paula, farewell.]

Brittney Szempruch emphasises the outstanding character of this imperial epigraph for deictic function. In this epitaph for Paula, Homeric literary imagery and language take on a deictic role. It refers the reader to the inherently mythic landscape of the region surrounding the ancient city of Smyrna. That is, the epitaph for Paula has a deictic system that interacts with its immediate epigraphic context as well as its farther-reaching environment. Besides, we notice in the inscription that the mythic landscape the description refers to is the physical landscape before the reader's very eyes⁶³.

2.1.7 *Niobe Myth*

In her work, *The Weeping Rock*, Barbara Baert⁶⁴ highlights several critical aspects concerning the language that the image of Niobe evokes. I refer to four essential factors that relate to an-tithesis. The polarities are as follows: exuberance and soberness, fluid and solid, hearing and vision, and incorporative and introjected grief. Concerning the contradiction between hearing and vision, Baert refers to Tim Ingold⁶⁵. Ingold describes the dualism between hearing and seeing as follows:

- a) The auditory world is dynamic, the visual world static.
- b) To hear is to participate, and seeing is to observe from a distance.
- c) Hearing is social, but vision, asocial (individual).
- d) Hearing is morally virtuous, whereas vision is intrinsically untrustworthy.
- e) Hearing is sympathetic, whereas vision is indifferent.

Baert highlights this contradiction to emphasise a kind of synesthetic dialogue, a participatory dialogue model wherein perception and experience between human and nature blend⁶⁶. The quality is symbolic of a sculpting stone image; it is a generative and creative force to incorporate an impression. It depicts its potential for incarnational imagery⁶⁷. Besides, synesthetic

⁶³ Brittney SZEMPRUCH, *Literary Commemoration in Imperial Greek Epigram*, p. 230.

⁶⁴ Barbara BAERT, *The Weeping Rock: Revisiting Niobe through Paragone, Pathosformel and Petrification* (Studies in Iconology, 17), Leuven, Peeters, 2020, p. 64.

⁶⁵ Tim INGOLD, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, London, Routledge, 2000, p. 251-252; Barbara BAERT, *The Weeping Rock*, p. 64.

⁶⁶ Barbara BAERT, *The Weeping Rock*, p. 64.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35 and 65.

dialogue involves blending all senses to perceive an event or recreating its scene⁶⁸. The eschatological Parousia that Paul describes in 1 Thess 4:15-17 is very scenic. The Parousaic scene brings together God, Christ, the deceased, Paul and the community, and other theophanic imagery of clouds, archangels and sounding trumpets. It is an ensemble cast that depicts a dramatic epilogue piece. It symbolises God's arrival, expected but sudden and abrupt. At the same time, I agree with Claude Coulot⁶⁹, who emphasises that the imagery of clouds, archangels, and trumpet sounding in 4:15-17 imitates Sinaitic theophanic scenes (Ex 19:10-25). He proposes that Paul has combined these images with the prevalent Graeco-Roman *topoi*, the ceremonial reception of the dignitaries (Parousia).

Further, Baert distinguishes a contrasting grief scenario: incorporative and introjected grief. The first one is traumatic, guilt-ridden and confusional, whereas the second is less pathological. Niobe and her weeping rock image mainly stand for incorporative grieving. Baert comments as follows regarding this: "the deceased is physically, psychically, and almost literally appropriated. This grief 'corresponds' with death: cold and hard as a rock, the petrification as the only possible 'way out' of the grief, the own body lent out and used as commemorative 'monument'. Niobe in her guilt and perhaps in her most extreme form of grief shows exactly that symptom"⁷⁰.

The poetic epigraphs by Antipater of Thessalonica⁷¹ portray the symbolic value of Niobe in mourning the dead. On the contrary, Paul recalls Christ, his death and resurrection, and His coming for a different purpose:

- a) The narrative imitates Christ, the death and resurrection temporal axis, but understood in spatial terms, gathering and belonging as one family. It is both an ecclesial and eschatological reality.
- b) It represents a living God contrary to stony images, idols to which the gentile community once belonged.
- c) It constructs a symbolic world, a new social and eschatological reality of "children of the day and children of the light" (5:4-8).
- d) It strengthens the followers with new virtues: faith, love, and hope.
- e) Finally, it establishes a new future for the community, the hope of salvation.

But the image of Niobe with its rock formation also has some value. Baert opines that stones possess a creative and generative power, a potentiality for incarnational imagery⁷². The eschatological discourse performs a similar act consisting of several images: light, darkness, day, night, awake, asleep, sober, drunk, hope, wrath and all these are associated with humanity. But

⁶⁸ Barbara BAERT, *The Weeping Rock*, p. 64.

⁶⁹ Claude COULOT, *La première lettre aux Thessaloniens dans son contexte gréco-romain*, in Cilliers BREYTENBACH (ed.), *Paul's Graeco-Roman Context* (BETL, 277), Leuven, Peeters, 2015, p.135-156 (here p. 148-152).

⁷⁰ Barbara BAERT, *The Weeping Rock*, p. 83.

⁷¹ Andrew S. F. GOW and Denys L. PAGE, *Garland of Philip 1*, p. 66-67.

⁷² Barbara BAERT, *The Weeping Rock*, p. 65.

we observe a different process, a categorical expression of the children of the day and children of the night.

Paul confirms that the community has moved away from idols toward the true and living God (1:9). He recollects his journey and the gospel he has preached, emphasising a particular imitation model to be incarnational: true God, true apostles and finally, hope-filled and faithful followers. Paul depicts God and God's word accompanied by power and Holy Spirit (1:5, 9-10 and 5:9-10 with 4:14-17). He provides a self-portrayal of himself and the community (2:1-12 and 5:4-8 with 4:13). Finally, we identify a description of God as always faithful (5:24; cf. 1:3). The generative and creative power behind Paul and community is God himself through Jesus. The entire narrative supports this imagery of God's perseverance in the human salvation story. Paul substantiates this divine and creative agency through the imitation model, both divine and human, true and living. The foundational narrative describes two important persevering qualities of hope: the "steadfastness of hope" in 1:3 and the community receiving the gospel in the context of "much suffering with joy" in 1:6. This incarnational imagery relates to God, Jesus, Paul, and the community, and repeats in the successive units of the letter.

I have already referred to Antipater of Thessalonica and a few of his epigrams. He predates Paul and is from Thessalonica. However, there is nothing comparable with the crisis of the early Christ-followers in Thessalonica. But in some epigrams associated with Antipater of Thessalonica, we reference Niobe, a famous figure representing grief. Even though the location of the epigraph is not Thessalonica, the epigraph is helpful on two accounts: one, for its strong *pathos*, grieving mother; second, for its usage of the mythical traditions. One can situate the epigraph's topological features from Paul's multiple missionary journeys' overall trajectory and several short and abrupt sojourns by Paul (Acts 15-18; 2 Cor 8:1-7; Phil 15:20). Paul passed through Asia Minor, Macedonia, Beroea, and Athens before writing to the Thessalonians from Corinth. The apocalyptic imagery, literal and physical gathering of the believers with Christ, constitutes a functional and constructive memory for the early Christ-followers. They repeatedly read and remember what Paul has written to them (1 Thess 4:18; 5:11; 5:27). At the same time, believers now possess a visual and symbolic world before their eyes as they hear Paul's words.

We see that the epigraphs include the deceased's details and slowly begin incorporating more literary features and traditions. The short poetic literary works organised densely evoke strong imagery from the past and enhance active engagement by the readers and the public. Similarly, the eschatological discourse (1 Thess 4:13-5:11) actively engages the readers with multiple images. These have pointed to the prophetic utterance and apocalyptic visions of God's arrival, followed by a consolatory message. The discourse demonstrates these dynamics with several rhetorical contrasts and metaphors, intensifying the social and apocalyptic dualisms. Notably, a prohibition of grief (4:13) by all means marks the distinctive character of the community as against those who have no hope.

2.2 Perception of Others and Social Dualism

2.2.1 Religious Mentality in the Ancient Greek World

Concerning the religious mentality in the ancient world, Hendrik Versnel observes that the human person generally makes contact with the gods in two ways: first, employing the word through oracular question or prayer; second, using action expressed as a sacrifice, offering and votive gifts. According to Versnel, these two aspects mark the characteristic features to glimpse the religious mentality in the ancient Graeco-Roman world⁷³. Versnel refers to Harry Pleket to indicate a fundamental shift in the formalisation of faith. Human dependency on a majestic god gets its formal and structural shape only by Hellenistic and Imperial times. However, its roots are in the pre-Hellenistic period. The past sources refer to the growing consciousness of guilt and penance in the ancient period. These indicate a significant change in the religious attitude of human beings, and faith, doubt and hope articulate this expression⁷⁴. We have seen such a progressive path by Isocrates in *To Demonicus* (Isoc. 1.39, cf., Isoc. 4.28⁷⁵), to *Philip* (Isoc. 5.134⁷⁶), and in *Oration on Peace* (Isoc. 8.34⁷⁷). These tendencies are noticeable by Plato in *Philebus* (Plato. Phileb.39d-40a)⁷⁸ and Thucydides in the *Peloponnesian War* (Thuc. 3.45)⁷⁹. In these writings, the statements of hope come to the forefront due to contrasts in play. Plato has shown a distinction between the just and the unjust. By this dynamism, humanity reflects upon the wrongs done to others. Similarly, the different contexts like war, misfortune, adventure, and death also bring out the various dimensions of hope.

Further, Versnel comments that the ancient prayers involved many questions and wishes, both private and public. Among these that have survived, most are with a mythical or legendary character attached to them. The inquiries also relate to diverse aspects of human life, like improving one's financial status, healing and ordinary, mundane matters. These private questions

⁷³ Hendrik S. VERSNEL, *Introduction*, in Hendrik S. VERSNEL (ed.), *Faith Hope and Worship, Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Studies in Greek and Roman Religion, 2), Leiden, Brill, 1981, p. xi-xiii.

⁷⁴ Hendrik S. VERSNEL, *Introduction*, p. xi-xiii. See Harry W. PLEKET, *Religious History as the History of Mentality: the 'believer' as Servant of the Deity in the Greek World* in Hendrik S. VERSNEL (ed.), *Faith Hope and Worship, Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, (Studies in Greek and Roman Religion 2), Leiden, Brill, 1981, p. 152-192.

⁷⁵ ISOCRATES, *Oration I: To Demonicus* (LCL 209), George Norlin (trans.), Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press/London, William Heinemann, 1928, reprint 1966, p. 28-29; *id.*, *Oration IV: To Panegyricus* (LCL, 209), George Norlin (trans.), Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press/ London, William Heinemann; 1928, reprint 1966, p. 116-241 (here 134-135).

⁷⁶ ISOCRATES, *Oration V: To Philip*, in George NORLIN (ed. and trans.), *Isocrates with English Translation 1*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press/London, William Heinemann, 1928, reprint 1966, p. 326-327.

⁷⁷ ISOCRATES, *Oration I: On the Peace*, *Isocrates with English Translation 1*, in George NORLIN (ed. and trans.), *Isocrates with English Translation 1*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press/London, William Heinemann, 1928, reprint 1966, p. 28-29.

⁷⁸ PLATO, *Philebus*, p. 300-303.

⁷⁹ THUCYDIDES, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, p. 76-81.

far exceed public ones. At the same time, the oracular shrines act as the locus between human wishes and gods' responses⁸⁰.

However, about ἐλπίς in the ancient Greek world, Nicholas Wright opines as follows: "The word ἐλπίς in ancient Greek is not particularly prominent, often merely implying wishful thinking, a cousin of τύχη, 'fate'. To express a good, secure hope...requires a further adjective, perhaps ἀγαθή or μεγάλη. Hope may have been the last thing left in Pandora's box, but it was a generalised optimism, not a specific, defined or well-grounded expectation"⁸¹.

2.2.2 *Worship and Allegiance to Gods*

The epigraphic evidence shown in the above sections reveals an unknown factor in the relationship between gods and men: the elements of hope and disappointment that act as two poles of ancient religious life. These two poles show exclusive reciprocity between gods and believers. That is, a failure from god's side is met with disdain by believers, often resulting in rejection of a god. This type of response possibly indicates a god's death whose life is solely dependent on the function it plays. Greater dependency on a god also results in an outright rejection of the god when believers do not meet their expected outcomes⁸².

Allegiance to and worship of particular gods provided a platform to judge those who do not worship a god, especially gods who are the benefactors of the cities. The ancient citizens have looked with disdain the fact of ἀσέβεια⁸³. It has an impact on the kind of judgment by the general public regarding others⁸⁴. Paul Trebilco in *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*⁸⁵ opines that θεοσεβής found from the time of Herodotus has the meaning of "pious or devout". It occurs seven times in the LXX and reflects an ethical tone. We find the term, θεοσεβής appear three times in the book of Job (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3), and it reflects Job's faith and character⁸⁶. Trebilco

⁸⁰ Hendrik S. VERSNEL, *Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer*, in Hendrik S. VERSNEL (ed.), *Faith Hope and Worship, Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Studies in Greek and Roman Religion, 2), Leiden, Brill, 1981, p. 1-64 (here p. 4-5).

⁸¹ George Van KOOTEN, Oda WESCHMEYER and Nicholas T. WRIGHT, *How Greek was Paul's Eschatology?*, in *NTS*, 61.2 (2015), p. 239-253 (here 249).

⁸² Hendrik S. VERSNEL, *Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer*, p. 37-42.

⁸³ It refers to those not worshipping a benefactor god, those who invite the wrath of the new God against the conventions of the city, or those believing in new gods.

⁸⁴ Hendrik S. VERSNEL, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion I, Ter Unus, Isis, Dionysos, Hermes, Three Studies in Henotheism*, Vol. 1, (Studies in Greek and Roman Religion 6), Leiden, Brill, 1990, p. 174-177, 184-185.

⁸⁵ Paul R. TREBILCO, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (SNTS Monograph, 69), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, reprint 1994, p. 146-147.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 146. See also note 9 on page 247 for further reference to Ex 18:21; Jud 11:17 and IV Macc 15:28, 16:12. Trebilco comments that θεοσεβεία ('reverence for God') occurs seven times in the LXX and regarding Philo, θεοσεβής is used only once in Mut.197 and θεοσεβεία nine times. For θεοσεβής in Philo's *De mutatione*, see in the translated work and commentary by Naomi J. COHEN, *On the Special Laws 1-4*, in *Outside the Bible, Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*, Vol. 1, Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society; Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2013, p. 1033-1133. See also in *On the Special Laws 2*, p. 1054-1090, and specially in 2.197, on page 1084 with regard to 'perfect piety' in reference to the Day of Atonement.

compares both θεοσεβής and εὐσεβής and opines that the latter is much more common in the pagan world. At the same time, he considers that a mere appearance of θεοσεβής is not a definite proof to establish a link between the Gentiles and the Jewish community as God worshippers⁸⁷. We see that θεοσεβής marks Jewish faithfulness to God by distinguishing those who are not ethnically Jewish. Trebilco observes it as a common approach in the LXX, Philo, Josephus and the Pseudepigrapha. Thus θεοσεβής becomes a common denominator for a Jew as opposed to a Gentile⁸⁸.

We observe that hope in the context of worship and allegiance to particular gods shows certain polemical tendencies. The interplay between an insider and outsider perspective emerges at the forefront. The polemical tendencies arise both in terms of loyalty to the real cult or embracing new cults. It affirms that new cults or faiths demand a total departure from previous religious backgrounds, especially in monotheistic religions. In this regard, John Cook emphasises that the Graeco-Roman majority population disdain the early Christ-followers. At the same time, the polemical interplays aim to retain and formulate the new communities' existence and their corresponding new faith content. The particular process shows that a total departure from the previous culture is a necessity. In the case of Paul, the point of departure is the pagan world itself. Cook comments that Paul preaches his gospel to pagans (1 Thess 1:9; 2:16). Within the pagan world, some accept the message, and some do not⁸⁹. Our observations here briefly show how others who do not receive Paul's gospel understand ἐλπίς. Although the evidence we have seen is not historically close to First Thessalonians, yet it points to a functional understanding of a Greek perspective of ἐλπίς (hope) from different sources.

2.2.3 A Graeco-Roman Association

Further, we examine what Justin Hardin⁹⁰ has proposed. It concerns the framework of the imperial decrees against the unauthorised associations. The same refers to the opposition that Paul faces while preaching in Thessalonica. The context also refers to depositing a penalty by Jason as described in Acts 17:6^b-7. Hardin considers that the context is similar to the other Graeco-Roman associations. In Acts 17:6^b-7, we read: "When they could not find them, they dragged

⁸⁷ Paul R. TREBILCO, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, p. 146.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 147. Josephus is said have used θεοσεβής six times (Ant 12:284, 14:308, 20:105; Cap 2:140). See notes 10–11 on page 247 in *Joseph and Aseneth*, a Jewish Pseudepigrapha (JosAsen 4:9, 8:5-7, 20:8, 22:8, 23:9, 10, 28:4, 29:3) where ἀνὴρ θεοσεβής is used only as designation for a Jew.

⁸⁹ John G. COOK, *Pagan Philosophers and 1 Thessalonians*, in *NTS*, 52.4 (2006), p. 514-532 (here p. 515-517).

⁹⁰ Justin K. HARDIN, *Decrees and Drachmas at Thessalonica: An Illegal Assembly in Jason's House (Acts 17.1-10a)*, in *NTS*, 52 (2006), p. 29-49 (here p. 48-49). For more details on the nature and organisation of the Pauline early Christ-followers' communities see James R. HARRISON and Larry L. WELBORN (eds), *The First Urban Churches 1. Methodological Foundations* (Writings From The Greco-Roman World Supplement Series, 7), Atlanta, SBL, 2015; *id.*, *The First Urban Churches 2. Roman Corinth* (Writings From The Greco-Roman World Supplement Series, 8), Atlanta, SBL, 2016; *id.*, *The First Urban Churches 3. Ephesus* (Writings From The Greco-Roman World Supplement Series, 9), Atlanta, SBL, 2018; *id.*, *The First Urban Churches 4. Roman Philippi* (Writings From The Greco-Roman World Supplement Series, 13), Atlanta, SBL, 2018; *id.*, *The First Urban Churches 5. Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series, 16), Atlanta, SBL, 2019. Concerning the Christ's Associations see John S. KLOPPENBORG, *Christ's Associations Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 2019.

Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, ‘These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus’” (μὴ εὐρόντες δὲ αὐτοὺς ἔσυρον Ἰάσονα καὶ τινὰς ἀδελφοὺς ἐπὶ τοὺς πολιτάρχας βοῶντες ὅτι οἱ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀναστατώσαντες οὗτοι καὶ ἐνθάδε πάρεισιν. οὓς ὑποδέδεκται Ἰάσων· καὶ οὗτοι πάντες ἀπέναντι τῶν δογμάτων Καίσαρος πράσσουσιν βασιλέα ἕτερον λέγοντες εἶναι Ἰησοῦν).

In 1 Thess 1:10, Paul establishes a pathway to describe his readers, which defines the community as an antithesis to local culture. The description concurs indirectly with the imperial orders. The self-description that they have turned away from gods is a contrary endorsement by Paul. That is, an affirmation of the members’ newfound faith runs contrary to imperial orders. It appears that this new status is a departure from the dominant local culture. Hence, a move from the status quo, religiously or politically, is easily observed as anti-imperial. On this basis, there can be several alternatives to understand the imperial notion.

We also identify that in 1 Thess 2:1-12, Paul proposes himself as a worthy imitator for the new followers. He advocates a different philosophy by refuting the way of life of certain philosophers. Thereby, Paul provides an alternative and calls it worthy of imitation. It is an alternative against the existing philosophical system or cultural philosophy that typically defined the Thessalonians. On the contrary, we notice in 1 Thess 3:1-13 that Paul strengthens his relationship with the community on a different basis. He narrates his past experiences with his readers and reminds them of the reception they had given to him when he visited them. He repeatedly speaks of it before he proposes an alternative ethical code (1 Thess 4:1-12). In this way, a total departure, an alternative philosophy, a positive reception into the community, a new moral code has a gradual link to ἀπάντησις, the encounter with the Risen Lord (1 Thess 4:17). In this encounter, “the others who have no hope” (1 Thess 4:13, οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα) have no share in the benefits of the awaited God, Christ. Hence, understanding Paul’s reception into the community redefines our outlook toward ceremonial reception, indicating a political or religious connotation⁹¹.

We find that the Graeco-Roman world nurtures ceremonial receptions, and these receptions are a means that uniquely bound territories to the empire. Besides, imperial survival requires certain elements: formal receptions, courts and courtesans, presbyteries and guards who circle the emperor, adulate and flatter. First Thessalonians provides a contrary outlook toward this imperial perspective. It addresses specifically the ἀπάντησις (formal meeting) built on hope and opens up to their risen Lord and the departed believers. Its structure has a different epiphany where the Risen Lord, the angels, the trumpet, the resurrected believers, and the new assembly members constitute an alternative world. Hence, it is an alternative narrative. The standard religious-political system, as ideology and philosophy, formal liturgy around gods, king, and hierarchy, has no place.

⁹¹ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-113.

On the contrary, the hope of salvation (1 Thess 5:8) and the saviour who rescues the believers from the coming wrath (1 Thess 5:8-10) are presented in a language that copies familiar imperial terms and establishes an alternative reality. The eschatological discourse presents this reality with several elements: ἐλπίς (hope), λόγος κυρίου (word of the Lord), ἀπάντησις (formal meeting), ἡμέρα κυρίου (day of the Lord), εἰρήνη and ἀσφάλεια (peace and security), ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας (hope of salvation), and ὀργή (wrath). These terms replicate a borrowed official language but now constitute a new reality.

Hence, Paul uses the language of the empire but proposes a contrary reality. It is probable that, as in anti-colonial, where the coloniser's language passes through subversion, Paul uses the vocabulary of the empire similarly. Paul repurposes the terms to serve his mission of preaching the gospel. He is not anti-imperial but imports the language of the rulers and adds different meanings. Here, I presume two probable stages in the process of subversion. First, Paul imports the ruler's language or the hierarchy and subverts it with a different meaning to serve his purpose. Second, this subversion transforms locally so that this bears no links to the empire in a reverse direction and thus tends to appear as anti-imperial. The antithetical features support this type of development. It is a literary style that Paul adopts, and the community follows. The letter as ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου has its presence in the community, and the process initiated by Paul continues until the coming of the Lord. Similarly, it is an imitation advocated and strengthened by the fact of the letter.

These features tend to personify the new community and construct positive traits. Accordingly, the narrative structure that Paul develops flows from Jesus' stories. In the New Testament epistles, the stories of Jesus generally advocate: "Jesus is Lord and not Caesar!"⁹². Looking at this general statement, we can ask whether First Thessalonians in general or the eschatological discourse, in particular, contain characters that point to power relations. At the same time, we can inquire whether that challenges the attitude and actions of the ruling class. Or we can observe whether that describes the perspective of the oppressed class as parallel to uniform visual language. But we only see that Paul recognises the sufferings of early Christ-followers and offers to console them by the word of the Lord. His response comforts the believers in their grief and prepares them for Parousia, saving them from the coming wrath.

Paul reminds his readers that they have received the gospel joyfully despite much suffering (1 Thess 1:5-6)⁹³. Such reminders are repetitive and denote a hostile suffering context. Their suffering is an imitation of their founder's. Paul has experienced opposition in the province of Macedonia, first in Philippi and then in Thessalonica. He recapitulates his memories and projects them onto his readers⁹⁴. The opponent they face constantly casts them as an oppressed class, and their suffering is an outcome of their acceptance of Paul and his authority. It is

⁹² Judy DIEHL, *Empire and Epistles: Anti-Roman Rhetoric*, p. 217.

⁹³ 1 Thess 1:5-6, ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ... Καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου, δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει.

⁹⁴ 1 Thess 2:2, ἀλλὰ προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες, καθὼς οἴδατε, ἐν Φιλίπποις ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλῆσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἁγῶνι.

discernible from the way Paul sums up the entire mission and dynamics of the Thessalonian followers. 1 Thess 1:9-10 indicates this dimension and points to the following: a) that the community has received the apostles warmly, b) that the new converts have embraced true God, and c) their mission is explicitly to wait for Jesus who rescues them from the coming wrath⁹⁵. The Thessalonian followers are the primary objective within the eschatological discourse. The antithetical features define this direction. But surrounded by hostilities, it appears that Paul applies a subverted language to avoid a direct conflict with the Roman authorities⁹⁶.

2.3 Antithesis: Grief and Hope

We have indicated that in the antithesis “grief and hope”, Paul employs a categorical prohibition, “that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope”. This prohibition language does not involve explicit polemics, but it holds an appeal and a warning. In the section on epigraphic evidence, we have seen that Francis Cairns has emphasised a deformative type of language in the use of traditional material. Brittney Szempruch has also highlighted the significance of a deictic function (literal and physical world) of the myths and imperial epigraphs. In both cases, the literary works recall the traditional material and have used it through media and the most influential literary type in their times. Both types, deformative rhetoric and deictic rhetoric, highlight the historical turns in time and space.

With Paul, we have a paraenetic type of rhetorics for consolation. Notably, the consolatory language also begins with a prohibition using a particular antithetical form. Jean Nélis⁹⁷ has shown that antitheses in the Pauline letters point to Paul’s stylistic features, doctrinal forms, and frameworks of his theology. According to Nélis⁹⁸, in Greek literature, the general form of an antithesis is μέν– δέ. About 1 Thess 4:13, Nélis has commented that the temporal structure which Paul applies with two aeons, the question of Jewish hope does not arise here. Because for Paul, a new aeon has begun with Christ⁹⁹. Also, Nélis establishes a close link between antitheses and the concept of quasi-synonym. Concerning grace and mystical realities, grace within a quasi-synonym type has two different applications. In the Jewish context, grace is understood along with justice, juridical and existential realities. In the Christian context, grace relates more closely to the internal reality of God’s own name. He highlights this type of distinction in the Pauline antitheses¹⁰⁰. In the background of this application, 1 Thess 4:13 in no way includes Jews in the category of “others”, because the Jews also have a share in God’s promises. In chapter five, we have observed that Norbert Schneider¹⁰¹ further extends the importance of the antitheses to outline the form and content of Pauline theology.

⁹⁵ 1 Thess 1:9–10, αὐτοὶ γὰρ περὶ ἡμῶν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὅποιαν εἴσοδον ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ [τῶν] νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν ῥυόμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης.

⁹⁶ Judy DIEHL, *Empire and Epistles: Anti-Roman Rhetoric*, p. 222.

⁹⁷ Jean NÉLIS, *L’Antithèse littéraire ZQH – ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ dans les Épitres pauliniennes*, p. 18.

⁹⁸ Jean NÉLIS, *Les Antithèses littéraires dans les Épitres de Saint Paul*, p. 20, 24-25.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24-25.

¹⁰¹ Norbert SCHNEIDER, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese*, p. 12.

On the type of language used to shape the memory of prohibitions, I refer to André LaCoque and Paul Ricœur¹⁰². Through their interactive dialogue, they deal with the apodictic nature of the prohibitions in the Ten Commandments. They highlight a close link between the fulfilment of the law and the continuity of the divine promises. They insist that there is a dialectical relation between law and gift/blessings¹⁰³. LaCoque has emphasised that in prohibitions (especially against murder), obedience is expected always and everywhere. He observes a close parallel between the Qumran introductory expression, “But regarding this, we say” (4QMMT) to Jesus’ sayings, with “But I say to you”.¹⁰⁴ We can extend further these formulations to the context of First Thessalonians’ eschatological discourse with a scheme: “We wish, we believe, we declare, and we encourage”. Besides, with 1 Thess 4:13, the prohibition imitates this style of language with καθὼς καί (as or like).

Further, we indicate that Ricœur discusses the messenger formula, “Thus says Yhwh” and “go and say”. According to him, these formulas highlight a shift from *Sitz in Leben* to a *Sitz in Schrift*. The transition completes the delivery of the message. It also reaches those not concerned by the original performance of the speech (oral)¹⁰⁵. For Ricœur, the prophetic announcements do not plan to foresee the future but establish a saying in advance of what it will be like in the future. This type of utterance outlines an apodictic future as a “halfway between the indicative and the imperative”¹⁰⁶. Ricœur also observes the apodictic future’s sayings, which point to a delay by a promise, a benediction or a curse. The expressions like the apodictic future depend entirely on God’s choice to deliver and to destroy¹⁰⁷.

As follows, Paul has probably combined several elements, and his utterances (communication) appear prophetic. They refer to shaping the prohibitions (1 Thess 4:13) and prophetically imitating the Lord’s word (1 Thess 4:14-17). They together reflect a type of Jesus’ sayings in the eschatological discourse. Besides, Paul combines both the Jewish and Hellenistic formulas of declaration. The combinations function as an apodictic, deictic and paraenetic literary effects. In the eschatological discourse, the consolation and a prospective memory of Parousia resemble these features. Notably, the hope narrative dynamics point to retrospective and prospective dimensions of memory.

2.3.1 Retrospective and Prospective: Performative Context

The incorporation in the fatherhood of God transforms the incorporative grief. God’s creative powers become meaningful through the imagery, light and day. We see this narrative performance between “I – You” (we – they) statements. The epistolary context mainly outlines these statements keeping the dualism between light and darkness, day and night, namely “for you are

¹⁰² André LACOQUE and Paul RICŒUR, *Thinking Biblically. Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*, David Pellauer (trans.), Chicago-London, The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 76-77.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92-93.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness” (I Thess 5:5). I explain this performative context as follows.

First, I indicate specific sources from First Thessalonians, Dead Sea Scrolls, Pauline and post-Pauline parallels, and Gospel units (Q and Canonical). The citations are only a pointer to the retrospective and future perspectives of the memory as a past constructivist. Second, I refer to the variations found in First Thessalonians and the Dead Sea Scrolls and between First Thessalonians and the Sayings gospel (Q) in these sources. The rest of the citations reflect how a commonplace motif performs differently in different contexts, including in the letters by the same author (Paul). Third, I show how the first and the renewed covenantal images interact, constructing newer perspectives of salvific promises.

