

Waiting for Jesus

The meaning and significance of eschatological *waiting* with special reference to ἀναμένω in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and implications for eschatology, mission and ethics.

by

Michael Taylor

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Declaration

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Lionel J. Windsor _____

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Abstract

The NT describes Christians as those who wait for Jesus (1 Thess 1:10). Despite this clear teaching, the concept of *waiting* has been neglected in scholarship, both Pauline eschatology and recent material on 1 & 2 Thessalonians. This thesis seeks to contribute towards a theology of *waiting* with a view to offering suggestions for greater clarity in eschatology and mission and ethics as they relate to eschatology.

Based in a word study on the concept of *waiting*, this thesis establishes key words and texts for research into *waiting*: ἀναμένω (1 Thess 1:10), προσδέχομαι (Luke 12:36; Acts 24:15; Titus 2:13; Jude 21), ἐκδέχομαι (Heb 10:13, 11:10; Jas 5:7), ἀπεκδέχομαι (Rom 8:23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:20; Heb 9:28), προσδοκάω (Matt 24:50; Luke 12:46; 2 Pet 3:12, 13, 14), and μακροθυμέω (Jas 5:7, 8). This thesis focusses on ἀναμένω in 1 Thess 1:10: its meaning in relevant non-biblical literature; and its meaning in its immediate and wider literary contexts. This focus is to ensure proper analysis because 1 Thess 1:10 has been neglected, despite its high significance as a fundamental description of being Christian in the richly eschatological 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

In LXX, Philo, and Josephus *waiting* is understood primarily as remaining in a state until the future arrival or occurrence of something, and so indicating lack. It carries nuances of passive receptivity, expecting duration and, yet, being ready. It is also contrasted with acting prematurely, being impatient and of actively obtaining. In 1 Thess 1:10 they wait to be with Jesus. For Christians, to be with Jesus at the parousia is the purpose of his death and the essence of salvation. A broader consideration of 1 & 2 Thessalonians reveals that *waiting* highlights both future salvation, viz., being with Jesus, and also Jesus' present exaltation. Consistency in the meaning and nuances of *waiting* is established by examination of related words and texts (listed above).

Implications follow for eschatology: greater clarity in the language of already-not yet eschatology, namely, of faith and Spirit, or of sight and physical presence; and, against certain views, a lack of emphasis on current progress in terms of renewal of creation, and that *waiting* suggests the parousia is an event in world history. Implications for mission are then discussed: that *waiting* indicates the goal of mission and importance of personal conversion. Implications for ethics are then considered: that *waiting* does not lead to withdrawal but allows for robust living well in this world oriented towards Christ's imminent arrival.

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Tables

Table 1

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Abbreviations

All abbreviations follow the forms indicated in Alexander, Patrick H., et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), with the exception of:

ANYE	Already-Not Yet Eschatology
ESV	English Standard Version
NTG	New Testament Greek

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

They themselves report [. . .] how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and *to wait for* his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come (1 Thess 1:9–10 ESV).¹

They turned to wait for Jesus. Here, Paul reminds the Thessalonians of their purpose in turning to God: to serve God and wait for his Son. Thus, Paul depicts as fundamental to Christian belief and life, an orientation towards Jesus' future arrival. Christians wait for Jesus.²

How many modern churches, however, regularly address this aspect of belief, and how many believers would describe themselves as *waiting* for Jesus? If somebody is

¹ Emphasis mine. Bible quotations are from ESV unless otherwise indicated.

² The 'essence of being a Christian', I. Howard Marshall, 'Pauline Theology in the Thessalonian Correspondence', in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honor of C. K. Barrett* (ed. Morna D. Hooker and Stephen G. Wilson; London: SPCK, 1982), 173–183 (here 179).

suffering severely, we might hear a cry for Jesus to return. But this only highlights the absence of *waiting* as characteristic of regular Christian life. While the parousia itself is often acknowledged as essential to Christian belief, how the Christian is related to that future day is frequently neglected. The scholarly situation is similar. Many scholarly treatments on eschatology focus either on the events of, or around, the last day, or on the structure of a particular eschatological framework. Moreover, several key NT scholars consider *waiting for Jesus* as a threat to mission and ethics.

Therefore, despite being mentioned by almost every NT author, the concept of *waiting*, i.e., waiting for Jesus, has rarely been explored.³ As a result, the theological significance of *eschatological waiting* and its implications for mission and ethics have not been explored in sufficient depth. A better understanding of *eschatological waiting*, however, will provide clarity and balance to eschatology and its relation to mission and ethics.

This thesis explores the idea of *eschatological waiting* in the New Testament by focussing on the use of ἀναμένω in 1 Thess 1:10. The word ἀναμένω presents a window onto the concept of *waiting* in Paul's richly eschatological epistles to Thessalonica.

This research will not provide an exhaustive treatment of the theme throughout the NT. It is, however, a contribution towards a theology of *waiting* which, in turn, we

³ Matt 24:50; Luke 12:36, 46; Acts 24:15; Rom 8:19–25; 1 Cor 1:7; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 1:10; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28, 10:13, 11:10; Jas 5:7–8; 2 Pet 3:12–14; Jude 21. The concept is present also in Mark 13:32–37; John 13:33–35, 14:1–4, 16:7; 1 Pet 4:7; 1 John 3:2–3; and Rev 6:10–11.

hope will contribute to greater clarity and balance in NT eschatology and provide constructive implications for mission and ethics.

To this end, we shall overview the scholarly literature and show how the concept of *waiting* has been neglected, hearing firstly from major views on Pauline eschatology from just over the last hundred years, and then from more recent approaches to 1 & 2 Thessalonians (ch. 2). We shall then explicate our methodology (ch. 3), and discuss which NTG words provide a solid foundation for research into *eschatological waiting* (ch. 4).

At this point we move on to the main focus of our research: exegesis — where we shall narrow our focus to examine ἀναμένω in the richly eschatological 1 & 2 Thessalonians. This focus is to ensure proper analysis in accordance with the limits of this thesis. Moreover, ἀναμένω and 1 Thess 1:10 have generally been neglected, despite the fact that in this context Paul indicates that *waiting* is essential to being Christian. We begin by exploring the meaning of ἀναμένω in LXX, Philo, and Josephus (ch. 5), and then examine how it is used in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, focussing on 1 Thess 1:10 (ch. 6). We then consider the theological significance of *waiting for Jesus* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians (ch. 7). Then we examine the consistency of the meaning and sense of *waiting* throughout the NT (ch. 8).

Following this exegesis we will suggest implications for eschatology, mission and ethics in conversation with the issues raised in the literature review (ch. 9). A summary of our research on *waiting* will conclude this thesis (ch. 10).

In sum, this thesis explores what it means that Christians are described as those who wait. What significance and meaning lies in this rarely explored concept, and what implications does *waiting* have for eschatology, mission and ethics?

Since we have already introduced central terminology for this thesis, we now provide some basic definitions.

Waiting: To remain in a state or place until a future expected thing occurs with an orientation towards or expectation of that thing (cf. §4.1).

Eschatology: ‘the study or doctrine of the destiny of humanity and history’.⁴

Mission: ‘the specific task or purpose that the church is sent into the world to accomplish’.⁵

Ethics: for this thesis *ethics* addresses the general area of *Christian living*.⁶

⁴ Todd D. Still, ‘Eschatology in the Thessalonian Letters’, *RevExp* 96/2 (1999): 196.

⁵ Kevin DeYoung and Gregory D. Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2011), 20.

⁶ Cf. Oliver O’Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics* (2nd ed.; Leicester: Apollos, 1994), 26.

Chapter 2

2. Literature Review

Our examination of the concept of *waiting* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians enters into two related conversations regarding (a) Pauline eschatology and (b) scholarship on 1 & 2 Thessalonians. In these two conversations, the concept of *waiting* is generally neglected. In some cases, however, *waiting* is acknowledged, but considered in need of modification or supplementation. Most commonly, the idea that believers simply wait is dismissed; instead they are to act to establish the coming kingdom.

Where pertinent, we will draw out significant contributions, critical and constructive, that shape our research. This will highlight what various scholars have said about *waiting* in their views on 1 & 2 Thessalonians or Pauline eschatology. This highlighting, however, ought not be misconstrued as suggesting that these scholars emphasise *waiting*. Instead, there exists a general disregard for *waiting* in the literature. What little is said, however, is here highlighted for our purposes.

2.1. Pauline Eschatology

In this section we will survey the major Pauline scholars of the last century and highlight their contributions to the concept of *waiting*, issues that arise concerning *waiting*, and the general lack of emphasis, significance, or consideration of *waiting*. We will see a general tendency to sideline *waiting*, either because it fails to fit a proposed eschatological scheme, or because it is considered a threat to ethics and mission in need of modification, reinterpretation, or supplementation. That is, *eschatological waiting* is frequently neglected, and eschatology has not been examined through the lens of *waiting*.

2.1.1. Christoph Blumhardt

The work of the German Pietist Christoph Blumhardt (1842–1919), who described ‘waiting and hastening’ as vital to Christian life,¹ was highly influential on several significant twentieth century scholars.² Thus, Blumhardt is an important starting point to gauge the place of *waiting* in Pauline scholarship over the last hundred years.

¹ Moltmann refers to this as ‘*warten und pressieren* “waiting and being in a hurry”’; Jürgen Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 6; trans. of *Ethik der Hoffnung* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2010).

² E.g. Barth, Cullmann, and Moltmann. Charles Moore, Introduction to *Action in Waiting*, by Christoph Blumhardt (Robertsbridge East Sussex: The Plough Publishing House, 1998), xv–xxx; cf. Karl Barth, Afterword to *Action in Waiting*, by Christoph Blumhardt (Robertsbridge East Sussex: The Plough Publishing House, 1998), 217–222; Christian T. Collins Winn and Peter Goodwin Heltzel, “Before Bloch There Was Blumhardt”: A Thesis on the Origins of the Theology of Hope’, *SJT* 62/1 (2009): 39. Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 6. Jürgen Moltmann, ‘The Hope for the Kingdom of God and Signs of Hope in the World: The Relevance of Blumhardt’s Theology Today’, *Pneuma* 26/1 (2004): 4; trans. by Michael Nausner, Christian Collins Winn, and Peter Heltzel of address entitled, ‘Reich-Gottes-Hoffnung und Hoffnungszeichen in der Welt. Die Aktualität von Blumhardts Theologie’, (1999).

Blumhardt's thought is anchored in Christ's victory, his promise to come again, and the living reality of God's kingdom.³ The true Christian is oriented towards God's coming and thus energised to act for justice and love.⁴

[Christ's] servants have a two fold task: they are to wait for him in the sense of being active and doing something, and they are to be stewards.⁵

The activity of stewards who wait-by-being-active anticipates Christ's future kingdom. Waiting patiently (Rom 8:25) 'gives rise to an energy that is directed toward what they desire to achieve'.⁶ That is, since Christ's kingdom will consist in peace and justice, waiting for it means acting now towards peace and justice.

Blumhardt reveals several tendencies concerning *waiting* that, as we shall see, persist throughout 20th century Pauline scholarship. Like Barth, Schweitzer and Bultmann, Blumhardt does not emphasise the significance of the parousia as an event in world history.⁷ Its primary significance is *now* — not 'one single point in absolute remoteness for which we are to wait'. 'Christ's future is now, or [. . .] not at all', and hence, 'comes closer' and is experienced by watching.⁸ This present experience of the parousia, as in Dodd, militates against its irrelevancy as 'something to be realised only at the end of time'.⁹

³ Christoph Blumhardt, *Action in Waiting* (Robertsbridge East Sussex: The Plough Publishing House, 1998), 6, 13, 37, 43; trans of sermons taken from the following volumes by Christoph Blumhardt: *Jesus ist Sieger!; Sterbet, so wird Jesus leben!; Ihr Menschen seid Gottes; Gottes Reich kommt!* (Rotapfel-Verlag, c. 1937).

⁴ Blumhardt, *Action*, passim.

⁵ Blumhardt, *Action*, 26, cf. 28.

⁶ Christoph Blumhardt, *The Gospel of God's Reign: Living for the Kingdom of God* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, 2014), 98; trans. of *Vom Reich Gottes* (Schlächtern: Neuwerk-Verlag, 1922) and *Von der Nachfolge Jesu Christi* (Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1923). Cf. Barth, 'Afterword', 221.

⁷ See §§2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.6.

⁸ Blumhardt, *Action*, 38, cf. 27.

⁹ Blumhardt, *Action*, 27. cf. Dodd, §2.1.5.

Blumhardt also emphasises world renewal — that God’s kingdom is being established now through Christians.¹⁰ As we wait and watch, we act towards that renewal, and in so doing, ‘hasten’ his coming. We need to actively fight for the kingdom now, unlike people of dead religion, who,

think that some day something will come down from heaven that will change everything all at once as if by magic, and that in the meantime it is all right to let life go on as it is, so long as we attend to our religious duties. [. . .] Even if much remains that, in the end, only he can put right, we will show that we are people who are not simply waiting for their salvation in a self-centred, self-loving way, but who rather are consumed by eagerness to smooth the way for God [by working only for the good], even if it is only in a very small way.¹¹

Waiting for Christ, then, means actively establishing his kingdom now, through good works and stewardship; however, simply *waiting* for future salvation is self-centred and evidence of ‘dead religion’.¹²

Blumhardt rightly recognises that *waiting for Jesus* is a significant part of the Christian life. This significance is reflected in the NT (1 Thess 1:10) but not often in NT scholarship. Nevertheless, Blumhardt’s work effectively interprets *waiting* as *acting* towards establishing Christ’s kingdom. This raises vital questions: how do *waiting* and *acting* relate, how is *waiting* missional and neighbourly, and what may be expected in this age and what needs to be awaited until the next?

¹⁰ Blumhardt, *Action*, 40–41, 78, 167–179, 194, 196. See Käsemann, §2.1.8; Beker, §2.1.9; Wright, §2.1.12.

¹¹ Blumhardt, *Action*, 77.

¹² Blumhardt, *Action*, 77.

2.1.2. Karl Barth

For Karl Barth (1886–1968), there are two primary aspects to eschatology which effect *waiting*: first, its future aspect that creates discontent and so eager *waiting*; and second, that *waiting* means the present apprehension of Christ through love, since his parousia will not enter into time. This interpretation may be seen in Barth’s groundbreaking commentary on Romans (1919).¹³

First, emphasising the importance of hope, Barth sees that ‘[i]f Christianity be not altogether thoroughgoing [ie. future] eschatology, there remains in it no relationship whatever with Christ’.¹⁴ That is, we are saved and we know Christ in hope. Hence, what better thing can there be but to wait! ‘[T]o wait is the most profound truth of our normal, everyday life’.¹⁵ Christians wait because the Spirit directs them ‘at every moment [. . .] from death to the new life’.¹⁶ As a result, they groan (Rom 8:23). They suffer under the weight of the present order, and so wait for redemption in totality.¹⁷ ‘The new man [. . .] has been born. But I [. . .] am not the new man. My final possibility is to groan—and to await the promise.’¹⁸

¹³ *Der Römerbrief* (Bern: Baschlin, 1919). We will refer to Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns; 6th ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963); trans of *Der Römerbrief* (Bern: Baschlin, 1919). Käsemann mentions its significance for NT eschatology, Ernst Käsemann, ‘On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic’, in *New Testament Questions of Today* (trans. W. J. Montague; London: SCM Press, 1969), 108–37 (here 108–109 n. 2); trans. of *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Zweiter Band; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1960; 2nd ed. 1965). Chapter first published as ‘Zum Thema der christlichen Apokalyptik’ in *ZTK* (1962): 257–284.

¹⁴ Barth, *Romans*, 314.

¹⁵ Barth, *Romans*, 314.

¹⁶ Barth, *Romans*, 314.

¹⁷ Barth, *Romans*, 311–313.

¹⁸ Barth, *Romans*, 312.

Barth sees this *waiting* in terms of discontent (Rom 8:24–25). We cannot be content with our present situation because we have seen the truth. Instead, we wait ‘as though’ the truth were in some sense already true, while knowing it to be only hope (cf. Barth, *CD IV/3*, 908–909).

Our refusal to accept [our present situation] and to regard our present existence as incapable of harmony [. . . is] intelligible in the unseen hope which is ours in God, in Christ, in the Spirit, in the hope by which we are existentially confronted by the things which are not. [. . .] We can then, if we understand ourselves aright, be none other than *they who wait*.¹⁹

That is, *waiting* forbids claiming too much in terms of realised eschatology. It holds out the truth and declares that it is ‘not yet’ (cf. Barth, *CD IV/3*, 922). We wait because we do not yet see, and yet we wait because in hope we ‘see’ the invisible. We ‘see’ more than the visible world, and so cannot be satisfied with it. So, we wait. Faith yields a bold refusal to accept what can be seen — and so, a hopeful waiting.

Second, for Barth, the eternal nature of the parousia means that waiting for it actually means apprehending Christ *now*, and so, partaking in eternity through love. Since the parousia is eternal, it cannot be an event in world history.²⁰ Instead, the present time is *qualified* by the imminence, eternity, and totality of the end.²¹ Consequently, awaiting the parousia is understood as a right response to Christ *now*.

Knowing that the eternal ‘Moment’ does not, has not, and will not, *enter in*, we should then become aware of the dignity and importance of each

¹⁹ Barth, *Romans*, 314–315. Emphasis mine.

²⁰ Barth, *Romans*, 501.

²¹ Barth, *Romans*, 500.

single concrete temporal moment, and apprehend its qualification and its ethical demand. *Then we should await the parousia*: we should, that is to say, accept our present condition in its full seriousness; we should apprehend Jesus Christ as the Author and Finisher, and then we should not hesitate to repent, to be converted, to think the thought of eternity, and therefore to—love.²²

The parousia impacts the present — but not by entering into time. What matters is not the parousia's eventual *arriving*, but its *imminence*. Encountered by Christ's eternity, we must respond to him now, and can — through knowledge-enabled love (cf. Barth, *CD* IV/3, 938). The existential *now* is central.²³ Since we apprehend Christ now, Christians respond now to the parousia by love. Such love is, for Barth, *waiting* for Christ.