First Thessalonians:

1 Thess 5:5 — “For you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness” (πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς υἱοὶ φωτός ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας. Οὐκ ἐσμὲν νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκότους).

Dead Sea Scrolls:

1QM 1:1 — “For the Ins[tructor: The Rule of] the War. The first attack by the sons of light will be launched against the lot of the sons of darkness, against the army of Belial, against the band of Edom and of Moab and of the sons of Ammon”¹⁰⁸.

1QM 15:6-10 — “And the priest assigned for the time of vengeance according to the decision of all his brothers will step forward, and he will strengthen [their hands for the wa]r. He will begin speaking and say: ‘Be strong and valiant, become men of valour. Do not be afraid or [tremble, may your hearts not weaken], do not panic, or be terrified by them, do not turn backwards, or [run away from th]em. For they are a wicked congregation and all their deeds are in darkness and to it go [their] desires, [...] their refuge, their power disappears like smoke”¹⁰⁹.

1QS 3:19-26 — “From the spring of light stem the generations of truth, and from the source of darkness the generations of deceit. And in the hand of the Prince of Lights is dominion over all the sons of justice; they walk on paths of light. And in the hand of the Angel of Darkness is total dominion over the sons of deceit; they walk on paths of darkness. From the Angel of Darkness stems the corruption of all the sons of justice, and all their sins, their iniquities, their guilts and their offensive deeds are under his dominion in compliance with the mysteries of God, until his moment; and all their afflictions and their periods of grief are caused by the dominion of his enmity; and all the spirits of his lot cause the sons of light to fall. However, the God of Israel and the angel of his truth assist all the sons of light. He created the spirits of light and of darkness and on them established every deed, [o]n their [path]s every labour <and on their paths [eve]ry [labo]ur>. God loves one of them for all”¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁸ The translated text is from Florentino Garcia MARTINEZ and Eibert J. C. TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, Leiden, Brill, 1999, p. 113.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹¹⁰ Florentino Garcia MARTINEZ and Eibert J. C. TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 75-77.

Pauline Parallel Units:

Gal 3:7 — “For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith” (Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).

Gal 3:26 — “So, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham” (γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ).

Gal 4:6 — “And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Ὅτι δὲ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν κρᾶζον· ἀββα ὁ πατήρ).

2 Cor 4:6 — “For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπών· ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ).

Phil 3:20 — “But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτῆρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν).

Rom 2:19 — “And if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness” (πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει).

Rom 8:14 — “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God” (ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ εἰσιν).

Rom 9:26 — “And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, ‘you are not My people’, There they shall be called sons of the living God” (καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῷ τόπῳ οὗ ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς· οὐ λαὸς μου ὑμεῖς, ἐκεῖ κληθήσονται υἱοὶ θεοῦ ζῶντος).

Post-Pauline units:

Eph 5:8 — “For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light” (ἦτε γὰρ ποτε σκότος, νῦν δὲ φῶς ἐν κυρίῳ· ὥς τέκνα φωτὸς περιπατεῖτε).

Eph 5:14 — “For everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, ‘Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you’” (πᾶν γὰρ τὸ φανερούμενον φῶς ἐστίν. διὸ λέγει· ἔγειρε, ὁ καθεύδων, καὶ ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἐπιφάσει σοι ὁ Χριστός).

1 Tim 6:16 — “It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen” (ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν, φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον, ὃν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται· ὃ τιμὴ καὶ κράτος αἰώνιον, ἀμήν).

Other Epistles:

1 Pet 2:9 — “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (ὁμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φωτός).

Gospel units:

Mk 4:21 — “He said to them, ‘Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand?’” (Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· μήτι ἔρχεται ὁ λύχνος ἵνα ὑπὸ τὸν μόδιον τεθῇ ἢ ὑπὸ τὴν κλίνην; οὐχ ἵνα ἐπὶ τὴν λυχνίαν τεθῇ;).

Mt 5:14 — “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden” (Ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου. οὐ δύναται πόλις κρυβῆναι ἐπάνω ὄρους κειμένη).

Lk 8:16 (cf. 11:33) — “No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lamp-stand, so that those who enter may see the light” (Οὐδεὶς δὲ λύχνον ἄψας καλύπτει αὐτὸν σκεύει ἢ ὑποκάτω κλίνης τίθησιν, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ λυχνίας τίθησιν, ἵνα οἱ εἰσπορευόμενοι βλέπωσιν τὸ φῶς).

Lk 16:8 — “And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light” (καὶ ἐπῆνεσεν ὁ κύριος τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας ὅτι φρονίμως ἐποίησεν· ὅτι οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου φρονιμώτεροι ὑπὲρ τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ φωτὸς εἰς τὴν γενεάν τὴν ἐαυτῶν εἰσιν).

Jn 8:12 — “Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life’” (Πάλιν οὖν αὐτοῖς ἐλάλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων· ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσει ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ’ ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς)¹¹¹.

First Thessalonians and the Dead Sea Scrolls:

The eschatological discourse (1 Thess 4:13–5:11) consists of both apocalyptic and social dualism. We examine this dynamism from the apocalyptic motifs and categorical expressions that the discourse highlights. The cited source from the Dead Sea Scrolls reflects the same.

First, I refer to the apocalyptic genre. John Collins¹¹² defines apocalypse as “a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another supernatural world”¹¹³. The dualism between the sons of light and darkness consists of motifs generally found in the apocalyptic genre.

¹¹¹ See also Jn 1:4-5, 7-9; 3:19-21; 12:36 and 46. In this regard, the “I am” statements of Jesus establish a direct connect with the reader and create an empowered sacred space. However, I consider it a past-construct. Distanced temporally from the physical Jesus and the first line of Jesus’ apostles, the author and readers of John’s gospel have consciously established a direct narrative connect with “I am” statement. This is one example of how spatial approximation enables a reconstruction of the sacred space and a spiritual connection to the deity.

¹¹² John J. COLLINS, *What is Apocalyptic Literature?*, in John J. COLLINS (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, 1-16 (here p. 2). See also John J. COLLINS (ed.), *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (Semeia 14), Missoula, MT, Scholars Press, 1979, p. 1-20 (here p. 9); *id.*, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2nd edition, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1998, p. 2-9.

¹¹³ John J. COLLINS, *What is Apocalyptic Literature?*, p. 2.

Second, we see the notion of dualism according to Jörg Frey. He defines it as follows: “‘Dualism’ is a scholarly term used to characterise a number of philosophical and religious thought systems shaped by a fundamental physical or metaphysical duality, a teaching of two powers, principles or states of being which cannot be explained as originating in or leading to an overall unity”¹¹⁴. Frey enlists several dimensions of dualism: metaphysical (God-Satan), cosmic (light-darkness), spatial (above-below), eschatological (this world-the world to come), ethical (good-evil), soteriological (saved-rejected), theological or creational (God-world, creator-creation), physical (matter-spirit), anthropological (body-soul), psychological (good and evil inclinations)¹¹⁵.

Further, we observe that Frey considers three further developments concerning the apocalyptic dualism between “sons of light” and “sons of darkness”. I explain as follows.

- a) First, we point to a multi-level cosmic dualism in Aramaic (pre-sectarian) priestly texts, namely, 4QAmram^f (=4Q547.1 ii 8)¹¹⁶. In this text, Amram narrates his vision about two angelic powers claiming to rule the world and human beings: Michael and Belial. The division of humanity follows a cosmic basis, light and darkness. On this basis, the two divisions are sons of light (sons of truth) and sons of darkness (sons of the lie). Frey thinks there is no clear explanation for this division but sees this multi-level development as a Palestinian Jewish sapiential thought.
- b) Second development refers to a dualism based on a kind of theodicy in IQS 3:13–4:26 (3:18, 21-24; 4:6-8)¹¹⁷. The Qumran community rule book shows that God determines the world and its humanity, including eschatological visitation. Here, the dualism between the sons of light and sons of darkness relates specifically to inner Jewish development. It explains that even the pious go astray and therefore look at enhancing the final perfection despite the experience of affliction and hostility. This ethical dualism has a basis from the cosmic division between light and darkness. The particular dualism distinguishes between virtues and vices, and the respective outcome they designate.
- c) Finally, we identify a cosmic and eschatological dualism in the War Scrolls from Qumran Cave I (IQM 1:1; 13:10; 17:6)¹¹⁸. The dualism in this scroll is ultimately cosmic. The opposed pairs are the “sons of light” and “sons of darkness” (IQM 1:1). This cosmic duality based on light and darkness lasts until apocalyptic times. The dualism resolves only in the final victory, the sons of light over the sons of darkness. Notably, this scroll depicts war imagery signifying preparation for the final battle, the liturgical accompaniment of prayers, and sequential orders of marshalling the troops. This

¹¹⁴ Jörg FREY, *Apocalyptic Dualism*, in John J. COLLINS (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 271-294.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 277-278.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 280-281.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

imagery's historical origin and development are in Herodian times but have roots in Hasmonean times.

The First Thessalonians and the Sayings gospel (Q):

The First Thessalonians 5:2-3 provide two images, thief in the night and the labour pains of a pregnant woman, to depict the manner of the Lord's day arrival. These images introduce an antithesis between peace, security, and sudden destruction. We also find the imagery, thief in the night, in Lk 12:39 and Mt 24:43 (cf. Mt 6:19). The reference to the sayings source is in Q 12:39b¹¹⁹. The imagery of a pregnant woman's birth pangs (labour pains) is only in Mt 24:8 (cf. Mk 13:8).

I cite the reference as follows:

Lk. 12:39 — “But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into” (τοῦτο δὲ γινώσκετε ὅτι εἰ ᾔδει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ποῖα ὥρα ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται, οὐκ ἂν ἀφῆκεν διορυχθῆναι τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ).

Mt 24:43 — “But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into” (Ἐκεῖνο δὲ γινώσκετε ὅτι εἰ ᾔδει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ποῖα φυλακῇ ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται, ἐγρηγόρησεν ἂν καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴασεν διορυχθῆναι τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ).

Mt 6:19 — “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal” (Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅπου σὴς καὶ βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπται διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν).

Mt 24:8 — “All this is but the beginning of the birth pangs” (πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων).

Mk 13:8 — “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs” (ἐγερθήσεται γὰρ ἔθνος ἐπ’ ἔθνος καὶ βασιλεία ἐπὶ βασιλείαν, ἔσονται σεισμοὶ κατὰ τόπους, ἔσονται λιμοί· ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων ταῦτα).

The Synoptic Gospels (Lk 8:16; 11:33; Mk 4:21; cf. Jn 8:12) show that the imagery of light relates to Jesus's revelation and his teaching to the world¹²⁰. The lamp within the parable supplies the ground for Jesus teaching. The instructions concern and exhort wakefulness. Here, regarding the Son of Man's arrival, watchfulness is the topical emphasis against eating and drinking shown in Lk 17:26-27, 34-35 and Mt 24:36-44 (cf. Lk 21:34-36; cf. Mk 13:32-37). In this regard, I refer to Gertraud Harb¹²¹. She comments that the eschatological section in the

¹¹⁹ Frans NEIRYNCK, *Q-Parallels. Q-Synopsis and IQP/CritEd Parallels*, Leuven, Peeters, 2001, p. 44-45 and 100-101.

¹²⁰ Raymond E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John I–XII* (AB, 29), New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1966, reprint 2008, p. 344.

¹²¹ Gertraud HARB, *Die eschatologische Rede des Spruch-evangeliums Q. Redaktions-und Traditionsgeschichtliche Studien zu Q 17, 23-37* (BTS, 19), Leuven, Peeters, 2014, p. 299-305.

sayings source, Q 17:23-37¹²² (cf. Lk 17:23-27; Mt 24:26-28, 37-41) generally includes images of both men and women. The Son of Man tradition and flood narratives focus on watchfulness while warning against eating and drinking. However, the study concludes by emphasising that the eschatological section in Q Gospel values the Messiah expectation forms negatively.

As follows, I explain the interaction between the Lord's day and its implication regarding eating and drinking as an antithesis to hope. The "day" and "hope" recapture all these moments. Marcel Jousse¹²³ proposes that we understand "the day of the Lord" as "the day of the world to come". He emphasises the Galilean oral tradition behind Jesus' sayings. Jousse argues that the transmission of early oral traditions is characteristic of necklace formulation (with three, four, five, seven, and up to twelve pearls). He explains this system compared to the formulation of "Our Father" prayer in the Synoptic tradition. In 1 Thess 1:10, Paul expresses as follows: "to wait for his Son from heaven" and "from the wrath that is coming". Further, in 5:3, we identify the day of the Lord and in 5:4, that day. We also notice these phrases combined with the imagery of "thief in the night" and "labour pains of a pregnant woman" (birth pangs). The antithetical formulations closely cluster these images.

Jousse proposes and explains the relevance of Palestinian peasant oral style and its rhythm-catechistic transfer¹²⁴ for traditioning. The type refers to memorising the written Hebraic text into familial Aramaic little by little, verse by verse, and strung together like pearls in a necklace formulation. The process resembles a living, popular, and automatic language mode. As a result, this model outlines two Torahs or a dual strategy: "the Torah-from-the-writing and the Torah-from-the-mouth"¹²⁵. The transmission technique is purely related to memorising the written text. We connect the same to Paul's method of writing. He has shaped the eschatological discourse to reflect his presence and the events to come as dynamic and living. In this mode of transmission, the apprehender is primarily a receiver¹²⁶. The letter written has an auditory context. The events and images cluster together in a loop like constructive arrangement. With its repetitive and diverse contents, the antithetical formulation links specific contexts to a more significant event, Parousia.

Jousse proposes three kinds of possible traditional formulas that Jesus may have encountered in messaging his proclamation: "targumic formulas, Torahic formulas and mimodramatic formulas"¹²⁷. Jousse also distinguishes between two units of expression: words and formulas. The

¹²² Frans NEIRYNCK, *Q-Parallels*, p. 58-59 and 114-115. See also James M. ROBINSON, Paul HOFFMANN and John S. KLOPPENBORG, *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis Including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German and French Translations of Q and Thomas* (Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible), Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press, 2000, p. 500-523.

¹²³ Marcel JOUSSE, *Memory, Memorization, and Memorizers: The Galilean Oral-Style Tradition and Its Traditionists* (Biblical Performance Criticism, 15), Edgard SIENAERT (ed. and trans.), Eugene, OR, Cascade Books, 2018, p. 370.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 246-353.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

¹²⁷ Marcel JOUSSE, *Memory, Memorization, and Memorizers*, p. 349.

formulas do the balancing act, and they form the unit of expression¹²⁸. Jousse explains that both targumic and Torahic formulas are mimodramatic formulas that embody a gestural language¹²⁹. Here, the words are actors, and they recreate the one who hears them. Paul's imitation model repurposes this root. At the same time, a gestural language leaves a lingering and durable shadow through metaphorical words. It is like a "flesh and blood composite" by eating and drinking the teaching; one becomes ready to receive (eat and drink) the teacher. It encompasses the entire reality, the relationship between the teacher and the hearer. It indicates two modes of operation: analogical and polysemantic.

The analogical model bridges the material and the heavenly. It means that the earthly father who feeds and cares is analogous to the heavenly Father who gives the bread (polysemantic manna). Here, the one who hears first becomes like the teaching and then resembles the teacher in real terms, flesh and blood. Therefore, the mimodramatic formulas involve two processes: instructing and recreating the man (image and resemblance)¹³⁰. In this analogical and dialogical process, we view a narrative function and transformation as follows. First, we identify a link between the visible and the invisible world. Second, the image, the father of ours on earth, leads us to the Father in heaven; asking for the bread of the present world enables us to ask for the bread of the world to come analogically. Hence, instructing and teaching is constructive, a quasi-creation: the father engenders his children, the teacher incorporates the values in hearers, the scared deity engenders the devotee, the imitation begets the imitator.

Jean Nélis¹³¹ also emphasises the quasi-meaning of the words: a single word takes different meanings in different contexts. He considers the death and life antithesis the primary one, referring to the Mesopotamian background that has shaped initial biblical narratives of creation with life and death and light and darkness motifs. The children of darkness do not survive the great flood, ignoring God and his warnings. In this regard, the motif of eating and drinking stands contrary to vigilance. Those who ignore God become victims of the sudden destruction.

In this way, day and night motifs are basic temporal units to understand the creation and its nature and process. Marcel Jousse and Philip Esler consider this motif and emphasise its value to understand ancient societies. Marcel Jousse¹³² understand times and seasons as an expression of the durative temporal dimension. In this regard, he proposes understanding time with its three dimensions as past-duration, present-duration and future-duration. Philip Esler¹³³ considers that day and night as a basic temporal unit helped ancient agrarian societies construct seasonal and cyclic rhythm in their regulation of life. In terms of Jewish culture, the day is the most basic form and time measurement unit. In the foreword to Birger Gerhardsson¹³⁴, Jacob

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 363-365.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Jean NÉLIS, *Les Antithèses littéraires dans les Épîtres de Saint Paul*, p. 3-30 (here p. 25); *id.*, *L'Antithèse littéraire ΖΑΩ – ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ dans les Épîtres pauliniennes*, p. 18-53.

¹³² Marcel JOUSSE, *Memory, Memorization, and Memorizers*, p. 370.

¹³³ Philip F. ESLER, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, p. 252-260.

¹³⁴ Birger GERHARDSSON, *Memory & Manuscript*, p. xxxii-xxxiii.

Neusner insists on the significance of ritual and festival calendars in Jewish and Christian societies. Social memory emphasises this aspect and shows that festivals reconstruct, communicate, and organise the groups' memory. We have demonstrated that Halbwachs indicates how different time frames function in rural, urban, religious, industrial, and professional groups¹³⁵.

Conversely, eating and drinking positively means the appropriation of the content. Marcel Jousse¹³⁶ considers its symbolic significance in the context of learning and imitating the teacher. Eating and drinking have social and ritual significance. These habits also explain literal and social contexts. Dennis Duling¹³⁷ has demonstrated this in respect to the First Corinthians. I do not deal with it here, but I refer to an insider and outsider perspective on learning and imitation's literal and social context. In the early Christian period, community gathering and belonging redefined ritual practices regarding baptism, meal, and other divergent bodily metaphors of building-up and community unity.

In this background, I consider the eschatological discourse. The narrative has several lingering metaphors balanced by antithetic formulas. Notably, the image father begetting the children resembles the children of the day and light. Paul has described God: true and living. There is a self-portrayal of Paul (co-workers) as a true apostle and worthy of imitation. Further, Paul constructs the true self of the community, which resembles a past-constructivist approach. The process is re-creative and transforms their old self (allegiance to idols, false teachers, fornication, grief, and idlers).

Further, Jousse understands time as duration (the duration is the world; the world is the duration)¹³⁸. We see three successive stages based on this notion: the past duration, the present duration, and the duration-to-come. The rhythmic and dynamic nature applies to the overall reality: the bread to come intends the bread of the world to come; the day to come means the day of the world to come; the wrath to come speaks of the wrath of the world to come; the day of the Lord then refers to the day of the Lord to come. In this way, the shortened formulas stand to function similarly to the long formulas. The antithetical forms recreate this balancing act: imitating both the Palestinian rhythmic oral style of memorising and the Greek formulation of antithesis to balance the oral units that intend to contrast and persuasion and imitation. The eschatological discourse appears to imitate this verbal, oral catechetical style besides Greek antithetical forms.

The "thief in the night" may intend an agricultural metaphor (a thief stealing the harvest or the animal fold) or an urban setting (guarding the city against the enemy who attacks, plunders and steals). It denotes a surprising character of arrival in the night, unexpected but also an unwanted outcome. It is both temporal and spatial: an astonishing act but unwanted destruction. We see a similar application in the metaphor "labour of a pregnant woman". The imagery evokes

¹³⁵ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 102.

¹³⁶ Marcel JOUSSE, *Memory, Memorization, and Memorizers*, p. 364-365.

¹³⁷ Dennis C. DULING, *Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death*, p. 289-310.

¹³⁸ Marcel JOUSSE, *Memory, Memorization, and Memorizers*, p. 370.

unpredictable temporality but intends a wanted positive result after much labour. The notion “birth pangs” involves temporal and spatial dynamics: unavoidable and unpredictable arrival of pain yet an expected and desired outcome (birth of a child). The discourse involves these two images: a standard reference to man and woman, respectively. Paul’s address includes this general reference to the populace metaphorically using “children” (children of the day and children of the night).

The First and the Renewed (New) Covenant:

Jan Assmann¹³⁹ shows that the mythic and covenantal roots point to two movements: looking backwards and forward. He explains these stages, referring to bridal and filial metaphors, respectively. On the one hand, the relationship between God and Israel as bridegroom and bride reflects fidelity. The prophets like Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel invoke images that point to covenant violation. The description of the covenantal infringement is often adultery. The prophets admonish the community based on the previously established covenants. In this regard, the imagery and process look backwards. The warning and woes as a result of infringement often evoke wailing and tragic connotations.

On the other hand, as Assmann¹⁴⁰ considers, the relationship between God and Israel as Father and children has roots in the Exodus myth highlighting Israel’s divine sonship. The notion of “the children of God” is about God’s election of Israel as children. Its roots are in the Exodus event and pertain to a remembered past. Besides, the sonship guarantees Israel’s election in the continuity of fulfilling God’s promises. The elected community looks forward in the hope of liberation from slavery. The imagery emphasises that wailing, and suffering make way to liberty and the joy to come.

As mentioned above, from a broader perspective, Israel’s election and vocation as children of God also remain a plausible background to the description found in First Thessalonians, “children of light and children of the day” (5:5). There is a foundational narrative, God as the Father (1:3), an election and vocation of divine sonship. Besides, Paul provides a self-portrayal proving to be their father and a gentle nurse (2:1-12). The community shares double sonship: God’s and Paul’s, a divine and human sonship by apostolic origin. The dual benefit is a remembered past and looks forward to the eschatological liberation, rescued from the wrath to come (1:9-10; 5:9-10).

Further, we observe that the divine sonship as “children of God” (children of light and day) intends to continue and fulfil the future. In these dynamics, the foundational narrative, including biographical and ethical codes, never lose the end to come. At the same time, the persuasive description intends to incorporate Divine fatherhood into humanity’s childhood. In this regard, the hortatory passages in First Thessalonians reflect both old and new narratives, often applying

¹³⁹ Jan ASSMANN, *The Invention of Religion*, p. 202-203.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

familiar metaphorical images. I refer to Claude Coulot¹⁴¹. He considers repeated contrasts in metaphorical language as reflecting intertestamental and dead sea scrolls witnesses. They are as follows:

- a) The language of false security and sudden destruction in Jer 6:14 and Ez 13:10, 16;
- b) The labour of a pregnant woman in Is 13:8-9 and the triad of faith, love and hope in Is 59:17;
- c) The generation in the flood narrative, false security in Mt 24:37-39, and the apocalyptic motif of the thief in the night in Mt 24:43-44.

In this background, Coulot considers “those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who drunk, are drunk at night” (1 Thess 5:7) as a proverbial statement based on a shared experience of natural and customary practice¹⁴². Concerning the thief in the night imagery, I refer to Joseph Fitzmyer¹⁴³. He considers that the image is uncommon to pre-Christian Jewish literature and, therefore, a construction that has its origin in Jesus and his followers.

Further, I refer to Udo Schnelle¹⁴⁴. He considers that Paul has described the essential and existential process of the early Church under three primary metaphors: in Christ, the body of Christ, and the people of God. First, the “in Christ” dimension portrays the believers’ participation and communion with Christ (1 Cor 1:30; Gal 3:26-28). Second, the “body of Christ” image symbolises new creation, represents the community and unity, and shares spiritual gifts and apostolic labour (1Cor 1:10-17; 12:12-27; 13:1-13; 14:12; Rom 12:5). Third, the “people of God” metaphor characterises the relationship between the Church and Israel. It refers to historical continuity and discontinuity. The people of God image recalls and represents the continuation of God’s election and saving history (1 Cor 10:7; Rom 9:25f; 10:21; 11:1f; 15:10).¹⁴⁵

The “children of light” metaphor symbolises God’s election and saving action of the Thessalonian believers. Paul assures the Thessalonian believers, their election and vocation in God using foundational and eschatological narrative (1 Thess 1:2-10; 5:4-10). In this regard, Collins thinks that the creedal formula and baptismal narratives refer to the Thessalonian early Christ-followers’ life as God’s new creation and election¹⁴⁶. The antithetical pairs of light-darkness, day-night, awake-asleep, and sober-drunk portray and refer to the believers’ present Christian condition and salvation with a future perspective (1 Thess 5:1-11)¹⁴⁷. These images interlink God’s election and redemption of the community in the past, present, and future.

¹⁴¹ Claude COULOT, *La première lettre aux Thessaloniens*, p. 151-152.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 152.

¹⁴³ Joseph A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV* (AB, 28A), New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1985, reprint 2010, p. 986-987.

¹⁴⁴ Udo SCHNELLE, *Die ersten 100 Jahre des Christentums 30 –130 n. Chr. 2. Auflage*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016, p. 258 (Drei Grundmetaphoren: in Christus, Leib Christi und Volk Gottes).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

¹⁴⁶ Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Birth of the New Testament*, p. 175-176; Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Power of Images in Paul*, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 2008, p. 11-39.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The Pauline corpus (cf. Titus 1:1-3) places Paul in the intersection of “before the ages began” and life eternal¹⁴⁸. It is a narrative temporal expansion of the Christian preaching, election and fulfilment (Gal 3:16; 1 Cor 15:24; Rom 1:5). That promise and fulfilment through Abraham and in Christ constitute the salvific temporal duration. Paul emerges in this temporal intersection, from expectation to anticipation, and between Semitic and Hellenistic cultures. Collins comments as follows: “Those who believe in Jesus Christ the Lord look backwards to the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham; they look forward to the Parousia when the reign of the Lord will be complete”¹⁴⁹. The Christian eschatological era is a temporal construct. It has its basis in the biographical, foundational, communicative, and cultural context of Jesus Christ and His followers. It swings back to the past and leaps to the future and sketches its mark on the present. The eschatological era recaptures the relevant intersections in the foundational and eschatological events: creation and promise, covenantal law and preaching, God’s people and their new creation, and their relation and loyalty.

The expression “children of light” not only recollects the old and new biblical covenantal promises but continues to shape an ideological basis in the contemporary period. Regarding this, I cite two references. Reinhold Niebuhr¹⁵⁰ considers the dictum “children of this age and children of light” (Lk 16:8) and relates the expression to the twentieth-century social and political organisation developments. He thinks that the medieval feudal system, authoritarian regimes, and those who place self-interest more than anything else used freedom and order to contradict each other. On the contrary, he believes that democracy fundamentally channels liberty and order in support of each other. Niebuhr takes the first as standing for the children of darkness and the second referring to the children of light.

Further, William Sims Bainbridge¹⁵¹ considers how those who defend the faith in the contemporary modern world face persecution. Here, persecution is not religious fundamentalism but arises from other factors: material culture, aesthetic ideologies, and modern science fundamental and overall claims on knowledge. In this background, new religious movements emerge to defend their faith. It is entirely an insider movement and a response to the internal challenge. Bainbridge cites as follows: “Few religious movements survive, let alone grow, unless they produce children in significant numbers and retain most of them when they reach adulthood. Children are the fulfilment of the Law of Love that so strikingly sets the Family apart from other Christian religious movements of our era, and for many outsiders, the way the Family treats its children is the ultimate test of its spiritual worthiness”¹⁵².

¹⁴⁸ Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Power of Images in Paul*, p. 1.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Reinhold NIEBUHR, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of its Traditional Defence*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1944, revised with a new foreword by Garry Dorrien, edition 2011, p. 1-15.

¹⁵¹ William Sims BAINBRIDGE, *The End time Family: Children of God*, Albany, NY, State University New York Press, 2002, p. 1.

¹⁵² William Sims BAINBRIDGE, *The End time Family: Children of God*, p. 141.

2.3.2 *Jesus' Sayings (traditions) and Paul*

Paul occasionally appeals to Jesus' authority, and his statements allude to Jesus' citations and traditions (1 Thess 4:15-17; 1 Cor 7:1; 1 Cor 15:1-2). The problem that concerns us is how Paul knows these sayings. In this regard, understanding the tradition and transmission of Jesus' teachings has four proposals¹⁵³:

- a) Source and form-criticism view (Rudolf Bultmann),
- b) Formal controlled tradition (Birger Gerhardsson),
- c) Radical discontinuity view (Werner Kelber) and
- d) Informal controlled tradition (Kenneth Bailey).

The source and form-critic perspectives look for individual units, sources, forms that are comparable and resemble each other. The imagery found in the New Testament gospels and similarly in the epistolary witnesses are in focus. We see this dynamism in the parallel reference (παρα-λαλέω). Interpreters have looked for the individual unit or form from credible sources (biblical and non-biblical sources, literal and social contexts, diachronic and synchronic application of references).

The formal controlled tradition or transmission means that apostolic commissioning of Jesus' traditions circulated in a controlled manner. We may refer to Paul and Barnabas' commissioning with specific instructions: a) the abstinence from idol worship and food offered to idols and fornication; b) an appeal to write about these matters to the Gentiles and to read them on every Sabbath gathering (cf. Acts 15: 20-21). The process is formal, controlled on two levels: apostolic gathering and the gathering of the community. Both reflect the traditional character of gathering and worshipping, instructing, writing, and reading. Georgia Keightley¹⁵⁴ has proposed this formal setting of ritual practices as the possible means for Paul to know, experience and formulate the gospel of Jesus. The radical discontinuity view of the transmission of Jesus' sayings refers to formulations unique to the author.

Informal controlled transmission of Jesus' sayings refers to a free flow of the source information in the successive stages. The witnesses' reports are essential in this category, including

¹⁵³ Tuomas HAVUKAINEN, *The Quest for the Memory of Jesus: A Viable Path or a Dead End?* (CBET, 99), Leuven, Peeters, 2020, p. 291-294. See Rudolf BULTMANN, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, John Marsh (trans.), New York, Harper & Row, 1963, 2nd revised edition, Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 1995; Birger GERHARDSSON, *Memory & Manuscript*; *id.*, *The Secret of the Transmission of the Unwritten Jesus Tradition*, in *NTS*, 51 (2005), p. 1-18; Werner H. KELBER, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1983, reprint 1997, p. 1-43; James D. G. DUNN, *Jesus Remembered* (Christianity in the Making, 1), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2003, p. 173-254; Kenneth E. BAILEY, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*, Downers Grove, IL, IVP Academic, 2008; *id.*, *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians*, Downers Grove, IL, IVP Academic, 2011. See also Jerry L. SUMNEY, *Steward of God's Mysteries: Paul and Early Church Tradition*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2017.

¹⁵⁴ Georgia M. KEIGHTLEY, *Christian Collective Memory*, p. 129-150; *idem*, *The Church's Memory of Jesus*, p. 149-156.

the witness's credibility and authenticity. We see that Halbwachs, Vansina, and Assmann¹⁵⁵ have emphasised the notion of a generational gap in transmitting the foundational experiences. Credible witnesses may refer to first Jesus' hearers, probably in the Galilean context. Besides, there is an appeal to apostolic tradition, the Old Testament motifs and early Christian prophecy. In this regard, Seyoon Kim¹⁵⁶ refers to and emphasises Paul's revelatory encounter with Jesus on his way to Damascus (cf. Acts 9:1-19). It is informal. However, Tim Ingold¹⁵⁷ considers the individual visionary experiences untrustworthy broadly.

We see a different trajectory in the context of early Christian practices, rituals, community meal gatherings, letter writing, and communal reading of the letters. The social memory looks at the units of preaching in a social setting and the historical contexts. The literary units function as manuals of the community identity, like "turning away from the idols and turning toward the true and living God" (1 Thess 1:9-10). The process reflects an insider and outsider literary and social context.

2.3.3 Inside and Outside Perspectives

I explain the insider and outsider views as follows. From an insider's perspective, we may see Pauline tradition and its theological content as a corpus and in three stages: pre-Pauline, Pauline and post-Pauline. We relate the content through parallel reference. We understand them within the respective correspondence, for example, Thessalonian (First and Second Thessalonians) or Corinthian (First and Second Corinthians) within the individual letter considering the letter as a unity. Here, looking inside is an insider view. An insider view flows from the same letter or same writer if multiple letters. Notably, the individuality of the letter and its context for the theological meaning of a word is more important. We may consider and relate the content in the gospel traditions and other New Testament writings. Besides, we may seek to construct a conceptual relationship appealing to a broader biblical perspective and relate to the content of the Old Testament writings and motifs. Notably, in Pauline and other New Testament writings and contexts, we seek to understand Paul and his relationship to Jesus, other apostles, communities he has founded, and finally, his opponents within the communities. The latter may refer to contrary influences or allegiance to multiple apostolic teaching sources. In this regard, both literal and social contexts are essential.

An outsider view flows from the surrounding parallel contexts: literal and social. From an outsider perspective, we refer mainly to non-biblical influences: Jewish religious practices, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Graeco-Roman contexts, imperial or non-imperial. Particular reference is to the interaction between the trans-local Christian communities with gentile Greek or Jewish ethnic backgrounds, the contexts of idolatry, fornication, gnostic influence, and anti-Christian Judaizers.

¹⁵⁵ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 48; Jan VANSINA, *Oral Tradition as History*, p. 23-24; Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 34-35.

¹⁵⁶ Seyoon KIM, *The Jesus Tradition*, p. 225-242.

¹⁵⁷ Tim INGOLD, *The Perception of the Environment*, p. 251-252.

The appeal to source traditions by social memory approach considers mainly the reports and records supplied by early Christ witnesses, the generation that directly heard Jesus teaching. The authenticity of their source and the credibility of their witness is both significant and a matter of concern. Notably, the pre-Pauline stage seeks to explore the link between Jesus and Paul. It also focuses on the relationship between Paul and the community he has established. We see connections between the apostolic authority, apologetics, co-workers, community ethics, and theological paraenesis. In Paul, the transmission process is mainly communicative: oral and written with links direct and indirect (co-apostleship/co-authorship).

Georgia Keightley¹⁵⁸ explains the social memory reading of the pre-Pauline stage focussing on Paul's early experience of Jesus. She proposes that Paul learns more about earthly Jesus through participating in the Christian ritual practices and community gatherings for prayer and worship. She highlights three proposals that explain the possible means by which Paul has experienced Jesus. First, Paul knows more about Jesus during his anti-Christian pursuits and persecutions, mainly through Jerusalem anti-Christian Pharisaic tradition¹⁵⁹. The second and third relate respectively to Paul's baptism and sojourn in Damascus, and Paul's visits and contacts with the Apostles in Jerusalem.

Seyoon Kim supports a direct link between Jesus and Paul. It is not a material link in terms of physicality but a revelatory link. Kim argues for Paul's authentic experience of Jesus with a greater focus on Paul's encounter with the risen Jesus on the way to Damascus (cf. Acts 9:1-19). He establishes Paul's apostolic origin in the revelation of Jesus. He treats Paul on par with other apostles, thereby accessing the original Jesus' teaching material through authentic apostolic tradition. Followingly, Kim considers that Paul has selected significant allusions from the Synoptic gospels. In this regard, Paul is aware of them and cites these sources with slight modification to serve his communicative purpose of addressing the concerns of the communities.

On the contrary, Christopher Tuckett has a minimalist approach. He rejects the proposal that Paul follows the extant Synoptic gospels. According to him, it would be anachronistic. Any possible solution has to move from Paul and then to the recorded Synoptic gospels. Tuckett understands that a material link between Jesus' earthly teachings and Paul's Jesus statements probably reflect a commonality with specific eschatological passages in Paul's letters and the Synoptic gospels. Notably, we have two witnesses in First Thessalonians' eschatological discourse (5:1-11). We see two apocalyptic motifs, "thief in the night" and "the labour of a pregnant woman" (5:3-4), that bear a resemblance to the Synoptic passages (Mk 13:1-13; Mt 24; Lk 12:39-40).

We have seen how thief in the night, the birth pangs of a pregnant woman, eating and drinking, light and darkness, day and night images have a functional role in the watchfulness aimed at

¹⁵⁸ Georgia M. KEIGHTLEY, *Christian Collective Memory*, p. 129-130.

¹⁵⁹ François VOUGA, *Geschichte des frühen Christentums*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1994, p. 100; Jerome MURPHY-O'CONNOR, *Paul: A Critical Life*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 75 and 90-91; Georgia M. KEIGHTLEY, *Christian Collective Memory*, p. 129-130.

the Parousia. At the same time, I have shown how these dynamics have an altogether different connotation within the relationship between the instructor and the disciples. The dynamics relate to imitation and incorporation. We see that divergent applications are possible. In this context and regarding Jesus' sayings, John Kloppenborg¹⁶⁰ explains a multiple performative context dimension. He focuses on the aphorism "measure for measure" in five extant early Christian witnesses (Q 6:29, 38c, 39-40; Lk 6:29; Mt 5:44-48 and 7:1-5; Mk 4:21-22, 24-25; 1 Clement 13:1). Kloppenborg shows that different writers have used this commonplace motif to serve their community context. The adaptation displays a variant reading of the aphorism and its performative context.

Conclusion

In this particular case, Paul has not taken literal blocks or units from elsewhere. It is Paul's construction. The parallel witnesses and the conceptual application reflect commonplace topics. The mode of operation and the context bear a resemblance to ritual practices. The words perform, they act (actors) in their own right. We see that Paul does not apply them arbitrarily. The content and literal context reflect *modus operandi* through set patterns or models in the tradition. Paul has used these commonplace topics available to him through biblical and non-biblical sources and contexts: oral and written media (Jewish apocalyptic motifs, Dead Sea Scrolls, Graeco-Roman imperial and literal context). The "we wish, we believe, we declare, and we encourage" praxis predominantly displays an instructive mode, and at the same time, applies the "they say, we say" antithetical formula. In this large section, I have described and analysed how "we wish hope and not grief" with specific sources that explain a particular background to the eschatological discourse, Paul and his audience in Thessalonica. The following section deals with Paul and the Lord's word, demonstrating "we believe, we declare" dynamics.

3. THE LORD'S WORD

In this section, I analyse the implication of the 'word of the Lord' in 4:15-17 (λόγος κυρίου in 4:15). Interpreters assume several backgrounds behind the wording. They refer to Jesus' sayings as an *agraphon* or a slogan familiar to synoptic tradition or pre-Pauline/non-Pauline traditions. In the previous section, we have seen plausible layers of traditional material. These materials relate to apocalyptic motifs, Synoptic traditions, Jesus' sayings, socio-religious contexts, and voluntary associations. These perspectives address the alleged backgrounds and surrounding contexts active behind Paul shaping the eschatological discourse. They point toward respective modules to study early Christ-followers as a believing community actively involved with several traditions. The biblical and non-biblical contexts constitute the background shaping the dynamic form and content of this appeal.

¹⁶⁰ John S. KLOPPENBORG, *Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus*, in GALINSKY Karl (ed.), *Memory in Ancient Rome & Early Christianity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 286-323. See also Karl GALINSKY, *Introduction: Memory, Performance, and the Sayings of Jesus*, in GALINSKY Karl (ed.), *Memory in Ancient Rome & Early Christianity*, p. 1-42; Ann-Kathrin STOCK, Hannah GAJSAR, and Onur GÜNTÜRKÜN, *The Neuroscience of Memory*, in GALINSKY Karl (ed.), *Memory in Ancient Rome & Early Christianity*, p. 369-392.

The present section shows that Paul authenticates his position as the apostle who has direct contact with Christ by the logion of λόγος κυρίου (1 Thess 4:15). Interestingly, Paul uses this *logion* to console his followers, addressing their context of suffering. However, Paul's wording is not precise, and there remain specific issues requiring clarity. Paul responds by writing to the Thessalonians what he has preached on his first visit to Thessalonica, and what he means to communicate now with λόγος κυρίου.

3.1 The Lord's Word

We find in the eschatological discourse a combination of λόγος and κύριος. The Lord's word context and the study of κύριος mainly begin from the perspective of Christological titles¹⁶¹. According to Gordon Fee, there are three key texts (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15-17 and Phil 2:6-11) that represent all issues raised in the cumulative evidence of Paul to summarise what Pauline Christology would describe. Fee considers that Paul's application of κύριος equates with the "Yahweh of the Septuagint"¹⁶². But Fee is vague in clarifying Paul's source. I do not focus on the Christological perspective. Still, the combination of the "Lord's word", the word and the title has some significance in First Thessalonians for the identity and community formation of the early Christ-followers. At the same time, the *logion* requires establishing its meaning, sources and traditions, contexts, and influences in the eschatological discourse.

Meaning and Description in Septuagint:

The translation of the Hebrew construct in genitive as λόγος κυρίου, occurs more than fifty times in the Septuagint of the Hebrew Prophets, and it is always a translation of דְּבַר־יְהוָה (cf. 1 Kings 13:2; Joel 1:1). In most cases, it stands to support that the "word" which the prophet speaks originates from God¹⁶³.

Meaning and Description in Pauline Corpus:

The Word of the Lord/of God occurs eight times in the Pauline corpus (cf. 1 Thess 4:15; 1 Cor 14:36; 2 Cor 2:17; 4:2; Rom 9:6; Col 1:25; Titus 2:5; 2 Tim 2:9). This phrase in the Pauline corpus always occurs in the subjective genitive. It refers to words that God has spoken or the words either incorporated as scripture or is about the gospel. Our reference to the gospel here points toward the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Although the title highlights a Christological significance, there are two distinctions to note: the gospel of God (2 Thess 2:2, 8-9) and the gospel of Christ (1 Thess 3:2). The former emphasises the source, and the latter refers to Christ as its primary content¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶¹ Gordon D. FEE, *Pauline Christology, An Exegetical-Theological Study*, Peabody, MA, Hendrickson Publishers, 2007, p. 16.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁶⁴ Gordon D. FEE, *Pauline Christology*, p. 58.

In specific reference to First Thessalonians, we find in 1:8, ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου and 4:15, ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου. Fee assumes that for Paul, “the word of the Lord” stands in place of Jesus’ words or words about the Lord Jesus. According to him, the phrase in 1 Thess 1:8 stands for the gospel and means the word of the Lord. Concerning the second reference (4:15), Fee proposes that its usage resembles the Septuagint application. This assumption implies and points to a word that Christ himself has spoken. It means that the spoken word is most likely from Jesus’ tradition that has come down to Paul or a prophetic word that Paul has received from Christ¹⁶⁵. In either case, this well-known Yahweh phrase now has a Jesus appropriation to refer to Christ. Thus, in First Thessalonians (1:8; 4:15), Fee considers this particular instance an intertextual moment¹⁶⁶.

In the following section, I propose that the *logion* has its primary location in 1 Thess 4:16b with οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον (the dead in Christ will rise first). It takes recourse to a revelation from the exalted Lord. It functions in singular and plural contexts to address the concerns of the community in distress. This study draws from previous research to examine divergent opinions to address the issues related to λόγος κυρίου.

3.2 By The Lord’s Word

The phenomenon of appealing by λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου (we declare to you by the Lord’s word) represents an authoritative tone. Besides, we find a detailed sketch of the Parousia¹⁶⁷. In general, the interpreters raise three pertinent questions concerning the source of this *logion*, its location within the discourse, and finally, its function. The concerns relate to why Paul cites this formula of *logion* here only and not elsewhere¹⁶⁸. As a response, exegetes with varied methodological approaches have tried to resolve these issues, and successive attempts in this regard have either suggested or sided with one of the responses broadly outlined as follows:

- a) Paul is quoting Jesus:
 - The actual sayings of earthly Jesus,
 - The unrecorded sayings of Jesus known as *agraphon*
 - The slogans are from the general eschatology of Jesus in the gospels¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45. The first one refers to Seyoon KIM (*The Jesus Tradition*, p. 225-242) and the second, refers to Karl P. DONFRIED (*Short Pauline Letters*, p. 39-40) and Larry W. HURTADO (*Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in earliest Christianity*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2003, p. 150-151).

¹⁶⁶ Gordon D. FEE, *Pauline Christology*, p. 45.

¹⁶⁷ David LUCKENSMAYER, *The Eschatology on 1 Thessalonians*, p. 186. See also ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in 1 Thess 1:8 (cf. 2 Thess 3:1) and a few more parallels in other instances of Paul but not the same (1 Cor 7:10, 12, 25; 9:14; 11:23-26; 14:37). This is to say that none of the instances represent the unique character found in 1 Thess 4:15 where Paul applies a prepositional phrase with an instrumental dative to modify λέγειν.

¹⁶⁸ David LUCKENSMAYER, *The Eschatology of 1 Thessalonians*, p. 173; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 267; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 320;

¹⁶⁹ For a detailed summary of historical-critical research on λόγος κυρίου, see Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 189-194; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 267-270; David LUCKENSMAYER, *The Eschatology of 1*

- b) Paul uses a tradition similar to Mt 24:30 and other supplements Jewish apocalyptic imagery (cf. Dan 7:13; 12:2-3)¹⁷⁰.
- c) Paul means here a prophetic word received from the exalted Lord or by way of a tradition that goes back to a prophetic revelation or early Christian prophecy¹⁷¹.
- d) Paul, in this phrase, intends a proclaimed message of Jesus, meaning that it is a message about Jesus based on the Christ events, his death and resurrection, and the Scripture¹⁷².

The last option corresponds to Michael Pahl, whose comments are the most recent regarding the series of interpretations on λόγος κυρίου. He attempts extensive research on this logion and responds to the pertinent questions of its source, location, and function¹⁷³. Although this work is commendable, it falls short and limits its focus mainly on the epistemic question. On the one hand, we see that Peter Nagel agrees with Pahl and confirms the particular approach. On the other hand, Richard Ascough and Paul Foster question this research's fundamental assumption and outcome. For Ascough, the core message of First Thessalonians is Thessalonian believers' rescue from the wrath that is to come on the "day of the Lord" (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9). He comments that Pahl ignores this critical link. Whereas Paul Foster regards the work as "notoriously ambiguous", and thereby, the final solution provided by Pahl is unconvincing¹⁷⁴.

Since Pahl's work is the latest, I will not present the limitations in the historical interpretation of the logion. Besides, Pahl's research involves an extensive redaction approach but fails to be conclusive. Therefore, I explore further using the social memory model and its performative context regarding the logion. Significantly, we focus on the compelling character of the logion in the pericope and Paul's hand in formulating the entire content in 4:15-17¹⁷⁵. The formulation

Thessalonians, p. 186-211; Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA, *Thessalonians*, p. 320-325. Given the subdivisions here, Seyoon Kim considers a reference to a specific saying of historical Jesus or Jesus material as the most likely option (*The Jesus Tradition*, p. 225-242). Weima agrees with this position. There is not much difference between the first and the last subdivision in this. Frame considers the logion as an agraphon (*1 Thessalonians*, p. 171).

¹⁷⁰ Frederick F. Bruce views that the Jerusalem Church is behind the tradition of this logion (*1 Thessalonians*, p. 98). Malherbe notes that a majority of the interpreters side on this position to affirm that Paul had a direct revelation from the exalted Lord (*1 Thessalonians*, p. 268-269). Fee contends that behind the *logion* is an Old Testament prophetic tradition and in this case Jesus is appropriated to replace what was meant by λόγος κυρίου in the Old Testament (*1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 173-174).

¹⁷¹ Joseph B. LIGHTFOOT, *Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 65.

¹⁷² Michael W. PAHL, *Discerning the Word of the Lord*, p. 1-5.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Richard S. ASCOUGH, *Review: Michael W. Pahl's 'Discerning the Word of the Lord'*, in *Religious Studies Review*, 37.2 (2011), p. 133-134; Peter NAGEL, *Review: Michael W. Pahl's 'Discerning the Word of the Lord'*, in *Neotestamentica*, 45.1 (2011), p. 161-162; Paul FOSTER, *Review: Michael W. Pahl's 'Discerning the Word of the Lord'*, in *The Expository Times* 121.5 (2011), p. 259-260.

¹⁷⁵ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 154-172; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 270; David LUCKENSMEYER, *The Eschatology of 1 Thessalonians*, p. 186-211.

points to the ancient rhetoric or epistolary forms and their consolatory patterns and funerary orations¹⁷⁶.

3.3 The Context of the logion

The eschatological discourse in First Thessalonians consists of two units (4:13-18 and 5:1-11). They bear remarkable formal similarities between them¹⁷⁷. Various studies suggest as follows regarding their overall structure and understanding of the contents. They allude to patterns that reflect epideictic or paraenetic in form or contents. The other reflects traditional material consisting of Jewish apocalyptic imagery found in prophetic literature or indirectly references Jesus' sayings tradition¹⁷⁸. At the same time, interpreters agree with Paul's ability to formulate the discourse to serve his purpose uniquely. We see that the eschatological narrative exhibits a free use of traditions and Paul's unique ways of addressing the community members. The community is predominantly of gentile origin (1 Thess 1:9), and its Graeco-Roman background is possibly behind the alleged misunderstanding of the situation. As a result, Paul responds to his followers, clarifying the status of the deceased at the Parousia.

Paul has in possession the appraisal report provided by Timothy, who has returned from Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:1-6). He offers consolation to his grieving followers, as shown in the first unit (4:13-18). Paul appeals to them using the formula λόγος κυρίου (1 Thess 4:15). The appeal and its content bear witness to traditional *topoi* concerning eschatological and apocalyptic motifs. I have already noted this and referred to Pahl's work as the latest in this interpretation series¹⁷⁹. I only consider the performative context of the logion regarding antitheses, traditions, and social memory.

¹⁷⁶ Juan CHAPA, *Consolatory Patterns? 1 Thess 4,13-5,11*, p. 219-229. See also Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Exhortation in First Thessalonians*, in *NovT*, 25 (1983), p. 238-256 (here p. 254); Raymond F. COLLINS, *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians*, p. 17-20; Albertus F. J. KLIJN, *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and its Background in Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 67-73; Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence, Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety*, p. 126.

¹⁷⁷ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 154.

¹⁷⁸ James D. HESTER, *Creating the Future: Apocalyptic Rhetoric in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 192-212; Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 154-172; Seyoon KIM, *The Jesus Tradition in 1 Thess 4.13-5.11*, p. 225-242.

¹⁷⁹ Michael W. PAHL, *Discerning the Word of the Lord*, p. 1-5. Pahl opines that the problem relates to the authority to which Paul appeals by means of ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου in 1 Thess 4:15. He considers this issue unresolved. He sums up the already given solutions into two ways: "that it is a saying or discourse believed to originate with the earthly Jesus and mediated to the authors of early Christian tradition, or that it is an utterance or oracle believed to originate with the exalted Jesus and mediated to the authors through direct revelation". To resolve the issue, Pahl appeals to historical and literal settings of the text (1 Thess 4:13-18). He includes epistemological, linguistic, and contextual analyses, and concludes affirming as follows. "It looks like that in 1 Thess 4:15 Paul applies traditional eschatological teaching as response to the Thessalonians. However, by the phrase, ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, Paul refers to the "proclaimed gospel message about Jesus centred on his death and resurrection which forms the theological foundation of Paul's response (cf. 4:14)". Pahl's conclusion is very obvious. It is in the text itself, and he fails to explain the implication between the narrative and theological foundation that he has emphasised.

3.4 The Context in 1 Thess 4:13-18

There is a consensus that by λόγος κυρίου Paul appeals to the Thessalonian believers applying an authoritative formula. Divergent methodological attempts are reconstructing the historical Thessalonian situation, and the resulting multiple suggestions make this logion appear more complex and confusing. It is possible that in 4:15, with λόγος κυρίου, we see a reflection of traditional material. The conventional material may point to Jesus's sayings tradition or point to other influences, including Septuagint¹⁸⁰. The name of Jesus is appropriated in the New Testament context replacing the prophetic oracle formula of the Old Testament¹⁸¹. To determine these influences, interpreters predate the material as pre-Paul and point to sources other than the gospel traditions. If the traditions passed on orally are unrecorded, they may still supply the material to the "proclaimed message". In this case, the proclaimed message may have two-way distinctions. First, it is a message that Jesus himself has declared, in which case it may still refer to earthly or heavenly Jesus and is yet unrecorded. Second, it is a message about Jesus proclaimed by others using recourse to traditions or a direct revelation from the exalted Jesus. In this regard, the rhetorical approach has tried to offer solutions, but they differ and do not address our research concerns¹⁸². The social memory model addresses the context of this logion from the discourse itself.

The context of the eschatological discourse is as follows: first, we observe that it concerns the status of the deceased believers and corresponding grief due to their loss. Second, it communicates the resurrection of the dead and their gathering with Christ at the Parousia. The contents relate to these two contexts practically assisted by the rhetorical device. Here, rhetoric form infuses emphasis, both paraenetic and epideictic. I believe that the rhetoric form here has a particular role of reemphasising already preached content rather than a new one¹⁸³. In this background, we examine what role the introductory formula, οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἄγνοεῖν has with another form, λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου. In terms of appeal, both require further clarification.

We indicate two elements that refer to knowledge and information namely, ἄγνοεῖν and λέγομεν. These elements do not communicate new information but recollect the previous and reemphasise. The formulas have a functional role in terms of communication and

¹⁸⁰ Gordon D. FEE, *Pauline Christology*, p. 45.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁸² Abraham J. MALHERBE opines that within literary approaches, form-critical and rhetorical are not mutually exclusive. He suggests further that the Thessalonian Letters first need to be explored within the framework of epistolary theme and not necessarily as canons of rhetorical handbooks. His opinion can be tested further alongside those who have applied a rhetorical approach to the Thessalonian letters including Malherbe as mentioned above with the following ones. Bruce C. JOHANSON, *To all Brethren: A Text of Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians*; Gary S. SELBY, *Blameless at his Coming: The Discursive Construction of Eschatological Reality in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 385-410; J. Paul SAMPLEY and Peter LAMPE, *Paul and Rhetoric*; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Ethics in Context: The Thessalonians and their neighbours*, in *Restoration Quarterly*, 54.4 (2012), p. 201-218; Ezra JaeKyung CHO, *Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians in Light of Ancient Funeral Oration*, Eugene, OR, Pickwick Publications, 2020.

¹⁸³ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Concerning Περὶ δέ in 1 Corinthians*, p. 229-256; Benjamin A. EDSALL, *Paul's Rhetoric of Knowledge of the Οὐκ Οἶδατε Question in 1 Corinthians*, in *NovT*, 55 (2013), p. 252-271.

reconstruction of the already delivered information. Paul achieves the purpose he intends, and, at the same time, he re-authenticates the message. It is the gospel of Christ and also Paul's gospel. The two formulas enact this double rhetorical force. We also notice that the message flows out in two ways: first, by referring to Jesus, the logion points to a legitimate source; second, the media of this source becomes an authentic agent of the logion.

The questions concern the source and the media of the logion. At the same time, they refer indirectly to the relationship between Jesus and Paul. Here, the direct relationship pertains to the personal connection and the discourse's contents. The form of the logion is a possible way to bridge the contents and contexts related to the most basic narrative structure in the post-resurrection proclamation of Jesus. It is about Jesus' death and resurrection. We find this in 4:14, 4:15-17, and it repeats in 5:10. Here, Paul is not authenticating Jesus' message per se but his preaching of the message and its relevance to the Thessalonian situation. We are clear that Paul has visited Thessalonica only once, and his later attempts to revisit them has not happened (1 Thess 3:1-6).

In this particular context, the letter replaces two related physical absences: Christ and then Paul. Consequently, Paul puts forward the message he has orally communicated previously and communicates now in a written form. He does so by the λόγος κυρίου phrase as a formulaic means of authority: in oral and written media. The combination points to the decisive communication pattern of Paul to matters of utmost concern to the community. First, Paul draws attention to what the Lord has said. Second, what he communicates is definitely from the Lord. Here, the communication moves from Jesus to Paul and then to the community. Paul's apostolic authority means constructing the required spatial proximity to Jesus' sayings that he knows or has received and has experienced. Yet, the formula λόγος κυρίου inserts a sense of mystery. In this way, it may function as a prophetic revelation to Paul in line with the Old Testament prophets and their application of the logion in the Septuagint in a formulaic manner.

In the letter, Paul uses this formula not only as a rhetorical means to authenticate his relationship to the message, but he has reemphasised that the gospel is not merely in words but carries the power of God (with power, with Holy Spirit and with full conviction as in 1:5). There are two foundational narratives active in the formula: establishing the community through preaching and constructing the narrative through the foundational events of Jesus' death and resurrection. These two events belong to the recent past and are fundamental to the next, the Parousia. This forthcoming event is also a memory: that the deceased will rise. Formerly, the dead survived only through memories, but now the dead are revived through the resurrection enacted by God through Jesus.

The relationship dynamics are also two ways: the relationship between risen Jesus and Paul, Paul and his readers. The dynamics are both asymmetrical and symmetrical. However, Paul balances these dynamics through familial terms, primarily through first-person plural pronouns and other affectionate siblings and familial words (brothers and sisters, father, nurse, children). Eschatological discourse consists of these affectionate terms. They indicate in a particular manner how familial terms include time aspects (present, past, future), and these aspects, in this

case, are means of comfort and consolation (consolatory patterns)¹⁸⁴. The relationship rests on the core message of the proclamation, namely, Jesus' death and resurrection. The foundational assurance of this message guarantees all the members of the Thessalonian community participation in the Parousia gathering. I consider that the formula λόγος κυρίου concerns these elements reconstructing the discourse in light of the previous message.

3.5 The Contents in 1 Thess 4:13-18

Thessalonians' knowledge about the logion λόγος κυρίου relates directly to the contents of the eschatological discourse. Accordingly, the analysis considers possible close parallels to the λόγος κυρίου phrase from the eschatological discourse.

3.5.1 The Content Parallels

In this context, the content parallels are ἐν, σὺν, and ἅμα. We see them as a cluster based on their case, the dative. The datives form a link to the related contents with λόγος. The content is dependent on the verbs like θέλομεν, ἀγνοεῖν, λυπήσθε, πιστεύομεν, and παρακαλεῖτε. These verbal forms shape the discourse adjoining specific content about λόγος. Subsequently, these verbs establish a connection between λόγος and κυρίως. We identify this dynamism expressed through τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, τοῦ θεοῦ, σὺν αὐτῷ and ἐν Χριστῷ.

3.5.2 Analysis of the Content Parallels

To analyse the content parallels, I reconsider the opinion expressed by Pahl. A close look at the analysis of Pahl's work shows that he has restricted much of his linguistic analysis to evaluate divergent interpretations about λόγος κυρίου only¹⁸⁵. His approach is both dependent on and differs from the previous research. Earlier studies focus more on the functional role of the logion, and a possible divergence in this regard is as follows, and Pahl's position remains close to it.

Concerning the function of the dative in ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, between an instrumental or locative, Pahl chooses the locative. It further relates to the meaning of λόγος in ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, referring to a message, the teaching of Jesus, the oracle of the exalted Jesus as Christian prophecy or the Scripture as a whole. Considering these options, Pahl opines that λόγος in its singular form lacks evidence in the first and second-century Christian writings, including Paul. At best, in its singular form, λόγος can only mean "message", preferably an oral message. Above all, in the analysis of Pahl, ἐν is central to the interpretation, but most studies side with a dative as instrumental which explains possible diversity in the understanding. Besides, I consider the case of

¹⁸⁴ Trevor J. BURKE, *Paul's New Family in Thessalonica*, in *NovT*, 54 (2012), p. 269-287 (here p. 275); Ben WITHERINGTON III, *Thessalonians*, p. 153. See also Abraham J. MALHERBE (*Thessalonians*, p. 322-327) for Greek consolatory patterns as an equivalent piece of evidence in reference to the eschatological discourse in First Thessalonians.