Barth's point is that rather than *waiting* for a future moment in linear history, we are to apprehend Christ now. Indeed we must, since the parousia is eternal; it does not have the essence of temporality. It cannot be awaited. *Waiting* is understood as present experience of Christ, manifested in love, which is itself of eternity. Therefore, because of its eternal nature, the parousia does not enter into time, but qualifies time, and so to wait for it means to participate in eternity now, that is, to love.

In sum, Barth presents two views of *waiting*: one emphasises the future, hope, and so, *waiting* for the new age, dissatisfied with the present; the other emphasises the eternal

²² Barth, *Romans*, 501. Emphasis mine except 'enter in'.

²³ Cf. Barth, *Romans*, 30; 115; cf. Anton John Rose (2015), 'Paul, Christ and Time: An Investigation of Apocalyptic and Salvation Historical Themes in the Undisputed Pauline Epistles', Durham Theses, Durham University, Available at Durham E-Thesis Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/11351/>, 91–95.

nature of the parousia, that it is not a moment in time to be awaited, and so conceives of *waiting* as participating in that eternity now, by loving. The former points to an essential truth: *waiting* indicates something greater, and so, a yearning which refuses to be satisfied by the illusory fullness of what can be seen. The latter, however, by emphasising eternity over history, tends to sideline the specific object and nature of *waiting* (cf. Bultmann, §2.1.6). Moreover, the future moment seems to be drowned out by the present experiencing of it. It gives the distinct impression that it is irrelevant whether or not the parousia is an event in world history. Does it actually matter that he ‘enters in’ (cf. 1 Thess 1:10, 4:16)? We shall argue, however, that *waiting* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians demonstrates the importance of the parousia as an event in world history, a climactic event which is awaited and not drowned out by any present experience of Christ in the Spirit (§§7.1–3; 9.1).

2.1.3. **Albert Schweitzer**

Albert Schweitzer’s (1875–1965) seminal work on Paul highlights Paul’s strong eschatological mindset; however, by focussing on present realisation in Christ-mysticism, it leaves little room for *eschatological waiting*.²⁴

Schweitzer argues that Paul essentially teaches an apocalyptic mysticism of ‘being-in-

²⁴ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (trans. William Montgomery; 2nd ed.; Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins University Press, 1953); trans. of *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1930). Cf. Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 294; Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 410–412. For influence see G. R. Beasley-Murray, ‘A Century of Eschatological Discussion’, *ExpTim* 64/10 (1953): 314; F. F. Bruce, *Eschatology* (*London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 183 (1958); repr., Oxford: Miss Burroughs, c. 1958), 3; Stephen H. Travis, ‘Eschatology’, in *New Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright; Leicester: IVP, 1988), 229. Campbell, *Union* 36.

Christ'. Christianity, he says, is 'a christ-mysticism [...] a "belonging together" with Christ as our Lord, grasped in thought and realised in experience'.²⁵ This 'being-in-Christ' means that 'future redemption' is experienced *in the present* as Christ's supernatural life is shared by those united to him.²⁶

[Paul] is not, like others, content with a confident expectation of a future redemption [. . .] but seeks through the mystical conception of being-in-Christ to conceive it as something which is realising itself in the present.²⁷

Thus, although Schweitzer refers to the parousia, it is sidelined in his work, and consequently *waiting* also.²⁸ Solidarity with Christ is not found by 'looking forward in hope to that future realisation [. . .] in the Messianic glory',²⁹ and 'faith ceases to be simply a faith of expectation',³⁰ because Christ-mysticism provides 'the necessary conditions for the experience of the future in the present and the eternal in the temporal'.³¹ Such a focus means that instead of waiting for the future kingdom, blessing, and resurrection, believers experience them now. Thus, little room is left for *eschatological waiting*.

Therefore, for Schweitzer, the parousia had little significance as a future event in time. He thus minimises the essential future nature of expectation (cf. Rom 8:24–25), and does not do justice to the Pauline teaching on waiting for the Lord, particularly Paul's

²⁵ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 378.

²⁶ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 75, 124.

²⁷ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 75.

²⁸ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 380–381; cf. Barth §2.1.2.

²⁹ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 109. Emphasis mine.

³⁰ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 99.

³¹ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 37.

expectation that Jesus will arrive in history ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν (1 Thess 1:10) to gather his people to be with him (1 Thess 4:16–17). How, indeed, can the Thessalonians be described as *waiting*, if, by Christ-mysticism, they already experience their future redemption? This will be explored in depth below (chs. 6–7). Nevertheless Schweitzer’s work raises the question of how believers can both participate in Christ now *and* wait to be with Christ personally at his future coming (cf. §9.1.1).

Schweitzer understands Paul’s ethics as arising from Paul’s emphasis on present participation in the future. This reveals that, for Schweitzer, *simple waiting* is inconsistent with ethics. Whereas for others, eschatological expectation led to asceticism and withdrawal, Paul ‘would much rather that daily life should go on in its usual way’.³² Paul’s positive attitude to living in the world came about because the parousia had lost significance as a future event in time. Paul’s commendation of work (1 Thess 4:11–12), in fact, is said to show his lack of eschatological expectation:

*In spite of his thoughts being concentrated on the end of the world, he commends work[. . .] The way in which he brings back the ethical value of work has in it something prophetic. [. . .] He propounds an idea [. . .] that the world was not coming to an end, but was to go on.*³³

Schweitzer’s logic here reveals a way of thinking about *waiting*: it inherently detracts from ethical living and leads towards a millenarian-like withdrawal from the world and its affairs. Is this right? Does focussing on eschatological expectation mean disregarding the world? Is *waiting* for Jesus antithetical to ethical living? These

³² Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 312.

³³ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 312–313. Emphasis mine.

questions will be considered below in light of our conclusions about *waiting* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians (§9.3).

In sum, Schweitzer's Christ-mysticism whereby believers participate in the future *now* leaves little room for *eschatological waiting*. They have no reason to wait to be with Jesus because they are not absent from Christ, nor he from them (cf. 1 Thess 1:10, 4:17, 5:10).³⁴ Moreover, ethics is seen to result from Paul's present focus; simply *waiting* for Jesus is inconsistent with right living in the world. By stressing present realisation in Christ-mysticism, Schweitzer sidelines *waiting* in Paul.

2.1.4. Geerhardus Vos

Geerhardus Vos (1862–1947) makes an important contribution to Pauline eschatology, but does not emphasise *waiting*.³⁵ Vos understands Pauline eschatology as 'now and not yet'. That is, the 'age to come' is now 'realised in principle' (not, as in Schweitzer, through Christ-mysticism),³⁶ but not yet 'fully realised in solid existence'.³⁷ At the parousia, when 'this age' ends, the age to come will be fully realised.³⁸ This already-not yet framework of eschatology, as we shall see, makes good sense of what it means to *wait for* the already exalted Son of God from heaven (1 Thess 1:10, cf. §§7.2–3; §9.1).

³⁴ Peter C. Orr, *Christ Absent and Present: A Study in Pauline Christology* (WUNT2; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 14.

³⁵ Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (1930; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 38.

³⁶ See §2.1.3.

³⁷ Vos, *Eschatology*, 38.

³⁸ Vos, *Eschatology*, 38.

For Vos, ANYE strengthens hope, because the ‘the partial enjoyment has rather whetted the appetite for the true food in its abundance’.³⁹ We may infer from this, then, that within a framework of ANYE, Christians wait in confident peace, but still eagerly.⁴⁰ ‘Heaven’, Vos says, ‘not only in principle beatifies but also still beckons onward the believer to its final consummation’.⁴¹

Despite these insights, Vos says little about *waiting*, meaning that space remains for our research. Vos’ insights regarding ANYE, nevertheless provide important grounds for further thought about *waiting*, particularly in how *waiting* highlights the significance of the not yet without detracting from that which has already been realised.

2.1.5. C. H. Dodd

C. H. Dodd (1884–1973) contends that Paul teaches a fully realised eschatology, an emphasis that crowds out *waiting*.⁴² Dodd argues that because Christ did not appear in the clouds,⁴³ the apostles, including Paul, saw the eschaton as having come in Jesus’ own ministry,⁴⁴ — ‘the new age is already here, and because it is here men should repent.’⁴⁵ In Paul, the eschatological life consists of Christ’s presence by his Spirit in

³⁹ Vos, *Eschatology*, 40.

⁴⁰ See §2.1.2.

⁴¹ Vos, *Eschatology*, 40.

⁴² John Wick Bowman, ‘From Schweitzer to Bultmann’, *ThTo* 11/2 (1954): 168. Some say that Dodd later softened his views, but still held to realised eschatology, e.g. Beasley-Murray, 315; Hoekema, *The Bible*, 295; Bruce, *Eschatology*, 3; Donald Joseph Selby, ‘Changing Ideas in New Testament Eschatology’, *HTR* 50/1 (1957): 22.

⁴³ C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (2nd ed.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1944 [1st ed. 1936]), 41.

⁴⁴ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 21–22.

⁴⁵ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 33.

the church.⁴⁶ The focus has shifted from future glory to present benefits, experienced in the Spirit.

The hope of glory yet to come remains as a background of thought, but the foreground is more and more occupied by the contemplation of all the riches of divine grace enjoyed *here and now* by those who are in Christ Jesus.⁴⁷

Thus, *waiting* is unnecessary, because the kingdom is *already* present. But additionally, *waiting* is considered detrimental to Christian living. Echoing Blumhardt's and Schweitzer's fears,⁴⁸ Dodd argues that ethics must be grounded in realised eschatology (i.e., the church and the supernatural life), because future eschatology is non-ethical.

[A]n exclusive concentration of attention upon glory to come, with the corresponding devaluation of the present, its duties and opportunities, its social claims and satisfactions, obscures the finer and more humane aspects of morality.⁴⁹

That is, *waiting* for Jesus leads to anti-social behaviour. Moreover, here Dodd articulates an assumption that pervades much scholarship on Pauline eschatology: future focus devalues the present. This seems to lie behind some later perspectives, where future aspects, such as recreation⁵⁰ or resurrection,⁵¹ are reworked to emphasise the present age. This raises two questions: does *waiting* devalue the present, and, if so,

⁴⁶ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 60.

⁴⁷ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 63. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁸ See §2.1.1, 2.1.3.

⁴⁹ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 64.

⁵⁰ E.g. Käsemann, §2.1.8; Beker §2.1.9; Wright §2.1.12;

⁵¹ Wright, §2.1.12.

is that necessarily the bad thing that scholarship seeks to avoid? Or, as we argue later, can *waiting* (1 Thess 1:10) emphasise the future age over the present, without reducing the present to an amoral and valueless thing (§9.3)?

Thus, Dodd taught that the new age was already here, and consequently *waiting* is unnecessary and also detrimental to ethics.⁵²

2.1.6. Rudolf Bultmann

Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976) emphasises the existential moment of decision, and combined with his demythologising of ‘mythical eschatology’,⁵³ he argues that central to Pauline eschatology is an openness to the future and how God is experienced in the present moment.⁵⁴ Bultmann’s anthropocentric hermeneutic means that the eschatological event occurs continuously in history as people are called to make ‘genuine existential decision[s]’.⁵⁵

In [the proclamation], therefore, the eschatological occurrence is taking place; the eschatological ‘acceptable time,’ the ‘day of salvation’ foretold

⁵² Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 62. For influence see Bowman, 173–174.

⁵³ Rudolf Karl Bultmann, ‘New Testament and Mythology: The Mythological Element in the Message of the New Testament and the Problem of its Re-interpretation’, in *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate Vol. 1* (ed. Hans Werner Bartsch; trans. Reginald Fuller; 2nd ed.; London: SPCK, 1964), 1–44 (here 5, 16). trans of *Neues Testament und Mythologie* (1941). See Blumhardt §2.1.1; Barth, §2.1.2.

⁵⁴ Rudolf Karl Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. Kendrick Grobel; 2 vols; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951 (Vol. 1), 1955 (Vol. 2); repr. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007), 319–320; trans. of *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1948).

⁵⁵ Bultmann, ‘New Testament and Mythology’, 16. Cf. Rudolf Karl Bultmann, ‘History and Eschatology in the New Testament’, *NTS* 1/1 (1954): 13.

by Is. 49:8, is present reality in the Now in which the word encounters the hearer.⁵⁶

For Bultmann, faith is not only hope and confidence, but also openness to the future.⁵⁷ Future, however, has no clear specific object. Salvation is found not in a future return of Jesus, but in the process of becoming one's true, free self through renewed, existential decisions.⁵⁸

In this framework, *waiting* is a mode of being open to the future and thus enabling a turning from oneself in self-surrender.⁵⁹ Bultmann writes, 'hope is the freedom for the future and the openness toward it[. . .] It manifests itself in the patient waiting (Rom 8:25)'.⁶⁰ *Waiting* has no specific object, but is an expression of the individual turning away from himself, in 'freedom for the future'. In this openness to the future, the resurrection life is 'a present reality'.⁶¹ Hence, the significance of *waiting* is not in its object but in the *waiting* itself; that is, in being open to the future.

Against this view, Moltmann writes, '[i]f it is precisely believers who *wait for* the redemption of the body [. . .] then in so doing they make it known that they have not

⁵⁶ Bultmann, *Theology*, 306–7; cf. L. Joseph Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul's Eschatology* (JSNTSSup; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 97.

⁵⁷ Bultmann, *Theology*, 319–320.

⁵⁸ Hoekema, *The Bible*, 310–311, quoting H. N. Ridderbos, *Paulus* (Kampen: Kok, 1966), 37 (translation by Hoekema). See also R. Barry Matlock, *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul: Paul's Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism* (JSNTSSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 101.

⁵⁹ Bultmann, *Theology*, 319.

⁶⁰ Bultmann, *Theology*, 320.

⁶¹ Bultmann, *Theology*, 348.

yet attained to identity with themselves'.⁶² *Waiting* indicates an incompleteness that Bultmann does not rightly account for. Moreover, the consistent testimony of the NT to specific objects of *waiting* militate against Bultmann's view.⁶³ For example, in order to comfort the Thessalonians, Paul relates to them concrete events, *by whose future fulfilment*, they may be encouraged (1 Thess 4:13–18).

Therefore, Bultmann's anthropological and existential interpretation of Paul leaves little room for *waiting* for an actual return and union with Jesus, because it emphasises the present moment of decision and openness to the future.

2.1.7. Oscar Cullmann

Oscar Cullmann (1902–1999) argues that the Christ-event divides all history into two periods, and so also, that Pauline eschatology contains a now and not yet tension (cf. Vos §2.1.4).⁶⁴ The Christ-event is a decisive 'mid-point' which ushers in the last period before the end.⁶⁵ The 'decisive battle' has occurred, but 'the war still continues'.⁶⁶ Cullmann thus emphasises 'the temporal character of Christian hope'.⁶⁷ This hope,

⁶² Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (London: SCM Press, 1967), 68; trans. of *Theologie der Hoffnung* (5th ed. Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1965). Emphasis mine. Cf. Barth, *CD IV/3*, 914; A. L. Moore, *The Parousia in the New Testament* (NovTSup; Leiden: Brill, 1966), 78; J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 147.

⁶³ E.g. 1 Cor 1:7, Gal 5:5, Phil 3:20–21, 1 Thess 1:10, Heb 10:27, Jas 5:7, 2 Pet 3:12–14.

⁶⁴ Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History* (trans. Floyd V. Filson; Rev. Ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 67–68, 81–82; trans. of *Christus und die Zeit* (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag AG, 1946; 2nd Ed. 1948; 3rd Ed. 1962)

⁶⁵ Cullmann, *Christ*, 4–5, 21, 32.

⁶⁶ Cullmann, *Christ*, 84; cf. Stephen S. Smalley, 'Patterns of New Testament Eschatology', *Churchman* 76/3 (1962): 141–49.

⁶⁷ Oscar Cullmann, 'The Return of Christ', in *The Early Church* (trans. Stanley Godman; London: SCM Press, 1956), 141–62 (here 144); trans. of *Le Retour du Christ* (3rd Ed.; Neuchâtel, 1948).

he writes, ‘awaits the age [. . .] to come, which is to succeed the present age’.⁶⁸ Such hope is opposed to Bultmann’s “‘permanent availability for existential decision’”.⁶⁹ Christians wait, according to Cullmann, because the ‘decisive event has already taken place [. . .] but the end has not yet arrived’, yet will arrive as a future historical event.⁷⁰ They do not ‘already participat[e] in all that the Church expects for the end of the world’, because despite being with Christ they ‘still remain in time’ and so ‘are waiting’ (cf. Rev 6:10).⁷¹

For Cullmann, understanding the past, present and future of salvation history means that NT hope ‘inspires and encourages’ mission.⁷² Cullmann understands this present period to be a true and necessary moment of salvation history for gospel preaching before the end.⁷³ Paul saw himself as the ‘restrainer’ of 2 Thess 2 and that his ministry was a necessary step prior to the parousia.⁷⁴ Munck follows Cullmann on this,⁷⁵ arguing that Paul believed that only after his success in preaching to

⁶⁸ Cullmann, ‘The Return’, 144.

⁶⁹ Cullmann, ‘The Return’, 144.

⁷⁰ Cullmann, ‘The Return’, 147.

⁷¹ Cullmann, ‘The Return’, 148–149.

⁷² Cullmann, ‘The Return’, 160.

⁷³ Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (trans. Sidney G. Sowers; New Testament Library; London: SCM Press, 1967), 250, 254; trans. of *Heil als Geschichte: Heilsgeschichtliche Existenz im Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1965). Cullmann, *Christ*, 157–158; cf. Oscar Cullmann, ‘Eschatology and Missions in the New Testament’, in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube; trans. Olive Wyon; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 409–21.

⁷⁴ Cullmann, *Christ*, 163–166.