¹⁸⁵ Michael W. PAHL, *Discerning the Word of the Lord*, p. 135-139.

κύριος in ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου between a subjective genitive or objective genitive. Here, Pahl selects the objective genitive as this supports his interpretative scheme. According to him, ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου means the proclaimed message of Jesus.

3.5.3 An Alternative Understanding

At this stage, I reconsider the location of logion λόγος κυρίου. The earlier interpretations, mainly form-criticism, delimit the logion between 4:16-17. The delimitation follows a developmental model concerning Paul's eschatological thought. Then, the possible shifts in the development of this logion relate to the particular Thessalonian situation¹⁸⁶. I agree that a specific link to the prophetic tradition bridges post-Christ events and early Christian writing. It points to the traditional topoi of the actual message. In this regard, unit 4:16-17 does not limit the scope of the logion. However, the precise location of the logion appears in 4:16, more especially in 4:16b.

We observe that 4:13a begins the address with δέ directed toward περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων. The same repeats in 4:13c, marked by περί which in return specifically relates to τῶν κοιμωμένων. We see this reference in 4:14d and until 4:15d before it shifts in 4:16b as οἱ νεκροί. The word “the dead” approximates one out of two elements designated by ἐν Χριστῷ, death and resurrection of Christ. Here, it suffices that the believers have died in Christ. The first element is already a fact, and it connects the next, that they await the resurrection at the Parousia. I consider this shift is an important marker and the logion, λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου specifically relates to 4:16b as οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον.

Further, we indicate that 4:13a with the introductory formula οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν connects with πιστεύομεν in 4:14a, λέγομεν in 4:15a, and παρακαλέω and λόγος in 4:18. These link the dictum and refer to the more significant dynamics concerning the Thessalonians. Notably, Paul applies the “we wish, we believe, we declare, and we encourage” communicative model that links the previous message concerning the deceased (περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων) as pointed in 4:13c. Besides, the earlier narrative now becomes a normative process. We see that the norm functions in two ways. First, the normative force works through a prohibitory formula, “not to grieve like others”. Second, there is a declarative procedure that enforces this norm with λόγος κυρίου. Here, Paul frames the community's response with “we wish” dynamics.

In addition, the discourse has a predominant use of dative ἐν. We find it in 4:15a, 4:16a, 4:16b, 4:17a, 4:17b, and 4:18. All of these instances in the discourse closely relate to the divine

¹⁸⁶ Raymond F. COLLINS (*Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation in 1 Th 4, 13-5, 11*, p. 160-161) summarises this view based on the explanation provided by Wolfgang Harnisch who seems to have developed further based on the ideas of Willi Marxsen and Ulrich Luz. Collins explains a three-level development of this *logion* with three clear markers that demarcate each stage. The first refers to a Jewish affirmation about the descent of the Son of Man with a marker of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου at the beginning of the logion. The second one points to pre-Pauline Jewish-Christian *logion* on the resurrection of the dead and parousia replacing the marker ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου with ὁ κύριος. Finally, there is a further addition to ὁ κύριος with ἐν Χριστῷ to affirm a Pauline formulation of addressing the actual situation of the Thessalonians.

referent namely, λόγος κυρίου in 4:15a and 4:16a with ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ in 4:16b, with ἐν Χριστῷ and ἐν νεφέλαις in 4:17a, and finally with ἐν τοῖς λόγοις in 4:18. All these relate specifically to the spatial location above. The divine origin of the logion comes from above, like God speaking to the prophets from above. Here, Paul has recapitulated the faith content, “we believe” with “we declare”.

Further, we suggest that 4:14d repeats the primary concern with τοὺς κοιμηθέντας. It relates closely with σὺν αὐτῷ that stands for earthly Jesus. We identify additionally in 4:17b, σὺν κυρίῳ. The latter context regroups the entire community in 4:15bcd. Next, 4:17a indicates a transformation with ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς. It refers to their possible reunion and gathering as one family with σὺν κυρίῳ in 4:17b, referring mainly to the exalted Jesus. Here, Paul binds two narratives: the earthly Jesus and the divine Jesus. The same extends to the community constructed through a retrospective and prospective memory. Paul declares these dynamics by the Lord’s word.

The final gathering with Christ and its members represents a common sharing indicative with the dative ἐν in 4:15a. It is a heavenly union. Paul enacts a future event through a prospective narrative. That has its location above, that is above the plateau and is up, high. At the same time, Paul constructs a communicative narrative for the table here below. Notably, we see in 4:18 a culmination, that the earthly gathering has a purpose of communicating specific words of encouragement (ἐν τοῖς λόγοις for παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις). In this way, Paul and his co-workers encourage the community to encourage each other, “We encourage”.

Following this mechanism, I propose that the logion demonstrates a dynamism of a prophetic proclamation, preferably modified by Paul and reflecting the early Christian prophecy. The address shifts from the status of the deceased at Parousia toward an understanding that affirms authoritative teaching. Here, it is plausible that Paul appeals to an authority in the form of a logion. The saying has its source in the exalted Lord by the medium of prophetic revelation uniquely applied to the Thessalonian situation. Hence, it is possible to locate and limit a central focal point within the logion to 4:16 and more especially 4:16b regarding οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον.

3.6 Paul’s Apostleship

The eschatological discourse holds comforting words like the words of friends as a substitute for one’s presence. Similarly, Paul offers consolation using λόγος κυρίου that reflects Christ’s content, his death, resurrection, and coming. Here, the word of exhortation and the consolatory formula directly refer to 1 Thess 4:18 and 5:11. The pattern has a clear purpose outlined and focuses on παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις (encourage one another with these words)¹⁸⁷. Besides the formula, these words substitute the presence of a communicator. It

¹⁸⁷ Juan CHAPA, *Consolatory Patterns? 1 Thess 4,13-5,11*, p. 225.

means that the memory of the gospel words replaces the communicator. In this way, λόγος κυρίου has a permanent presence to fill the void of earthly Jesus and also Paul himself. Paul is unable to revisit the community. However, he writes and in addition, uses λόγος κυρίου to authorise what he writes concerning the dead (the body). In doing so, he adds more to the text than the actual condition of the grieving members. We recognise that there are allusions to Hellenistic epistolography and rhetoric, and Jewish traditions. Paul has equipped his readers to use the available common topoi to understand themselves better and deal with their grieving situation¹⁸⁸.

The phrase, λόγος κυρίου, is generally a literary and prophetic ploy as was the case with Old Testament prophets to authenticate what they communicate. The prophetic message then originates from God and derives a pledging commitment from the hearers. The phrase reflects Septuagint Old Testament formulaic usage to authenticate prophecy. It points to the words emanating from above, the heavens. Besides, Paul makes an apparent reference to the very sayings of historical Jesus now seated in heaven. More than a reference to the actual Jesus' saying, it points to the dynamics of Paul's apostleship. There are traces that Paul establishes a clear pathway for the believers to follow. It is not only here but all through the letter. Paul does not undervalue his communities, but there is also an asymmetrical relationship between the apostle and followers.

In First Thessalonians, Paul speaks as a fatherly figure. We suggest that the expression is both affectionate and asymmetrical. One finds such instances in 1 Thess 2:7, 11, and 17. These refer to the images of a nursing mother, infant, and orphans, respectively. Furthermore, in 5:12-15, Paul refers directly to Thessalonians as "siblings". According to Trevor Burke, these indicate the structure and the dynamics of Paul and his followers in Thessalonica as a family¹⁸⁹. Here, Paul's dominant position in the community and his authority over them is asymmetrical. And this asymmetrical position is further strengthened by the formula of λόγος κυρίου. The formula links their allegiance with Jesus's sayings and traditions and practices that Paul's apostleship has endorsed¹⁹⁰.

Characteristics of a familial structure in the eschatological discourse are scant. In this regard, Stephen Curkpatrick¹⁹¹ comments that Paul includes several personal aside to indicate his desire and belongingness to the followers, expressing his desire to visit them and, in the case of

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 229; Albertus F.J. KLIJN, *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and its Background in Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 67-73. See Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence, Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety*, p. 126.

¹⁸⁹ Trevor J. BURKE, *Paul's New Family in Thessalonica*, p. 269-287.

¹⁹⁰ For more details on Paul and traditions see Michael F. BIRD (ed.), *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*, Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 2012; *id.*, *An Anomalous Jew: Paul Among Jews, Greeks and Romans*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2016; Peter J. TOMSON, *Paul As Recipient And Teacher Of Tradition*, in Bart J. KOET and Archibald L. H. M. VAN WIERINGEN (eds), *Multiple Teachers in Biblical Texts* (CBET, 88), Leuven, Peeters, 2017, p. 185-206; Joshua SCHWATZ and Peter J. TOMSON (eds), *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: The Interbellum 70-132 CE* (CRINT, 15), Leuven, Peeters, 2017.

¹⁹¹ Stephen CURKPATRICK, *Apostrophic Desire and Parousia in the Apostle Paul's Epistles: A Derridean Proposal for Textual Interpretation*, in *Biblical Interpretation*, 10.2 (2002), p. 175-193.

Thessalonians, his inability to visit them in their dire needs. Paul makes up for the lost presence by a ploy called “apostrophe Paul” by Jacques Derrida¹⁹² and further referred to by Curkpatrick. It stands to designate Paul’s desire for belongingness. Paul wishes to be with his readers, and his asides express this motif¹⁹³. To the Derridean “apostrophe Paul”, we can recall the term “apostolic parousia” by Robert Funk¹⁹⁴. First Thessalonians shows that Paul establishes his presence by substitution when he cannot revisit the community he has founded. He sends Timothy when the community is in need (cf. 3:1-5). Paul also makes up for his absence by inserting personal asides that demark the critical units that emphasise the instructions directed to the community¹⁹⁵.

Besides the content and source, the formula “word of the Lord” depicts a dynamic relationship between the writer and readers. It highlights the presence and absence of the founder, namely divine deity and human agent, in building up the community. It points to Paul’s case of authenticating his apostleship constructively devoid of conflicting opponents. The formula links consolatory patterns with Jewish imagery. It also reflects multiple traditions and resolves the eschatological tension related to the dead and their resurrection at the parousia. Paul’s familial terms function with his asymmetrical position as entrusted with the “word of the Lord”. Besides, Paul encourages the community to follow his teachings as authenticated by the divine word.

4. THE LORD’S WORD AND SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC ANALYSES

The eschatological discourse contains multiple apocalyptic motifs like Lord’s word, Lord’s day, as well as the dialectics between “they say, and we say”. Here, we point to an antithesis between peace and security, death and destruction. In this dualism, the others encounter the new converts as a threat to peace. But the converts foresee a Parousia and life and destiny of wrath for others. This identification is a double negation, reversible dual representation, or a constructive negation shaped from the insider perspective.

At the same time, the foundational experience rearticulates this negated direction. The foundational understanding of encountering God means turning away from idols. It is purely God’s

¹⁹² Jacques DERRIDA, *How to Avoid Speaking: Denials*, in Harold COWARD and Toby FOSHAY (eds), *Derrida and Negative Theology, With a Conclusion by Jacques Derrida*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1992, p. 73-142; Stephen CURKPATRICK, *Apostrophic Desire and Parousia in the Apostle Paul’s Epistles*, p. 179.

¹⁹³ Stephen CURKPATRICK, *Apostrophic Desire and Parousia in the Apostle Paul’s Epistles*, p. 179.

¹⁹⁴ Robert W. FUNK, *Apostolic Parousia: Form and Significance*, in William R. FARMER, Charles F. D. MOULE and Richard R. NIEBUHR (eds), *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967, p. 249-268; Lee A. JOHNSON, *Paul’s Epistolary Presence in Corinth: A New Look at Robert W. Funk’s Apostolic Parousia*, in *CBQ*, 68 (2006), p. 481-502. In support of the apostolic parousia description in Corinth see Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, Louisville, John Knox Press, 1993, p. 197-198.

¹⁹⁵ For more details on the Parousia in 1 Thessalonians and for broader cultural setting see Jane M. F. HEATH, *Absent Presences of Paul and Christ: Enargeia in 1 Thessalonians 1–3*, in *JSNT*, 38.1 (2009), p. 3-39.

act, gift and generosity, extended by the gospel of God through apostles and power of the Spirit, mediated by Christ's death and resurrection. This knowledge proceeds not by perception but by conviction. However, this conviction becomes perceptible to the others.

In this regard, we have a process in Rom 5:1-3: suffering produces endurance, endurance, character, and hope (poured into our hearts by gift of the Holy Spirit). Therefore, temporal and spatial axes and knowledge interact mutually. In terms of the apocalyptic understanding of Paul and knowledge, scholars propose both continuity and discontinuity. They refer to the first and the second covenant (the Old Testament and the New Testament) and see whether Christ-event continues and completes the totality, discontinues, breaks totally and then realises God's promises. Albert Schweitzer¹⁹⁶, Karl Barth¹⁹⁷, Rudolf Bultmann¹⁹⁸, Johan Christiaan Beker¹⁹⁹, James Louis Martyn²⁰⁰, and others have proposed two distinct ways: apocalyptic invasion and unveiled fulfilment. Among the two, the former perspective is a dominant narrative that posits a total discontinuity. Similarly, these two interpretative keys consider apocalyptic eschatology, cosmology, soteriology, and epistemology.

We see that the ancient philosophical schools have adopted two ways of knowing: perception and conviction. Paul has opted for the second as the starting point. He uses the perceptive world to communicate the conviction revealed by God through his theophanic conversion experience and revealed mysteries of the word. It is God's generous, powerful act through elected persons and communities. In this regard, we see two propositions concerning the idea of continuity and discontinuity, including their epistemology of spatial and temporal axes. They are the apocalyptic invasion and unveiled fulfilment.

We recognise that the ancient world has approached logos from perception and conviction. Perception and belief are the two modes of presenting one's idea before the public. Paul's gentile mission preaching material proceeds from the view of Christ-event's promises for humanity. In the social memory model, there are two temporal frameworks: past-constructivist and inter-influential. Here, I propose spatial approximation and temporal nearness as means to

¹⁹⁶ Albert SCHWEITZER, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, W. Montgomery (trans.), London, A & C Black, 1910. See Ben C. BLACKWELL, John K. GOODRICH, and Jason MASTON, *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination, An Introduction*, in Ben C. BLACKWELL, John K. GOODRICH, and Jason MASTON (eds), *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press, 2016, p. 3-21.

¹⁹⁷ Karl BARTH, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Edwyn C. Hoskyns (trans.), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968. See Ben C. BLACKWELL, John K. GOODRICH, and Jason MASTON, *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 3-21.

¹⁹⁸ Rudolf BULTMANN, *The Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. 1-2, Kendrick Grobel (trans.), New York, NY, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951 and 1955. See Ben C. BLACKWELL, John K. GOODRICH, and Jason MASTON, *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 3-21.

¹⁹⁹ Johan Christiaan BEKER, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God*, Philadelphia, PA, Fortress Press, 1982. See Ben C. BLACKWELL, John K. GOODRICH, and Jason MASTON, *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 3-21.

²⁰⁰ James Louis MARTYN, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 33A), New York, Doubleday, 1997. See Ben C. BLACKWELL, John K. GOODRICH, and Jason MASTON, *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 3-21.

understand the eschatological language. The language proceeds from the conviction and applies perceptible character/behaviour as an outward sign of the inward conviction. In the Graeco-Roman world of Paul's times, the ancient world and philosophical schools look at religion and experience it through their allegiance to gods and their respective rites. Their words (opponents, gods, idols, rites and schools, false teachers), God's words, and the apostles' words interact with the promises of purity and new life (present and future). They experience and propose their logos, their knowledge of reality by perception or by conviction. The themes of God's promises, covenant, and the knowledge that reveals and fulfils this reality dominate Paul's modern apocalyptic thinking or understanding.

For Paul, the notion of hope is also a chain process (cf. Rom 5:1): suffering, endurance, character and hope. For the Thessalonians, Paul addresses the third stage, hope in place of grief (4:13). A characteristic mark of the community originates here. But this response does not work in isolation. It relates to Paul's other antithetical proposals like purity and impurity, freedom and law, sin and death, flesh and death, dying and life, old and new, and old Adam and new Adam. With many antitheses and antithetical features, Paul lays several prospective foundations. These facilitate a renewed understanding of the Jewish and Greek glosses that outline his theology. In these dynamics, two things are essential.

Faith, love, and hope, the triad formula: faith recaptures monotheistic tendencies, love concerns purity, and hope refers to the covenantal promises of God's reign and kingdom. There is an identical path in what others say, God's words, and the apostles' word. There is a kind of nuanced antithetical style. It concerns Jesus' sayings and their prospective memory construction based on the Christ-events. That is, memories are keyed to Jesus' life and preaching in real-time and space. The community members undertake these constructions in their real-time and space. I explain this process in three phases.

First, in Paul's letters, the literal and social expansion of the eschatological reality happens or reveals the following of the community: sayings that represent a "you are" scheme, namely you are the children of the light/day, children of glory, children of God, and citizens of heaven (1 Thess 5:5; Gal 3:7 and 4:6; 2 Cor 4:6; Phil 3:20; Rom 8:14 and 9:26). We identify a renewed anthropological understanding that reconciles the foundational experiences and origin of the communities: between Greeks and Jews. The new faith advances as no Greek and no Jew. In other words, it is both Gentiles and Jews, and they are one in Christ. Therefore, the implications are a rejection of circumcision, emphasis on freedom, no slavery of sin and law. But there is only the slavery of Christ, who sets humanity free from sin, law, death, and Satan. The saying statements reflect the renewed anthropological soteriology that leads to Christological assertions. The founders, namely the Lord's apostles, make statements about the community.

Second, from an overall perspective of the Synoptic gospels, the statement "you are light of the world and salt of the earth" (Mt 5:13-16; cf. Mk 4:21; Lk 8:16) indicates a reconstructed past with a prospective dimension. The communities expand, literally and socially, using the reconstructed memory of Jesus. The oral and written media point toward literal and social expansion with eschatological dimension: spatial approximation and temporal nearness of the

material objects: God, Paul/founder and the community. The renewed anthropological soteriology leads to Christological assertions. That is, the Son of Man, Jesus himself, makes statements about the community.

In terms of the Johannine communities: the sayings are “I am” (I am the bread of life; I am the light of the world; I am the life, death and resurrection; I am the way, the truth and the life; I am the vine, and you are branches; cf. Jn 6:48; 8:12; 11:25; 14:6; 15:5). Here, renewed anthropological soteriology is dependent on Christological assertions. That is, Christology leads the soteriological dimension. Jesus’ sayings of his own ‘I statements’ highlight the salvific origin and destiny, but literal and social expansions are at play. Satan is already active in the community; opponents are at work to destroy it. But the reality is recast in Jesus times, for a renewed literary and social growth of the community in actual times.

4.1 Prospective Memory of Jesus’ Sayings

I have mentioned three phases of Jesus’s sayings. Instead of a retrospective, I move toward a constructive tradition based on the knowledge of conviction and perception. We see a prospective path in the process of continuity and discontinuity. The future dimension also considers the eschatological thinking of Paul or the apocalyptic understanding of Paul. We have seen that the form-critical view has focussed mainly on the source and form of Jesus’ sayings. Besides, other methods have looked from a communicative and performative context of the sayings in the ancient world. However, we also need to recognise old means of knowledge: whether knowledge of perception or understanding by conviction dominates, or both at play, or one serves the other.

In terms of Paul, the narrative begins with a perceptible problem. It leads toward a restatement of the promise, often in creedal confessions. Paul’s presentation of the notion of hope involves a chain process. The process is from suffering to endurance to the character and finally to hope. It is a transformative process at work by God already and will come to completion with Parousia/day of the Lord (cf. Rom 5:1-5).

In this direction, two passages: 4:13-18 and 5:1-11 reflect Paul’s initial gentile mission preaching material for the Graeco-Roman god-fearing Gentiles. Together, both units constitute preaching material for the larger audience. The Parousia is a familiar term in the Graeco-Roman world and Greek philosophical culture and schools. In this larger world, Paul categorises the others as false teachers (2:1-19), the gentile nations that do not know God (4:5), the others who have no hope (4:13), those who say “peace and security” (5:3), and finally those who share a destiny of wrath (5:10).

4.2 Words on the Resurrection of the Believers

In terms of 1 Thess 4:13-18, the apocalyptic imagery shows that the dead are the first to realise resurrection. They are then transferred along with all and will gather in the air with the Lord. Paul thinks basically with a paradigmatic shift: from old to new and from death to life. The discussion in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is about those who have died, and Paul believes that like Christ, the dead will rise first and join the procession at the Parousia. The first Corinthians 15:1-51 mentions that “all will be transformed”, and the passage discusses death in general. The community in Christ has a path from death to life, from old to new life, from division to the unity of reconciling love, and from moral death to spiritual life. In Romans 5 and 8, we also see that Paul shows that eventually, everything transforms, the entire creation.

4.3 Words on Times and Seasons

In the ancient world, especially in classical Greek literature and anthologies, funerary rites, new morning or day meant hope. Besides, night and darkness meant despair and sadness. They attempt to deal with hopelessness and distress through rites, cults, and ceremonies dedicated to city gods and idols, accompanied by drinking. But a new morning, like youth, brought fresh hopes and energy. So, day works as a metaphor for hope. Accordingly, “day” has a Greek notion of new life and new morning in a secular idea but is not invested in monotheistic God’s judgment or wrath.

For Jewish theology, “day” not only evokes God’s creation but becomes a category, repetitive but ordered into seven days to comprise the entire realms of creation, God’s mighty power to create and to destroy. Similarly, it is a basic measuring unit for cosmological and theological purposes. They are God’s creation and destruction, re-establishing God’s reign here on earth, i.e., restoration themes, reflected by the Son of Man and day of the Lord eschatologies. The New Testament reflects the same, especially in Pauline letters, Synoptic and Johannine gospels. But ‘Day’ and ‘day’ are different organising principles. The “Day” stands as the eventual occasion of God’s judgment, re-entry, new creation, day of salvation and wrath. The “day” becomes a basic unit modified numerically and hours like a first, second, third watch to speak of different day moments. It points to crucial moments of Jesus’ journey, especially journeys to Jerusalem Temple, prayers, isolation, suffering, miracles, passion, death, resurrection in the Synoptic and Johannine gospels. Often, “Day” and “that day” follow a narrative sequence. In Pauline, especially in First Thessalonians, “Day” stands for the Parousia and hope of salvation for the children of light and wrath for the children of night/darkness.

CONCLUSION

We have demonstrated in this chapter how Paul constructs the eschatological discourse with the “we wish, we believe, and we declare” framework. The declarative form, ὁ λόγος κυρίου, links the content with negated forms. Keeping this framework, I have analysed specific

backgrounds, non-biblical and biblical, to show that the past-constructivist approach is diverse and recollects images appropriate to address the audience needs, the grieving context and the Lord's day. In this process, I have indicated how the material objects of the letter (God, Paul and community) and formal aspects of the communication (presence and absence) operate at various levels of the text. Mainly, I have described these dynamics in the eschatological discourse regarding the antitheses of grief, hope, death, and life. The next chapter deals with the "we encourage" scheme. Alternatively, the chapter takes forward and complements the λέγομεν and ὁ λόγος κυρίου (ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου) framework with παρακαλέω and οἱ λόγοι (ἐν τοῖς λόγοις). Paul has framed a unique response and urges the community to repeat and encourage one another by a model he has informed. Followingly, I explain that a theology of hope in First Thessalonians is a theology of hope by negation.

CHAPTER 7

A THEOLOGY OF HOPE

INTRODUCTION

The final chapter discusses First Thessalonians' overall structure, purpose, context, language, and characteristics, especially the eschatological discourse (4:13–5:11). The exegetical and theological dictionaries of the New Testament include well-formulated and condensed descriptions of hope within Pauline letters. They contribute significantly to our understanding of the theological concept of hope (ἐλπίς). The individual commentaries on the Thessalonian letters and several other studies have looked at what Paul means by hope¹. In this background, I show how we may define hope in the eschatological discourse (4:13–5:11) uniquely and from the overall context of First Thessalonians. Here, I propose a theology of hope based on our methodological approach, social-scientific interpretation, using the social memory model. The primary basis is that in 4:13–5:11, Paul emphasises “life after death”, specifically as life through the death of Jesus. Two elements describe the idea: one, Jesus who died for us; second, whether we are alive or dead, we live with Jesus forever. We see this type of theology, a theology of hope by negation, in First Thessalonians.

First, I explain the significance of the “we encourage” context in the discourse. The explanation is a continuation of the general framework this study has adopted, “we wish, we believe, we declare, and we encourage”. We have indicated this application regarding the exegetical interpretation of the discourse and observations concerning the antitheses, traditions, and social memory. Second, I explain the context of hope as consolation in the letter, primarily dealing with God's words as authoritative. Finally, we engage a detailed description of the theology of hope in the letter. Additional sections further focus on the same subject and define the theological concept of hope as a hope by negation.

¹ Ernst BLOCH, *The Prinzip Hoffnung*, vols. 1-5, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1959, ET: *The Principle of Hope*, vols. 1-3, Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight (trans.), Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 1995; Archibald M. HUNTER, *Paul, and His Predecessors*, London, SCM Press, 1961; Rudolf BULTMANN and Karl H. RENGSTORF, ἐλπίς. ἐλπίζω, p. 517-535; Gottfried NEBE, *Hoffnung bei Paulus*; Thomas SÖDING, *Die Trias Glaube. Hoffnung. Liebe bei Paulus*; Abraham SMITH, *Comfort One Another*; Reimund BIERINGER, *Aktive Hoffnung im Leiden. Gegenstand, Grund und Praxis der Hoffnung nach Röm 5,1-5*, in *TZ*, 51 (1995), p. 305-325; Horst BALZ, *Early Christian Faith as 'HOPE AGAINST HOPE'*, p. 31-48; John M.G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 131-153; John BAYRON, *Paul the Seer and the Apocalyptic Community at Thessalonica*, in Benjamin E. REYNOLDS and Loren T. STUCKENBRUCK (eds), *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of the New Testament Thought*, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press, 2017, p. 245-258.

1. WE ENCOURAGE: THESE SALVIFIC WORDS

The chapter takes forward the general framework with “we encourage”. The salvific words addressed by Paul enable us to define a theological concept of hope in First Thessalonians 4:13–5:11. We show that Paul’s writing primarily addresses the concerns experienced and shared by the community. In the letter, hope is God-given, Christ-centred. Hope points to endurance, reward, holiness, and salvation. In the prayer–thanksgiving units, hope recalls. In the paraenetic sections, hope exhorts, lays out conditions, encourages, comforts, and builds up the community. Spatially, we read the “in Christ/with Christ” expression. It shows both closeness and union. Temporally, we see rhythmic phrases with day-night, light-darkness, awake-asleep, sober-drunk dualistic words. They reveal the nearness of the Parousia event, which recollects both the ascent and descent theophanic scenes. Primarily, the community wants to know the status of those who have died.

I consider Pauline theology and pertinent eschatological aspects of defining a theology of hope in First Thessalonians in a general way. Our primary focus is on the eschatological discourse and its overall context in First Thessalonians. Social memory looks at the recollected past, its temporal and spatial framework in each group. Paul remembers Jesus’ events related to the Christ-followers’ suffering context in Thessalonica (2:14–19; 4:13). Paul narrates reconstructing Jesus’s events specific to addressing the problems that the community encounters (1 Thess 4:13, “that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope”; cf. Phil 3:18, “many live as enemies of the cross of Christ”; 1 Thess 5:5, “for you are all children of light”; cf. Phil 3:20, “our citizenship is in heaven”). Paul adopts this back-and-forth movement reconstructing Jesus’ events to rebuild his communities (a pendulum swing from a community context to Jesus and from Jesus back to the community).

2. HOPE AS CONSOLATION

In this section, we look at the close relationship that ἐλπίς has toward παράκλησις and παρακαλέω in First Thessalonians and its significance in the eschatological discourse. To outline this, I explain different interpretations under subsections that take up comfort, exhortation, Greek consolatory patterns, Jewish traditions and Greco-Roman social milieu. However, this study is not exhaustive but intends to introduce the main issues concerned with παρακαλέω. By linking λόγος κύριου with παρακαλέω, one can refer to the source of authority and pattern of παρακαλέω in First Thessalonians and particularly in the eschatological discourse. The following sections deal with issues regarding παράκλησις and παρακαλέω in First Thessalonians.

2.1 Comfort and Exhortation

Paul recapitulates his ministry to the Thessalonians with a long thanksgiving (1 Thess 1:2–3:13). In this description, there are frequent shifts between ‘we know’ statements (1 Thess 1:4) toward ‘you know’ or ‘you remember’ comments (1 Thess 2:1, 5, 9, 11). We notice an

overwhelming emphasis on εὐχαριστία in the letter (1 Thess 1:2; 2:13; 3:9; also 5:18). These statements, as a whole, describe the friendly and familial relationship between Paul and his readers. Their relationship and the mode of instruction exhibits persuasive character and hortatory features. One such example is how Paul addresses his readers in First Thessalonians with ἡ παράκλησις once in 2:3 and with παρακαλέω eight times, in 2:12; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 10, 18; 5:11 and 14. We may consider what meaning it articulates regarding exhortation and appeal or consolation and comfort in the overall context of the letter².

2.1.1 Παράκλησις in 1 Thessalonians

Paul mentions παράκλησις in 2:3-5 and the authority of the gospel that he and his co-workers preached to the Thessalonians. Their preaching source and the gospel is God, whose description is “true and living God” (1:9-10). Here, Paul’s appeal does not reflect a polemical rhetorical force. However, there is an emphasis on the affective dimension. Their demands to the Thessalonians conjoin the affective side, being gentle: “like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children” (2:7). The appeal concerns the authority of the gospel. Paul also mentions the opposition he and his team have faced (2:2). In addition, this appeal denotes a dynamic and mutual relationship between the writer and his readers. The writer appeals to his readers that the authenticity of the message shared to them originates from God. The Thessalonians have given a positive response and that they have already turned toward the true and living God (1:9-10).

In sum, we observe that παράκλησις in 2:3 originates from God and has the gospel of God as its explicit objective content and context. Similarly, the source of appeal and the approval of the gospel has its origin in God. Thus, we view that παράκλησις is first linked to God as the source and then to the gospel preached and approved by God. Therefore, we can say that the gospel of God is the primary objective content. The gospel of God constitutes the objective reality regarding the relationship that Paul and the community have toward Jesus by whose reality they are consoled and persevere in faith despite sufferings. Besides, the mention of “opposition” (2:2) provides only the circumstantial condition and context in which the Thessalonians have received the gospel of God. Here, παράκλησις designates more of appeal and exhortation rather than comfort or consolation. However, one cannot reject its place in the opposition phase that Paul and his readers face. We need to examine whether this understanding also applies to παρακαλέω.

2.1.2 Παρακαλέω in 1 Thessalonians

Παρακαλέω occurs eight times in First Thessalonians (2:12; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 10, 18; 5:11 and 14). In the first instance, in 2:12, Paul appeals to the Thessalonians to lead a life worthy of God. Paul also intensifies his appeal with other words like encouraging and pleading (παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς καὶ παραμυθούμενοι καὶ μαρτυρόμενοι). Here, Paul’s appeal is toward

² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Exhortation in First Thessalonians*, in *NovT*, 25/3 (1983), p. 238-256; *id.*, *Thessalonians*, p. 261-262, 288; Jan LAMBRECHT, *A Structural Analysis of 1 Thessalonians 4-5*, p. 175; Juan CHAPA, *Is First Thessalonians a Letter of Consolation?*, p. 150-160; Abraham SMITH, *Comfort One Another: Reconstructing the Rhetoric and Audience of 1 Thessalonians*, Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 1995, p. 170; Reimund BIERINGER, *The comforted comforter: The Meaning of παρακαλέω*, HTS: 2011.

God as an objective content within a suffering context of the Thessalonians (2:14). This phenomenon has a universal appeal and is a natural consequence of developing Christ communities on account of the gospel of God.

In 3:2, we find that Timothy travels to Thessalonica with a purpose to strengthen the Thessalonians' faith (εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν). Also, in this second instance, God and the gospel of Christ form the factual content, and Paul's appeal further intensifies with στηρίξαι so that the Thessalonian followers do not succumb to persecution (3:3).

In the third instance, in 3:7, Timothy's return and his positive report allow Paul to mention παρακαλέω. Here, Thessalonians' faith as the object indirectly references Paul, his distress, and persecution on the gospel preaching. We can say that suffering conjoins with the overall mission of Paul's preaching of the gospel and the general living conditions of his followers at the universal level. There is no direct reference to what type of suffering the community or Paul has faced other than a mention of suffering in a general way. We see that the only transparent object here is the faith of the Thessalonians.

The subsequent five instances of παρακαλέω appear in the paraenetic section³ (chapter four and five) of the letter. In 4:1, Paul takes up his appeal already shown in 2:12 that they lead a life worthy of God. The request this time has added force with the phrase, ἐρωτῶμεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν (we ask and urge you). Although 4:1 begins a series of appeals in chapters 4 and 5, suffering finds no mention in this instance. Similarly, in 4:10, Paul uses παρακαλέω only in the sense of urging and encouraging. The following two cases of παρακαλέω are within the context of eschatological discourse (4:18; 5:11). In this context, though 4:13 mentions λυπέω as a result of the death of some members of the community, it is not clear whether death occurred due to persecution or other reasons, natural or unnatural events as its cause. In addition, the grief of the community is ambiguous. Here, grief relates to the non-participation of the dead members in the Parousia event rather than the actual death of the members⁴.

We further verify whether παρακαλέω is connected more toward τῶν κοιμωμένων of the community or the ἐλπίς of the community in general. Notably, this aspect relates to the interpretation of παρακαλέω in 4:18 and 5:11 wherein the latter also has an addition of οἰκοδομέω. The matter concerns the meaning and the translation that παρακαλέω takes, namely exhortation or consolation. If one considers it as an appeal, then it is an encouragement in the sense of appealing and urging. If it relates more toward consolation, then it is comfort. Finally, in 5:14, the elders of the community receive instructions to encourage the faint-hearted. In this instance, we find παρακαλέω highlighted twice, with παρακαλοῦμεν and παραμυθεῖσθε, which emphasise the same meaning in this context. In this final instance, there is no direct mention of

³ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 216. Malherbe considers that the whole letter functions paraenetically including the initial three chapters (1:1–3:13). This section is filled with the autobiographical sketch of Paul and his relationship to the Thessalonians which is said to function as paradigm for the Thessalonians to follow.

⁴ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 283-285.

suffering or persecution. But it is not clear whether the reference made to the faint-hearted is a result of persecution and torture, which Paul has already mentioned in 3:3 (εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν).

We suggest that both exhortation and consolation find an equal place in First Thessalonians from the above descriptions. Although suffering and persecution have a close reference, they are not the direct objective content of παρακαλέω but the gospel of God. In terms of its source, it is God (2:3). About its beneficiaries or addressees, both Paul and the Thessalonians find a place. We explore further the meaning and significance of παρακαλέω in the eschatological passages.

2.2 Παρακαλέω in the Eschatological Passages

Concerning the eschatological passages (1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11), we shall consider the vocabulary of παρακαλέω with supporting words that substantiate this topic like knowing, appealing, urging, asking, encouraging, and building up⁵. The first eschatological passage (1:9-10) points more toward what the Thessalonians are to do (ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν) and what the son of God will do (Ἰησοῦν τὸν ῥυόμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης) at the Parousia event. In this context, both the son of God and the Thessalonians have the following descriptions. The Thessalonian followers are those who have turned away from idols to serve the true and living God (καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ). The son of God is the one raised from the dead (ὃν ἠγείρεν ἐκ [τῶν] νεκρῶν). In this context, only ἀναμένειν can loosely refer to παρακαλέω since the Thessalonians are ultimately encouraged for the event of Parousia.

In the second eschatological passage (2:19), we can consider ἐλπίς as the objective mark of the Thessalonians at the coming of Christ. We see that παρακαλέω forms a link to the overall Thessalonians' situation and their general condition before the Parousia.

In the third eschatological passage (3:13), we find στηρίξαι in the phrase εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας which is a related word to the vocabulary of παρακαλέω⁶. I have mentioned earlier that Paul appeals to the Thessalonians to strengthen their faith (3:2, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν) so that persecutions do not shake them (3:3, τὸ μηδένα σαίνεισθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις). There is a parallel appeal in the end section with an urge to strengthen the faint-hearted (5:14, παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί ... παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους).

The context of the community's suffering and the subsequent intervention by Paul relate to constituting a sacred space. The process embodies a general framework: a living God and a living community that is blameless. The sacred dimension consists of both social and

⁵ Reimund BIERINGER, *The comforted comforter: The Meaning of παρακαλέω*, HTS: 2011.

⁶ *Ibid.*

eschatological realities. Paul communicates to the community this general purpose and strengthens reminding that they are to remain blameless and pure at the coming of Christ (3:13, εἰς τὸ στηρίζαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ, [ἀμήν]). We notice that the following sections (4:1–5:14) outline this general purpose. Gary Selby ascribes to this aspect and emphasises that Paul’s readers experienced opposition and loss. However, they do not compromise on the moral and ethical demands of being with the Lord at Parousia⁷. This description outlines the initial thrust to the discourses in chapters four and five of the letter. Selby insists that in these chapters, Paul offers consolation to his readers in the context of opposition, suffering, and loss, while exhortation warns the readers against compromising ethical standards.

We have indicated in the preceding eschatological passages that ἀναμένειν (1:9-10), ἐλπῖς (2:19) and στηρίζαι (3:13) connect παρακαλέω with the general purpose of the letter. Here, Paul aims to strengthen the faith of his readers. It also serves the twofold needs of his readers: first, they are to remain blameless and holy before the Lord who is the true and living God (3:13; 4:7-8; cf., 1:9-10); second, they are to await God who saves them from the impending wrath (1:9-10; 5:9). Only in 4:7-8, Paul makes an indirect appeal to the authority of God that God has called the Thessalonians to a life of holiness. Therefore, we may mention that the eschatological passages express a link to the authority of God and Jesus. The source is God or Son of God, and this source also includes consolation (cf. 2 Cor 1:3-7). Some members have died in the community. Their loss intensifies due to twofold departures: from the world as well as from the community. In this background, both perspectives, consolation and comfort, receive significance. Besides, the status regarding the deceased members has affected the stability in the community. It has caused grief at the cost of hope. Based on this understanding, one may translate παρακαλέω with “console or comfort”. This contention primarily emerges concerning the differing views of παρακαλέω in the larger eschatological discourse.

The three small eschatological passages above introduce the larger eschatological units (4:13-18 and 5:1-11) of the letter. These units make a single discourse. We notice that παρακαλέω in 4:18 and 5:11, with the addition of οἰκοδομέω, function in several ways: exhortation, encouragement, consolation, and comfort depending upon the perception of Paul’s and the community’s social world. Concerning the early Christian period, sociological studies observe the building-up of early Christ followers’ social identity and social belongingness⁸. We suggest

⁷ Garry S. SELBY, *Blameless at His Coming: The Discursive Construction of Eschatological Reality in 1 Thessalonians*, p. 385-387.

⁸ Richard S. ASCOUGH, *A Question of Death*, p. 509-530; Hughson T. ONG, *Paul’s Personal Relation with Earliest Christians*, p. 146-172; Richard LAST, *Communities That Write: Christ-Groups, Associations, and Gospel Communities*, in *NTS*, 58/2 (2012), p. 173-198; *id.*, *The Social Relationships of Gospel Writers: New Insights from Inscriptions Commending Greek Historiographers*, in *JSNT*, 37/3 (2015), p. 223-252; Stanley K. STOWERS, *The Concept of ‘Community’ and the History of Early Christianity*, in *MTSR*, 23 (2011), p. 238-256; Stanley E. PORTER, *Introduction to the Study of the Paul’s Opponents*, p. 1-5; *id.*, *How Do We Define Pauline Social Relations?*, in Stanley E. PORTER and Christopher D. LAND (eds), *Paul and His Social Relation* (Pauline Studies, 7), Leiden, Brill, 2013, p. 7-34; Jerry L. SUMNEY, *Studying Paul’s Opponents: Advances and Challenges*, p. 7-58.

that comfort or consolation alone does not suffice as a translation of παρακαλέω, which has an impact on the reconstruction of the Thessalonian situation.

Accordingly, we observe that Paul's writing points to Graeco-Roman rhetoric and consolatory patterns. There are also contrary opinions that the Jewish traditions of consolation have influenced Paul rather than Greek literary works regarding consolation⁹. If such is the case, the notion of Paul's appeals to the Thessalonians concerns mainly the perception of hopelessness. It has resonance among the Thessalonian followers, which some interpreters note of the Thessalonians' situation. The observation relates the hopelessness of the surroundings to the community. In the context of delayed Parousia, the community appears to lack hope. The characteristic mark of the community, ἐλπίς, now represents a declining trend¹⁰. We observe and understand these dynamics, the presence and absence of hope, by appealing to Paul's authority in the eschatological discourse.

2.2.1 Παρακαλέω and Λόγος Κυρίου

In my opinion, one has to revisit the source of authority that Paul applies to this context. Generally, the Pauline application of παρακαλέω in First Thessalonians refers to the authority of God. Similarly, we see in 4:15 the expression, "word of the Lord", which substantiates the source of Paul's communication to his readers. His appeal is rooted in the Risen Lord and whose word now consoles the grieved members. According to Malherbe, the pagan world has also offered consolation by the advice of wise men. For the believers, Paul now provides the basis to encourage one another based on the Word of the Lord¹¹. The living God continues to communicate through an agency, in this case, Paul. Here, ὥστε introduces this aspect. From the eschatological point of view according to Malherbe, ὥστε is also found in 1 Cor 15:58 (cf. 1 Cor 4:5; 10:12; 11:33; Phil 2:12; 4:1)¹².

Among numerous meanings of παρακαλέω, here it refers to instil someone with courage or cheer, comfort, encourage or cheer up. Further, in this context, it can mean comfort someone with words or, in passive, be comforted, receive comforting words or favourable response¹³. More than the issues of translation of παρακαλέω between exhortation and consolation, there

⁹ There are views that 1 Thessalonians is a model for consolatory pattern in Paul's writings. The primary reason is consolation as a major aspect of Paul's pastoral concern. See David LUCKENSMYER, *The Eschatology of 1 Thessalonians*, p. 28; Juan CHAPA, *Is First Thessalonians a Letter of Consolation?*, p. 150-160; Abraham SMITH, *Comfort One Another*, p. 170; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 309-327; Hans JOSEF-KLAUCK, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament, A Guide to Content and Exegesis*, Waco, TX, Baylor University Press, 2006, p. 386.

¹⁰ Colin R. NICHOLL, *From Hope to Despair*, p. 13-14; Janusz KUCICKI, *Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 26-31.

¹¹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 278.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ BDAG 764-765, παρακαλέω 1-4. First, it means to ask to come and be present where the speaker is. Second, it indicates to urge strongly, appeal to, exhort, encourage as is the case in 1 Thess 5:11. Third, it refers to making a strong request for something, request, implore, entreat. Finally, it means to instill someone with courage or cheer, comfort, or encourage, cheer up as is the case in 1 Thess 4:18. Here, it means console someone with words, or in passive be comforted or receive comforting words or a favorable response.

remains a significant focus ignored by the interpreters: an interlink between ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου in 4:15 to ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις in 4:18.

2.2.2 Παρακαλέω and Words of Comfort

The place of παρακαλέω in the Pauline homologoumena is quite significant. Reimund Bieringer¹⁴ in his study of παρακαλέω and παράκλησις, focuses on the Pauline homologoumena and contends that it occurs 40 times, including both in verb and noun form. As we have noted, in First Thessalonians, it appears eight times, and in this particular section, we are dealing with it occurs twice, namely in 4:18 and 5:11. In both these contexts, Bieringer ascribes to the translation as ‘comfort’ and not ‘encourage’ to the verb παρακαλέω. However, linking both references, “word of the Lord” and “comfort”, enables one to relook at the meaning of παρακαλέω.

We observe that Malherbe suggests “encourage” as a translation for παρακαλέω since the ancient world categorised consolation as an appeal. And this appeal is thought to be traditional in the sense that the wise people offered the words of consolation¹⁵. Further, Best considers that the exhortation is open to all Christians (1 Cor 14:3; Rom 12:8). Besides, the exhortation through community gatherings enables the believers to replace sorrow with consolation offered through the preaching of the Word¹⁶. It is Paul’s preaching context that occurs twice here in eschatological discourse. We have considered the eschatological address as one continuing unit to distinguish between consolation or comfort from encouragement or exhortation¹⁷. However, both dimensions heal the broken community and orient the community beyond the context of death and the anxieties concerning the Lord’s Day. This tension resolves both by the authority of ὁ λόγος κυρίου and παρακαλέω.

2.2.3 Παρακαλέω and Words of Exhortation

The context of παρακαλέω in 4:18 and 5:11 may reflect a larger picture. The meaning is more than merely to comfort. We see that παρακαλέω is with ὥστε in 4:18 and 5:11a, it is with διό. Thematically, both communicate the same, but Fee considers the latter to have more substantial weight¹⁸. For Malherbe, the appeal in 5:11a has a broader scope than in 4:18. It is in the sense that along with παρακαλεῖτε in 5:11a, οἰκοδομεῖτε follows it in 5:11b. Παρακαλέω both in 4:18 and 5:11 can mean comfort and encourage given the building up of the community. Marshall, with the metaphor of the church as a building, highlights the aspect of cooperation. Here, just as Paul tries to build up one another, each believer, in turn, responsibly contributes to building up the community by applying repeated exhortation¹⁹.

Hence, παρακαλέω means to urge strongly, appeal to, exhort, and encourage. Οἰκοδομέω means to help improve the ability to function in living responsibly and effectively, strengthen,

¹⁴ Reimund BIERINGER, *The comforted comforter: The meaning of παρακαλέω*, HTS: 2011.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Exhortation in First Thessalonians*, p. 238-256.

¹⁸ Gordon D. FEE, *Thessalonians*, p. 199.

¹⁹ Ian H. MARSHALL, *Thessalonians*, p. 142. He supports this comment with further references: 1 Cor 8:1; 10:23; 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26; Eph 4:12, 16, 29; cf. Rom 15:20; 1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; Eph 2:21; 1 Pet. 2:5, 7.

build up, or make one abler²⁰. Both the aspects of urging and building up are to take place in a specific manner. Both encouraging and building up depend upon λόγος κύριου and παρακαλέω. In the context given in 4:18, we have referred to Bieringer. He thinks that in First Thessalonians (4:18 and 5:11), παρακαλέω functions better with the translation “to comfort” than “to encourage”²¹. However, Bieringer does not emphasise enough this specific interlink that I have highlighted.

Malherbe depends on Greek literary sources to emphasise Paul’s paraenetic role with παρακαλέω²². On the contrary, Best proposes that the consolation appeal is open to all believers by preaching God’s word²³. I consider that this opinion is closer to the one suggested here and to the dynamics of social memory. Here, Paul intends the believers to grow beyond the issues concerning death, grief and the day of the Lord. We have indicated earlier that the wise men in the Graeco-Roman world offered words of consolation. Against these texts as examples, we see an alternative suggestion that Paul has shaped his consolatory message using Jewish traditions in First Thessalonians, especially in chapters four and five of the letter.

2.3 Παρακαλέω and Jewish Tradition

In terms of appeal, the eschatological discourse in First Thessalonians is unique to Paul. We do not find a similar text elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. 1 Cor 15:1-51) or secular literature. However, Juan Chapa²⁴ remarks that Paul has shaped an exhortation familiar to his readers. But at the same time, Paul is unique in constructing the narrative quite differently from other preachers of the secular context. The difference lies in the material used. In Chapa’s view, Paul is not providing information to his readers but consoling them²⁵. Chapa critiques the assumption that there are philosophical traditions from the Hellenistic background behind this passage. He is critical of this and provides the reason for this alleged assumption. For him, it stems from the consolatory pattern that the authors from the secular world used: “deceased has been snatched away by death (and)... is now dwelling with gods (and)... will be joined by those who are alive”²⁶.

For Chapa, 1 Thess 4:13-5:11 is closer to the Jewish tradition. He explains his argument with a specific distinction drawn between the consolatory pattern of the secular world and Paul. The appeal in the Graeco-Roman world depends upon the words of comfort provided by a friend. These words indicate the shared human experience, whereas Paul offers consolation based on Christ’s resurrection and His coming in the Thessalonians²⁷. Chapa also opines that contrary

²⁰ BDAG 696, οἰκοδομέω 3.

²¹ Reimund BIERINGER, *The comforted comforter: The meaning of παρακαλέω*, HTS: 2011.

²² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 278.

²³ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 202.

²⁴ Juan CHAPA, *Consolatory Patterns? 1 Thess 4,13. 18; 5,11*, p. 220-228.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

²⁷ Juan CHAPA, *Consolatory Patterns? 1 Thess 4,13. 18; 5,11*, p. 226.

to the secular context, there is an example of a consolatory narrative in the Jewish tradition (cf. 2 Mac 7: 5, 14, 20). The Maccabean text indicates elements of consolation based on the hope of the resurrection in the face of death²⁸. Though Chapa recognises the Jewish background, he has not rejected the Hellenistic consolatory patterns either. His comments are as follows: “Christian consolation springs from a Jewish root, which is approached by a Hellenistic man”²⁹. Similarly, though Chapa bases the source of consolation on the death and resurrection of Jesus, he has ignored the relation between ὁ λόγος κυρίου and παρακαλέω in the overall narrative context of First Thessalonians.

2.4 The Triad: Faith, Love, and Hope

In First Thessalonians, 4:18 and 5:11 with οἱ λόγοι, παρακαλέω and οἰκοδομέω serve the context of ὁ λόγος κυρίου in 4:15. We find similarly ἀναγινώσκω (read) in 5:27. The gospel, revealed by God and preached by the apostles (Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy), constitutes “these words” that the community possesses for mutual encouragement and building-up. The military metaphor in 5:8c, “put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation” (ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας) clearly express the dynamics of “believing and declaring” (πιστεύομεν and λέγομεν).

In continuation with Chapa³⁰, we find a clear reflection of a Christian consolation springing from Jewish roots. In chapter four (section 3.1), I have mentioned the significance of the military metaphor (cf. Isa 59, Wis 5:17-20; Eph 6:14)³¹. In the present section, I emphasise that the imagery intends more of Jewish roots and its dynamics of “believing and declaring”, particularly in the context of suffering and the Messiah’s return (but not a return from the exile). We see a Christian perspective of the prophetic consolation devoid of any connotation to particular land or ethnic backgrounds. In this context (5:8c), the triadic formula of faith, love and hope re-envision what triadic formula in 1:3 where “work, labour, and steadfastness” precede each element of the triad, respectively.

We realise that these three cardinal elements characterise the Christian vocation’s foundational attitude and establish a pathway toward eschatological election and salvation from the coming wrath (1:9-10; 5:9-10). However, the triadic formula of faith, love and hope is not unique to First Thessalonians (1:3 and 5:8). We identify the same in 1 Cor 13: 7 and 13 organised differently, giving a pivotal position to love. Gordon Fee regards this differential hierarchical order of the triad as a difficulty. Besides, he considers that the triad element is a familiar concept of

²⁸ Juan CHAPA, *Consolatory Patterns? 1 Thess 4,13. 18; 5,11*, p. 227-228 (2 Mac 7:5 — “the smoke from the pan spread widely, but the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die nobly”. 7:14 — “One cannot but choose to die at the hands of mortals and to cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him”. 7:20 — “The mother was especially admirable and worthy of honourable memory”).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 220-228.

³¹ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 166-168.

preaching among the early followers of Jesus³². Followingly, the entire Christian believers, new people jointly possess the earlier prophetic message (cf. Is 59:17) of faith, love, and hope.

Further, we note that Charles Barrett³³ describes the meaning of hope as endurance (cf. Rom 2:7). Accordingly, with persistence, the present existence derives meaning not by itself but in and through God. In simple words, it is faith in God that addresses the future. However, such a future is not by humanity but characterises a trust that awaits God's gifts. Barrett adds further that, along with faith and love, hope "supposes and expresses a genuine and therefore unalterable truth about God. God is faithful... one in whom faith properly rests"³⁴. However, faith plays a role in understanding hope. Gottfried Nebe³⁵ considers that hope requires its attention apart from faith. Besides, Fee comments that given the future as guaranteed by Jesus, the early followers of Christ are future-oriented persons³⁶.

Victor Furnish comments that it pertains to a kind of optimism that Paul wants to communicate using, "I think, or I believe in the place of I hope"³⁷. The problem between faith and hope also moves to the act of hope in 2 Cor 5:11-6:10. We see ἐλπίζω in 5:11, within the section of the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:11-13, 14-21). It also belongs to a broader coalition that comments on apostolic service (2 Cor 2:14-5:19). For Rudolf Bultmann, it denotes only the sense of "I think"³⁸. Furnish refers to Philip Edgcumbe Hughes by saying that Hughes prefers "I hope" in the place of "I believe"³⁹. Hughes wants to show that Paul is presenting his case as a genuine one, and consequently, Paul wants the Corinthian community to trust him. Here, there is a kind of persuasion that Paul denotes⁴⁰. Oppositely, for Murray Harris, "I think" has no place here, and he does not want in any way to dilute the significance of hope⁴¹.

The above opinions show that hope intricately links to faith but is also distinct from faith. A similar tension is also visible in its relation to the future. However, in 1 Thessalonians, we see that the triad formula complements hoping in the Lord and the coming future, the hope of salvation. In this way, the dynamics of believing and declaring (πιστεύομεν and λέγομεν) supply and constitute the form and content of hope in ways familiar to the writer. The community is already aware of the content (1:3), and Paul reconstructs the same given the eschatological narrative in 5:8.

³² Gordon D. FEE, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2014, p. 720.

³³ Charles K. BARRETT, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London, Black, 1968, p. 309.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Gottfried NEBE, *Hoffnung bei Paulus*, p. 9-13.

³⁶ Gordon D. FEE, *1 Corinthians*, p. 720-721.

³⁷ Victor P. FURNISH, *2 Corinthians*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 1984, p. 307; cf. *BDF*, §350.

³⁸ Rudolf BULTMANN, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, Erich DINKLER (ed.), Roy A. Harrisville (trans.), Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1985, p. 148-149.

³⁹ Victor P. FURNISH, *2 Corinthians*, p. 307; Philip E. HUGHES, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1973, p. 186-187.

⁴⁰ Philip E. HUGHES, *2 Corinthians*, p. 187; Victor P. FURNISH, *2 Corinthians*, p. 307.

⁴¹ Murray J. HARRIS, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2005, p. 414.

2.5 Παρακαλέω and Graeco-Roman Social Milieu

According to Chapa, the Jewish tradition is behind the consolatory pattern in this eschatological discourse. However, Chapa has not ignored the influence of Greek consolatory ways. I have already referred to Malherbe that Greek literature provides a particular link to consolatory patterns, mostly consoling words by wise persons. They offer consolation for a few reasons: the death of a relative or friend or loss of property. But according to Malherbe, Paul has not followed the Greek consolatory pattern of writing. However, Paul resembles the extant ancient Greek consolatory patterns of hortatory features of exhortation⁴².

Moving away from the ancient literary sources, Ascough treats the question of grief among the Thessalonian believers quite differently. For him, the issue is not personal salvation but belongingness⁴³. In this way, the primary focus is on surveying this issue from the social context of Paul's eschatological description. Ascough cites high mortality rates and fewer survival chances for several reasons (mainly wars and diseases) as a shared social factor. It shows that the persons died without anyone from the family to perform their burial rites, and, as a result, they depended on associations. The ancient burial practices and tomb inscriptions reflect a language that relies on social differentiation and stratification in the old associations. The associations practically have a role in asserting the group's identity within the larger context of the society and have used burial events as a significant factor for social construction⁴⁴.

According to Ascough, Paul's offer of hope within the eschatological discourse intends to build up the corporate life of the believers in Christ. In this regard, Paul focuses on the grief that has affected the larger community and the deceased believers. In this process, Paul expresses the intention of building the corporate entity of the believers by encouraging them to a life of holiness⁴⁵. Ascough's observation drives the point that one needs to go beyond the status of the deceased members and consequent grief mentioned in the eschatological discourse to understand παρακαλέω. However, he has not recognised the interactive dimension between λόγος κύριου and παρακαλέω in the overall context of the letter.

In Chapter Two, concerning the form and structure of First Thessalonians, I have explained different methodological approaches to the letter: thematic, epistolary, rhetoric and subtypes, and social-scientific studies. Notably, we have examined Abraham Malherbe's epistolary paraenetic application. We have also indicated that Margaret Mitchell and Ben Witherington critique Malherbe's approach⁴⁶. In response, Witherington proposes an epideictic rhetorical application in his commentary using a socio-rhetorical method. He compares the letter with several ancient Greek classical works emphasising that Paul's letters are mainly "to be heard, not

⁴² Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Exhortation in First Thessalonians*, p. 238-256; *id.*, *Thessalonians*, p. 279-280, 285-286.

⁴³ Richard S. ASCOUGH, *A Question of Death*, p. 509-530.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 515-519.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 521.

⁴⁶ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Review Essay: Abraham J. Malherbe*, p. 54; Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 16-21; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 78-86.

read”⁴⁷. His commentary is a helpful reference to the classical Greek literary works and introduces the epideictic genre to understand the oral context of the audience than the authorial. He proposes this subgenre, arguing that it primarily concerns testimony and appreciation rather than argumentation and proofs. Besides, he emphasises that there is more than mere appreciation on the side of the audience. They are reminded of what they know already, of truth and virtues⁴⁸. In this regard, consolation and comfort are characteristics of the entire community.

Further, I refer to Ezra Jaekyung Cho⁴⁹, who examines the application of ἀρπάζω⁵⁰ in Greek literary sources and funeral orations and has emphasised its value in restraining grief. He proposes that we read First Thessalonians as an epideictic funerary oration. But Cho’s proposal comes with a rider or with an inner contradiction. According to Cho, even though Paul employs elements of epideictic rhetoric to persuade the community, the letter itself is not a funerary oration. But the entire thesis claims otherwise and progresses with this self-contradictory precaution. In this scheme, the letter consists of four main parts⁵¹: *exordium* (1:2-3), narration (1:4–3:10), *probation/exhortation* (4:1–5:15) and *peroration*. An *exordium* includes the *topoi* of *nomos* (law and traditions) and *logos* and *epainos* (deeds). The *encomium* (hymn) focuses on praising to courageous acts of the deceased. In this oratory, the *encomium* (homage/hymn) of a person is the primary *topoi*. It centres on a person’s origin, homeland and works. The notion of *praxis* (πρᾶξις) is essential to this type of rhetoric. It refers to values related to mind (courage and prudence), body (beauty, swiftness, and strength), soul (fortune, power, and wealth, friends) and finally applies comparison (συγκρίσις). We see this dynamism in the final appeal by Paul. In 1 Thess 5:23, Paul mentions body, soul and spirit, mainly focussing on sanctification.

Remarkably, this study includes a broader explanation of epideictic rhetoric⁵². I explain as follows:

- a) The epideictic rhetoric expresses under the banner of panegyric, eulogy and encomium.
- b) The epideictic rhetoric is a general form that embraces all non-judicial or forensic types and non-deliberative oratory.
- c) The epideictic rhetoric is synonymous with the oratory of display or demonstrative oratory or ceremonial oratory.
- d) The epideictic rhetoric as a form of oratory closely resembles poetic style and function.