⁷⁵ Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (trans. Frank Clarke; London: SCM Press, 1959), trans. of *Paulus und die Heilsgeschichte* (Copenhagen: Universitetsforlaget, Aarhus and Ejnar Munksgaard, 1954). Munck references his dependence on Oscar Cullmann, ‘Le caractère eschatologique du devoir missionnaire et de la conscience apostolique de S. Paul. Étude sur le κατέχων (—ων) de II Thess. 2.6–7’, *RHPR* 16 (1936): 210–45. Munck, *Paul*, 36. n1.

representative Gentiles, and at his own removal, would the Lord come.⁷⁶ This raises an important question: how can Jesus' imminent arrival, for which Christians wait, be reconciled with the necessity that the gospel is to go to all the earth (Matt 24:14; Luke 24:46–47)?

In sum, Cullmann's understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection as *the* decisive event in world history, and the historical character of hope, is immensely important for understanding Pauline eschatology. In contrast to other scholars reviewed above, Cullmann emphasises the essential historical character of the present time and the parousia, an emphasis that sits well with the concept of *waiting* in the NT.⁷⁷ However, does this historical emphasis mean that Cullmann is unable to adequately account for Jesus' imminence and yet the necessity of mission in this present time to the ends of the earth (cf. Matt 24:14; Lk 24:46–47; Acts 1:8)? Is it of the nature of a sequence of events, one after the other, or, as we argue below, is mission-necessity and Jesus' imminence held together some other way (§9.2.2)?

2.1.8. Ernst Käsemann

The framework for thinking about how Ernst Käsemann (1906–1998) understands *waiting* is his double eschatology of Christ's present rule and future coming.

⁷⁶ Munck, *Paul*, 38–42, 65–66, 333–334. Cf. Johannes Munck, '1 Thess 1:9–10 and the Missionary Preaching of Paul: Textual Exegesis and Hermeneutic Reflexions', *NTS* 9/2 (1963): 95–110; John Knox, 'Romans 15:14–33 and Paul's Conception of His Apostolic Mission', *JBL* 83/1 (1964): 1–11. For critique cf. Lionel J. Windsor, *Paul and the Vocation of Israel: How Paul's Jewish Identity Informs His Apostolic Ministry, with Special Reference to Romans* (BZNW 205; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 27.

⁷⁷ E.g. Barth, §2.1.2; Schweitzer §2.1.3; Bultmann §2.1.6.

For Käsemann, the early disciples reinterpreted Jesus' actions and teachings from an apocalyptic point of view,⁷⁸ primarily, Christ's present heavenly rule bringing eschatological subjection to the world.⁷⁹ Christ's present rule guarantees the eschatological future. The ground for any hope of a future resurrection is solely Christological – *he* is risen; *he* reigns; *he* ushers in God's lordship.⁸⁰

In this eschatological framework of Christ's future coming and present reign, *waiting* indicates incompleteness: the church cries longingly (Rom 8:19–23) 'because her perfection is still to be accomplished'.⁸¹ But what is lacking? The church 'wait[s] longingly with the whole of creation for the *liberty* of the children of God'.⁸²

Liberty is understood as total obedience to God's righteous rule in Christ.⁸³ *Waiting* for liberty, then, means waiting for the completion of Jesus' reign (his active subjection of the world), since that is how obedience is accomplished. Jesus' reign is actualised

⁷⁸ Käsemann, 'Primitive Christian Apocalyptic', 114–119; cf. 'the mother of all Christian theology', Ernst Käsemann, 'The Beginnings of Christian Theology', in *New Testament Questions of Today* (trans. W. J. Montague; London: SCM Press, 1969), 82–107 (here 102); trans. of *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Zweiter Band; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1960; 2nd ed. 1965); chapter first published as 'Die Anfänge christlicher Theologie' in *ZTK* 57 (1960): 162–185.

⁷⁹ Käsemann, 'Primitive Christian Apocalyptic', 133.

⁸⁰ Käsemann, 'Primitive Christian Apocalyptic', 133.

⁸¹ Käsemann, 'Primitive Christian Apocalyptic', 136.

⁸² Ernst Käsemann, 'Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans', in *Perspectives on Paul* (trans. Margaret Kohl; London: SCM Press, 1971), 60–79 (here 67); trans. of *Paulinische Perspektiven* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969). Emphasis mine.

⁸³ Ernst Käsemann, 'The Cry for Liberty in the Worship of the Church', in *Perspectives on Paul* (trans. Margaret Kohl; London: SCM Press, 1971), 122–37 (here 126); trans. of *Paulinische Perspektiven* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969). Chapter originally published as 'Der gottesdienstliche Schrei nach der Freiheit' in *Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1964), 142–156. Käsemann, 'Primitive Christian Apocalyptic', 136.

through proclamation.⁸⁴ He liberates those who come under his rule through proclamation, and so, extends his reign.⁸⁵ This is mission. Ethics is that same process on individuals, as they ‘deliver over to Christ by their bodily obedience the piece of world which they themselves are’.⁸⁶ Thus, Christ’s reign results in salvation, because the world is ‘recaptured for the sovereignty of God’.⁸⁷ Hence, through mission and ethics, *liberty* for which the church waits, is also being actualised in this age. The ‘new creation emerges from the old world through the Christian proclamation’.⁸⁸ Therefore, believers both *await* liberty and also take part in *actualising* it. In effect, *waiting* does not mean simply *waiting*. *Waiting* is modified to mean *accomplishing*; not: waiting now to receive later. What Christ brings at his parousia, is also what the church actualises now, and so it is unclear, in Käsemann, what it means to *wait*. We hope that an examination of *waiting* in light of Jesus’ present, active reign will provide greater clarity (cf. §§7.1–3; 9.1).

Käsemann’s presentation raises two important questions. First, how does the new creation emerge — is there a progress from the now to the not yet as implied in Käsemann? Is new creation — liberty — something increasingly actualised *now*, or awaited, or both? Second, what is the nature of Christ’s present reign and future coming which Käsemann rightly makes so central? Orr has observed that ‘the

⁸⁴ Ernst Käsemann, “‘The Righteousness of God’ in Paul”, in *New Testament Questions of Today* (trans. W. J. Montague; London: SCM Press, 1969), 168–82 (here 177); trans. of *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Zweiter Band; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1960; 2nd ed. 1965); chapter first published as ‘Gottesgerechtigkeit bei Paulus’ in *ZTK* 58 (1961): 367–378.

⁸⁵ Käsemann, ‘Primitive Christian Apocalyptic’, 134.

⁸⁶ Käsemann, ‘Primitive Christian Apocalyptic’, 138; Käsemann, ‘Cry for Liberty’, 124.

⁸⁷ Käsemann, ‘Righteousness of God’, 180, 182.

⁸⁸ Käsemann, ‘Justification and Salvation History’, 67.

personality of the exalted Christ becomes blurred in Käsemann's portrayal' and that his reign is conceived of as 'divine power rather than an expression of his reign as the exalted person of Christ'.⁸⁹ Since 1 & 2 Thessalonians presents salvation primarily as a personal relationship with Christ in the future (1 Thess 1:10, 4:17, 5:10), but experienced now by faith (1:3, 3:6–8, 11–13), Christ's person remains central in his exaltation and reign.⁹⁰

Thus, Käsemann rightly recognises the significance of Christ's present reign and the sole Christological ground for eschatology and future resurrection. But since what the church awaits — liberty — is also actualised in the present period, there remains a lack of clarity in *waiting*.

2.1.9. J. Christiaan Beker

Similarly to Käsemann, J. Christiaan Beker (1924–1999) emphasises action over simply waiting for the parousia. For Beker, the coherent centre of Paul's theology 'is constituted by the apocalyptic interpretation of the Christ-event', and emphasises God's cosmic victory.⁹¹ This manifests in a 'futurist flow' to Paul's thought,⁹² grounded in Christ's resurrection, which 'inaugurate[d] the new creation' and 'looks forward to

⁸⁹ Orr, *Christ*, 38.

⁹⁰ Cf. §7.2, 7.3, 9.1.1.

⁹¹ Beker, *Paul*, 135; cf. Beker, 'Paul the Theologian: Major Motifs in Pauline Theology', *Interpretation* 43/4 (1989): 352–65; A. Hanson, 'Review of J. Christiaan Beker, Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought', *JSNT* 14 (1982): 123. For dependence on Käsemann see J Louis Martyn, 'Review of J. Christiaan Beker, Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought', *WW* 2/2 (1982):195.

⁹² Beker, *Paul*, 176.

the consummation'.⁹³ Thus, the Spirit 'drives us towards the as yet unfulfilled future';⁹⁴ and the Church is the 'avant-garde of the new creation in a hostile world, creating beachheads [. . .] of God's new world and yearning for the day of God's visible lordship over his creation'.⁹⁵

Beker's emphasis on action means that, on the one hand, he speaks about what the church waits for, but, on the other, he redefines *waiting* to mean *acting* rather than simply *waiting*. So, the church awaits God's 'victory over evil and death in the Parousia of Christ'.⁹⁶ But since that victory is to be established now, Beker sees *waiting* as inconsistent with present ethical action and holistic mission.

It is often said that the church's apocalyptic expectation—the expectation of the imminent coming of the kingdom of God—allowed Christians to diffuse their revolutionary impulses and *to wait patiently* (and socially passively?) for God's ultimate establishment of his kingdom. [. . .] However, if God's coming reign will establish an order of righteousness that encompasses the created order (Rom 8:19–21), [. . .] then one would expect that the church as the blueprint and beachhead of the kingdom of God would *strain itself in all its activities* to prepare the world for its coming destiny in the kingdom of God.⁹⁷

⁹³ Beker, *Paul*, 159.

⁹⁴ Beker, *Paul*, 279.

⁹⁵ Beker, *Paul*, 155.

⁹⁶ Beker, *Paul*, 149.

⁹⁷ Beker, *Paul*, 326. Emphasis mine.

That is, instead of *waiting* for God to establish his kingdom at the end, the church should *act* now to achieve that goal. This impacts ethics and mission which Beker closely relates.

Beker sees ethics as how Christians live in the world for its redemption.⁹⁸ Since God's cosmic victory is central to Paul's thought, the ethical imperative is directed not to answer, "How will *I* be saved?" but rather "How are the anti divine powers of the world to be met in my redemptive activity in Christ for the sake of the world?"⁹⁹ It is not about what I wait for, but how I can act now towards the world's redemption. For Beker, living rightly in this world means taking part in God's victory by fighting for justice etc., and therefore, it does not fit with simply *waiting* for God's final victory. However, since Paul's theology contains a futurist flow, present ethical action in light of God's final victory is considered '*actively waiting*' for it.¹⁰⁰ That is, *right waiting* is that which acts now towards God's victory. Thus, *waiting* needs to be supplemented with action, or modified as to mean acting with thought to the parousia, but not simply waiting for it.

Mission for Beker means transforming creation in light of God's final cosmic victory (cf. Käsemann, §2.1.8). Rather than 'soul-salvation' only, mission is directed to 'the created order and its institutions'.¹⁰¹ 'The vocation of the church is not self-preservation for eternal life but service to the created world in the sure hope of the

⁹⁸ Beker, *Paul*, 277–278, 326.

⁹⁹ Beker, *Paul*, 278. Emphasis original.

¹⁰⁰ Beker, *Paul*, 277. Emphasis mine.

¹⁰¹ Beker, *Paul*, 326.

world's transformation at the time of God's final triumph.¹⁰² Although final transformation will not happen until God's final triumph, nevertheless the church is involved in this activity of transformation now. This is why Beker found a problem with *waiting*, because *waiting* seems antithetical to such holistic mission action. For Beker, waiting for God to act is opposed to acting now.¹⁰³

Then again, differing from Käsemann and Munck (§2.1.8), Beker argues that 'Paul can contemplate a universal mission and yet live in terms of apocalyptic imminence'.¹⁰⁴ We may infer from this that at one level *waiting* is consistent with mission, and that one can wait for Jesus' imminent arrival *and* plan for the gospel to reach the ends of the earth.

In sum, Beker's teleological focus on the final and cosmic victory of God rightly identifies the futurist flow in Paul's thought, and that there is a real sense of *waiting* for future consummation, driven by the Spirit. However, for Beker, *waiting* is inconsistent with active mission and ethics. Consequently, simple *waiting* needs to be supplemented with action towards recreation. Therefore, although he discusses *waiting*, his picture lacks coherence, and thus further investigation into *waiting* is required.

2.1.10. E. P. Sanders

For Sanders (b. 1937), *waiting* is a simplistic concept that Paul developed into the

¹⁰² Beker, *Paul*, 313, cf. 325–326, 364.

¹⁰³ Beker, *Paul*, 146.

¹⁰⁴ Beker, *Paul*, 178.

doctrine of progressive new creation. Sanders sees Paul's view of the imminent return of Jesus as basic to his preaching and theology.¹⁰⁵ The day of judgement meant salvation for those in Christ and God's final victory, resulting in the redemption of all people and creation.¹⁰⁶ However,

Paul was not content merely to say that Christians, while waiting for the coming of the Lord, had spiritual gifts and should remain clean. Pressed by opponents on various sides, he expounded the significance of the present state of the Christian life in such a way that the simple theology of future expectation and present possession of spiritual gifts was greatly deepened.¹⁰⁷

Therefore, Sanders sees *waiting* as simplistic and unable to deal with the challenges to the gospel presented to Paul. Paul developed his eschatology, moving away from simple *waiting* to progressive transformation, namely, that the new creation was already underway.

Paul sees the renewal as being already at work. [. . . In 2 Cor 5:17] the new creation is considered present either proleptically or at least incompletely. [. . .] The language [is] of change in progress, but not complete.¹⁰⁸

In this view *waiting* needs modification. A more robust eschatology views new creation as already in progress, rather than simply waiting for it.

¹⁰⁵ Edward P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 424, 441–447, 543. See also Edward P. Sanders, *Paul* (Past Masters; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3–4, 21, 27–30.

¹⁰⁶ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 441–442, 445–446, 515; Sanders, *Paul*, 125–126.

¹⁰⁷ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 452.

¹⁰⁸ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 468.

2.1.11. James Dunn

This idea of progress is seen further in Dunn (b. 1939), who interprets Paul's eschatology as a 'continuing process'.¹⁰⁹ This process is evident in his two stage soteriology of effective election and then obedience. Moreover, Dunn understands salvation to be conditional, because Jesus is Judge — '*apostasy* remains a real possibility'.¹¹⁰ That is, Paul's eschatology indicates that justification is 'a process begun but not yet to be completed'.¹¹¹ What Dunn says for the individual is analogous to the cosmos; again, process is emphasised. He says, '[s]alvation completes what creation began'.¹¹² It is no surprise, then, that *waiting* does not feature highly, if *process* and *progress* are central. Our contention, however, will be that if we give more weight to *eschatological waiting* then we will restore balance to eschatology and affirm what is true *already* and what will be true only when he returns (Rom 5:9).

2.1.12. N. T. Wright

N. T. Wright's (b. 1948) presentation of Pauline eschatology is extensive and has many implications for research. We shall look firstly at the big picture of God's eschatological project, and then look at the implications that has for *waiting*, ethics and mission.

¹⁰⁹ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 468.

¹¹⁰ Dunn, *Theology*, 497; James D. G. Dunn, 'Jesus the Judge: Further Thoughts on Paul's Christology and Soteriology', in *The New Perspective on Paul* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 395–412 (here 402, 409, 410).

¹¹¹ Dunn, 'Jesus the Judge', 402.

¹¹² Dunn, *Theology*, 493.

Wright understands that fundamental to Paul's inaugurated eschatology is that God has fulfilled his promises to Israel in Christ and begun the renewal of creation.¹¹³

Jesus' advance resurrection enables God to fulfil his purpose, namely,

the new creation of people whose inner transformation would reflect the divine image as always intended, a people through whom the original intention for creation would then be fulfilled. Paul's vision of an *inaugurated* eschatology, in which the chosen people were reshaped through Messiah and spirit, enabled him to see one key dimension of the problem. The creator always intended to accomplish his purpose *through* human beings. But only through 'the end' somehow being brought forward into the present could that aim be fulfilled, could this renewed humanity be generated.¹¹⁴

Wright articulates here the main elements of Paul's reimagined eschatology: God's original intention for creation accomplished through a renewed humanity; the resurrection of not just humanity but 'the whole world'; God achieves this by launching the new creation with Jesus' resurrection and the gift of the Spirit, so that through those renewed and saved in Messiah, he would establish his presence and glory through all the earth.

It is the *continuity* that matters, because God's action in the final consummation would be in line with his actions throughout history, 'the climax [. . .] of a story', not some 'bolt from the blue'.¹¹⁵ In this present age, the world would be 'put to rights' and God

¹¹³ N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God; London: SPCK, 1992), 272. Cf. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (2 vols; Christian Origins and the Question of God; London: SPCK, 2013), 1072.

¹¹⁴ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 760. Emphasis original.

¹¹⁵ N. T. Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives* (London: SPCK, 2005), 134.

would at last become King.¹¹⁶ Thus, ‘inaugurated eschatology’ would ‘result in *new creation*, not yet of course complete, but at least decisively launched’.¹¹⁷ This *inaugurated eschatology* emphasises that God’s project, begun and underway, is to renew all creation by the spreading of his glory through humans remade into his image, so that what is done now lasts into the new age.

This vast vision makes it unsurprising that Wright mentions only rarely what Christians actually await.¹¹⁸ Instead, since God is saving the whole world through Christians, the more pertinent question is, ‘What the whole world’s waiting for’.¹¹⁹

[C]reation itself is waiting for God’s children to be revealed. Only when human beings, restored to their full dignity, are placed in authority over creation will creation be what it was intended to be.¹²⁰

Mission in Wright’s perspective is ‘temple building’, because God is in the process of renewing his creation through his people, that is, spreading his glory throughout the earth.¹²¹ God saves people not for themselves but for what he longs to do through them.¹²² God’s renewal of the world would come about as Paul planted ‘little communities where heaven and earth’ came together — temples where God’s glory

¹¹⁶ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1060–1061.

¹¹⁷ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1072. Emphasis original.

¹¹⁸ The few references indicate that Christians wait for inheritance (Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 424), redemption of bodies (p. 435), glory (p. 1075), new creation (p. 1078) and Jesus final coming and presence, N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (London: SPCK, 2007), 156.

¹¹⁹ Title of chapter 6 in Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 104–119; cf. Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 183.

¹²⁰ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 485.

¹²¹ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1494.