In other words, the epideictic genre includes all different types of rhetoric that are strictly non-judicial and non-argumentative. The consolatory pattern belongs to this category. In this regard, Cho’s work refers to several Graeco-Roman literary works from antiquity up to the fourth

⁴⁷ Ben WITHERINGTON III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. xiii.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴⁹ Ezra Jaekyung CHO, *Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians in Light of Ancient Funeral Oration*, Eugene, OR, Pickwick Publications, 2020, p. 1-24.

⁵⁰ BDAG 134, ἀρπάζω 2.b (to take or snatch away unresisted).

⁵¹ Ezra Jaekyung CHO, *Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians*, p. 1-51.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 36-51

century CE. The study involves historical-rhetorical criticism and looks at the Greek classical literary works, handbooks of rhetoric, and consolatory commonplaces. It provides a comparison with First Thessalonians. The study also claims that Paul's style suggests that the Parousia overcomes mortal separation⁵³. There is a comparison with Plutarch's *Consolation ad Uxorem* (Consolation to His Wife, 608C–D) on restraining grief ("Only, my dear wife, in your emotion keep me as well as yourself within bounds")⁵⁴. We also find a reference to Dio Chrysostom⁵⁵.

Though this study proposes integrating Graeco-Roman and Jewish consolatory patterns, we hardly identify any primary focus on this subject, except a minute discussion on the Fourth Maccabees⁵⁶. Occasionally, we see instances supporting a mirror reading of First Thessalonians⁵⁷. At the same time, the study takes note of the repetitive comparison or contrast in the letter on a general level and provides very little explanation⁵⁸. Notably, chapter seven focuses on imperial funerary motifs and processions. It deals with Jesus' triumphal Parousia and the funerary language focussing on ἀρπάζω in 1 Thess 4:17. Remarkably, there is an emphasis on the "we" dimension signifying collectivism⁵⁹.

Conclusion

I have briefly analysed the meaning of παράκλησις and παρακαλέω and their relevance for ἐλπίς in First Thessalonians and particularly their significance in the eschatological discourse. We have seen divergent interpretations regarding the relationship between λόγος κύριου and παρακαλέω. I have highlighted comfort, exhortation, Greek consolatory patterns, Jewish traditions, and Graeco-Roman social milieu. We have seen some inconsistencies that inadequately explain the significance and the role of παρακαλέω. That through this study, we can assume a relationship between λόγος κύριου and παρακαλέω. The interactive dynamism enhances understanding Paul's authority and pattern of παρακαλέω in First Thessalonians and particularly in the eschatological discourse. These open dynamics enable us to explore the other elements that the letter displays. As follows, I explain a theological concept of hope appealing to the social memory model, particularly the communicative type. Besides, we see how the temporal, spatial, and communitarian dimensions shape our understanding of hope.

3. A THEOLOGY OF HOPE IN 1 THESSALONIANS

In First Thessalonians, we see a popular way of construing Christian hope based on the second coming of Christ along with the eschatological judgment. The judgment mainly concerns the enemies of God's people. The enemies not only reject the gospel but have persecuted God's people. The suffering context and the fulfilment of the salvific promise dominate the

⁵³ Ezra Jaekyung CHO, *Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians*, p. 25-35.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 154-171.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 202-233.

eschatological times and its narrative of hope. Besides, hope and the Parousia constitute the collective consciousness. Paul builds the group's cohesiveness that reconstructs the past through a theology of hope by negation. The Thessalonian believers moved away from idols and embraced a true God (1:9–10). Yet, they have not entirely moved away from their old ways, old ties, and old networks proved over time in Thessalonica. Paul has founded their Christian collective consciousness by a logic of opposition by compatriots (2:14–16). He readopts it in 4:5 (like the Gentiles who do not know God) and in 4:13 (as others do who have no hope). Paul has localised their social opposition and collective distress (being persecuted in 1:6; 2:2, 14; 3:7; being separated in 2:17; 3:1, 5; being shaken by persecutions in 3:3–4).

In Paul's writing of First Thessalonians, we notice a mechanism of dual representation of memory, retrieving the past in the present and reconstructing the past for the present. Besides, the process involves an act of contrary portrayals. In this regard, the dual representation consists of antitheses that reflect the contrary realities of Christ-followers and the others in Thessalonica. The past of the Christ-followers has attained a traditional form. The form refers to the turning away from idols for the sake of turning toward the living God. Paul retrieves this information and communicates the same repeatedly to the community employing antithetical and contrast parallels (dualistic features, binaries, or polarities). The contrary portrayals of the community and those opposed to their faith are reinforced in the discourse. In this process, constructive negations establish the positive dimension, hope on the side of the believers. The strategy highlights that the believers have turned away from idols and impurity. They prepare to face blamelessly the coming God. These dynamics consist of God, Paul and co-workers, and the community, including those who have died. The process also constitutes the contrary reality, the elements of hopelessness (idols, false teachers, others, impurity, grief, and wrath).

This dynamism, a theology of hope by negation, is outlined in First Thessalonians, enabling the followers to endure the existent hope despite the suffering and wait patiently for the revealing aspects of hope, the coming of the Lord. The material objects of memory (God, Paul, and community) and the formal properties of memory (time, space, and language) in First Thessalonians, especially in 4:13–5:11, function as the frameworks of social memory and explain a theological concept of hope. In the letter, we cannot have a single explanation of hope. Hope functions as a metonymy. It stands for belongingness to Jesus (word and person in all episodes) and refers to hope's foundational experience. It is an eschatological already and not-yet, a natural and visionary hope of salvation.

To define the theological concept of hope, I follow three steps. The first one is a spatial approximation and concerns the antithetical arrangement of the content. It is a balanced arrangement of the contrasting units. I show how the clustering of similar conceptual terms refers to the content of the eschatological hope. Second, I explain temporal nearness. We look at the negated forms indicating temporality, namely, not only but also, do not, and either–or negation. Third, I show a free flow of oral and written media transmission like the communicative memory in 1 Thessalonians.

In general, our efforts to articulate hope in the eschatological discourse also recognise the past contributions concerning the background for the Pauline corpus, both missionary and social contexts replete with opposition, suffering and persecution. Ferdinand Baur⁶⁰ refers to Paul and his opponents as an interpretative tool. Paul's letters received much attention from this perspective⁶¹. At present, studies on Paul's and Thessalonians' social background continue with certain modifications⁶². In place of opponents in the Thessalonians, studies focus more on general suffering, persecution and social dislocation. These are closely related to the other concerns of the structural, formal and rhetorical units and their characteristic features⁶³. Presently, Karl Donfried⁶⁴ proposes a possible connection between the persecution and death of some Thessalonian believers (1Thess 4:13). In this context, I suggest that Paul's structural issues and narrative scheme regarding the letter composition, purpose, and transmission are twofold. First, they bring to the forefront the context and intentional character of the author and its reception among the community; second, we see that a broader cultural context influences the eschatological community to develop its unique narrative content.

The results of the previous chapters are considered here to apply the social memory model (cultural, collective). It is to construct a theology of hope in the letter. An exegetical study showed that the formal and paraenetic structures facilitate several subunits. However, they are not necessarily limited by them. As a result, a focus on the subunits of the discourse for their available content has helped us relate and distinguish hope and grief (1 Thess 4:13). It has enabled a dismissal of the categorical bias. It refers to a definite division of humanity into two. It is not a pejorative attribution. That is, it is not a literal but metaphorical division of society. I consider that both phenomena of hope and grief are equally pertinent for a theology of hope based on the discourse and the letter in general.

For First Thessalonians, James Ware⁶⁵ in *Synopsis of the Pauline Letters in Greek and English*, thematically includes several units of the letter in respect to "the second coming of Christ", with a minor or significant focus (1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11; 5:23). These units are both eschatological and apocalyptic. Eschatological concerns the 'last things' and apocalyptic, as the invisible 'last things' are revealed using apocalyptic literary features. Paul applies these motifs with different rhetorical contrasts, antithetical elements and so forms a language of hope that is both literal and metaphorical. These features categorically represent the believers and the others as two opposed groups. Notable features of this supposed opposition are substantially

⁶⁰ Ferdinand C. BAUR, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ-1*, p. 1-2.

⁶¹ Stanley E. PORTER, *How Do We Define Pauline Social Relations?*, p. 7-34.

⁶² L. Gregory BLOOMQUIST, *Methodological Criteria for Apocalyptic Rhetoric, A Suggestion for the Expanded Use of Sociorhetorical Analysis*, in Greg CAREY and L. Gregory BLOOMQUIST (eds), *Vision and Persuasion, Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse*, St. Louis, Missouri, Chalice, 1999, p. 181-203; Karl P. DONFRIED, *The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonica Correspondence*, p. 336-356; John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 131-153.

⁶³ Karl P. DONFRIED and Johannes BEUTLER (eds), *The Thessalonians Debate: Methodological Discord or Methodological Synthesis?*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2000.

⁶⁴ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-114.

⁶⁵ James P. WARE, *Synopsis of the Pauline Letters in Greek and English*, p. 160-161.

qualitative and explain hope in the letter. So, from this general perspective, I move to the letter and the discourse itself to describe hope. In the following paragraph, I indicate where all in the letter Paul speaks of hope.

Paul, in First Thessalonians, refers to hope (ἐλπίς) within the context of remembering, the anamnesis⁶⁶. In 1:3, we see “steadfastness of hope” (τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος): “Constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ”. In 2:19, Paul proposes that believers are his hope at the coming of the Lord (“For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?”). In 1 Thess 4:13, Paul describes the others with no hope: “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope”. In 5:8, Paul indicates hope as the hope of salvation (ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας): “But 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”.

The four citations provided here attest that the subject of hope has diverse articulations. We can only say that “hope” remains a characteristic mark throughout. It has several aspects in focus. First, it points to the remembrance of the believers’ origin. Second, it connects Paul to believers and vice versa. Third, hope distinguishes believers from others in surrounding culture; finally, salvation is predicated through Jesus’ events and common Parousia. These descriptions have both positive and negative features. Positively, they turn to hope amidst grief and conflict. The early Christ-followers in Thessalonica met an oppressive majority culture. They faced persecution and a hostile environment⁶⁷. In such instances, Paul alludes to suffering but does not mention it explicitly. He wraps it in implicit polemics. He notes persecution and suffering that he and his followers experienced (1:6; 2:2, 14; 3:3, 7; 4:13). Followingly, their suffering and persecution, and even the death of some members, urge Paul to explain hope differently.

Paul writes to the Thessalonian believers recollecting their memories of association. He encourages them in a specific manner. The appeal contains several rhetorical contrasts. They point out how both Paul and the community evolve dynamically to reconstruct the present and future. Their past, as well as their life amidst afflictions, derive a new dimension. In other words, Paul’s exhortation functions as a counter-narrative. It reconstructs the group’s social memory based on the ongoing conversation between Paul and his readers in their challenging times. The counter-narrative strengthens believers’ perception of the past, present and future by distinguishing themselves from those opposed to them⁶⁸. The eschatological discourse plays out these dynamics.

The perception of the plurality of memory construction recognises that one negotiates the conversations through several moments: temporally and spatially. The plurality of social

⁶⁶ Régis BURNET, *L’anamnèse: structure fondamentale de la lettre paulinienne*, p. 57-69.

⁶⁷ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-114.

⁶⁸ Judith LIEU, *Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory*, p. 137.

memory with its several moments in constructing the past and the present because of the future events helps us build a theology of hope drawing from the content and context of First Thessalonians. The discourse has several antithetical features. They constitute several moments and construct content to communicate hope. They also point to believers' memory and identity. Through these dynamics, Paul comforts and builds up his emerging community. Paul and his readers together constitute their memories of the past, present and future. Their understanding of hope reflects this fashion.

3.1 Hope – A General Perspective

To describe or articulate an experience, one begins from a general framework to the particular or vice versa. In communicating both the public and specific occasions, we do not merely use words but fill them with the emotions that we consider essential. These dynamics, choosing relevant terms with apt feelings, play out in our daily life. They involve several systems of frameworks that shape our ideas, notions and concepts, using various backgrounds for an intended audience. So, how does Paul articulate 'hope' and, in particular, how do we theologise 'hope' in First Thessalonians? Is 'hope' merely a word, having a meaning just like any other word in a language system or a 'word' that embodies the incredibly significant outlook of a group, a community, a nation and a civilisation at large in one or several moments of history? In other words, our articulation of 'hope' may have several bases: our physical life and age differences, our daily routine and the work we do, our socio-cultural backgrounds and the institutions that constitute our belongingness. They influence our ways and means to understand 'hope'. These experiences encode the phenomenon of hope from several backgrounds.

3.2 Literal – Metaphorical

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson⁶⁹ consider that the experiential basis is a must to represent the metaphors adequately. Lakoff and Johnson outline the dynamic nature of the orientational metaphors and their several bases, including physical, social, and cultural. Our daily experience may point to 'hope' as an 'upward' moving in this background⁷⁰. It implies that an 'upward' movement may indicate our physical – emotional – social-cultural levels and representations. Paul writes exhortatively to the Thessalonian believers urging them to follow a particular mode of life. For this purpose, he employs antithetical features and rhetorical contrasts. They represent the believers' upward movement toward Christ at the Parousia. The rhetorical distinctions represent the believers' life until they participate in the Parousia. Their positive representation is categorical. That several metaphors in contrast pairing embody the perception of hope by the Thessalonian Christ-followers. Hence, to describe 'hope' is to bring together and explain those terms proximate to the letter's word order. In other words, we take 'hope' as a content word⁷¹

⁶⁹ George LAKOFF and Mark JOHNSON, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago/London, The University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 19.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14-15.

⁷¹ Anne MCCABE, *An Introduction to Linguistics and Language Studies*, Sheffield/Bristol, Equinox, 2017, p. 438-441. A content word in grammatical sense is an open-ended class whose list is never fixed: a noun, an adjective,

and relate it to the words that approximate it spatially. It is an analysis of a subject-object-process mechanism and also a sociocultural framework using the social memory model⁷².

3.2.1 *The Language of Hope and Parousia*

Paul articulates ‘hope’ using several rhetorical contrasts. The contrasts are metaphorical but primarily highlight eschatological character. Lakoff and Johnson⁷³ consider that metaphor and metonymy are mainly for understanding. The metaphor refers to an entity concerning others, while metonymy has referential value and points out a distinctive characteristic of the entity of its reference. In other words, it refers to the traditional rhetorical device called *synecdoche*. It relates to “the part stands for the whole”⁷⁴. Metaphor helps us to perceive one thing in terms of another. Lakoff and Johnson state as follows: “Metonymy... usually has a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to stand for another”⁷⁵. They explain this viewpoint of metonymy with the example, “the face for the person”⁷⁶. The facial portrait of a person would sufficiently illustrate how a person appears. It has referential value and can efficiently function as a substitute for the person.

Similarly, hope as a metonymy stands for all that entails the Lord’s coming (Parousia), for the believers and the others. For the believers with the Lord’s descent, the deceased believers have the resurrection reality, and along with the remaining, will assemble with the Lord. On the contrary, the others obtain wrath (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9-10). However, hope is also metaphorical because it represents believers in terms of the other. Notably, it is a contrary mechanism by negation. The believers have hope, and others do not; in this way, as a metaphor, it is also a material entity that the believers possess. It refers to that they are not to grieve (4:13). It has a cultural injunction that their sobriety is physically visible. So, as much as metaphorical, it is also categorical and shows an essential sociological characteristic. It defines the inherent dynamism of the community in opposition to the outsiders and stands as a representative character for the broader surroundings.

Paul attributes a higher value to the community and affirms their network in Macedonia and Achaia. Therefore, the dynamic nature of hope is not specific to the Thessalonian community alone but spatially distributed. Hope is characteristic of all Christ-followers. Paul and the community seriously engage with the reality of eschatological hope. It progresses in a telescopic manner of nearness (immanence, suddenness). They testify to it, trying to see and experience what – when – how of the future. Due to a perceived delay of the Lord’s coming, “nearness”

a verb or an adverb. It is different from a function word that is close-ended, the list remains fixed. A functional word has very little semantic content and express only grammatical relationships. It refers the articles, auxiliary or pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions. See also, Richard A. YOUNG, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, Nashville, TN, Broadman and Holman, 1994, p. 148. Here, a substantive is a word or groups of words in the place of a noun.

⁷² The social memory model by Maurice Halbwachs and others looks at memory essentially a social construction, that one remembers the past constructively. That is, one actively engages the past as one remembers it.

⁷³ George LAKOFF and Mark JOHNSON, *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 36.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36-37.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

receives more considerable attention⁷⁷. However, the Parousia, as a “telescopic manner of nearness”, materialises a categorical representation. It refers to the believers’ social reality in troubled times both within and outside. Internally, with the death of individual members, the community is in grief. Externally, they now experience social dislocation and an oppressive environment due to cultural differences⁷⁸.

Richard Young relates metaphorical association to a *synecdoche*. Its effect can be causal, spatial, temporal and attributive⁷⁹. For example, the expression “Love is in the air” is metaphorical. It can refer to the lovers or partners who want to get married. It also refers to the feeling of the vibes of romance and the like. It not only refers to the mood but also the surrounding physical events and locations.

Similarly, the expression “caught up in the air” (1 Thess 4: 15-17) may point to the ascension and descent of Jesus, both as an event and experience of the disciples handed over to the community for the present and future. It may also refer to Paul’s individual experience in the Damascus event⁸⁰. In this way, as an imprint of memory, this logion could have formed the cultural and religious narrative of the developing community of Christ-followers. The eschatological discourse is paraenetic in nature. It points to an oral and written character of Paul’s communication (memory). Both could have functioned simultaneously as a new location for the believers as they experienced suffering, death, and a more extensive social dislocation⁸¹.

We have demonstrated that the social memory model has several types (social, collective, communicative, and cultural). However, I take it as a methodological whole for our purpose. Its constructive role of past as remembered past and inter-fluential (past, present, future), the place of memory, its keying and framing techniques, and mimetic emphasis contribute significantly to our understanding of image, icon, sign, symbol, metaphor, and identity. All of these words are not only referential but strongly associated with hope⁸².

3.2.2 Symbolic and Metaphorical Nature of Hope

Hope is both a symbol and a metaphor for the community. Paul perceives the Thessalonian believers as his hope (you are our hope, 1 Thess 2:19). He speaks of hope within a broader outline of the triad of faith, love and hope. We see the triadic application in 1 Thess 1:3 and 5:8. In 1:3, we read “the work of faith, the labour of love and the endurance of hope”. In 5:8, we see “the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation”. These expressions point to ‘hope’ both as a symbol and metaphor. The application of hope in a broader sense requires nuances in our reflection on these statements by Paul.

⁷⁷ Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 159-178. By application of millenarian piety, he describes the Thessalonian believers as enthusiasts.

⁷⁸ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-114.

⁷⁹ Richard A. YOUNG, *Intermediate New Testament Greek*, p. 238.

⁸⁰ Seyoon KIM, *The Jesus Tradition*, p. 225-242.

⁸¹ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-114.

⁸² It is a synthesis of the social memory model as a whole including the contributions from Maurice Halbwachs, Jan Assmann, Pierre Nora and Barry Schwartz.

We know that our languages function very much on a constructive social basis⁸³. We perceive, analyse and interpret ordinary events through language as supplied by our social institutions. While it is helpful to consider that our everyday language is metaphorical⁸⁴, not all language reality we deal with is workable with metaphorical observation. There are elements of meta-language. For example, the eschatological language goes beyond the metaphorical. That is, the metaphorical nature of language is very much dependent upon the experiential basis. Experiences help us to perceive that metaphors are for our understanding. However, there are elements of speech that are dependent upon social frameworks and significant occasions in life⁸⁵. A symbolic and cultic language that deals with meta-experiences go beyond space and time, such as a mystical union with God.

3.2.3 Experience: Ordinary and Mystic

Humanity does not merely feel but experiences itself. That is, our ordinary life grounded in experience passes through a prism: individual and social life, private and professional life, material and spiritual life. These experiences, when communicated through a language, must cohere to our perception of ordinary life events. Language is very much dependent upon the space and time dimension that is already coherent within a society. Society provides us with the frameworks needed for our perception. These frameworks already existent within the socially constructed reality allow the ordinary language to go beyond its boundary. Space and time dimensions help a language be symbolic and go beyond representational, like in mystical union. This union transforms two realities into one, and a complete coherence exists even without a word uttered.

When we look at the heavenly bodies, they are a distant reality. However, when we observe them through a telescope, the distance reduces, the limits go off, approximate a tangible experience, and almost live that reality in an absolute sense. The spatial location is beyond reach yet actual. The time dimension is vast yet dynamic; we virtually experience and live that already existent but the future reality in our present times. We suppose that hope tends to function in that telescopic manner. It is like that telescopic instrument which we hold (not in the sense of helmet of the hope of salvation, 1 Thess 5:8) in a real sense both as an entity and experience. The believers potentially benefit from the death and resurrection of Jesus, and by His Parousia, they have a destiny for a higher honour. Moreover, through the hope that they can live that reality in their present times irrespective of the social dislocation and sufferings they endure.

3.3 Historical – Social

The origin of the community is traceable in the opening formula of the letter. Paul grounds historically the basis of the community in the Trinity (1:1). At the same time, Paul mentions a transformative turn in the believers' lives that "they turned away from idols to serve the true

⁸³ Peter L. BERGER and Thomas LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality*, p. 13, 207-211.

⁸⁴ George LAKOFF and Mark JOHNSON, *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 3.

⁸⁵ Peter L. BERGER and Thomas LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality*, p. 77-79.

and living God” (1: 3, 9-10). Both accounts are historically grounded on a socially constructed reality of the community with “before and after dimension”. Their contact with Paul and his preaching has drawn them away from their previous lifestyle dominated by idol worship.

Moreover, their new faith experience shows that they are now in touch with the living God Jesus and His life-saving events. Paul highlights such historical narrative experiences as a background to raise the level of the community from their broader context to the eschatological, into the higher realms of understanding the gospel. Materially, one experiences and constructs a narrative of hope grounded in the life of Jesus, his death, resurrection, and his coming, the Parousia.

When Paul writes them, reminding them not to grieve like others who have no hope (1 Thess 4:13), this paraenetic unit denotes an exhortative memory present already in the community but now falls short due to the death of some. It shows that this type of memory is communicative. Additionally, it is exhortative, a course correction to the memory rooted in the believers’ previous cultural background. Therefore, the community might look at events at critical periods, possibly interpreting them from the cultural sources they belonged to previously. So, the grief that Paul perceives of the community is not merely emotional but could be a ceremonial one to which they had an acquaintance once⁸⁶. It is clear that by exhortation, Paul does not pass a direct judgment on the community, but the opposition’s ploy might function both as a literal and cultural background of the discourse.

The anthropological comparison between the believers and the others concerning hope is not a strict sense of a natural phenomenon but a meta-reality that defines the community’s inner dimension and destiny. It is possible to perceive that the community lacks the information required to interpret the new happenings. However, Paul is familiarising them with the hope to comprehend their new reality through new religious and cultural notions⁸⁷. The historical interpretation of the text presents us with differing views: that the community lacks information, does not understand, and that the prohibition functions only as a reminder⁸⁸. In the present context, it is a paraenesis as a whole. It demonstrates a unique language that has ethical, eschatological, and apocalyptic imagery and content. Both paraenesis and language are at play to console the community. Paul encourages the members “to console one another with these words” (4:18; 5:11). These words conclude the two subunits that primarily refer to the hope of the community. Hence, hope depicts a broader context of the letter. The eschatological discourse mainly indicates what “these words” mean to help the community that awaits the coming Lord.

⁸⁶ Robert JEWETT, *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 159-178; Richard S. ASCOUGH, *The Thessalonian Christian Community*, p. 311-328.

⁸⁷ Jan ASSMANN, *The Invention of Religion*, p. 1-7. He considers the foundational memories and their narrative pieces as cultural texts with cultural meanings.

⁸⁸ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 180-181; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 262.

These words, through several images, construct a forward-orientated hope. This movement is specific to their social condition, categorical, and plays out both in a literary and metaphorical sense. Both 4:18 and 5:11, along with 4:14 with 1:8 and 5:27, show a forward and backward movement. They orient to a significant direction to understand that the Word of God has a direct link to the words spoken about in the community. They relate spatially and temporally. Hence, the signs of time, hope, joy, grief, and humanity's suffering reorient the proclaimed message⁸⁹. These moments are reflective when Paul applies the triad formula and mentions grace, joy, hope, rejoicing, and blamelessness. They are evenly spread in terms of occurrences (distributive spatially and temporally). There are several terms in proximity in the letter that link the theological content of hope. They point to hope and grief, sober and drunk, awake and asleep, joy and idleness. Besides, we also see qualitative and quantifying representations (children of light, children of the day).

3.4 Categorical – Rhetorical

The discourse paraenetic in nature⁹⁰ has several rhetorical contrasts and antithetical features. They function categorically, which means that they represent two categories of people. This distinction between people under two types is mostly pejorative⁹¹, rhetoric⁹², and exclusive⁹³. The interpretations lead to a narrative of “hope” unique to First Thessalonian Christ-followers. Here, hope intends to comfort and build up the community: a) with the endurance of hope (1:3), and b) hope of salvation (5:9). It means that “hope” not only signifies an inside-outside view of the community but also points to the dimension of “with the Lord”. That is, all of Paul's communication to the Thessalonians embraces the narrative of hope in space and time. Paul actively shapes a new location for the Thessalonians with a renewed time dimension in spatial and temporal terms. The believers' past, present, and future are at the service of the community and its salvation (1 Thess 1:9-10; 5:9-10). Paul tends to use a specific community background to remind the believers that they will not fall back to the old system in terms of their past. Paul strengthens his bond with the followers with a theology of election in its temporal and eschatological sense. In that way, they participate with the Lord at the present moment, leading to a specific unfolding of the future. The critical periods of their life, like birth and death, are brought to the fore using natural events like light and darkness, day and night, watchfulness and slumber, sobriety and drunkenness, and consolation and grief.

⁸⁹ *Gaudium et Spes*, 2; Jan ASSMANN, *The Invention of Religion*, 1-7; Charles A. WANAMAKER, *Epistolary vs. Rhetorical Analysis: Is a synthesis Possible?*, in Karl P. DONFRIED and Johannes BEUTLER (eds), *The Thessalonians Debate: The Methodological Discord or Methodological Synthesis?*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2000, p. 255-286.

⁹⁰ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 180; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 81.

⁹¹ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 131-153.

⁹² Raymond F. COLLINS, *Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation*, p. 154-172.

⁹³ Karl P. DONFRIED, *Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus*, p. 81-114.

4. ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCOURSE AND HOPE

4.1 Eschatological Tone and Apocalyptic Motif

First Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 has both an eschatological tone and an apocalyptic motif. This unit is a paraenesis and consists of two subsections (4:13-18; 5:1-11)⁹⁴. As a whole, chapters four and five together compose the paraenetic structure of the letter.

The eschatological texts under consideration are: 1 Thess 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11; 5:23⁹⁵. Besides, in the letter, *περί* denotes the essential concerns of Christ-followers (1:2, 9; 3:9, 4:6, 9, 13; 5:1, 25). It characterises the existence of the developing community. We see that *περί* δέ (4:9; 5:1) interlinks central themes in the Pauline letters as well as here, referring to *περί* τῶν κοιμωμένων (about those who have died, 4:13c)⁹⁶. Also, in First Thessalonians, the eschatological discourse (apocalyptic disclosures) occupies a central stage (4:13- 5:11)⁹⁷. The discourse with its two subsections (4:13-18 and 5:1-11) has a doctrinal character and is closely parallel in many ways. They exhibit parallel introductory formulas (4:13 and 5:1), similar literary features within the body of text (4:14-17 and 5:2-10) and an appeal that concludes each subsection (4:18 and 5:11)⁹⁸. On several occasions, in the first section of the letter (1:2–3:13) that focuses on thanksgiving, Paul profusely employs personal pronouns to highlight a close relationship with his readers. Similarly, Paul repeats the process in the final section (*προσεύχεσθε [καί] περί ἡμῶν*, 5:25) of the letter. Hence, *περί* becomes a binding force within the letter, and as a literary style imprints a strong autobiographical note from Paul to the community continually⁹⁹. Besides, autobiographical notes are primarily foundational, become collective and constitute the communicative memory before shaping a cultural whole.

Such an association between *περί* and personal pronouns (*περί πάντων ὑμῶν* in 1:2; *περί ἡμῶν* in 1:9; *περί ὑμῶν* in 3:9; cf., *προσεύχεσθε [καί] περί ἡμῶν* in 5:25) has a bearing on the eschatological discourse, both *περί* in 4:6 and *περί* δέ in 4:9 contextualising love within and outside the community using ethical exhortation (*περί πάντων τούτων* in 4:6 and *περί* δέ τῆς φιλαδελφίας in 4:9). Further, we observe that *περί* δέ (4:9; 5:1), which is technically an epistolary form, introduce essential topics and sandwiches *περί* τῶν κοιμωμένων (about those who have died, 4:13c)¹⁰⁰. Hence, *περί* predominantly associated with personal pronouns expands further to include the other dimension of the community, those who have died. Such a context reflects the community's concerns and their openness to the teachings of Paul and his companions.

⁹⁴ Ernest BEST, *Thessalonians*, p. 180; Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 81.

⁹⁵ James P. WARE, *Synopsis of the Pauline Letters in Greek and English*, p. 158-161.

⁹⁶ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Concerning περί δέ in 1 Corinthians*, p. 229-256.

⁹⁷ Raymond F. COLLINS, *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians*, p. 9.

⁹⁸ George MILLIGAN, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians*, p. 55.

⁹⁹ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *Thessalonians*, p. 103-106.

¹⁰⁰ Margaret M. MITCHELL, *Concerning περί δέ in 1 Corinthians*, p. 236, 253-254. See also Tracy L. HOWARD, *The Literary Unity of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11*, p. 163-190.

In First Thessalonians, we see that 4:16b completes 4:15¹⁰¹. The entire emphasis is on those who have died. It means to say that those who have died will rise first. Here, in the procession of the Parousia, those who have died are the first to be privileged, but this process concerns the entire community. Such a description reconstitutes the believers' place in the world amidst persecution and, at the same time, continues to highlight the privileged place of the community.