¹²² Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 212.

shone out.¹²³ And those communities, likewise, could ‘build for’ the kingdom, through works of justice, beauty and evangelism; by which they participate in God’s redeeming of space, time and matter.¹²⁴

With such a project underway, it is hard to conceive how *eschatological waiting* could fit, and unsurprisingly, Wright sees *waiting* as incompatible with that project. He writes, ‘Paul does not want his communities to sit back, fold their arms, and *wait* for the final day, *but to work* in the present time at the *koinōnia* which will be complete in the future’.¹²⁵ Or again,

Paul speaks of the future resurrection as [. . .] the reason, *not for sitting back and waiting for it all to happen, but for working hard* in the present, knowing that nothing done in the Lord [. . .] will be wasted in God’s future (1 Corinthians 15.58).¹²⁶

That is, the idea of *waiting* would seem to encourage disregard for the present world: ‘[w]hy try to improve the present prison if release is at hand?’¹²⁷ Instead, Wright argues that the resurrection means great continuity between the present and the future worlds.¹²⁸ So, work! In effect, this emphasises current progress and action over future consummation and *waiting*. Indeed, in echoes of Schweitzer, Wright stresses:

The world has *already* been turned upside down; that’s what Easter is all about. It *isn’t a matter of waiting* until God eventually does something

¹²³ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1509.

¹²⁴ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 218–244.

¹²⁵ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 18; Emphasis mine (apart from *koinōnia*). Cf. Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 441.

¹²⁶ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 37; Emphasis mine.

¹²⁷ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 37.

¹²⁸ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 37.

different at the end of time. God has brought his future, his putting-the-world-to-rights future, into the present in Jesus of Nazareth, and he wants that future to be implicated more and more in the present.¹²⁹

The present period, then, is one in which God's future — his putting the world to rights — will be increasingly actualised. For the world, that means that God will shine his glory through new communities of baptised people being remade into God's image.¹³⁰ For the individual, God graciously provides a 'gap' in order to develop character.¹³¹

the one God did it this way in order to enable the humans who would share in the running of his new creation to develop the character they would need for that ultimate task.¹³²

Consequently, *waiting* goes against everything that God is doing for, in and through his people to fulfill his eschatological project. It is *now* that God is recreating through his people, not at some awaited future moment.

Even where Wright speaks positively of *waiting*, it is redefined. Following Thiselton, he rightly speaks of expectation as consisting of appropriate conduct in light of that which is awaited, and so, '[f]or the Thessalonians, to "expect" the coming of the lord means that "they must seek holiness and work hard"'.¹³³ But this statement is immediately followed by: '[e]ven so' this means 'already in the present a totally different kind of life', one in which *waiting* is replaced with action. This new kind of

¹²⁹ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 226. Emphasis mine (except for *already*).

¹³⁰ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1103–1104.

¹³¹ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1048, 1097–1098, 1116.

¹³² Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1098; cf. 1048, 1113, 1116, 1126.

¹³³ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 554.

life is marked by the new kind of time now current: ‘messianic time’.¹³⁴ Consequently, this period ‘is the new, special time for which the whole creation had been waiting’ — the time of the new creation.¹³⁵ Thus, the present is emphasised over the future, such that, ‘[t]his can’t be put off; it belongs in the present, not simply to the future’.¹³⁶ Jesus’ resurrection makes the present more ‘vital’ than the future.¹³⁷ That is, the resurrection of Jesus, by which he enters into the eschatological age, points believers to the present time, rather than the future resurrection age. It emphasises continuity, new creation, *now*. Hence, *waiting* is an incorrect response to the resurrection; instead believers are to work hard at establishing God’s new creation now.

In summary, since God has launched and is undertaking his creation-eschatological project to see the world renewed through the people he saves and remakes into the image of Christ, *waiting* does not really fit. This raises for us the following issues, that Wright, although not the first to raise them, brings into stark relief through his grand vision: (a) is *waiting* inconsistent with mission and ethics? (b) How does *waiting* contribute to the idea of God’s progressive recreation in the present period? (c) Does *waiting* aid in understanding why God granted a period between Christ’s resurrection and return? (d) Is ‘the end brought forward’ the best way to understand the present eschatological period?

¹³⁴ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 555.

¹³⁵ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 558.

¹³⁶ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 556.

¹³⁷ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 554.

2.1.13. Summary of Pauline Eschatology Review

In this section, we have surveyed key theological reflections on Pauline eschatology of the last hundred years, and shown the need to examine the theme of *waiting* and its relation to eschatology, mission and ethics. While some scholars recognise *waiting* as a NT motif, some leave no place for it in their eschatological scheme, others think it inconsistent with ethics and mission, or in need of modification; but mostly it is simply neglected. Consequently, there exists a lacuna with respect to *waiting*. Although *waiting* is not necessarily the heart of Pauline eschatology, it does offer a window onto it and can offer balance and correctives to certain misplaced emphases. There is, then, need for an examination of the meaning and significance of *waiting* and its contribution to the themes of eschatology, mission and ethics.

2.2. Recent Scholarship on 1 & 2 Thessalonians

2.2.1. Introduction

Having surveyed key theological reflections on Pauline eschatology, we turn now to consider recent scholarship on 1 & 2 Thessalonians. The overall picture of recent scholarship on 1 & 2 Thessalonians is that, similarly, *eschatological waiting* has been neglected. Although 1 Thess 1:10 is, obviously, commented on in commentaries, and *waiting* mentioned at various points, the specific approaches to 1 & 2 Thessalonians minimise *waiting* as a theme, and lack extensive discussion about its meaning and significance, despite its importance as a key purpose of conversion (1 Thess 1:10). As we look at this recent scholarship we will highlight this neglect, but also draw out

points where *waiting* is touched upon.¹³⁸

2.2.2. Approaches Emphasising the Social Situation.

A significant trend in recent studies of 1 & 2 Thessalonians is social scientific approaches. We discuss these studies in the following broad categories: millenarianism, conflict, rhetoric, eschatological and social. In these approaches, if present, *eschatological waiting* normally serves a social function or goal. That is, *waiting qua waiting* is passed over, but the goal to which it contributes, along with other motifs, is emphasised. For example, Paul's describing the Thessalonians as waiting is read as securing social identity, rather than considering the significance of their *waiting*.¹³⁹ Or, alternatively, the 'thief in the night' metaphor (1 Thess 5:2), present in a key section about watchful waiting (1 Thess 5:1–11), is said to have the effect of 'social control', particularly of women.¹⁴⁰

(A) Millenarianism

Recognising apocalyptic motifs in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Wanamaker and Jewett identify the Thessalonians as a millenarian movement, predisposed to conversion

¹³⁸ Two recent works have surveyed all the relevant literature. Hermeneutical approaches have been reviewed by Sean A. Adams, 'Evaluating 1 Thessalonians: An Outline of Holistic Approaches to 1 Thessalonians in the Last 25 Years', *Currents in Biblical Research* 8/1 (2009): 51–70; Luckensmeyer's review is theme based. David Luckensmeyer, *The Eschatology of First Thessalonians* (NTOA: SUNT 71; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 18–46. For older material cf. Raymond F. Collins, *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians* (BETL; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1984), 3–75; Earl Richard, 'Contemporary Research on 1(& 2) Thessalonians', *BTB* 20/3 (1990): 107–15.

¹³⁹ James Hester, 'Creating the Future: Apocalyptic Rhetoric in 1 Thessalonians', *R&T* 7/2 (2000): 194.

¹⁴⁰ Christopher D. Stanley, 'Who's Afraid of a Thief in the Night?', *NTS* 48/4 (2002): 468–86.

because of their poor social conditions.¹⁴¹ For Wanamaker, community identity is maintained through Paul's dualism of believers and idol worshippers (1 Thess 1:9–10).¹⁴² Jewett argues that Paul wrote in response to a radical millenarianism, exemplified by their cessation of work and civil activity, sexual liberty, and their claims to have experienced the parousia in 'ecstatic worship'.¹⁴³ This millenarianism is, moreover, indicated by Paul's 'description of their current status as "wait[ing] for his son from heaven" (1 Thess 1:10)'.¹⁴⁴ That is, *waiting* was evidence of their millenarianism. The impetus for this millenarianism was a combination of several factors, including their social situation and their syncretistic adoption of eschatological mythology.¹⁴⁵ In this context, *waiting* arises out of their syncretistic radical millenarianism, and Paul writes 1 Thessalonians in order to redirect them to his 'apocalyptic ethos', viz., being prepared for the parousia, not by waiting, but by purifying themselves.¹⁴⁶

(B) Conflict

Barclay identifies conflict and Paul's apocalyptic dualistic teaching as the hermeneutical key to 1 & 2 Thessalonians.¹⁴⁷ This dualism reinforced their social

¹⁴¹ Charles A. Wanamaker, 'Apocalypticism at Thessalonica', *Neot* 21/1 (1987): 1–10. Robert Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Foundations and Facets; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

¹⁴² Charles A. Wanamaker, 'Apocalyptic Discourse, Paraenesis and Identity Maintenance in 1 Thessalonians', *Neot* 36/1-2 (2002): 135–136.

¹⁴³ Jewett, *Thessalonian*, 172–173.

¹⁴⁴ Jewett, *Thessalonian*, 170–171.

¹⁴⁵ Jewett, *Thessalonian*, 169.

¹⁴⁶ Jewett, *Thessalonian*, 171.

¹⁴⁷ John M. G. Barclay, 'Conflict in Thessalonica', *CBQ* 55/3 (1993): 512–30. John M. G. Barclay, *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), especially 181–203.

boundaries, but was also manifest in their impatient question about times and seasons (5:1–2) — ‘they daily awaited the signs of the outpouring of God’s wrath on unbelievers and their own rescue by the heavenly saviour’.¹⁴⁸ In Barclay’s view, then, *waiting* arises out of Paul’s apocalyptic teaching, forming part of a radical distinction between not only this age and the next, but also, those inside and out.

Todd Still presents a similar view in his research into the source of the conflict evident in the Thessalonian letters.¹⁴⁹ Still argues that Paul’s apocalyptic gospel impacted their community formation, drawing clear boundaries between them and everyone else, and also resulted in conflict and persecution with those outside.¹⁵⁰ An essential fruit of that apocalyptic gospel, however, was *waiting* for Jesus’ parousia, expected soon and suddenly.¹⁵¹ As they wait, they are expected to honour the Lord in speech and word so that they are found holy at the parousia.¹⁵² Paul writes, in part, to encourage the Thessalonians ‘to steadfastness as they await the coming of their heavenly Saviour’.¹⁵³ Therefore, although *waiting* is a cause for conflict and persecution, it is also the right response to Paul’s gospel and to be wedded with faith, love and hope in holiness.¹⁵⁴ Although both Barclay and Still speak of *waiting*, it is not as thoroughly integrated into

¹⁴⁸ Barclay, ‘Conflict’, 517.

¹⁴⁹ Todd D. Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and Its Neighbours* (JSNTSSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

¹⁵⁰ Still, *Conflict*, 233–236.

¹⁵¹ Still, *Conflict*, 196.

¹⁵² Still, *Conflict*, 196.

¹⁵³ Still, *Conflict*, 284.

¹⁵⁴ Still, *Conflict*, 196. So also B. J. Oropeza, *Jews, Gentiles and the Opponents of Paul: The Pauline Letters* (vol. 2; Apostasy in the New Testament Communities; Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2012). 36–65.

their presentations as it could be — and consequently they downplay how the future, as future, shapes the letter.

(C) **Rhetoric**

Watson explores how Paul uses apocalyptic discourse to persuade the Thessalonians of their new identity as God's people.¹⁵⁵ Identifying that the Thessalonians 'await the parousia [. . .] but are discouraged by doubts', Watson sees Paul's purpose in his use of apocalyptic discourse to confirm them in their faith, comfort them in light of their suffering and console them with the certainty of their parousia hope.¹⁵⁶ *Waiting* (1 Thess 1:10) functions not just to highlight an epistolary theme, but to engender hope and build community.

Following Watson and Hall,¹⁵⁷ Hester argues that apocalyptic discourse in 1 Thessalonians functions to establish 'group consciousness' through 'the rhetorical vision of eschatological hope'.¹⁵⁸ Although he lists many examples of the 'language of fantasy themes and insider cue words' throughout the letter, *waiting* (1 Thess 1:10) is not identified as such.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Duane F. Watson, 'Paul's Appropriation of Apocalyptic Discourse: The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Thessalonians', in *Vision and Persuasion: Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse* (ed. Greg Carey and L. Gregory Bloomquist; St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 1999), 61–80.

¹⁵⁶ Watson, 'Paul's Appropriation', 79.

¹⁵⁷ Robert G. Hall, 'Arguing Like an Apocalypse: Galatians and an Ancient Topos Outside the Greco-Roman Rhetorical Tradition', *NTS* 42/3 (1996): 434–53.

¹⁵⁸ Hester, 'Creating the Future', 194; cf. James Hester, 'Apocalyptic Discourse in 1 Thessalonians', in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament* (ed. Duane F. Watson; SBLSymS; Atlanta: SBL, 2002), 137–64.

¹⁵⁹ Hester, 'Creating the Future', 199–200. From 1:9–10 he highlights: turned to God from idols, living and true God, his Son from heaven, raised, Jesus, the wrath that is coming. Hester, 'Apocalyptic Discourse', 153.

Several scholars argue that Paul's main purpose is community formation and maintenance through honour discourse,¹⁶⁰ or rhetoric.¹⁶¹ Tellbe's work provides a good example, as he sees Paul associate honour with Jesus' parousia and not the Greek city or Imperial propaganda.¹⁶² The eschatology of 1 Thessalonians deliberately contrasts the imperial ideology of peace, so that Paul's community would hope in the parousia of Jesus.¹⁶³ Such eschatology serves to enable them to embrace 'social alienation' as normal.¹⁶⁴ All this, however, is written pastorally, in order to 'strengthen a distinctive identity and integrity as a Christian community'.¹⁶⁵ That is, eschatology functions toward community formation and identity.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, *waiting* plays little or no part explicitly in these views.

Roetzel, rather than seeing Paul's apocalyptic discourse as hardening social boundaries and encouraging separation, contends that Paul reshaped apocalyptic

¹⁶⁰ David Arthur DeSilva, "'Worthy of His Kingdom': Honor Discourse and Social Engineering in 1 Thessalonians', *JSNT* 64 (1996): 49–79; Zeba Antonin Crook, 'Paul's Riposte and Praise of the Thessalonians', *BTB* 27/4 (1997): 153–63.

¹⁶¹ Abraham Smith, *Comfort One Another: Reconstructing the Rhetoric and Audience of 1 Thessalonians* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995). Kwanghyun Cho, Ernest Van Eck, and Cas Wepener, 'Paul's Community Formation in 1 Thessalonians: The Creation of Symbolic Boundaries', *HTS Theological Studies* 71/1 (2015): 1–7; cf. Philip F. Esler, "'Keeping It in the Family": Culture, Kinship and Identity in 1 Thessalonians and Galatians', in *Families and Family Relations As Represented in Early Judaism and Early Christianity: Texts and Fictions* (ed. Jan Willem Van Henten and Athalya Brenner; Studies in Theology and Religion; Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2000), 145–84.

¹⁶² Mikael Tellbe, *Paul Between Synagogue and State: Christians, Jews, and Civic Authorities in 1 Thessalonians, Romans, and Philippians* (Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2001).

¹⁶³ Tellbe, *Paul*, 123–133.

¹⁶⁴ Tellbe, *Paul*, 136.

¹⁶⁵ Tellbe, *Paul*, 140.

¹⁶⁶ Craig Steven De Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationship of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Civic Communities* (SBLDS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999).

myths to encourage a ‘fruitful participation in the world’.¹⁶⁷ This participation was evident not only in the Gentile mission and love for outsiders, but also in how they were *to wait* for the kingdom.¹⁶⁸ That is, rather than withdraw from society like the Qumran community,¹⁶⁹ the quietness that Paul encouraged (1 Thess 4:11) was active, social, and engaged with ‘the tasks of this world’.¹⁷⁰ Such social involvement, including work and paying taxes (Rom 13:1), was ‘faithful watching [waiting] appropriate to the arriving eschatological kingdom’.¹⁷¹ Roetzel examines the apocalyptic discourse in 1 Thessalonians, but in contrast to other scholars, allows the text and not the genre to determine his conclusions. Thus Roetzel demonstrates that the Pauline material holds together *waiting* and responsible living in the world, a key aspect to the ethical implications that we examine below (§9.3), despite our different approach to the text.

(D) Eschatology

For Luckensmeyer, eschatology creates social identity and is ‘*the* key for understanding Paul’s pattern of exhortation in First Thessalonians’.¹⁷² His discussion of waiting (1 Thess 1:10) reflects this:

¹⁶⁷ Calvin J. Roetzel, ‘Paul as Organic Intellectual: The Shaper of Apocalyptic Myths’, in *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F. Snyder* (ed. Julian V. Hills et al.; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1998), 221–43.

¹⁶⁸ Roetzel, ‘Paul’, 228.

¹⁶⁹ Roetzel, ‘Paul’, 227.

¹⁷⁰ Roetzel, ‘Paul’, 234.

¹⁷¹ Roetzel, ‘Paul’, 234.

¹⁷² Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 6. Emphasis Original. Cf. James T. Dennison, ‘Eschatology and the Structure of 1 Thessalonians’, *Kerux* 19/3 (2004): 31–35.

The two infinitives δουλεύειν and ἀναμένειν are descriptive of the Thessalonians' integration into a new eschatologically identifiable existence, as opposed to ἐπιστρέφειν, which is indicative of their current social disintegration.¹⁷³

Luckensmeyer argues that these two elements, 'disintegration and subsequent integration', form the pattern of exhortation in 1 Thessalonians.¹⁷⁴ Luckensmeyer contends that waiting (ἀναμένω) defines part of the 'new identity' of the 'new community' and 'characterise[s] a pattern of exhortation by which the Thessalonians are to understand the emergence of a new community'.¹⁷⁵ That is, the main emphasis of Paul's teaching about *waiting* lies in how it creates and gives identity to a new community; *waiting* as a mode of relating to Jesus' parousia is not emphasised.

(E) Social

Malherbe, along with stressing the paraenetic nature of the letter,¹⁷⁶ and likening Paul to the moral philosophers,¹⁷⁷ also highlights the social factor in 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Paul narrates their shared history and his love for them (chs. 1–3) in order 'to strengthen *the bond between them* to form the basis of the moral direction' (chs. 4–5).¹⁷⁸ Paul emphasised conduct over doctrine 'to form a community with its own ethos, yet

¹⁷³ Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 92–93.

¹⁷⁴ Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 113.

¹⁷⁵ Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 113–114.

¹⁷⁶ Abraham J. Malherbe, 'Exhortation in First Thessalonians', *NovT* 25/3 (1983): 238–56.

¹⁷⁷ Abraham J. Malherbe, 'Gentle as a Nurse: The Cynic Background to 1 Thess ii', *NovT* 12 (1970): 203–17; cf. Earl Richard, 'Early Pauline Thought: An Analysis of 1 Thessalonians', in *Pauline Theology Volume I: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (ed. Jouette M. Bassler; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 39–52.

¹⁷⁸ Abraham J. Malherbe, 'Ethics in Context: The Thessalonians and Their Neighbors', *ResQ* 54/4 (2012): 207 (emphasis mine); cf. Malherbe, 'Gentle'; Malherbe, 'Exhortation'.

with a positive view of its place in the larger society'.¹⁷⁹ Malherbe sidelines Paul's eschatological teaching in 1 & 2 Thessalonians,¹⁸⁰ and so also, *waiting*, seen in his focus on the *act* of encouragement rather than the *words* about Jesus' parousia which ground it (1 Thess 4:18, 5:11).¹⁸¹

2.2.3. Approaches Emphasising the Religious or Imperial Background

The approaches that concentrate on the religious or imperial background of 1 & 2 Thessalonians tend to find in Paul's eschatology a critique of cultic, and specifically, Roman ideologies. In much of what is written *waiting* does not feature highly, because the focus is on the interaction between ideologies.

Donfried sees 'the religious and political history of Thessalonica' as the starting point of interpretation.¹⁸² He sees the political language of 1 Thessalonians indicating that Paul's original message led to persecutions, even death.¹⁸³ Hence, Paul writes a letter of comfort to console his young, persecuted church,¹⁸⁴ emphasising the 'twin themes

¹⁷⁹ Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 56.

¹⁸⁰ Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 5; cf. Roetzel, 'Paul', 223.

¹⁸¹ Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 80–81.

¹⁸² Karl P. Donfried, 'The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonian Correspondence', *NTS* 31/3 (1985): 336; cf. Karl P. Donfried, 'The Imperial Cults of Thessalonica and Political Conflict in 1 Thessalonians', in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (ed. Richard A. Horsley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1997), 215–23.

¹⁸³ Donfried, 'Imperial Cults', 222.

¹⁸⁴ Karl P. Donfried, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians as a Reflection of Its Purpose', in *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.* (ed. Maurya P. Horgan and Paul J. Kobelski; New York: Crossroad, 1989), 243–60. Karl P. Donfried, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians', in *The Theology of The Shorter Pauline Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1–80 (here 26).

of hope and parousia', because they had no hope.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, Donfried asserts that the parousia theme dominates the letter.¹⁸⁶ Despite the strong parousia theme, we see little contribution to the meaning and significance of *waiting*.¹⁸⁷

Amongst those scholars who identify hellenistic language¹⁸⁸ and anti-Roman propaganda in Paul's eschatology, Koester identifies community formation as Paul's aim,¹⁸⁹ and so, the future already was realised in the present community of faith, love and hope (1 Thess 5:1–11).¹⁹⁰ More commonly, however, we find a replacement motif, that Paul offers an eschatology better than the empty promises of Rome. For Khiok-Khng, God and not Rome is the true benefactor.¹⁹¹ Harrison observes in the risen and reigning Lord a 'radical subversion' of imperial ideology.¹⁹² Smith reads the letter as encouraging political resistance.¹⁹³ Míguez reads 1 Thessalonians as counter-hegemonic, that the community is called to express by its life the existence of another

¹⁸⁵ Donfried, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians', 20–21.

¹⁸⁶ Donfried, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians', 26.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Donfried, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians', 32, where understanding death is 'what it means to wait'.

¹⁸⁸ Robert H. Gundry, 'The Hellenization of Dominical Tradition and Christianization of Jewish Tradition in the Eschatology of 1-2 Thessalonians', *NTS* 33/2 (1987): 161–78.

¹⁸⁹ Helmut Koester, 'From Paul's Eschatology to the Apocalyptic Schemata of 2 Thessalonians', in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. Raymond F. Collins; vol. 89; BETL; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), 441–58 (here 446, 447–448, 449–450); cf. Helmut Koester, 'Imperial Ideology and Paul's Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians', in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Imperial Society* (ed. Richard A. Horsley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1997), 158–66; Helmut Koester, 'Jesus the Victim', *JBL* 111/1 (1992): 10; cf. Donfried, 'Cults of Thessalonica', 351–352.

¹⁹⁰ Koester, 'Paul's Eschatology', 455, cf., 451–453; Koester, 'Imperial Ideology', 164.

¹⁹¹ Yeo Khiok-Khng, 'A Political Reading of Paul's Eschatology in I and II Thessalonians', *AJT* 12/1 (1998): 86.

¹⁹² James R. Harrison, 'Paul and the Imperial Gospel at Thessaloniki', *JSNT* 25/1 (2002): 92; James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

¹⁹³ Abraham Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers": Toward a Postcolonial Analysis of 1 Thessalonians', in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (ed. Richard A. Horsley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2004), 47–66.

Lord, government and reality.¹⁹⁴ Wright sees Paul's apocalyptic language as referring to socio-political events and that he wrote in 'a coded way' to speak about world powers.¹⁹⁵ In these approaches, where eschatology is read politically, *waiting for Jesus* is not a strong theme, and if found, Jesus' status is emphasised against Caesar, rather than what it means to wait for him.

Responses to these approaches have argued that Paul's target was much greater than Rome, and that if anything, Paul treats Rome as insignificant.¹⁹⁶ White, examining 'peace and security' (1 Thess 5:3) as a possible Roman slogan, concludes that many political readings of Paul have gone far beyond the evidence.¹⁹⁷ It is worth noting three critiques of the anti-imperial approach offered by Kim, because of how he involves eschatology and *waiting*.¹⁹⁸ First, he argues that Paul teaches not just a superior eschatological salvation but a 'categorically different' meaning, namely, resurrection and salvation from wrath (1 Thess 5:1–11, Phil 3:20–21).¹⁹⁹ Second, a political reading fails to heed Paul's main concerns, namely the fate of the dead, and

¹⁹⁴ Néstor O. Míguez, *The Practice of Hope: Ideology and Intention in 1 Thessalonians* (trans. Aquiles Martínez; Paul in Critical Contexts; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 38, 152; trans. of *No Como los Otros, que no tienen esperanza: Ideología y estrategia del cristianismo paulino en la gentilidad* (2006).

¹⁹⁵ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1290–1291. N. T. Wright, 'Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire', in *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013* (London: SPCK, 2013), 169–90 (here 178); chapter originally published in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel Imperium Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (ed. Richard A. Horsley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2000), 160–183.

¹⁹⁶ Barclay, *Pauline Churches*, 363–387. Peter Oakes, 'Re-Mapping The Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians', *JSNT* 27/3 (2005): 321. Tyler Stewart, 'The Imperial Implications of Paul's Pastoral Apocalypse', *Stone-Campbell Journal* 15/2 (2012): 229–45.

¹⁹⁷ Joel R. White, "'Peace" and "Security" (1 Thess 5:3): Roman Ideology and Greek Aspiration', *NTS* 60/4 (2014): 509; Joel R. White, "'Peace and Security" (1 Thessalonians 5.3): Is It Really a Roman Slogan?', *NTS* 59/3 (2013): 392.

¹⁹⁸ Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

¹⁹⁹ Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 15.

the date of the parousia (1 Thess 4:13–5:11).²⁰⁰ Third, Kim argues that the tendency of political readings to realise the day of the Lord in the present goes against the grain of the letter where ‘Paul calls the church *to wait* for the day of the Lord [. . .] with faith, love, and hope’.²⁰¹ That is, these approaches, which emphasise present day political interpretations, misread the letter’s future orientation and Paul’s consistent call for his readers to wait for Jesus.

2.2.4. Approaches Emphasising Eschatology or Apocalyptic Motifs

Recent eschatological approaches to 1 & 2 Thessalonians include those which have looked to establish the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians,²⁰² or to see whether the eschatology of 1 & 2 Thessalonians was Christocentric,²⁰³ or Theocentric.²⁰⁴

Marvin Pate understands eschatology as key to interpreting Paul and 1 & 2 Thessalonians.²⁰⁵ He argues that behind Paul’s teaching in 1 & 2 Thessalonians are

²⁰⁰ Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 10.

²⁰¹ Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 10. Emphasis mine.

²⁰² Colin R. Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica: Situating 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). 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* (vol. 7; Das Alte Testament im Dialog; Bern: Peter Lang, 2014).

²⁰³ Phil Ware, ‘The Coming of the Lord: Eschatology and 1 Thessalonians’, *ResQ* 22/1-2 (1979): 109–20; cf. Richard N. Longenecker, ‘The Nature of Paul’s Early Eschatology’, *NTS* 31/1 (1985): 89; Veronica Koperski, ‘Resurrection Terminology in Paul’, in *Resurrection in the New Testament: Festschrift J. Lambrecht* (ed. R. Bieringer, Veronica Koperski, and B. Lataire; BETL; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 265–82.

²⁰⁴ Jerome H. Neyrey, ‘Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians: The Theological Factor in 1:9-10; 2:4-5; 3:11-13; 4:6 and 4:13-18’, ed. Paul Achtemeier, *SBLSP* 19 (1980): 219; cf. Kreitzer who argues for an overlap between their roles, *Jesus and God*, 169.

²⁰⁵ C. Marvin Pate, *The End of the Age Has Come: The Theology of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 41. C. Marvin Pate, *Apostle of the Last Days: The Life, Letters, and Theology of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 78.

three extant eschatologies: Jewish, Hellenistic and Imperial.²⁰⁶ Pate's approach suffers from privileging a historical reconstruction over the text, and he does not adequately account for the theme of *waiting*.

Like Pate, despite Plevnik's eschatological approach, wherein he highlights the important theme of being with Christ (cf. §7.2), Plevnik writes little on *waiting*.²⁰⁷ He does, however, identify and discuss *hope* as a crucial theme in Paul, especially hope of an 'intensely personal' union with Christ in God's presence.²⁰⁸ On two key verses in our own study (1 Thess 4:17, 5:10), he writes that they 'indicate that the whole purpose of the Christ-event is to make it possible for the faithful to be with Christ and to share in his life'.²⁰⁹ Although Plevnik writes primarily about hope, and includes *waiting* within hope,²¹⁰ his presentation rightly highlights future salvation; namely, being with the Lord.²¹¹

Two views, emphasising the apocalyptic motifs in Paul, differ greatly as to what Christ's coming will entail. On the one hand, Turner argues for an interim earthly

²⁰⁶ Pate, *Apostle*, 78. For explanation of the perspectives cf. p. 21–26.

²⁰⁷ Joseph Plevnik, 'The Parousia as Implication of Christ's Resurrection: An Exegesis of 1 Thes 4:13-18', in *Word and Spirit: Essays in Honor of David Michael Stanley, SJ on His 60th Birthday* (ed. Joseph Plevnik; Willowdale, Ontario: Regis College, 1975), 199–277; Joseph Plevnik, '1 Thess 5:1-11: Its Authenticity, Intention and Message', *Biblica* 60/1 (1979): 71–90; Joseph Plevnik, 'The Taking Up of the Faithful and the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18', *CBQ* 46/2 (1984): 274–83.; Joseph Plevnik, 'Pauline Presuppositions', in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. Raymond F. Collins; vol. 89; BETL; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), 50–61; Joseph Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997); Joseph Plevnik, '1 Thessalonians 4,17: The Bringing in of the Lord or the Bringing in of the Faithful?', *Biblica* 80/4 (1999): 537–46; Joseph Plevnik, 'The Destination of the Apostle and of the Faithful: Second Corinthians 4:13b-14 and First Thessalonians 4:14', *CBQ* 62/1 (2000): 83–95.

²⁰⁸ Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, 205, 266.

²⁰⁹ Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, 266.

²¹⁰ Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, 198.

²¹¹ Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, especially ch. 8, 11.

messianic kingdom,²¹² but Yarbrow Collins sees Paul make a great distinction between the two ages,²¹³ and that Jesus will descend to gather his people, who will accompany him back to heaven since that is the place where the new age occurs.²¹⁴ This last view implies the significance of *waiting*, and Yarbrow Collins does mention it, '[m]ost importantly, they are to expect his coming from heaven, at which time he will rescue them from the wrath that is coming', but she does not go into great detail.²¹⁵

2.2.5. Approaches Emphasising Ethics

Various approaches have linked Paul's eschatology or apocalyptic discourse to ethics. Kaye argues that Paul's eschatological teaching had profound practical ethical implications because 1 Thessalonians exhibited a continuity between present and post-parousia times.²¹⁶ For Vena and Sleeper,²¹⁷ eschatology determines Paul's paraenesis. De Villiers understands that the eschatological focus of being with Christ 'has a transformative effect on the present lifestyle of believers'.²¹⁸

²¹² Seth Turner, 'The Interim, Earthly Messianic Kingdom in Paul', *JSNT* 25/3 (2003): 323–42.

²¹³ Adela Yarbrow Collins, 'Paul's Contribution to the Hope of the Early Church', in *Paul, John, and Apocalyptic Eschatology: Studies in Honour of Martinus C. de Boer* (ed. Jan Krans et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 203–17.

²¹⁴ Yarbrow Collins, 'Paul's Contribution', 204.

²¹⁵ Yarbrow Collins, 'Paul's Contribution', 203.

²¹⁶ Bruce N. Kaye, 'Eschatology and Ethics in 1 and 2 Thessalonians', *NovT* 17/1 (1975): 47–57.

²¹⁷ Osvaldo D. Vena, *The Parousia and Its Rereadings: The Development of the Eschatological Consciousness in the Writings of the New Testament* (Studies in Biblical Literature; New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 116, 119; C. Freeman Sleeper, 'Christ's Coming and Christian Living', *Interpretation* 53/2 (1999): 133.

²¹⁸ Pieter G. R. de Villiers, 'The Eschatology of 1 Thessalonians in the Light of Its Spirituality', *Acta Theologica* 28/1 (2008): 17; cf. Pieter G. R. de Villiers, 'In the Presence of God: The Eschatology of 1 Thessalonians', in *Eschatology of the New Testament and some Related Documents* (ed. J. G. Van der Watt; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 302–32; Pieter G. R. de Villiers, 'The Future Existence of the Believers According to 2 Thessalonians', *HTS Theological Studies* 67/1 (2011): 1–9.

Ware expresses the same kind of concern raised by several key Pauline scholars about the relation of *waiting* to ethics:²¹⁹

The Thessalonians had *not* turned from idols to sit in calm detachment from the world *awaiting* the return of Christ. In their wait they were to be servants of God.²²⁰

In highlighting that the Thessalonians turned both to serve and wait, Ware raises that key question of the relation of *waiting* to ethics: that *waiting seems* to go against right ethical living, such that it needs to be modified or supplemented by further ethical exhortation (cf. §9.3).

Applying Duff's apocalyptic ethics which emphasised Christ's Lordship, the new creation, and the imminent parousia,²²¹ Elias understands that the Thessalonians' reality was defined with reference to Jesus who, having been delivered from death, delivers them from wrath, both now and in the future parousia.²²² They have been freed to serve him as Lord, which grounds ethical knowledge, not in the good, but in who their Lord is.²²³ The new creation creates a space for the church to live out 'an anticipatory image of the world' to come, particularly in non-retaliation (5:15, cf. 5:23).²²⁴ Finally, the imminent parousia means that they are 'children of hope' and, as

²¹⁹ Cf. Schweitzer, §2.1.3; Dodd, §2.1.5; Wright, §2.1.12.

²²⁰ Ware, 'The Coming of the Lord', 118. Emphasis mine. cf. Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 64.

²²¹ Nancy J. Duff, 'The Significance of Pauline Apocalyptic for Theological Ethics', in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (ed. Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards; JSNTSSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 280–96.

²²² Jacob W. Elias, "'Jesus Who Delivers Us from the Wrath to Come" (1 Thess 1:10): Apocalyptic and Peace in the Thessalonian Correspondence', ed. Eugene H. Lovering, *SBLSP* (1992): 123.

²²³ Elias, 130.

²²⁴ Elias, 130–131.

such, Paul urges them to watchfulness (1 Thess 5:1–11).²²⁵ Such teaching raises key questions of (a) how Paul's moral instruction relates to the parousia and waiting for it; and (b) what place does Christ's exaltation and present reign have in ethics?²²⁶

2.2.6. Approaches Emphasising Mission

Contributions to the theme of mission have been made by scholars from varying approaches. Weima sees in the 'Roman slogan', 'peace and security' (1 Thess 5:3), a possible reference to the Thessalonians' fellow citizens' response to their preaching of the 'coming wrath' (1:10).²²⁷ For Segal, the Gentile mission evidenced in 1:9–10 was justified by the impending general resurrection, begun in Christ's own.²²⁸ Gieschen likewise connects Christ's resurrection in the past as the basis for waiting for him in the future, and concludes that mission must emphasise both.²²⁹ Strandenæs sees the letter as Paul's attempt to complete his mission to them.²³⁰ Krentz analyses 1 Thess 1 in light of mission, but misses the concept of *waiting*, and concludes that there 'is amazingly little stress on soteriology'.²³¹

²²⁵ Elias, 131.

²²⁶ Duff, 'Significance', 280.

²²⁷ Jeffrey A. D. Weima, "'Peace and Security' (1 Thess 5.3): Prophetic Warning or Political Propaganda?", *NTS* 58/3 (2012): 331–59.

²²⁸ Alan F. Segal, 'Paul's Thinking about Resurrection in Its Jewish Context', *NTS* 44/3 (1998): 400–419.