Further, it leads to enhanced self-description of the members as they await the coming of the Lord. They are not to grieve like others (4:13). They are children of the day and children of the light (5:5-6). They are to be sober and awake (5:7-8). They have a destiny of the hope of salvation. They, whether alive or asleep, will be with the Lord (4:9-10).

4.2 Thematic, Structural, and Formal Descriptions of Hope

4.2.1 Hope as Origin and Destiny

Rudolf Bultmann comments that what separated the Christ-followers from their surrounding culture in Thessalonica is their specific Christian hope. This hope traces its origin in Christ and looks forward to Christ and his coming¹⁰². According to Gottfried Nebe, hope is a denominator of the future invested with emotional and intentional aspects in its strong sense¹⁰³. For Horst Balz, hope introduces a criterion: those closer to Christ and those far away from Christ in the eschatological discourse¹⁰⁴. Abraham Malherbe¹⁰⁵ and Juan Chapa¹⁰⁶, through their analysis of the letter under consolatory patterns, view hope as consolation and comfort. They take the structural and formal character of the letter and assign a meaning to hope. These are all theological interpretations based upon the structural unity of the letter.

4.2.2 Hope – As a Dimension that is Lacking in Faith

Nils Dahl understands the Thessalonian context and its crisis of hope as “what is lacking in faith is the hope dimension”¹⁰⁷. Karl Donfried revises the scheme of Dahl’s views on οἶδατε formula as “superfluous rehearsals” to reconsider it as a component of advocacy. Consequently, the definition of hope is what is lacking in faith (then and now)¹⁰⁸. This reading reflects a direct influence of 3:6, where Timothy reports to Paul of Thessalonians’ faith and love. Here, the order of the triad formula (1:3; 5:8) is incomplete. Hope is missing in the good news report

¹⁰¹ 4:15 — “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” (Τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, ὅτι ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας), and 4:16b — “and the dead in Christ will rise first” (καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον).

¹⁰² Rudolf BULTMANN and Karl H. RENGSTORF, ἐλπίς, ἐλπίζω, p. 517-535

¹⁰³ Gottfried NEBE, *Hoffnung bei Paulus*, p. 10-12 and 29.

¹⁰⁴ Horst BALZ, *Early Christian Faith as ‘HOPE AGAINST HOPE’*, p. 31-32.

¹⁰⁵ Abraham J. MALHERBE, *The Thessalonians*, 262-265.

¹⁰⁶ Juan CHAPA, *Consolatory Patterns?*, p. 220-228.

¹⁰⁷ Karl P. DONFRIED, *The Thessalonian Debate*, p. 21. Donfried attests to Nils Dahl’s paper presentation to the SBL Paul Seminar in 1972 and has incorporated the same in his article (*The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonica Correspondence*, p. 336-356).

¹⁰⁸ Karl P. DONFRIED, *The Thessalonian Debate*, p. 21-24.

of Timothy to Paul about Thessalonians. If Donfried views and attributes the form of a “friendship letter” to First Thessalonians (especially 2:1-19) within epideictic rhetorics, then a statement on hope by Timothy need not be 1:3 (triad formula of faith, love and hope) but maybe his assessment of 4:13 (grief). So, reinforcing hierarchical order from the base (from first to the last) is in total contrast to 1 Cor 13:13. It is a progressive hierarchical order. However, it appears that there are other reasons (justification by faith) that reinstate the hierarchical order of the triad in the interpretation of the text, as found in First Thessalonians.

4.2.3 Hope – As Categorical Hope

John Barclay¹⁰⁹, by a socio-historical interpretation of 1 Thess 4:13, shows that Christian hope is categorical. Investing a pejorative sense in the division of humanity into two, Barclay traces the origin of Christian funerary rites and tomb inscriptions to 4:13. The sobriety, submitting grief to utter silence, procession by chanting hymns, inscribing biblical oversets on the tombs all appear to be a reception of the Christian communities to the present. While it seems a fitting commentary on the origin of present material traces of Christian funerary practices, it leaves much unanswered.

The current Christian funerary practices exhibit both continuity and discontinuity. Missing in this reading of the eschatological discourse by Barclay is the treatment of the body. Why place the body’s ash in urns and keep them within the garden of cemeteries replete with Christian symbols? Why immerse the ashes in the rivers and bury them in the mountains? Are modern funerary practices that emerged from environmental and land contingencies or imitation of courses spread across cultures? Practices alone do not show a clear distinction between conventions, adaptations, choices, or governed by civil and ecclesial laws? Such approaches could operate upon an overgeneralised, conscious or unconscious basis of culture. Historically tombs of the martyrs became cultic sites. Later as larger churches came to be, the dead found a place in proximity. However, with the multiplication of the churches when Christian culture got entrenched with Christian civilisation, tombs and churches got integrated depending upon the whose memory they wanted to preserve. Contemporary times show mixed signals and distancing from the symbols and images that once brought them together.

What is essential to discover is that, on the one hand, qualitative proximities and oppositions (hope and grief) either bring or separate people’s grouping; on the other, the quantitative representations like children of light or children of the day blur peoples’ perceptive world in the contemporary era. The categorical division proposed by Barclay need not be a scriptural adaptation but simply overriding the pre-existent cultures in a much later period.

4.2.4 Hope – As Being Saved from Wrath

Richard Ascough¹¹⁰ describes hope as salvation. It is a rescue from wrath (1 Thess 1:9; 5:8). His Thessalonian studies, along with Macedonian voluntary associations, place Christian

¹⁰⁹ John M. G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 131-153.

¹¹⁰ Richard S. ASCOUGH, *Paul’s Macedonian Associations*; id., *A Question of Death*, p. 224-225; id., *Paul’s ‘Apocalypticism’ and the Jesus Associations at Thessalonica and Corinth*, p. 151-186; id., *Redescribing the Thessalonians’ Mission in Light of Graeco-Roman Associations*, p. 61-82.

communities vis-à-vis more extensive voluntary associations. Two events mark the origin and destiny of the Christ-followers: turning away from idols and being rescued from wrath. His methodological approach rests on historical-comparative models derived from anthropological studies. It is commendable that the studies have contributed significantly to the possible manner of group structure and functioning within their social milieu.

Nevertheless, his definition of hope based on his reading scheme of 1:9 and 5:8 restricts the overall dynamics of hope. It supposes an association to idols and all that surrounds idol worship as wrath. In that case, it leaves out Paul and the community, the significance of Parousia, and other eschatological tones that relate closely to the dynamics of hope. Such a fallacy is noticeable in contemporary times. We see that modern secularisation reconsiders religious attitudes with a disassociative perspective. It distances from the idolised dominance of religion in the public sphere by civil institutions or ecclesiastical organs through civil institutions. It does not specify the idolised, institutionalised oppressive means of the State and religion incorporated on an individual entity. Here, the visible characteristics closely relate to the qualitative proximities and opposites. They intend a practice of religious attitudes. It does not consider the quantified representations. Notably, the community moves on influenced by culture, namely Christian civilisation, and not by an institutionalised Church. So, the epigraphic evidence of voluntary associations, especially funerary inscriptions of the associations, does have much to contribute to the Thessalonian believers' actual context and hope.

5. HOPE AND SOCIAL MEMORY MODEL

5.1 Memory And Compositional Process

In this section and the following, I take up “memory” as an interpretative tool. The descriptions of hope, treated in the preceding paragraphs, have reduced the phenomenon of hope to the methodological approaches the studies have adopted. It is noticeable by the adjective they assign to the definition of hope. Those are Christian, eschatological, apocalyptic, Parousia, paraenetic, rhetorical, and consolatory. This section progresses with an alternative proposition. It does not restrict the definition of hope by a simplistic term like the memory of hope or hope as a memory. I consider that the death and resurrection of Jesus set a clear differentiation in the literary composition. The accounts in 1 Thess 4:13 and 1 Cor 15:1-58 appeal to traditions. One functions as a prophetic revelation formula for the Lord's Word, while the other transmits from the apostolic tradition. Here, I consider that the eyewitness account of the appearances of the Lord is not merely a tradition for apostolic commission but relates more broadly to the apostolic authority.

However, they reveal a significant trend in literary composition. Paul can reach back to the sources in his capacity only the point of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Furthermore, what he records related to the life ministry of Jesus is possibly from apostolic sources. However, all new messaging, either as the Lord's word or as a mystery from the Lord, perhaps points to Paul's creative power based on his experience of Christ's appearance at Damascus. He nurtures

his communities from thereon. The death and resurrection of Jesus is a critical period for the eyewitness account, apostolic authority, and literary composition. On a probable basis, in general, 1 Cor 15 could be a pointer to a limited group involved in the transmission and design of the source material into literary documents. Notably, we see that the narrative strategy of the foundational memory for the gentile church in First Thessalonians closely follows the criterion set by the apostles (cf. Acts 15:19-21, about denouncing idols, fornication, and abstaining from food offered to idols).

5.2 Spatio – Temporal Dynamics

In the social frameworks that shape memories, space and time play a significant role. In the first chapter of this study, we have demonstrated how social memory studies have modified memory dynamics concerning the present, past and future. As a proposition, I consider how a pendulum movement provides a temporal and spatial dimension of hope for its theological description. A pendulum is a device or motion that moves or swings from one side to the other (it can also signify a shift from one opinion to an opposite one), back-and-forth or a side-to-side movement¹¹¹. The pendulum stands to represent the person or concept or memory as an entity with a multi-dimensional character. It is only a representative scheme and is replaceable with any object of reference. I explain the multi-dimensional nature of memory and hope with the following pictorial diagram.



Figure 1: Pendulum Motion

In the above pictorial, the motion is interactive. Memory in a pendulum movement shows the communicative moments of the past, present, and future as interactive (Figure 2). The spatial reference begins with a decisive moment of the person (Paul's Damascus experience). The reference also concerns the person and the object of the proclamation (Jesus Christ's death and resurrection). Here, Paul's Damascus experience establishes a possible material connection with Jesus' death and resurrection (a literary compositional unit traced back to the Apostolic authority and tradition in 1 Thess 4:14-17 and 1 Cor 15).

¹¹¹ *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995), p. 1045.

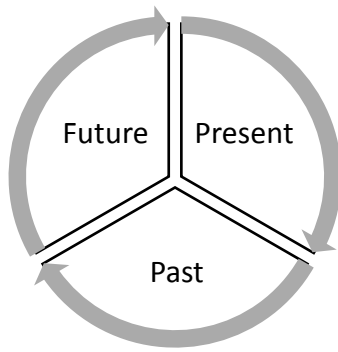


Figure 2: Temporal Interaction

Description of Figure 1:

In the pictorial pendulum diagram, the upper and lower spheres remain connected. They remain defined yet open and not rigid. The movement is descriptive and integrates the vertical and horizontal dimensions. These are conscious and constructive dimensions of the interactive moments beyond the definable categories, namely cyclic and linear movements, which have their ambiguities. On the left end, the pendulum moments remain disclosed to the person of Jesus with a material connection. Notably, it points to the authoritative location of the writer for literary composition. It can be merely a reference point to the past. On the right end, pendulum moments remain disclosed to the Parousia moment. It refers to a future location. This moment gives force to the missionary and literary context of the author. Between them is the present that connects and materialises these moments. Both ends have measurable and non-measurable time units as duration and direction. The endpoints are not bound by straight or circular lines that are unidirectional. The interactive process remains fluid, as well as is a movement that happens within a defined space. The process does not occur in a vacuum but is constructive of several communicative moments as an elastic fluid connected passage¹¹². In this sense, temporality shows as *inter-fluential*¹¹³ and remains communicative, as explained here regarding the spatial dimension.

I have not marked or indicated anything specifically at either end of a pendulum motion. The space at either end remains open-ended and expansive. The expansive space at both ends denotes a passage before Jesus' historical events regarding material for the literary composition and a passage before the Parousia (eschatological). The literary activity ends for the composer. In Paul's case, it is his death. These do not indicate per se to the literary composition of the New Testament here but only to Paul's literary activities. They consist of measurable units traceable to Paul's missionary journey, literary movements, and death.

These explanations could help us to construct a critical period for each document. It further modifies the "critical period" as a phase in the memory construction as an interpretative

¹¹² Judith LIEU, *Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory*, p. 133-144.

¹¹³ Barry SCHWARTZ, *Where There is Smoke*, p. 7-37.

mechanism. Conceptually, Halbwachs introduces the “critical period”¹¹⁴, later Jan Assmann improves it by introducing another critical category, the “generational gap”¹¹⁵, to delimit the eyewitness testimony. Sandra Huebenthal gives a detailed description of the recent work¹¹⁶. I have already mentioned the Lord’s Word units in First Thessalonians (1:5; 2:8; 4:14, 18; 5:11, 27) and First Corinthians (15:1-11). The Word of Lord unit in First Thessalonians closely relates to the other thematic units: the gospel of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, Word of the Lord and the self of the apostle, the word of the Lord and the apocalyptic vision, words of encouragement, and the public reading of the letter. All these constitute several communicative moments for the early Christian community in Thessalonica. Notably, Judith Lieu refers to this dynamic relationship between the author and readers in the letter. The document establishes a connection between the author and the community in his absence. Besides, the document constructs a functional space (sacred) given the awaited Parousia meaning an encounter with the living, true, and coming God, Jesus. Remarkably, the mechanism, as a whole, points to the several constitutive moments of the letter composition and its significance for the community¹¹⁷.

5.3 Continuity and Discontinuity

I have considered the analytical techniques of the social memory model, keying and framing, the location of memory, and the past as remembered past to develop the following mechanism. I discuss continuity and discontinuity with a different scheme, a qualitative memory representation, and a quantitative memory model. The antithetical features and the rhetorical contrasts point in that direction (1 Thess 4:13-5:11).

5.3.1 *Qualitative Representations of Memory*

Qualitative representations by a negated formula relate to specific behavioural and attitudinal changes (4:13, “that you may not grieve like others do who have no hope”). They are to be taken literally in an eschatological sense. They function as boundary markers but through a corrective mechanism directed inward and not to the opposing groups. When a positive statement introduces qualitative representations, it does not demand an actual response but adds a metaphorical sense for the present and future. In that sense, it is an eschatological reality. They maintain and stabilise the community (2:19; you are our hope) regarding the context the community faces.

5.3.2 *Quantitative Representation of Memory*

Contents introduced by a negated formula denote a rejection of reality in a literal sense and not metaphorically. In that sense, the eschatological direction draws the community farther from that reality (cf. 5:5, we are not of the night or the darkness). The rhetorical devices facilitate the opposite direction with expected behavioural changes. In this instance, the definite formulas introduce the content, and the representation amplifies the sense. The application is not literal

¹¹⁴ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory*, p. 48.

¹¹⁵ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 34-35.

¹¹⁶ Sandra HUEBENTHAL, *Frozen Moments*, p. 17-44; Richard BAUCKHAM, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, p. 7.

¹¹⁷ Judith LIEU, *Letters and the Construction of Early Christian Memory*, p. 133-144.

but metaphorical (5:5, you are children of the light and children of the day). It is an eschatological reality for now and the future. Nevertheless, there is no visible change expected within that single literary unit. The process is continuous.

5.3.3 *Memory Facilitated by Approximation of the Content*

The process of remembering is a continuous flow. In 1:3, we read, “We remember before our God and Father *your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ” (μνημονεύοντες ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν). This unit shows that Paul spatially places himself and his readers close to the living God, Jesus Christ. In an eschatological sense, it is fundamental that it does not invite any course correction in the attitude of the believers. It is also indicative of how Paul has used the triad formula in proximity. Here, it is not the source of the content. However, his creative style brings all participants and eschatological elements into nearness (Paul, co-workers, Thessalonian believers and their foundation in God).

The eschatological and social contexts complement our understanding of hope. So are spatial and temporal categories. Together, they attribute a multi-dimensional character of hope to the community. As a result, looking at the theology of hope with a single, well-defined systematic unit is out of context. Pendulum motion and an undefined space open up to this disclosure. We find a second instance in 2:19-20. When 1:3 and 2:19-20 are condensed, it reflects the following resemblance: you are our hope, glory and joy. The operative words here (prepositions, pronouns) establish proximity. The nearness of the conceptually related terms allows us to distinguish and relate hope to the proximate content. This mechanism constructs a theology of hope in the letter.

5.3.4 *Memory Distanced from an Attitude by Contrasting the Content*

Here, we consider 1:9, 4:13 and 5:10. In 1:9 we read, “and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God” (καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ). We find the same in 4:13, “We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope” (Οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων, ἵνα μὴ λυπῆσθε καθὼς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες ἐλπίδα). We can observe the same in 5:9, “For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (ὅτι οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὀργὴν ἀλλ’ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).

The above verses indicate both the foundational and eschatological responses by a change in the spatial location. We observed in the previous section that attitudes, when negated, references a changed attitude in terms of space and time, “from-to”: a) in 1:9 “from idols to God”, b) in 4:13 from grief to hope, and c) in 5:10 from the wrath to salvation. Nevertheless, their changed behaviour is a present reality and is enduring. It is an eschatological attitude toward the living God (1:9), which instrumentalises salvific reality (5:9).

5.3.5 Foundational Memory

Jan Assmann¹¹⁸ traces Israel's fundamental aspects of memory, hope, and identity to the Exodus event. In this way, we find that memory details the performative acts, endurance, behavioural knowing, and behaving in that direction. It is a decisive duration that explains a movement from idols to a living God. Assmann's approach of *mnemohistory* considers history as remembered history¹¹⁹. In the case of the death and resurrection of Jesus and His Parousia, memory enacts an enduring drama and becomes a remembering history. The primary motifs or frameworks of the Exodus event are covenant, election, and commitment. We see a similar thought pattern in First Thessalonians (Chapters 1–3 reflect a covenant and election emphasis; chapters 4–5 elaborate upon the commitment and final fulfilment).

According to Assmann¹²⁰, two ways of expressing this founding memory are bridal and filial metaphors. The bridal metaphors evoke loyalty and allegiance and build a negated remembrance, whereas the filial metaphors evoke promises, especially promised land. Moreover, they bring a positive impact. We notice several filial metaphors in the discourse and the letter. The structural studies appeal to a formal character of the friendship letters and themes of consolation. Hence, we can identify what the metaphor of wrath mainly denotes. It is a failure to obey. In the context of Thessalonica, it is probable that wrath functions as a warning against idol worship. The metaphors of children of light and children of the day may represent the covenant blessings of the final days¹²¹.

6. SOCIAL MEMORY AND 1 THESS 4:13–5:11

6.1 Forward and Backwards (a fluid pendular movement)

Social memory is past constructivist. Memory studies have focussed on the back-and-forth indication of the narrative direction. Our research focuses on this direction in Paul's narrative of hope. In First Thessalonians (3:1-6; 4:13), the community's grief over the deceased shifts back to Paul's preaching of the Parousia. Paul's stay in Thessalonica was brief and his departure abrupt. He recollects his sojourn through biographical narratives: both the community and Paul himself. He sends Timothy to revisit the community, returning with a report (oral and written media). Paul writes to the Thessalonians, and with this, Jesus' earthly events (death and resurrection) become central. They are proof, a norm for the belief. They produce a framework that consoles and defines the deceased's status in the overall scheme of the hope of salvation (5:8). A hope centred on endurance now moves forward as a hope of salvation. This process points to a back-and-forth movement of emotions in the community. The movement includes both perseverance of hope and a hope of salvation. Further, the context of suffering, social opposition, and the loss (deceased members) necessitate a back-and-forth narrative movement.

¹¹⁸ Jan ASSMANN, *The Invention of Religion*, p. 23.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 202-203.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

That is, between the events of endurance (Gospel; suffering) and rejoicing (Parousia; rejoice always), believers remember Jesus' death and resurrection, his teachings (eschatological).

Halbwachs, in his work on collective memory, has highlighted the back-and-forth movement of Jesus narrative. Assmann explains it as follows:

“The authentic collective memory, drawn from live experience, of the community of the disciples — nowadays we might call it the Jesus Movement — as a *communauté affective* is a typical selection based on emotional involvement, as is restricted to the sayings, parables, and sermons of Jesus. The biographical elaboration of these memories did not come until later after expectations of the Apocalypse had faded. At this point, it became important to embed the remembered sayings in biographical episodes that would furnish them with the order of time and place. There were no places incorporated in those memories, and therefore after Jesus' death, they were augmented with particular settings by people well acquainted with the geography of Galilee. When Paul came on the scene, however, the focus of memory shifted from Galilee to Jerusalem. Here there are absolutely no ‘authentic memories’, because the trial and execution of Christ took place without the disciples. At this point Jerusalem became central as theological attention shifted to focus on the passion and resurrection of Jesus: these decisive elements had to be reconstructed; thus everything that happened in Galilee was pushed in the background as a prelude to the main event”¹²².

In this context, in First Thessalonians, we identify that Paul proposes a true God (1:2-10; 4:14) and a faithful preacher (2:1-12) models for imitation. The models are biographical recollections of God's activity and Paul's activity in the community. The community prepares itself for the true God (arrival at Parousia), and Paul hopes to meet the community in the future. They have a template to recollect and prepare for the event. Paul reconstructs the past (Jesus' death and resurrection) with additional content (Parousia and the deceased believers' general resurrection). Paul writes mindful of the context of sending Timothy and receiving him back. Paul also intertwines the prospects of the deceased members with the death, resurrection and Parousia of Jesus. The content is both a reality in the past and an object intended in the future. The memory of Jesus closely relates the community's existence to hope. On the relationship between memory and hope, Jan Assmann notes the following:

“Thus collective memory operated simultaneously in two directions: backward and forward. It not only reconstructs the past but it also organises the experience of the present and the future. It would therefore be absurd to draw a contrast between the

¹²² Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 26-27.

‘principle of memory’ and the ‘principle of hope’ because each conditions the other and each is unthinkable without the other”¹²³.

6.2 Memory is both Remembering and Forgetting

The rhetorical contrasts and antitheses revisit the community’s historical setting by a negation. In 4:13, Paul admonishes the community for their grief. Paul has shown the community as a model to other churches (1:7-8) and has appreciated their willingness to welcome the gospel despite opposition and suffering. With the context of deceased members, Paul asks the community not to grieve (4:13), be sober (5:5-8) and always rejoice (5:16). Here, we see both positive and negated forms in their behavioural adaptation. In positive states, the community has a true God and a faithful preacher as a principle for imitation (suffering and death of Jesus in 2:14-16 and 4:14; Paul’s suffering in 2:1-12). The community itself is a model (their recollected past that welcomed Paul and his gospel with joy). In the negated forms, the community must not grieve (4:13). This statement is a prohibition. We see a double representation of a community’s twofold response in both the positive and negated state.

Social memory deals with a double representation: it retrieves the past in the present and recollects the past to rework and integrate it into the present. Similarly, hope (suffering, endurance, sobriety, joy, rejoicing, salvation) revisits suffering from recollecting the past (receiving the gospel with joy despite opposition, 1:5-6). Hope reviews deceased members’ context to rework on it for the present (sobriety) and revisit the past for the future (death and resurrection of Jesus for salvation, and rejoicing given the Parousia). In these dynamics, the other realities (idols, false teachers, Satan, children of darkness) appear in a poor light (Thessalonian believers’ past life, before coming to faith).

In the process of building hope, we see that memory revisits suffering. Notably, Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann consider memory and forgetting as two sides of the same process. They review the memory dynamics to highlight this aspect and, at the same time, focus on how to reconcile socially suffering and painful events. Emile Durkheim¹²⁴ has shown how negated religious forms (asceticism, challenging initiation rites) shape a positive impact on a collective conscience. Prohibitions aim to take one closer to the sacred and, at the same time, distance one from the profane. Paul encouraged the community to be blameless at the coming of the Lord (3:13; 5:23, spirit, soul and body). The community’s description in a negated form shapes a particular response and erases a specific past constructively. Besides, we see that according to Jan Assmann¹²⁵, the contexts of death and burials deeply affect the collective conscience of the community. So, as Aleida Assmann¹²⁶ shows, the painful past requires reconciliation by

¹²³ Jan ASSMANN, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, p. 28. See also Dietrich RITSCHL, *Memory and Hope. An Inquiry Concerning the Presence of Christ*, New York, Macmillan, 1967.

¹²⁴ Emile DURKHEIM, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, p. 303-329.

¹²⁵ Jan ASSMANN, *Rituals of Memory* in Adele TUTTER and Léon WURMSER (eds), *Grief and its Transcendence, Memory, Identity, Creativity*, New York, Routledge, 2016, p. 15-29.

¹²⁶ Aleida ASSMANN, *Formen des Vergessens* (Historische Geisteswissenschaften Frankfurter Vorträge, 9), Göttingen, Wallstein Verlag, 2016, p. 11-13 and 31-73.

constructive and therapeutic forgetting. Paul Ricœur¹²⁷ also comments on the material traces of pain and the ways to deal with the past.

Ricœur considers mourning behaviours the most excellent examples of intersecting relations between the private and public expressions of grief. It always regards its losses, and the wounded memory must confront itself. One must deal with it by the praxis of forgetting the traces that are painful and traumatising¹²⁸. Ricœur explores the ways of bypassing the trails. He distinguishes from the tradition three traces: a) the written traces or documentary traces on the level of historiography; b) the physical traces termed as an impression in the sense of affection left in us by a remarkable event; c) the cortical traces which the neurosciences deal with and explain the trauma. For Ricœur, the dynamics of forgetting deal with these traces. The first and the last are physically alterable. However, the real problem lies with the forgetting of physical traces. We observe that according to Ricœur¹²⁹, forgetting involves two polarities: pain and happiness. The process requires a voluntary and conscious effort that is painstaking. At the same time, wrestling away from the painful past relieves the burden and increases an individual's comfort level. Ricœur also speaks of forgetting at two levels: vertical and horizontal. The vertical axis points to the levels of depth in the act of forgetting. The horizontal axis distinguishes between a passive and an active role. Forgetting is then a strategy that includes vertical and horizontal dimensions. In this process, the vertical and horizontal levels constitute the unique space to an individual or a group. The particular mechanism is also known for its uses and abuses of memory¹³⁰. It points to the application of memory models in modern research. However, such an application has its historical roots in memories handed over, especially in ancient Judaism and Christianity.

6.3 Perception and Conviction

The eschatological and apocalyptic dimension of Paul's times or later of the New Testament proceeds mainly from convictions but interact with the perceptible reality to project a character. The character reflects Christ's attitude in suffering and endurance. It is a basic imitation principle. We see that 1 Thess 4:13, "that you may not grieve like others who have no hope", reflects a character formation of the community. It is in line with what Paul has stated in chapters 1–4, before 4:13. In chapter one, it is turning away from idols. In chapter two, it refers to turning away from false teachers. In chapter three, it is turning away from a lack of faith. In chapter four, it means turning away from sexual aberrations and turning away from grief. Finally, in chapter five, as in 5:16, points to a renewed attitude, "rejoice always".

6.4 Spatial Approximation and Temporal Nearness

I propose that spatial approximation of the closely related terms creates an aspect of temporal nearness. This dynamism outlines a perceptible world, adapting apocalyptic motif, world and

¹²⁷ Paul RICŒUR, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 78-80.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 412-418.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

genre to serve the eschatological dimension of Paul's theological purpose, in this case, hope. The eschatological dimension draws the finality closer and reorients life with a persevering dimension. The new reality is a renewed character in line with the Lord's sayings. The spatial approximation and temporal nearness respectively draw closer two worlds and times that are poles apart. In this way, the multi-dimensional character of hope becomes transparent within the conceptually related words placed in clusters (hope, glory, joy, crown, and salvation). Besides, the Parousia imagery links spatially and temporally the vertical to the horizontal dimension and vice versa. The process indicates a memory that a writer or founder intends for the community and constructs it through oral and written media. Paul intends and builds hope within a sacred space that involves both this-worldly and otherworldly dimensions regarding First Thessalonians.

For Paul, if the letter stands in place of God, then it is a Sacred text. Given the second Temple, Judaism and diasporic Jewish theological purpose reimagine the Sacred Texts as the abode of God. The conceptual mechanism plays over when some have died in the community. The members appear sad about missing the procession, the delay in Parousia. Therefore, Paul, fearing a loss of faith, writes the community and recommends reading the text (1 Thess 5:27) with renewed clarity. In this way, Paul re-establishes his presence and particularly the Lord's presence with the Parousia image and event. The theophanic imagery is apocalyptic and glossed with Greek terms of the Parousia. In this regard, Paul makes known his conviction and knowledge through perceptible signs. The believers have not yet accustomed to progress in new faith and understanding of a new God employing conviction. They are still in their old ways of knowledge using perception. However, Paul provides them with a narrative perspective, explaining and encouraging the salvific means of faith, love, and hope. We observe these dynamics of encouragement, particularly with hope.

7. A THEOLOGY OF HOPE BY NEGATION

The consolatory patterns and consolations allow the mourning community to recollect and remember past images and narratives of promises in a new light. These images appear in brief descriptions that display strong metaphorical images and mythical content. In the context of suffering and opposition (mourning), a theology of hope by negation happens through a double representation. Notably, Paul has shaped the discourse by antithetical pairings (light and darkness, day and night, sober and drunk, awake and asleep, hope and grief, purity and impurity). These contrasting pairs display implicit dynamics of life and death antithesis¹³¹. Durkheim has shown how one dominant antithetical pair like sacred and profane stands to explain all other antithetical pairs¹³². I argue that Paul's narrative of hope by negation uses the temporal-spatial frameworks familiar to the community. Epigraphic evidence and descriptions in Greek anthologies show deformative techniques akin to Paul's narration from 1 Thess 4:13-5:11. Paul's

¹³¹ Jean NÉLIS, *L'Antithèse littéraire ZAQ – ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ*, p. 18-53; *id.*, *Les Antithèses littéraires dans les Épîtres de Saint Paul*, p. 3-30.

¹³² Emile DURKHEIM, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, p. 303-329.

description in this discourse adopts these frameworks, along with Jesus' tradition and sayings. These dynamics result using spatial approximation and temporal nearness.