²²⁹ Charles A. Gieschen, 'Christ's Coming and the Church's Mission in 1 Thessalonians', *CTQ* 76/1-2 (2012): 37–55.

²³⁰ Thor Strandenæs, 'Completing the Mission: Paul's Application of the Gospel to the Faith and Life of the Thessalonian Converts in 1 and 2 Thessalonians', *Svensk missionstidskrift* 98/1 (2010): 69–98.

²³¹ Edgar Krentz, 'Evangelism and Spirit: 1 Thessalonians 1', *CurTM* 14/1 (1987): 30.

Ascough has recently applied his social scientific approach to mission.²³² He sees the church as modelling contemporary voluntary associations.²³³ He describes their mission as the spread of news about the Thessalonians themselves, through the networks associated with their association and trade.²³⁴ Its primary purpose and content were not conversion, but the honour of Paul as their founder.²³⁵

Gorman has recently proposed an ethical-missional reading of 1 Thessalonians through the lens of faith(fulness), hope and love.²³⁶ He argues that ‘Paul wanted the communities he addressed not merely to *believe* the gospel but to *become* the gospel, and in so doing, participate in the very life and mission of God’.²³⁷ By their public practising of faith(fulness), hope and love, the Thessalonians would embody and so narrate the gospel.²³⁸ Similarly, Johnson proposes that the Thessalonians represented God to others and others to God by oral proclamation and gospel embodiment, specifically faith (public fidelity) and holiness.²³⁹

²³² Richard S. Ascough, ‘The Thessalonian Christian Community as a Professional Voluntary Association’, *JBL* 119/2 (2000): 311–28.

²³³ Richard S. Ascough, ‘Redescribing the Thessalonians’ Mission in Light of Graeco-Roman Associations’, *NTS* 60/1 (2014): 61–82.

²³⁴ Ascough, ‘Redescribing’, 77–80.

²³⁵ Ascough, ‘Redescribing’, 62, 69–70.

²³⁶ Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 63–105. cf. Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 151.

²³⁷ Gorman, *Becoming*, 2. Emphasis Original.

²³⁸ Gorman, *Becoming*, 89.

²³⁹ Clinton Andrew Johnson, ‘Ecclesiology, Election, and the Life of God: A Missional Reading of the Thessalonian Correspondence’, *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 9/2 (2015): 255.

These missional views of the Thessalonian correspondence do not highlight *eschatological waiting*, focussing instead on present action and life, but will nevertheless be important as we seek to relate *waiting*, eschatology and mission (§9.2). In particular, what contribution does *waiting for Jesus* have to mission?

2.2.7. Literary Approaches and Recent Commentaries

In this final section we look at more recent commentaries and those who take a literary approach to reading 1 & 2 Thessalonians, highlighting epistolary or persuasive techniques.

Raymond Collins has written extensively on 1 Thessalonians.²⁴⁰ Applying redaction criticism,²⁴¹ he writes that Paul freely uses apocalyptic and traditional material (e.g. 1 Thess 1:10) ‘to encourage them to live in accordance with their eschatological condition’.²⁴² Christians believe God’s past act of raising Jesus, serve God in the present, and ‘await the future salvation effected by Jesus’.²⁴³ Importantly, he observes that the ‘believer is, by Christian definition, the expectant one’ (1:10).²⁴⁴

Various literary approaches to the letters have emphasised the purpose as either

²⁴⁰ Collins, *Studies*.

²⁴¹ Collins, *Studies*, 136, 162, 171.

²⁴² Collins, *Studies*, 171.

²⁴³ Collins, *Studies*, 260.

²⁴⁴ Collins, *Studies*, 216, cf. 260.

enhanced knowledge,²⁴⁵ or comfort,²⁴⁶ or perseverance.²⁴⁷ Rhetorical, eschatological and apocalyptic discourses serve those ends.²⁴⁸ Similarly, more recent commentaries focus on Paul's pastoral aims,²⁴⁹ encouragement,²⁵⁰ prior anxiety over them,²⁵¹ and relief that they stand firm.²⁵² McKinnish Bridges' three way dialogue approach leaves meaning open-ended for every new reader.²⁵³ Weima's literary approach sees the epistles' background as severe pressure on the church and also Paul's need to defend his own actions.²⁵⁴ We list later what these commentaries make of *waiting* in 1 Thess 1:10 (§6.6.1), but of interest now is Furnish's comment:

Although believers will experience the fullness of salvation only when they are finally gathered up to be with the Lord [. . .] they are not to view

²⁴⁵ Ben Witherington, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 21. Steve Walton, 'What Has Aristotle to Do with Paul? Rhetorical Criticism and 1 Thessalonians', *TynBul* 46/2 (1995): 229–50.

²⁴⁶ Donfried, 'Reflection of Its Purpose', 243–60; cf. Donfried, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians', 1–80. 'epideictic rhetoric' (p. 4). David Luckensmeyer and Bronwen Neil, 'Reading First Thessalonians as a Consolatory Letter in Light of Seneca and Ancient Handbooks on Letter-Writing', *NTS* 62/1 (2016): 31–48.

²⁴⁷ I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 236–246; Timothy Milinovich, 'Memory and Hope in the Midst of Chaos: Reconsidering the Structure of 1 Thessalonians', *CBQ* 76/3 (2014): 498–518.

²⁴⁸ E.g. I. Howard Marshall, 'Election and Calling to Salvation in 1 and 2 Thessalonians', in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. Raymond F. Collins; vol. 89; BETL; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), 259–76.

²⁴⁹ Victor Paul Furnish, *1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 21–22; Earl Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Sacra Pagina; Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 31. Cf. Elma M. Cornelius, 'The Purpose of 1 Thessalonians', *Hervormde Theologische Studies* 57/1-2 (2001): 435–46.

²⁵⁰ Robert J. Cara, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Evangelical Press Study Commentary; Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2009), 22.

²⁵¹ Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 8.

²⁵² Gary S. Shogren, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 17.

²⁵³ Linda McKinnish Bridges, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary; Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2008), 1, 13.

²⁵⁴ Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 10–23, 35.

the present *only as a time for waiting*. They are to embrace it as a time to “serve . . . God” (1:9) in their daily lives.²⁵⁵

That is, is *waiting* (1:10) a sedentary thing — a non-action — necessitating additional ethical instruction? If Paul had failed to add ‘to serve [. . .] God’ (1:9), would it be right to conclude that Christian life amounted to ‘sitting at the bus stop in suspense’? These questions will be explored below (chs. 6, 9).

Paddison’s theological approach, whereby he reads the text together with its history of reading in the church, identifies that future resurrection, (4:14) assured by a present experience of grace, is key to the letter.²⁵⁶ Reconciliation already accomplished means that salvation is ‘tinged with eschatological expectation’ and ‘we wait for [it] with hope’.²⁵⁷ Emerson’s canonical approach sees him conclude that Paul’s main focus is on the return of Christ and its ethical implications.²⁵⁸ A more closely exegetical approach, however, will offer greater depth and balance to the theme of waiting, by listening carefully to what is said in context.

2.2.8. Summary of Recent Approaches to 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Although recent years has seen a plethora of research on the Thessalonian

²⁵⁵ Furnish, *Thessalonians*, 34. Cf. Victor Paul Furnish, ‘Faith, Love, and Hope: First Thessalonians as a Theological Document’, in *The Impartial God: Essays in Biblical Studies in Honor of Jouette M. Bassler* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 221–31.

²⁵⁶ Angus Paddison, *Theological Hermeneutics and 1 Thessalonians* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 169.

²⁵⁷ Paddison, *Theological*, 166.

²⁵⁸ Matthew Y. Emerson, *Christ and the New Creation: A Canonical Approach to the Theology of the New Testament* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 96.

correspondence from many perspectives, there remains a significant lack of thought on the meaning and significance of *eschatological waiting*. It is not that there is a total absence — so, for instance, Roetzel sees social engagement as proper to waiting for Jesus' arrival, and others noted how *waiting* characterises the Pauline community in Thessalonica — but often other themes, such as conflict, imperial ideology, or community formation, dominate the discussion. The consequence is to have left little room for *waiting* as a contribution to eschatology, and so further research into *waiting* is needed.

2.3. Conclusion to Literature Review

Despite its importance in 1 Thessalonians, there remains in scholarship, both key theological reflections on Pauline Eschatology and recent approaches to 1 & 2 Thessalonians, a significant lacuna with regard to the meaning, significance and contribution of *waiting* to eschatology in relation to mission and ethics.

Indeed, despite the way in which we have drawn out and highlighted its use in various scholars, *waiting* is rarely considered an important aspect of eschatology or Christian living. It is not too much of an exaggeration to say of *waiting* what Käsemann said of 2 Peter, that 'apart from dutiful treatment in the various commentaries, almost complete silence has shrouded our [theme]'.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ Ernst Käsemann, 'An Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology', in *New Testament Questions of Today* (trans. W. J. Montague; London: SCM Press, 1964), 169–195 (here 169); trans. of sections of *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Erster Band; 2nd Ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1960). Chapter first published as 'Eine Apologia für die urchristliche Eschatologie' in *ZTK* 49 (1952): 272–96.

Chapter 3

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Having considered the general neglect of *waiting* in scholarship, we now consider how we will undertake our research. In order to investigate the theme of waiting in the NT, we will anchor our research in exegesis and word study, which provides a robust method that ensures the priority of the text. Our word study on *waiting* will identify several key words and texts for analysis (ch. 4), but for various reasons (cf. §3.2.1) we will focus on understanding the meaning and significance of ἀναμένω through the exegesis of 1 Thess 1:10 in its literary context. This necessary limitation allows deeper engagement with a neglected word and text and will prove extremely fruitful for our research. In this chapter we explain the method and scope for this thesis.

3.2. Selection of Words and Texts for Exegesis

Word studies provide solid grounds for inductive research and help to prevent influence by presuppositions external to the text. However, there remain dangers and limitations to word studies, and therefore, we first need to explore these potential pitfalls before suggesting a way forward for our own study.

James Barr critiques misguided theological word studies in, not least, *TDNT*.¹ Specifically, he identifies as issues the confusion of (a) categories of word and concept,² (b) the history of the meaning of a word (etymology) and its actual use,³ and (c) referent and meaning (illegitimate identity transfer).⁴ Barr's main concerns are a failure to appreciate 'the semantic value of words in their contexts';⁵ the error of thinking that 'the theological concept structure is directly related to words';⁶ the reading of an accumulated meaning into each use of the word, that is, the 'illegitimate totality transfer' fallacy;⁷ and the error of thinking that new ideas were found by providing new meanings to old words, rather than in new combinations of words (sentences).⁸

¹ James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

² Barr, *Semantics*, 210.

³ Barr, *Semantics*, 107, cf. 109. E.g. ἀναμένω means to 'wait up' for Jesus (1 Thess 1:10), Charles Caldwell Ryrie, 'Credo', *BSac* 105/419 (1948): 373.

⁴ Barr, *Semantics*, 217–218.

⁵ Barr, *Semantics*, 231.

⁶ Barr, *Semantics*, 234.

⁷ Barr, *Semantics*, 218, 145–146.

⁸ Barr, *Semantics*, 249–50.

Barr offered two important methodological corrections to such studies. The first was to appreciate the value of semantic field and group words together for their shared meaning and theological value.⁹ The second correction was to see the sentence and literary context, rather than the word, as the ‘linguistic bearer of the theological statement’.¹⁰ That is, the theological contribution ‘must be discussed not at the lexical level but at the level of things that were said’, i.e., exegesis.¹¹

We will seek to avoid those methodological errors by the following steps,¹² modelled on Smith’s exemplary *Pauline Communities as ‘Scholastic Communities’*.¹³ We will first use semantic domains to establish a lexical base and texts to study (ch. 4), then, after choosing to focus on one word, ἀναπένω, consider its synchronic meaning and nuances (ch. 5), then examine its meaning in context by exegesis (1 Thess 1:10, ch. 6), then consider the broader context of 1 & 2 Thessalonians (ch. 7) and the NT (ch. 8) before considering implications for eschatology, mission and ethics (ch. 9). We will briefly explain these steps below.

3.2.1. Semantic Domain (chapter 4)

In order to establish a lexical base for our study, we will begin with Louw and Nida’s

⁹ Barr, *Semantics*, 235.

¹⁰ Barr, *Semantics*, 269.

¹¹ Barr, *Semantics*, 271.

¹² Cf. Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meanings: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (rev. ed; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), chs. 5&6, and 176–177.

¹³ Claire S. Smith, *Pauline Communities as ‘Scholastic Communities’: A Study of the Vocabulary of ‘Teaching’ in 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus* (WUNT2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 31–52.

Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains (L&N).¹⁴ We shall begin by looking at L&N categories which include an English gloss of ‘to wait/await’, and examine each NTG word for its value in our study, testing the legitimacy of this by examining the actual usage of the words and other lexicons. We will focus on verbs. Those NTG words will then be examined case by case to discover which words and texts are relevant to the concept of eschatological waiting. This step will identify the vocabulary and NT verses which would prove most fruitful for research towards a theology of *waiting*. From that set of words and texts, however, we will take one word for study, ἀναμένω (1 Thess 1:10).

In an ideal scenario, each NTG word for waiting would be analysed at length in its historical usage and NT context, but that is far beyond the limits of this thesis. Therefore, we shall analyse one word, ἀναμένω (1 Thess 1:10) in the context of 1 & 2 Thessalonians. There are three primary reasons to have ἀναμένω in 1 Thess 1:10 as a special focus: (a) this is a highly significant verse, where *waiting* is given as a fundamental description of what it means to be a Christian, and presented as a purpose of conversion;¹⁵ (b) as widely acknowledged, 1 & 2 Thessalonians provide fertile ground for the study of eschatology;¹⁶ (c) despite these two important factors, this word has suffered great neglect. Three examples will suffice to illustrate this neglect. First, it is not uncommon to find a commentator deflect the meaning of ἀναμένω to ἀπεκδέχομαι, flattening out and identifying their meanings. For example,

¹⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2nd ed.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1989).

¹⁵ E.g. Collins, *Studies*, 216; Marshall, ‘Pauline Theology’, 179.

¹⁶ Cf. Pate, *Apostle*, 77.

Weima says ἀπεκδέχομαι ‘is normally used’, and Bruce says, ‘the same thought is expressed in other Pauline letters by the verb ἀπεκδέχεσθαι’.¹⁷ Second, in his 331 page monograph titled *Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence*,¹⁸ Kucicki references 1 Thess 1:10 to discuss wrath (p. 91), resurrection (p. 24, 222, 254), the dead (p. 249), and heaven (p. 288), but fails to discuss *waiting*.¹⁹ The third example of this neglect can be seen by the absence of ἀναμένω in *TDNT*, where it only appears once in a footnote for περιμένω as an LXX translation for קוּץ.²⁰ Therefore, although neglected, ἀναμένω in 1 Thess 1:10, in the context of a fundamental description of becoming Christian and the highly eschatological 1 & 2 Thessalonians, is a significant word for understanding the concept of waiting in the NT.

There are clear limitations to this method. For example, we are not considering words available to a NTG speaker that do not appear in the NT, or antonyms of waiting.²¹ Moreover, word studies, while helpfully anchoring research in the text, can focus on lexemes rather than concepts; writers, however, use a variety of forms to convey concepts (e.g. metaphor). The limitations set out by this approach shall be offset,

¹⁷ Weima, *Thessalonians*, 110; F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (vol. 45; Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1982), 11; cf. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 121; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 52; Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 86; Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 74; John Eadie, *Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians* (ed. William Young; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 52.

¹⁸ Bern: Peter Lang, 2014.

¹⁹ Snyder presents another example, when he writes that the two primary questions of 1:9–10 are whether it is pre-Pauline and what function it has in the letter. Two important questions, but it neglects the meaning and theology of waiting itself. Graydon F. Snyder, ‘A Summary of Faith in an Epistolary Context: 1 Thess. 1:9,10’, *SBLSP* (1972): 355. cf. Pate, *The End*.

²⁰ F. Hauck, ‘περιμένω’, *TDNT* 4:578, n. 1.

²¹ Cf. Moisés Silva, ‘The Pauline Style as Lexical Choice: ΓΙΝΩΣΚΕΙΝ and Related Verbs’, in *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce on His 70th Birthday* (ed. Donald A. Hagner and Murray J. Harris; Devon: Paternoster Press, 1980), 184–207.

firstly, by consideration of the broader eschatological context of 1 & 2 Thessalonians (ch. 7), and secondly, through demonstrating how our main conclusions are consistent with other texts throughout the NT, passages with and without NTG *waiting* vocabulary (ch. 8). In spite of these limitations, an inductive study of the text of 1 Thess 1:10 in light of its literary and historical context, will be highly valuable in moving towards a NT theology of waiting.

3.2.2. Synchronic Meaning (chapter 5)

In chapter 5, we examine ἀναμένω with a view to establishing possible meaning and nuance based on the usage in LXX,²² Philo, and Josephus. Our source for Philo and Josephus is *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG).²³ This will be a synchronic analysis.²⁴ By doing this, we aim to describe the meaning and nuances of ἀναμένω in order to provide a clear background to understanding Paul's usage in 1 Thessalonians.

3.2.3. Contextually based Exegesis (chapter 6)

Having established by synchronic usage possible meaning and nuances of ἀναμένω, we will then seek to understand the nature of *waiting* by an exegesis of 1 Thess 1:10 in context, observing specifically purpose, context, function and meaning. That is, we will examine ἀναμένω at the level of the sentence in its literary context,²⁵

²² Ed. Alfred Rahlfs 2012, 2006 German Bible Society.

²³ Thesaurus Linguae Graecae © A Digital Library of Greek Literature. Accessed online at stephanus.tlg.uci.edu.

²⁴ Moisés Silva, *God, Language and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics* (vol. 4; Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 41–44.