Spatial approximation involves responses aimed at cohesiveness (God, Paul, community, and the deceased members) and separation from other realities and others (idols, false teachers, Satan, others). The approximation happens by clustering of antithetical pairs that include positive and negative forms of association. These forms also indicate how Paul places the semantic world of hope with positive (endurance, joy, crown, sobriety, salvation, and rejoicing) and negated forms (not to grieve or be blameless). Temporal nearness involves appropriating the future time in the present days by emphasising the temporal distinctions like unceasingly, always, everywhere, thief in the night, a woman in labour. The image and content of Parousia function to draw this spatial and temporal closeness.

7.1 A Brief Description of the Theology of Hope

Considering the above analyses about ἐλπίς, we may define a theology of ἐλπίς/hope with an open-ended and multi-dimensional character. So ἐλπίς in First Thessalonians could be described as a founding – remembering memory (their report in 1:9; a definitive origin) toward a living God with an enduring longing (1:3 and 4:13 show transformed attitudes: grace, joy, and peace) for obtaining the salvation (5:9, destiny). In this way, Parousia as hope stands as an envisioned eschatological reality described through apocalyptic disclosures (transformed spatial-temporal categories) of the realising moments of grace, joy, and peace.

7.2 Hope Defined

I define the theological concept of hope in First Thessalonians as follows. Hope is an enduring communicative memory and a constructive negation of the contrary realities of the Persevering God, His Word, and His continuing agency and pathways until the Parousia and the transformative (promising, salvific, and belonging forever dimensions) participation it unfolds for the present and the times to come.

Alternatively, hope is the remembering and persevering dimension of the gospel of God, its faith and love lived and taught in and through the Christ events and proclaimed by the founding apostles. Above all, hope is the perseverance of the persevering God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), perceiving, articulating, and imitating that steadfast and confident experience in the creative, salvific, constant, and forever dimension of the belongingness with God. It is the liberation of humanity from the wrath to come in a specific negated manner (the facets of not only but also, do not, whether or, constantly, and forever).

In a word, in our sufferings and joys on account of the Gospel, hope is the experience, motivation, and imitation of the “Divine Perseverance or Non-abandonment” in God (in God we trust, hope, and have our transformed being and the forever corporate belongingness to come).

While defining the theological concept of hope in First Thessalonians, this research study is conscious of the following specific pertinent considerations:

- a) This definition considers the multidimensional character of social memory, namely several approaches: present-constructivist, past-constructivist, remembered-past, a contrapunctual and inter-influential temporal aspect between the past, present, and future. I have explained these notions in chapter one of this thesis.
- b) The study is aware of other theological and socio-psychological attempts to define hope. Still, it considers them not relevant to our approach to First Thessalonians: i) a theology of hope as a theology of contradiction by Jürgen Moltmann; ii) the tradition of apophatic thought, negation theology and philosophy by Jacques Derrida; iii) a theology of hope as a negative theology by Anthony Kelly; iv) hope in a time of abandonment as explained by Jacques Ellul; v) a twenty-first-century psychosocial definition of hope as a motivational state of goal-thinking and pathways-thinking as shown by Charles Snyder¹³³.
- c) This study or definition does not consider per se the “last things” usually the systematic eschatology deals with or, in no ways, an attempt to define a Pauline theology of hope¹³⁴.
- d) The definition pertains to First Thessalonians, and I have already explained the previous attempts to define hope in the letter in section 4.2 of the present chapter. The theological concept of hope given here is a further attempt in that direction.

¹³³ Jürgen MOLTSMANN, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, James W. Leitch (trans.), London, SCM Press, 1967; *id.*, *Progress and Abyss: Remembrances of the Future of the Modern World*, in Miroslav VOLF and William KATERBERG (eds), *The Future of Hope: Christian Tradition amid Modernity and Postmodernity*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2004, p. 3-26; Jacques DERRIDA, *How to Avoid Speaking: Denials*, p. 73-142; Anthony KELLY, *Eschatology and Hope*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 2006, p. 54-59; Jacques ELLUL, *Hope in Time of Abandonment*, C. Edward Hopkin (trans.), Eugene, OR, Wipf & Stock, 1973; Charles Richard SNYDER, *Hypothesis: There is Hope*, in Charles Richard SNYDER (ed.), *Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures and Applications*, London, Academic Press, 2000, p. 3-24 (here p. 5-8). See also Steven C. VAN DEN HEUVEL and Patrick NULLENS (eds), *Driven by Hope: Economics and Theology in Dialogue* (CPLSE, 6), Leuven, Peeters, 2018, p. xvii-xviii. This study introduces and explains hope as an incentive, hope barometer and the seven dimensions of hope in dialogue with economics and theology. The seven dimensions of hope given in this study are: cognitive, emotional, virtuous, social, institutional, economic, and spiritual. This work largely follows Charles R. Snyder and his definition of hope. See also Hans SCHWARZ, *Eschatology*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2000, p. 24-30; Veli-Matti KÄRKKÄINEN, *Hope and Community* (A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World, 5), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2017, p. 7-39; Timothy MILINOVICH, *Memory and Hope in the Midst of Chaos: Reconsidering the Structure of 1 Thessalonians*, in *CBQ*, 76 (2014), p. 498-518. The structural approach by Milinovich is a text-centred model based on lexical patterns and lexico-grammatical criteria that relies on the repetition of key words within the text. But this study is a reconsideration of the rhetorical structure of First Thessalonians. The title of the paper has no bearing to the actual explanation found within and it no way deal with the social memory nor explains the concept of hope.

¹³⁴ Michael WOLTER, *Paulus: Ein Grundriss seiner Theologie*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchner Verlagsgesellschaft, 2011, revised edition 2015, p. 182-226, ET: *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, Robert L. Brawley (trans.), Waco, TX, Baylor University Press, 2015, p. 177-220; Friedrich KÜMMEL, *Hoffnung I*, in *TRE*, 15 (1986), p. 484-484; Hans WEDER, *Hoffnung II*, in *TRE*, 15 (1986), 484-491; Gerhard SAUTER, *Hoffnung III*, in *TRE*, 15 (1986), p. 491-498; Hans WISSMANN, *Eschatologie I*, in *TRE*, 10 (1982), p. 254-256; Günter KLEIN, *Eschatologie IV*, in *TRE*, 10 (1982), p. 270-299; Albrecht DIHLE, Basil STUDER and Franz RICKERT, *Hoffnung*, in *RAC*, 15 (1991), p. 1159-1250.

7.3 Hope Explained

I explain hope briefly as the “Non-abandonment” in a negated form or the “Divine perseverance/participation” in a positive state. The first one is an open-ended form, whereas the second one is a close-ended form. The former is more dynamic and opens up to diverse narratives. Further, it is not about “not being left alone” (an individualistic dimension) but more about “not being left behind” (a community-oriented perspective). God’s faithful community realises that God will not abandon them. This hope is open-ended. It emerges from the very dynamics between the two horizons: promising and not-so-promising, or good and not-so-good, or good and evil, or fidelity and sinfulness, or creative and destructive. In this valley of horizons, vertical and horizontal dimensions reflect a constant and flux that “God will not abandon us/humanity/creation”. It is an ongoing process.

In the context of First Thessalonians, hope is a constant dynamic until the Parousia (ἀδιαλείπτως, in 1:3). God is always faithful and will affect his people’s sanctity to keep them blameless until the Parousia (cf. 1:10, 3:13, and 5:23). Non-grieving by the community refers to the manner of non-abandonment (1 Thess 4:13, μὴ λυπησθε/that you may not grieve). Those whom God has called will not abandon them. That is, the chosen humanity is part of God’s call through His Son, His Word, and His Resurrection (living and true), through His Spirit, who continues to sanctify the community, and through His apostles and the chosen ones (who imitate His Word).

But our capacity to receive the Word is limited to the level of an individual, community, and the world. By limited, we mean that our perception of hope (hearing and speaking) can happen only within the limited spatial and temporal horizon. We hear but do not hear everything. We speak but do not speak everything. In other words, we associate with the explicit and implicit nature of hearing and speaking and the range of meanings they imply. Our voice of hope can travel physically only up to two ends of the conversation (us and others). We try to voice something, nothing but not everything, as the dynamics rely on the individuals, groups, and larger societies that construct these horizons.

In this regard, the perception of hope by hearing and speaking becomes unique and particular through the process of imitation. Imitation is a visible sign representing and articulating the intention and affiliation between the deity/God, the agents/apostles, and the followers/community. The process is conversational, that is communicative. The ongoing conversation represents the agency, the apostolic authority in the very process of imitation. The agents imitate the deity and thereby resemble and authorise the very sacred space that the deity enshrines. Remarkably, the apostle Paul and his community in Thessalonica are the imitators of Christ. In other words, they are God’s stewards and ambassadors of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5) in two familial dimensions, a nucleus and a joint family. The nucleus and joint family status reflect the local and trans-local reality of the early Christian communities. The nucleus family nature refers to inward realisation, and the communal family nature points to the external dimension. We may extend this particular understanding to our reality, the local and trans-local dimension of the Christian vocation, particularly to the suffering context. We experience that God will not abandon us through thick and thin (hard times) in this process. Besides, as in First Thessalonians,

here too, two horizons constantly interact. First, some accepted God's Word. Among them, some died, physically or spiritually. God will not abandon them as they profit from a resurrection or a once for all-rebirth. Second, some accepted God's Word, but later generations rejected it, even though they still benefit from redemption when they recall the Word. It recalls that God did not abandon Jesus but resurrected Him. Like Adam, Noah, Abraham, and David historically, others benefit God's election through Jesus. The apostles and the new communities witness God's call. Their lives constitute a witness for the later generations. Hence, hope accounts for this narrative happening despite the contrary, like suffering, tragedies, death, and catastrophes, whether they are self-imposed or imposed by others through conflicts and persecutions or a result of nature's incidents or fury.

We identify this cyclic process as follows: God sent Jesus, Jesus sent the apostles (Paul), Paul sent Timothy. Timothy reports back to Paul (1 Thess 3:1-6), and Paul will present the case back to Christ at the Parousia event (1 Thess 2:19), who in turn gathers all of them (1 Thess 4:15-17) in the presence of God, the Almighty (cf. 1 Cor 15). The ongoing conversation represents a prophetic cycle. God's Word accompanies humanity through his chosen prophets. That dimension extends to the chosen missionaries and communities they founded. The Parousia demonstrates this final account of God's choice, a recollection of God's deed in the past in His created world, elected humanity, and redeemed believers. On this horizon, resurrection is not the Last Word. It is not the end but only marks a new eternal beginning. By this, humanity hopes to be in an eternal realm, being with God forever (1 Thess 4:15-17 and 5:10).

The dimension of being with God forever reflects through the horizon that God will not abandon us. This understanding of hope includes the durative and constructed past, present, and future (the origin and destiny of history in God's terms). The social memory model showed how different groups contract or expand the horizons of hope as demanded by the contingencies they face. The understanding of hope that God will not abandon us is hope by negation. That is, we move forward by recalling the past accounts of God's promise and their realisation unique to the specific group or the communities. In 1 Thess 4:13–5:11, Paul initiates this dimension of hope by negation. Essentially, the narrative of hope begins as a theology of hope by negating the very reality that disturbs or destroys our relationship with God, creation, and human society. That by an account of hope, we do not grieve, and we realise that God never abandons us, that we are not left behind in God's horizon of hope. It is a theology of hope by negation, a realisation of "non-abandonment" in Christ, died and risen for us, and in God the creator of humanity and the world.

The non-abandonment in Christ also recounts "Divine Perseverance". The agents of God like archangels, sounding trumpets, his Son, and the declarative commands through prophets all recount and recapture the divine presence, the will of God (1 Thess 4:1-12) and divine faithfulness (1 Thess 5:23-27). Paul recounts and reconstructs this imagery in 4:4, 4:15 and 5:5. Both the biblical and non-biblical connotations interact here. God is talking through common *topoi*. The absence and presence of hope give way to God's agents with dramatic effect. The narration of God's arrival also happens with this dramatic effect. God is active, alive, and accompanies us with power and the Holy Spirit as presented in the foundational narratives and is

likely to act similarly at the time of the world to come. We abide by the appeals in the interim duration, namely “do not grieve” and “rejoice always”. This remembrance and imitation of not grieving and rejoicing always resemble divine continuity of being faithful always and everywhere.

Definitely, a theology of hope by negation recounts the foundational Jesus’ events, life and death, death and resurrection, resurrection, and Parousia. Notably, we steadfastly remember that Jesus died, rose, and comes again for us and that whether we are alive or dead, we live with Him forever.

CONCLUSION

The interactive process between our understanding of hope and the consequent behavioural pattern becomes more transparent with the following illustrations. They indicate a further historical turn. I refer to Jürgen Moltmann¹³⁵, *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council, and finally to the present COVID-19 crisis.

On the dimension of hope, Jürgen Moltmann articulates the following:

“None of us are given hope just for ourselves. The hope of Christians is always hope for Israel too; the hope of Jews and Christians is always hope for the peoples of the world as well; the hope of the peoples of the world is always also hope for this earth and everything that lives in it. And hope for the whole community of creation is ultimately hope that its Creator and Redeemer will arrive at his goal, and may find in creation his home”¹³⁶.

The council Fathers state the following in the *Gaudium et Spes-1*:

“The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realises that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds”.

The above illustrations show that a conceptual understanding of hope in biblical and ecclesiastical traditions has taken a historical turn. Narratives have changed over time, and the existential and historical factors condition them. The illustrations focus more on human solidarity and serve a different dimension of hope. But in 1 Thess 4:13 (that you may not grieve like others

¹³⁵ Jürgen MOLTSMANN, *Kommen Gottes: Christliche Eschatologie*, München, Chr. Kaiser Verlagshaus Gütersloher, 1995, ET: *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, Margaret Kohl (trans.), London, SCM Press, 1996.

¹³⁶ Jürgen MOLTSMANN, *The Coming of God*, p. xiii.

who do not have hope), a definite notion of hope divides humanity into two groups¹³⁷. We observe a categorical prohibition of grief. Together, these elements characterise the exclusive identity and the inner cohesiveness of the community.

Presently with the COVID-19 epidemic crisis, we have seen how society shapes public responses and readapts them to the changing circumstances. Our responses show how we search for answers within a short period and rapidly shift our narratives. I refer to the typical diptych response we are familiar with these days:

“Stay home, stay safe;
Wear mouth-mask, move safely”.

This diptych response represents various institutional and organisational approaches to shape our behavioural response to the epidemic crisis. This response, although short, is densely worded and assembles an antithetical formulation of multiple experiences, their shifting narratives within a short period both in private and public spheres. People’s anticipations and expectations of recovery (restoration of the society to its previous order) and the means adopted to mitigate the crisis reflect an excavation of the past and social and medical responses to the epidemics from a global and local perspective. The temporal aspects of the past, present and future interacted so rapidly during this crisis. The overall dynamics indicate how social memory works in an intense problem, suffering, pain and death.

In this crisis, society and various public institutions have shaped our response through institutional orders and prohibitive recommendations. These measures are persuasive and reflect an ethical attitude toward physical distancing and social gatherings. In other words, the apodictic and antithetical reactions followed a mechanism of constructive negation. During this crisis, staying safe in a private sphere and moving safely in a public sphere have pointed to different things and resolutions. Initially, the existence of humanity predominated by withdrawing into safe zones. But later, the sustenance of human society became a more significant problem. The dialectics of the existential fears and hopes are visible through the dynamics of moving safely outside and securing the working environment. I do not think that the sphere of ‘the theology of hope’ is in any way outside this purview. However, the analyses here do not address the dialectics between griefs and hopes of the present circumstance.

The antitheses are a pointer to identify implied traditions that lie behind Paul’s eschatological narration. Paul’s style and thinking reflect a choice, a repetitive interactive process between the old and new information. Out of this, specific information dominates the social or apocalyptic dualism. In First Thessalonians, rhetorical force is visible in the pairing of contrasts and clustering of antitheses. These dual representations sustain the tension till the end of time. But along the path, a constant interactive process results in exclusive behavioural patterns. This way of

¹³⁷ Raymond F. COLLINS, *The Birth of the New Testament*, p. 84-85; John M.G. BARCLAY, *That You May Not Grieve*, p. 131-153; Richard S. ASCOUGH, *A Question of Death*, p. 509-530.

categorising by dual imagery, especially in an eschatological narration, enables us to explore the traditions involved in shaping the discourse with insights from social and apocalyptic dualism.

The reiterated social and apocalyptic dualism is both an intention and imitation by the author. Paul constructs a conceptual understanding of hope for his followers. The rhetorical contrasts repeat several times, but each pair shapes an integral image of the community. Their identity is their foundational experience, turning away from the idols toward a true God (1:9-10). In this process, the believers have experienced something new and reorient themselves. Their transformation has both social and literal implications. Their new faith has brought along unique benefits and privileges of imitating the “Divine perseverance”, the nature of God lived by Christ, imitated by Paul and co-workers, and recommended to the community. This dimension of hope is essentially a “Non-abandonment” in God in times of suffering, joy, death, and life (earthly and heavenly).

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This research study has proposed considering a theological concept of hope in First Thessalonians (4:13–5:11) by hypothesising that Paul constructs the theological notion of hope by rhetorics. Followingly, the study has chosen to apply a social-scientific investigation with the social memory theory, and the model was explained in Chapter One. Subsequently, Chapters Two to Seven have integrated the appropriate tools and techniques of the social memory theory to describe and analyse the subjects under consideration. In this concluding section, I summarise the findings as per the research objectives.

First, this study has not ignored the whole Thessalonian correspondence, the first and second epistles to the Thessalonians. Our research has briefly considered the pertinent theological issues and highlighted a priority given to First Thessalonians and its eschatological discourse (4:13–5:11). In this regard, we identified a general framework – “we wish, we believe, we declare, and we encourage” – organizing both antitheses and traditions.

Second, the “we wish/want” form refers to “God’s will” and “apostles’ will” in 4:3 and 4:13, respectively. Obeying God’s will is a means of sanctification that involves knowing him (4:5). The apostles’ intention relates to constructing a kind of sacred space within the community (4:13). The comparative forms “just as” or “like” establish a general context for this specific incorporative dimension. The study shows that the Lord’s word and the apostles’ proclamation of the gospel mutually interact. In this process, the reconstructed memory illuminates the revealed gospel through constructive negations. One form of negation is made by prohibitions, as found in 4:13 regarding grief and hope.

Third, we see that the “we believe” dimension closely relates to the “we declare” dynamics. The confessional formula according to which Jesus died for us expands to include the to-be-resurrected deceased, participation in the Parousia, and the eternal presence of the Lord. These dimensions recollect the earlier preaching about Jesus and its transmission through the Lord’s word formula. The formula recapitulates, “our gospel was not in vain” (1:4-10; 2:1-12). The gospel comes with power, the Holy Spirit and the true self of Paul as a preacher. As the apostles declare, the community repeats this action by reciting the Lord’s words (5:27). In this way, the message functions to console and build up the community in its present and future times.

Fourth, the text reiterates the foundational narrative of the context of the community receiving God’s gospel the very first time, “much suffering with joy” (1:5-6). This paradoxical encomium or enthymeme as a rhetorical unit and type continues throughout the letter. These dynamics point to the desired purpose and goal, “always rejoicing” (5:16). We see this repetitive back-and-forth as a pathway in reconstructing a whole narrative of the memory of God, Jesus, Paul and co-workers, and the community. Conversely, we see idols, false teachers, Satan, the Gentiles, and others blocking the pathways of their allegiance to the new God.

Fifth, the antithetical features and rhetorical contrasts demonstrate qualitative and quantitative representations of the community. These formal patterns have enabled us to develop a theology of hope by constructive negation. The negation creates a communicative process of the “turning away and turning toward” (1:9-10; 4:5, 13). The element of “turning away” in the guise of “others” is a ploy to withhold relapses by the community into their old affiliations. Paul’s application of this process is the deformative technique. That is, Paul reconstructs the believers’ context, their past life. Paul provides this foundational narration of the community he has founded. Therefore, the process is a top-down approach. The strategy reflects a communicative memory, a remembered past supplied by Paul involving social and apocalyptic rhetorics. In this context, the deformative tool represents the in-group positively and the out-group negatively and thereby appears as polemics of hope in the social realm. These representations are repeated and reinforced positively and negatively. Entirely, hope has several dimensions. First, hope has its origin in the Lord Jesus (1:3). Second, hope is the glory and joy of the community (2:19). Third, hope relates to the foundational events of Jesus’ death and resurrection (4:14). Fourth, hope is belongingness to the Lord (4:17; 5:10) and participation in the Parousia (4:15-17). Finally, hope is salvation (5:10). Negatively, the absence of hope is despair, wrath, and destruction for others (1:10; 2:16; 4:5, 13; 5: 3, 10).

Hence, the apostle Paul displays a mechanism of dual representation, thanks to the contrary portrayals of the Thessalonian Christ-followers and of those opposed to their faith. Several dualistic or binary polarities as antithetical and contrast parallels repeat and reinforce this strategy. In this process, negation establishes the elements of hope for believers:

- a) Turning away from idols and impurity.
- b) Facing or turning toward God blamelessly. It is a communitarian activity with Paul and his co-workers and finally those who have died in the coming times.

Conversely, the process demonstrates the elements of hopelessness for others (idols, false teachers, impurity, grief, and wrath).

This dynamism, a theology of hope by negation, enables the followers to cope with the current difficult circumstances despite the sufferings: they just have to wait patiently for the Lord’s coming. The concrete objects of memory (God, Paul, and community) and the formal properties of memory (time, space, and language) function as the frameworks of social memory and construct the theological concept of hope. As a result, the letter does not provide its readers with a single explanation of hope. Hope functions as a metonymy. It represents belongingness to Jesus (word and person in all episodes) and refers back to a hope’s foundational experience. It is an eschatological “not only but also” engaging and visionary hope of salvation. The definition of hope in the concluding chapter has considered these issues.

Sixth, this study focused on the links between the objects of memory, God, Paul and the community. The study identified the following scheme: a) before and after the departure of the apostles from Thessalonica, b) before and after the death of some community members, and c) what is to happen before and after the Parousia. Besides, this study presents a missionary

contextual narrative dualism: a) the living and true God against the idols, b) the life and preaching of Paul and co-workers worthy of imitation against the false teachers, and c) the community's life as a counter-model to others.

Seventh, this thesis, working with the social memory model, has shown that form-criticism and rhetorical criticism observe differently antithetical features and rhetorical contrasts. The form-criticism centres more toward the author's stylistic elements. The approach considers the creedal formulas, identifiable units and forms of traditions, and community identity narratives reflecting historical authorial intention. The rhetorical system observes the antithetical features as the tools of persuasiveness. Rhetorical techniques of composition of a particular rhetoric genre serve to persuade the audience in their actual context. We see in form-criticism more emphasis on a paraenetic force unique to Christ-followers. On the contrary, the rhetorical method focuses more on understanding the intended audience.

Eight, we observed continuity and discontinuity with the use of *περὶ δέ*. Paul writes about love, those who have died, and the times and seasons (with *περὶ δέ* in 4:9, 13; 5:1). The interactive exchange concerns this earthly life and the times to come (times and seasons in 5:1). We read a "we – you" communicative mode of interaction between Paul and the community in the process. Here, Paul implies the existence of shared information or new knowledge. On some occasions, God teaches the Thessalonians (4:9) and in others, Paul and co-workers (4:13; 5:1). Hence, the document reflects an open communication channel between God, Paul (co-workers), and the community. The medium of open communication, oral and written style, in several parts, does not relate to the letter unity only. It constitutes an external as well as an internal process of discontinuity and continuity, often emphasised by the *περὶ δέ* formula. In this regard, the antithesis of grief and hope shifts from an external dimension of discontinuity toward an internal dynamic of continuity, from death to life. Just as in the other Pauline letters (cf. Jean Nélis), life and death constitute the central antithesis in First Thessalonians (4:13–5:11). In this perspective, we see that Paul clusters multiple distinct yet parallel antitheses in many ways (hope and grief, day and night, light and darkness, awake and asleep, sober and drunk). In that way, Paul offers metaphorical images of hope and relates them to an everyday experience. Therefore, continuity and discontinuity function differently in apocalyptic-eschatological imagery and social representation: the objects of consideration in the apocalyptic-eschatological language include God and humanity, promise and fulfilment, events, and history.

In social memory studies, the concept of dual representation is an essential element. The concept of dual representation, retrieving and reconstructing the past, focuses on continuity and discontinuity by recourse to perceptible changes. Mainly, concerning a group, we differentiate a continuous and discontinuous change within the framework of a changing world over a period of time. The process involves defining and redefining the events that are significant to a particular group. In this context, continuity means a continuous flow of information between the objects concerned. In First Thessalonians, we see a steady flow of information. The material objects of the letter (God, Paul, and the community) remain connected, mutually engage and do so constantly (always and everywhere). Notably, the day of the Lord, the coming of the

Lord, and Parousia constitute the same event expressing the dynamic process of continuity and discontinuity within their social setting.

Ninth, we managed to define the theology of hope as a theology by constructive negation. This study highlighted the role of rhetorical contrasts to construct identity from an insider-outsider perspective. I have referred to certain epigraphs from the ancient Graeco-Roman world as a probable contextual source of this practice. The inscriptions reflect a literal and physical reality for the audience. Funerary literary inscriptions flourished in the surroundings of Thessalonica (personal, polemical, and deictic content in the funerary epigraphs). By using hope, the letter should be classified as a text displaying consolatory rhetoric. It demonstrates an epideictic type more than deliberative rhetoric. Paul applies both Jewish and Graeco-Roman literary backgrounds, recalls his personal and missionary experiences, and encourages the Thessalonian Christ-followers to build-up each other. The consolation Paul offers to the community includes the language of Parousia, the Word of the Lord, and Jesus' sayings traditions. The antitheses with polemical tendency construct these formulations. In this regard, the discourse repetitively points to both eschatological and social dualism ("reiterated dualism").

In the narrative, both the experience of social dualism and the representations of apocalyptic dualism emerge. The background of social duality relates to the initial stages of a new religious movement that often faces opposition from the existing dominant societal structures. The new directions incorporate the original experience by reconstructing their past. The reconstruction happens by negating the current conflicting nature with a multi-dimensional narrative of hope and stays open-ended to the power of the deity, the revealing God. In First Thessalonians, Paul twice speaks of hope, in the thanksgiving units (1:3; 2:19) and similarly in the paraenetic section (4:13; 5:10). Paul's application points to the plurality of hope narration: a) in the context of remembering and the theological triad of faith, love and hope, b) in the context of recalling its missionary activity, the community becoming a hope of reward, c) in the context of the definition of being a Christian, hope is a distinctive mark of Christ's followers, and d) in the eschatological context, it is the hope of salvation. In terms of the community, hope is multidimensional (polysemy and metonymy). It projects a quasi-meaning; that is, it gives two different readings in the context of comparisons and conflicts (hope signifies different realities between Christians and Jews; between Christians and pagans). The continuity and discontinuity praxis reflects the hope and grief antithesis with purity and impurity. Paul reconstructs God's presence in the human body seen as a temple (see "being blameless before God" in 3:13; 5:23-24) and, besides, to describe proper missionary conduct (2:10).

Tenth, the study primarily reveals the theological and sociological overtones in the eschatological discourse. Followingly, it demonstrates the communicative process at work. The antitheses restructure the believers' understanding of hope (ἐλπίς in 4:13 and 5:8; cf. 1:3; 2:19) with the Word of the Lord (λόγος κυρίου 4:15-17) and thereby offer a pattern of consolation (παρακαλέω in 4:18; 5:11). The reconstructed traditions shape the believers' identity and help the early Christ-followers with a prospective memory of the Parousia. Subsequently, I have reconsidered the categorical expression of hope as a means to desist from polemical overtones. Notably, categorical terms function as a prototype in the social cognition of an individual or a

group, often reflecting a bias or prejudice against others. I have also emphasised the incorporative dimension of hope with the social memory model supported by historical epigraphic evidence pointing to deformative and deictic media of memory. Finally, I have formulated two descriptive terms incorporating the multiple dimensions of hope as a theology of hope by negation: non-abandonment and, more pointedly, divine perseverance (God always remains open and communicative to save us whether we are alive or dead).

Eleventh, this research succeeds in exploring the incorporative dimension of hope and the primary emphasis on God. In this regard, the antithetical formulations need not be necessarily categorical, polemical, and conflicting representations of the faith community. In this regard, the plurality of hope narrations may enhance the overall theology of First Thessalonians. Besides, this dimension requires further attention toward First Thessalonians' relation to other Pauline letters, exploring and defining a kind of hope unique to each community in its context. At the same time, faith, love, and hope (the triad) remain open and communicative. The observations regarding how memory works and how social memory functions help us understand why hope remains open, dynamic, and engages its context by negations. Over time, hope disavows each present alarming context by recollecting the foundational memory and reconstructing it to be meaningful for the future. Therefore, this research's findings may help us understand the context of plurality in societies, religions, and nature in this background.

To conclude, this research helps us understand that in suffering, death, or more particularly, the present pandemic crisis, we reassess our priorities and regroup without abandoning others. For this, we look up to God, whose divine nature is communicative and persevering. We remember God's interventions in our lives and look forward to such eventful regenerative encounters. Furthermore, the dimension of hope becomes more meaningful with a back-and-forth movement. The process is not rigid but open-ended and survives through imitation, incorporation, and forward-looking. In this process, we recall those images and memories that address our struggles. We also look up to persons who have overcome such challenges in the past. Subsequently, we reconstruct that memory for the present and the future of our human society. The Thessalonian Gentile community moved away from its old ways and turned toward Jesus, who opens up to unlimited possibilities. Hence, we need not necessarily focus too much on understanding the Lord's Day in First Thessalonians as the final days only. Instead, the focus is on the forever belongingness to the Lord, whose nature of persevering divinity we inherit whether alive or dead. At the same time, this future demands that we become active, persevering, hope-filled, encouraging, and mutually building up each other's life.

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