²⁵ Barr, *Semantics*, 269.

remembering that, ultimately, context determines meaning.²⁶ Our guiding principle for determining that specific meaning from within the semantic range of the word will be ‘what did the author have in mind to say’, as best as can be established from the literary context.²⁷ Our focus on 1 & 2 Thessalonians will interact with the various approaches surveyed above (ch. 2), but these will not determine our own approach. We will treat the epistles primarily as epistles, recognising the guiding principles of the epistolary genre as identified by Deissmann.²⁸

The NT does not exist in a vacuum historically or theologically and may be understood as the missional witnessing to the crucified and risen Christ, as the fulfilment of the OT.²⁹ We offer the following as justification for reading 1 & 2 Thessalonians in light of the gospel and biblical theology.³⁰

In 1 Corinthians 15:1–11, Paul highlights the key points of his gospel and refers the Corinthians both to the apostolic tradition in which he shares and that these truths are in accordance with the Scriptures (15:3, 4). This gospel which Paul preached is

²⁶ Silva, *Biblical Words*, 139, 143–144.

²⁷ Silva, *God*, 89. Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 28.

²⁸ Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1927), 233–234; trans. of *Licht vom Osten* (Tübingen, 1909; first ed. 1908). Cf. Duane F. Watson, ‘Letter, Letter Form’, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Leicester: IVP, 1997), 649–655; Smith, *Pauline Communities*, 38–39. Richard N. Longenecker, ‘On the Form, Function, and Authority of the New Testament Letters’, in *Scripture and Truth* (ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1992), 145–70 (here 152).

²⁹ Marshall, developing Dodd’s argument that the OT provides the substructure for NT theology writes, ‘the Old Testament provided the New Testament writers with the key categories and broad structure of a theology for which the major structure was given by the saving history which they interpreted so as to bring out its innate significance’. Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 39. C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: James Nisbet & Co, 1952).

³⁰ Cf. Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 39–40.

that *through which* the Corinthians are saved (15:2, cf. Rom 1:16–17, 1 Thess 2:16, 2 Thess 2:13–14), if, having believed, they hold on to it. That is, the message which Paul preached, and confirms and expounds through his letters, is that which saves. It is centred on the historical events of Jesus' death, resurrection and post-resurrection appearances, and understood in line with the apostolic testimony and the OT Scriptures.³¹ This gospel forms the basis of his teaching of Jesus' parousia throughout the chapter (e.g. 1 Cor 15:23).

Similarly, in 1 Thessalonians, Paul likens his preached word to the word of God (1 Thess 2:12). He describes the Thessalonians' reception of that word as by the Holy Spirit. They imitate Jesus' own reception of God's word (1 Thess 1:5–7). Furthermore, he effectively equates his written word with his preached word, and so claims his letters as God's word (2 Thess 2:15; cf. 2 Pet 3:16; 2 Tim 3:16; 1 Thess 4:15). As in 1 Cor 15, in 1 Thess 4–5, Paul anchors his discussion of Jesus' parousia in his preached gospel message that Jesus died and rose again (1 Thess 4:14, cf. 5:9–10). Although he uses little OT explicitly in these epistles, there are indications of such a worldview, for example, in using *son* and *resurrection* (1:10, 4:14).³² Therefore our exegesis will focus on the meaning of the text in its literary and historical context in light of the gospel as fulfilment of OT Scriptures.

³¹ Cf. Martin Hengel, *Earliest Christianity: Containing, Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity & Property and Riches in the Early Church* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1986), 46–47; repr. of *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1979) and *Property and Riches in the Earliest Church* (London: SCM, 1974); trans. of *Zur urchristlichen Geschichtsschreibung* (1979) and *Eigentum und Reichtum in der frühen Kirche* (1973) (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1973, 1979).

³² Cf. E Springs Steele, 'The Use of Jewish Scriptures in 1 Thessalonians', *BTB* 14/1 (1984): 12–17. For Jewish background to resurrection cf. N. T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God; London: SPCK, 2003); also, George Van Kooten, Oda Wischmeyer, and N. T. Wright, 'How Greek Was Paul's Eschatology', *NTS* 61/2 (2015): 239–53.

3.2.4. Broader Context (chapters 7 & 8)

After a careful exegesis of 1 Thess 1:10, we will consider the contribution of the broader context to the theme of *waiting*. First, we view 1 & 2 Thessalonians through the lens of waiting (ch. 7). We will then examine the strength and consistency of our findings, by an overview of other important NT texts for the concept of *waiting*, both containing NTG words for *waiting* and not (ch. 8). This work proceeds on the assumption of the basic unity of the NT as mission documents anchored in the historical events of Jesus.³³ There is no space to establish the meaning in detail of the other NTG words as we shall do for ἀναμένω, but their usage in context will reveal shared nuances with the meaning of ἀναμένω, and thus support our research towards a theology of *eschatological waiting*. Chapter 8 concludes with two illustrations of the interpretive potential of our findings on *waiting* from 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

3.2.5. Implications (chapter 9).

In chapter 9, we consider the implications of our findings about *waiting* in three spheres: eschatology, mission, and ethics. Our engagement with the implications of *waiting* will be guided by various issues raised in the literature review and by the texts themselves. Our arguments in this chapter will be primarily based on our exegetical work in 1 & 2 Thessalonians (chs. 6, 7). Our task is not simply a historical one, to discover Paul's theology, but a biblical and theological one — what these *texts* say

³³ E. Earle Ellis, 'New Directions in the History of Early Christianity', in *Ancient History in a Modern University Vol. 2: Early Christianity, Late Antiquity and Beyond* (ed. T. W. Hillard et al.; Macquarie University, Sydney: Eerdmans, 1998), 71–92; Matthew Jensen, 'The Gospel and the New Testament', in *Let the Word Do the Work: Essays in Honour of Phillip D. Jensen* (ed. Peter G. Bolt; Sydney: Australian Church Record, 2015), 85–92; cf. Hengel, *Earliest Christianity*, 40–49.

about *waiting*. We will endeavour to make conclusions arising from the text themselves, and avoid making conclusions that are reliant on a particular interpretation of Paul's historical and cultural background.³⁴

3.3. Scope

We have additionally limited our research for this thesis in the following ways.

1. We will look closely at the concept of *waiting* but for reasons of space cannot include *hope* or *perseverance*.³⁵ This is not to say that there is no overlap in meaning, but our focus will be on *waiting* words and themes. A consequence of this decision is not to engage directly with τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Thess 3:5), despite Lambrecht's suggestion that it means 'steadfastly awaiting Christ'.³⁶ Then again, that phrase is likely a subjective genitive and refers to Christ's perseverance,³⁷ possibly his long-suffering as he waits for repentance (cf. 2 Pet 3:9; 2 Thess 3:1–2), or his perseverance in face of suffering while on earth (cf. 1 Thess 1:5–6; 2 Thess 1:4–5).

³⁴ As Wright often mistakenly does. See Chris Tilling, 'Review of N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Part 1)', *Anvil* 31/1 (2015): 53. cf. Chris Tilling, 'Review of N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Part 2)', *Anvil* 31/1 (2015): 57.

³⁵ Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*. Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*. Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling Away* (WUNT2; Tübingen: Mohr, 1990). David R. Denton, 'Hope and Perseverance', *SJT* 34/4 (1981): 313–20.

³⁶ Jan Lambrecht, 'Loving God and Steadfastly Awaiting Christ (2 Thessalonians 3,5)', *ETL* 76/4 (2000): 435–41.

³⁷ Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 202; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 322–323; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 598–599.

2. Our research will be primarily based in the NT.³⁸ For theological background and allusions we will use the OT. For the meaning of ἀναμένω (ch. 5) we consider material close, but external to, the NT: LXX, Josephus, and Philo.

3. We will not engage with dispensational readings which consider the day of the Lord as an extended event and that the church is secretly raptured before the final judgement.³⁹ The hermeneutical model that such readings rely upon is *a priori* and rejected by many scholars.⁴⁰ However, we will endeavour to take into account any relevant contributions to *waiting* that are not reliant on the dispensational scheme.⁴¹

(A) On the Delay of the Parousia

Although several scholars have proposed a development in Paul's eschatology, because the parousia did not come as expected (e.g. Barth, Schweitzer, Dodd, Beker and Mearns),⁴² others have demonstrated that there is little textual evidence to suggest that this was an issue.⁴³ Such a proposed development will not be a factor in our exegesis.

³⁸ For waiting at Qumran cf. Shemaryahu Talmon, 'Waiting for the Messiah: The Spiritual Universe of the Qumran Covenants', in *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (ed. Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest S. Frerichs; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 111–37.

³⁹ Craig A. Blasing, 'The Day of the Lord and the Rapture', *BSac* 169/675 (2012): 259–70; Michael J. Svigel, "'What Child Is This?': Darby's Early Exegetical Argument for the Pretribulation Rapture of the Church', *TJ* 35/1 (2014): 228.

⁴⁰ E.g. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 163; cf. Barbara R. Rossing, *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2004), 32; cf. de Villiers, 'Eschatology', 2, n. 4; Gieschen, 'Christ's Coming', 48.

⁴¹ E.g. Darby rightly says, 'the proper hope of the saint is not Christ's appearing', not 'glory', but 'to be with Christ Himself'. J. N. Darby, *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby: Doctrinal No. 3* (ed. William Kelly; vol. 10; Oak Park, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1972), 10:260. Quoted by Gary L. Nebeker, 'The Theme of Hope in Dispensationalism', *BSac* 158/629 (2001): 15.

⁴² Barth, *Romans*, 500; Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 312–13; cf. Käsemann, *Beginnings*, 101; Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 31; Beker, *Paul*, 162; Christopher L. Mearns, 'Early Eschatological Development in Paul: The Evidence of I and II Thess.', *NTS* 27/2 (1981): 153–154.

⁴³ Stephen S. Smalley, 'Delay of the Parousia', *JBL* 83/1 (1964): 51 n. 49.

There is good reason, however, to argue that the real possibility of the master's delay was part of Paul's eschatology from the beginning, because Paul, in 1 Thessalonians, encourages both expectation of Jesus' arrival, at any moment, and also, sober thinking that he may delay (1 Thess 5:6–10; cf. Matt 24:48).⁴⁴ That is, Paul did not modify his eschatology as a result of unmet expectations, but always entertained the possibility that Jesus might delay. The Lord's freedom to 'delay' is explained as his compassion for the lost, when 2 Peter responds to the charge that his delay undermines Christian hope (2 Pet 3:1–14).⁴⁵

Aune has shown that, in fact, the delay of the parousia was not a crisis for the early church.⁴⁶ Moreover, since *waiting* features similarly in early (1 Thess, Gal, 1 Cor) and late works (Titus, Heb, 2 Pet), the issue of the delay of the parousia, in terms of development of thought, does not significantly impact this research. This research is undertaken from the perspective there is no theologically significant development in Paul's eschatology in his letters.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ See §6.7.4.

⁴⁵ Richard Bauckham, 'The Delay of the Parousia', *TynBul* 31 (1980): 19.

⁴⁶ David E. Aune, 'The Significance of the Delay of the Parousia for Early Christianity', in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney Presented by His Former Students* (ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 87–109 (here 102).

⁴⁷ For a presentation of the issues see Aune, 'The Significance of the Delay', 87–109; cf. Smalley, 'Delay', 41–54; Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 496; trans. of *Paulus: Ontwerp van zijn theologie* (Kampen, The Netherlands: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. Kok N.V., 1966). Cf. Longenecker, 'Nature'; Charles E. B. Cranfield, 'Thoughts on New Testament Eschatology', *SJT* 35/6 (1982): 497–512; William Baird, 'Pauline Eschatology in Hermeneutical Perspective', *NTS* 17/3 (1971): 314–27; Bauckham, 'Delay', 3–36.

(B) Assumptions in the Interpretation of 1 & 2 Thessalonians

The conclusions of our research are not directly affected by decisions about many current critical debates concerning 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Our position for this thesis is that 1 Thessalonians is a literary whole and that 1 Thess 2:13–16 is original,⁴⁸ that 2 Thessalonians was written by Paul,⁴⁹ a short time after 1 Thessalonians,⁵⁰ and that the history of Acts and 1 Thessalonians is consistent and reconcilable.⁵¹ However, no major conclusions in our thesis depend upon the order of the letters, the history of Acts or the originality of 1 Thess 2:13–16. As to the authorship of 2 Thessalonians, since our thesis is towards a NT theology of waiting and not to establish the theology of the historical Paul, this, likewise, will not significantly affect our conclusions.

We proceed on the common understanding that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, while in

⁴⁸ For discussion see Weima, *Thessalonians*, 41–46; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 29–37; Still, *Conflict*, 24–45; D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 535–536. Richard argues for a composition of two letters (2:13–4:2, 1:1–2:12+4:3–5:28), but most scholars dismiss this for, not least, the lack of any manuscript evidence. Richard, *Thessalonians*, 11–12; Earl Richard, *Jesus: One and Many: The Christological Concept of New Testament Authors* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1998), 248–252.

⁴⁹ For discussion see Paul Foster, 'Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?: A Fresh Look At An Old Problem', *JSNT* 35/2 (2012): 150–75; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 36–54; Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 10–16; Still, *Conflict*, 46–60; Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 536–542. Jewett, *Thessalonian*, 3–18. Nicholl, *From Hope*, addresses the eschatological differences with a plausible solution. cf. Kucicki, *Eschatology*; I. Howard Marshall, 'Pauline Theology', 173–83.

⁵⁰ Contra Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 37–45; cf. Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 10–16; Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 543–544; Jewett, *Thessalonian*, 21–30.

⁵¹ For discussion see Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (trans. Doug Stott; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 342–367; trans of *Die Frühzeit des Apostles Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994); Riesner concludes 'of the altogether twenty-five individual pieces of information in the Lukan account of the founding, eighteen to nineteen are either directly or indirectly confirmed by 1 Thessalonians. Of the independent pieces of information in Luke, four can be checked, and two seem possible' (p. 367). Cf. Weima, *Thessalonians*, 23–24; Still, *Conflict*, 61–82; Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 532–533, 542–543; David Wenham, 'The Paulinism of Acts Again: Two Historical Clues in 1 Thessalonians', *Them* 13/2 (1988): 53–55. Jewett, *Thessalonian*, 55–60, 114–118; Edwin A. Judge, 'Decrees of Caesar at Thessalonica', *RTR* 30/1 (1971): 1–7. For opposing view and revised Pauline mission see Richard, *Thessalonians*, 4–8.

Corinth, shortly after⁵² his time in Thessalonica circa AD 50–51⁵³ after the arrival of Timothy with the good news that the new church in Thessalonica was standing firm in the face of persecution (1 Thess 3:6–8).⁵⁴ He subsequently authored 2 Thessalonians shortly afterward to the same community.⁵⁵

The Thessalonian congregation was made up of mostly gentiles (1 Thess 1:9–10),⁵⁶ had suffered at the time of conversion (1 Thess 1:5), faced the death of some members (4:13), possibly martyrdom,⁵⁷ and were likely still in a situation of persecution (3:1–10). They were recent converts (1:5–10), but had received extensive teaching by Paul when he founded the church (e.g. 4:2, 3:7),⁵⁸ including on eschatology (5:2, 2 Thess 2:5).⁵⁹

We propose that moving towards a theology of waiting through primarily a study on waiting in the literary and historical context of 1 & 2 Thessalonians is valid because (a) 1 Thess 1:9–10 presents the fact of *waiting* as a fundamental characteristic of turning to the true and living God, whatever one concludes about its place in missionary preaching, and, (b) although Paul responds pastorally in 4:13–5:11, the

⁵² Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 73; Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 414.

⁵³ Against Donfried's AD 41–44, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians', 12; also Richard's early to mid 40s, *Thessalonians*, 8.

⁵⁴ Cf. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 414; Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 542–543; Barclay's suggestion that the persecution arises from withdrawal from cult is persuasive, Barclay, 'Conflict', 514. cf. Still, *Conflict*, 238.

⁵⁵ Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 544.

⁵⁶ Weima, *Thessalonians*, 28–29. There were probably also God-fearers and Jews (Acts 17:4).

⁵⁷ E.g. Still, *Conflict*, 215–217; Donfried, 'Imperial Cults', 222; Gorman, *Becoming*, 74. John S. Pobee, *Persecution and Martyrdom in the Theology of Paul* (JSNTSSup; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 113–115.

⁵⁸ Plevnik, 'Pauline Presuppositions', 50–61.

⁵⁹ Judge, 'Decrees', 3.

particular situations (death of congregation members, not knowing the times) are not unique to that church but common to many Christian communities, then and now, and the basis for his teaching is Christ's death (5:9–10) and resurrection (4:14).

3.4. Summary of Methodology

Therefore, by careful exegesis sensitive to historical and literary contexts, and in light of pertinent questions raised in the literature, we will analyse the key words for the concept of *eschatological waiting*, and, in more detail, offer a meaning for ἀναμένω, analyse its use in immediate and broader contexts, and draw out some implications for eschatology, ethics and mission.

Chapter 4

4. Lexical Base for the Concept of Waiting in the NT.

This chapter describes our process of selecting NTG words and relevant NT passages for research into eschatological waiting by using the method indicated above (§3.2, 3.2.1).

4.1. Definition of Waiting

The purpose of this thesis is to consider the significance and contribution of the concept of *waiting*, and as such we needed to distinguish *waiting* from *hope* and *perseverance* in order to analyse the relevant material in the NT.¹ To do this we considered the meanings of these English concepts and then chose appropriate NTG

¹ These words share a paradigmatic relation. Silva, 'The Pauline Style', 187; cf. Silva, *God*, 90.

vocabulary and NT texts for examining the data of the theme of waiting in the New Testament.

The *Merriam-Webster* dictionary gives the following definitions for *wait*:

: to stay in a place until an expected event happens, until someone arrives, until it is your turn to do something, etc.

: to not do something until something else happens

: to remain in a state in which you expect or hope that something will happen soon.²

Macquarie Dictionary defines *wait* similarly as:

To stay or rest in expectation; remain in a state of quiescence or inaction, as until something expected happens.³

This, for comparison, was set against the definitions of *hope*, viz. ‘to want something to happen or be true and think that it could happen or be true’,⁴ ‘expectation of something desired’,⁵ and *persevere*, viz. ‘to continue doing something or trying to do something even though it is difficult’,⁶ ‘to maintain a purpose despite difficulty or obstacles’.⁷

² See <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wait>, accessed 17Feb2016.

³ Susan Butler, ed., *Macquarie Dictionary* (5th Ed. 2009; Sydney: Macquarie Dictionary Publishers, 1981), ‘wait’, 1851; cf. ‘await’, 110. Cf. *Oxford English Dictionary* (vol. XII; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), ‘wait’, 25.

⁴ See <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hope>, accessed 17Feb2016.

⁵ *Macquarie Dictionary*, ‘hope’, 807.

⁶ See <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/persevere>, accessed 17Feb2016.

⁷ *Macquarie Dictionary*, ‘persevere’, 1243.

The three concepts all appear in the NT and are similar in their future orientation. However, where *hope* tends to focus on desire, and *persevere* on the context of difficult circumstances, *wait*, while touching upon those ideas, consists primarily in the sense of: *remaining* until a certain event happens, with a view or expectation towards that event. In this thesis, we wish to examine how the concept of waiting is used in the NT. Therefore, our working definition of wait is:

To remain in a state or place until a future expected thing occurs with an orientation towards/expectation of that thing.

This definition includes both intransitive (wait) and transitive (await, wait for) uses. It also implies a sense of absence, a lack of what is awaited.

4.2. Semantic Field

The following NTG words were gathered since L&N gives them the English gloss *wait/await*:⁸ ἐκδέχομαι,⁹ ἀπεκδέχομαι,¹⁰ μακροθυμέω,¹¹ προσδοκάω,¹² διακονέω,¹³ μέλλω,¹⁴ μένω, ἀναμένω, περιμένω, and προσδέχομαι.¹⁵ We saw immediately that

⁸ Following the method of Smith, *Pauline Communities*, 45. This is a necessary limitation, but we note that broadening a study to include concepts like readiness (Luke 12:40), wakefulness (e.g. 1 Thess 5), watching/alert (e.g. Luke 12:38) would improve this work.

⁹ L&N, §13.28 1:152; §85.60 1:729–730.

¹⁰ L&N, §13.28 1:152; §25.63 1:297.

¹¹ L&N, §25.168 1:307.

¹² L&N, §25.228 1:313.

¹³ L&N, §46.13 1:521.

¹⁴ L&N, §67.121 1:646.

¹⁵ L&N, §85.60 1:729–730.

this list does not include NTG words normally used for *hope*¹⁶ or *persevere*,¹⁷ and so were justified in our differentiation.¹⁸

We then excluded words that differed from our broad definition of *waiting*: διακονέω¹⁹ and μέλλω.²⁰

4.3. Confirmation of Meanings

We then clarified that the remaining words could mean *wait* by their uses in the NT and by appeal to other lexicons.²¹ This work, presented briefly below, showed that each word included the sense of *waiting*, as we had defined it, in their semantic range.

Προσδέχομαι is used 14 times in the NT (Mark 15:43; Luke 2:25, 38; 12:36, 15:2, 23:51; Acts 23:21, 24:15; Rom 16:2; Phil 2:29; Titus 2:13; Heb 10:34, 11:35; Jude 1:21), and predominately has the sense of ‘to look forward to, wait for’,²² or ‘to await’.²³ The texts bear this out, since apart from the occasional sense of ‘receive’,

¹⁶ L&N, §§25.59, 25.60, 25.61, 25.62 1:296; §30.54 1:357.

¹⁷ L&N, §25.70 1:297; §§25.174, 25.175, 25.176, 25.177, 25.178 1:308; §68.17 1:657.

¹⁸ This is not a clean distinction, however, because, for example, for the English gloss ‘expect’ L&N suggest ἐκδέχομαι, προσδοκάω, two of our waiting words but also ἐλπίζω; L&N, §§30.53–55 1:357. See also n. 8 on subdomain D (§§25.59–64): Hope, Look Forward to, 1:296.

¹⁹ Danker, ‘διακονέω’, BDAG 229–230. cf. H. Beyer, ‘διακονέω’, *TDNT* 2:81–89.

²⁰ Danker, ‘μέλλω’, BDAG 627–628.

²¹ BDAG, LSJ, and with care *TDNT* (cf. Barr, *Semantics*).

²² Danker, ‘προσδέχομαι’, BDAG 877.

²³ Walter Grundmann, ‘προσδέχομαι’, *TDNT* 2:57–58.

προσδέχομαι is regularly used to mean *wait for* (Luke 2:25, Titus 2:13, Jude 21). In Acts 24:15 Paul hopes for the resurrection, which also the Pharisees *wait for* (προσδέχομαι). Προσδέχομαι contains the sense of *remain*, and of a *future orientation*.

Ἐκδέχομαι is used 6 times in the NT (Acts 17:16; 1 Cor 11:33, 16:11; Heb 10:13, 11:10; Jas 5:7). BDAG gives it the meaning of ‘to remain in a place or state and await an event or the arrival of someone, expect, wait’.²⁴ Each use in the NT has the sense of *waiting*, with several uses indicating a strong *expectation* (1 Cor 16:11; Heb 10:13, 11:10; Jas 5:7). Ἐκδέχομαι contains the sense of *remain* and of *future orientation*.

Ἀπεκδέχομαι is used 8 times in the NT (Rom 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:20; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 3:20), once of creation (Rom 8:19) and once of God’s patience (1 Pet 3:20), but every other use refers to Christians *waiting for* and *anticipating* the coming of Christ. It is defined as ‘await eagerly’,²⁵ or ‘expect anxiously’.²⁶ *TDNT* says that Paul uses it ‘to express “expectation of the end”’.²⁷ Ἀπεκδέχομαι emphasises more strongly *future orientation*, in the sense of *anticipating* or *expecting*, but does also contain a sense of *remaining* (Rom 8:25).

Προσδοκάω is used 16 times in the NT (Matt 11:3, 24:50; Luke 1:21, 3:15, 7:19–20, 8:40, 12:46; Acts 3:5, 10:24, 27:33, 28:6; 2 Pet 3:12–14). A number of uses portray a regular context of waiting or expecting something to happen, e.g., for Zechariah to

²⁴ Danker, ‘ἐκδέχομαι’, BDAG 300; cf. Grundmann, ‘ἐκδέχομαι’ *TDNT* 2:56.

²⁵ Danker, ‘ἀπεκδέχομαι’, BDAG 100.

²⁶ Liddell, ‘ἀπεκδέχομαι’, LSJ §12115–7, p. 184.

²⁷ Grundmann, ‘ἀπεκδέχομαι’, *TDNT* 2:56.

come out of the sanctuary (Luke 1:21, cf. Luke 8:40; Acts 3:5, 10:24, 27:33, 28:6); other uses indicate an expectation in an eschatological context, but generally prior to Jesus' resurrection (Matt 11:3, 24:50; Luke 2:19–20, 3:15), with only the references in 2 Peter definitely referring to the parousia (2 Pet 3:12–14). LSJ defines it as 'expect, whether in hope or fear; mostly [. . .] expect that one will do or that a thing will be'.²⁸ BDAG defines it as 'to give thought to something that is viewed as lying in the future, wait for, look for, expect'.²⁹ Προσδοκάω contains the sense of *remain*, often with apprehension about the future, but not necessarily so, and has the sense of *future orientation*.

Ἀναμένω is used once in the NT (1 Thess 1:10), in an important eschatological context. BDAG defines it as 'wait for, expect someone or something'.³⁰ *TDNT* has no (sub)entry for ἀναμένω, but LSJ defines it as 'wait for, await', or as 'put off, delay'.³¹ This second meaning makes little sense in 1 Thess 1:10. Ἀναμένω has some sense of *remain* and *future orientation*. *TDNT*'s only reference to ἀναμένω is in a footnote to περιμένω listing how פק (pi.) is translated in Job 7:2, where the suggested gloss is 'the yearning expectation of those in trouble for the end of their distress'.³² Although we focus on ἀναμένω later, here it is included among other NTG words to ensure a comprehensive methodology.

²⁸ Liddell, 'προσδοκάω', LSJ §91473–91475, p. 1506–1507.

²⁹ Danker, 'Προσδοκάω', BDAG 877; cf. C. Maurer, 'προσδοκάω, προσδοκία', *TDNT* 6:725–726.

³⁰ Danker, 'ἀναμένω', BDAG 68.

³¹ Liddell, 'ἀναμένω', LSJ §7302–7304, p. 112.

³² F. Hauck, 'περιμένω', *TDNT* 4:578–579, n. 1.

Περιμένω is used once in the NT (Acts 1:4) of the disciples being told to wait in Jerusalem until they receive the gift of the Spirit.³³ BDAG defines περιμένω as ‘wait for’ something or someone, and this is confirmed as a possible meaning in LSJ.³⁴ TDNT suggests ‘to expect’, ‘to wait for’, or as an alternative for μένω.³⁵

Μένω is used 118 times in the NT and while its main sense is purely to *remain*, BDAG notes that *waiting* is a possible meaning, as indicated by L&N.³⁶ For example, ‘chains and afflictions await me’ (Acts 20:23), or they ‘were waiting for us in Troas’ (Acts 20:5). Μένω carries a strong sense of *remain*, but the sense of *future orientation* is not strong and there is not a dominant sense of lacking something or that the future will bring an end to their *remaining* or change in circumstances. Nevertheless, μένω is a possible word for *waiting*.

Μακροθυμέω is used 10 times in the NT (Matt 18:26, 29; Luke 18:7; 1 Cor 13:4; 1 Thess 5:14; Heb 6:15; Jas 5:7–8; 2 Pet 3:9). In several of these verses, *waiting patiently* gives a good sense *prima facie* (e.g. Matt 18:26, 29, 1 Cor 13:4, Heb 6:15). Its use in Luke 18:7 has the sense of delay. James 5:7–8 uses μακροθυμέω as a proper synonym with ἐκδέχομαι, and could mean *waiting patiently*. 2 Pet 3:9 contrasts μακροθυμέω with βραδύνω (to delay), and *waiting patiently* makes good sense for μακροθυμέω. BDAG includes the following definitions, ‘to remain tranquil while waiting’, that is, to ‘have

³³ Also in textual variant D for Acts 10:24.

³⁴ Danker, ‘περιμένω’, BDAG 802. Liddell, ‘περιμένω’, LSJ §84180–84182, p. 1379.

³⁵ F. Hauck, ‘περιμένω’, TDNT 4:578–579.

³⁶ Danker, ‘μένω’, BDAG 631.

patience, wait’.³⁷ LSJ, on the other hand, does not suggest *waiting* as a possible gloss, instead suggesting ‘to be long-suffering’, ‘to be slow’, to ‘persevere’, to ‘bear patiently’.³⁸ Given our survey of uses, however, we must classify μακροθυμέω as a possible NTG word for *waiting*. Μακροθυμέω can have a sense of *remain* and *future orientation*.

4.4. Identification of Relevant Words and Texts

We further reduced our list of words by analysing each use of these words to evaluate whether the context was eschatological, and how relevant each instance was for our research on the concept of *eschatological waiting*. We found that in many cases the words carried the meaning of *waiting* but in irrelevant contexts. We devised a four level system of relevance and categorised each instance into one of four categories. Category A includes texts that refer to Christians waiting for Jesus’ parousia (highly relevant), and are the most important for our study. Category B includes texts that are broadly eschatological but do not refer to Christians waiting for the parousia (moderately relevant). Category C texts reveal a sense of waiting but in a non-eschatological context (lexically relevant only) and category D shows texts that use the word in a different sense to *waiting* (irrelevant).

³⁷ Danker, ‘μακροθυμέω’, BDAG 613.

³⁸ Liddell, ‘μακροθυμέω’, LSJ §66779–66781, p. 1074.

For example, προσδέχομαι in Luke 15:2 refers to how Jesus ‘welcomes sinners’, and so its sense here is irrelevant to *waiting* (D). Acts 23:21 sees 40 men waiting (προσδέχομαι) for the commander’s decision to send Paul to the Sanhedrin. This reference contributes to understanding the sense of προσδέχομαι as *waiting*, but is insignificant to our topic of *eschatological waiting*, thus we categorised it as relevant for lexical sense (C). In Luke 2:25, Simeon was waiting (προσδέχομαι) for the ‘consolation of Israel’. The referent here is not the second advent of Jesus, but nevertheless, the context is eschatological, and so we categorised it as relevant but not referring to Christians waiting for Jesus (B). The last category, highly relevant (A), is illustrated when Jude tells his readers to keep themselves in God’s love ‘waiting (προσδέχομαι) for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life’ (Jude 21).

It is worth making a further note on the significant but difficult to classify Category B, because the texts here are significant to the research but do not refer *directly* to post resurrection believers waiting for Jesus’ parousia. For example, Abraham waited for the heavenly city (Heb 11:10); Simeon, Joseph, and Anna’s hearers, were waiting for the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25, 38, 23:41, Mark 15:43); others wondered if John or Jesus was the expected one (Matt 11:3, Luke 3:15, 7:19–20). While these texts are significant for eschatology and *waiting* more generally they do not fit directly with our specific question. Similarly, texts that refer to waiting for Jesus’ parousia, but whose subject is not believers, for instance, creation (Rom 8:19), Christ (Heb 10:13), Lord (2 Pet 3:9), while significant, remain a secondary focus of our study. The table below shows the words categorised into levels of relevancy.

Lexeme	Number of instances	A (Highly Relevant)	B (Moderately Relevant)	C (Examples of <i>waiting</i> meaning)	D (Irrelevant)
προσδέχομαι	14	Luke 12:36, Acts 24:15, Titus 2:13, Jude 21.	Mark 15:43, Luke 2:25, 2:38, 23:51.	Acts 23:21.	Luke 15:2, Rom 16:2, Phil 2:29, Heb 10:34, 11:35.
ἐκδέχομαι	6		Heb 10:13, 11:10, Jas 5:7	Acts 17:14, 1 Cor 11:33, 16:11,	
ἀπεκδέχομαι	8	Rom 8:23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7, Gal 5:5, Phil 3:20, Heb 9:28,	Rom 8:19, 1 Pet 3:20.		
προσδοκάω	16	Matt 24:50, Luke 12:46, 2 Pet 3:12, 13, 14.	Matt 11:3, Luke 3:15, 7:19–20.	Luke 1:21, 8:40; Acts 3:5, 10:24, 27:33, 28:6 (2x).	
ἀναμένω	1	1 Thess 1:10			
περιμένω	1		Acts 1:4		
μένω	118			Acts 20:5, 23. Possibly Matt 26:38, Mark 14:34, John 3:36.	Matt 10:11; 11:23; 26:38; Mark 6:10; 14:34; Luke 1:56; 8:27; 9:4; 10:7; 19:5; 24:29; John 1:32–33, 38–39; 2:12; 3:36; 4:40; 5:38; 6:27, 56; 7:9; 8:31, 35; 9:41; 10:40; 11:6, 54; 12:24, 34, 46; 14:10, 17, 25; 15:4–7, 9–10, 16; 19:31; 21:22–23; Acts 5:4; 9:43; 16:15; 18:3, 20; 21:7–8; 27:31, 41; 28:16; Rom 9:11; 1 Cor 3:14; 7:8, 11, 20, 24, 40; 13:13; 15:6; 2 Cor 3:11, 14; 9:9; Phil 1:25; 1 Tim 2:15; 2 Tim 2:13; 3:14; 4:20; Heb 7:3, 24; 10:34; 12:27; 13:1, 14; 1 Pet 1:23, 25; 1 John 2:6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 24, 27–28; 3:6, 9, 14–15, 17, 24; 4:12–13, 15–16; 2 John 1:2, 9; Rev 17:10
μακροθυμέω	10	Jas 5:7 (2x), 8.	2 Pet 3:9.	Matt 18:26, 29; 1 Cor 13:4, 1 Thess 5:14, Heb 6:15.	Luke 18:7,

Table 1

As the table demonstrates clearly, μένω was irrelevant to our research, and περιμένω, though used in a significant eschatological moment, was also excluded, because its one use does not refer to Christians awaiting Jesus (Acts 1:4). Although ἐκδέχομαι contains no references to Christians waiting for Jesus, its cases of close relevancy and

use in James 5, closely related to μακροθυμέω, mean that it is fruitful for a study of *eschatological waiting*.

4.5. Relevant Texts

Based on our conclusions above, we propose that the following words and texts are directly relevant to a theology of *eschatological waiting*³⁹

1. Ἀναμένω in 1 Thess 1:10
2. Προσδέχομαι in Luke 12:36, Acts 24:15, Titus 2:13, Jude 21; with secondary consideration of Mark 15:43; Luke 2:25, 2:38, 23:51.
3. Ἐκδέχομαι as a secondary but important word in Heb 10:13, 11:10, Jas 5:7.
4. Ἀπεκδέχομαι in Rom 8:23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:20; Heb 9:28; with secondary consideration of Rom 8:19, 1 Pet 3:20.
5. Προσδοκάω in Matt 24:50; Luke 12:46; 2 Pet 3:12, 13, 14; with secondary consideration of Matt 11:3; Luke 3:15, 7:19–20.
6. Μακροθυμέω in Jas 5:7, 8; with secondary consideration of 2 Pet 3:9.

In sum, a proper study of these words, through the exegesis of the texts listed above, and complemented with a study of conceptually related texts, will provide a significant base for a theology of *eschatological waiting*. Since that is well beyond the scope of our thesis, we offer here a first step to such a project by doing the required

³⁹ Vena presents a different but similar list of texts and words for his work on the parousia. Vena, *Parousia*, 107–115.

study and exegesis for one word, ἀναμένω, in a key eschatological context (1 Thess 1:10), a word and verse often neglected in eschatological studies.⁴⁰ Our conclusions will be supported by an overview of these other NTG words and texts (ch. 8).

⁴⁰ See §3.2.1.

Chapter 5

5. Meaning of ἀναμένω

In this chapter, we examine uses of ἀναμένω outside of the NT. We will ascertain a description of its meaning and nuance. This will enable us to understand it better in 1 Thess 1:10 (ch. 6).¹ This chapter will not prescribe how Paul uses ἀναμένω (1 Thess 1:10), since that is determined by his actual use in context (ch. 6). We will, however, offer a description of the basic meaning and sense of ἀναμένω in related material. We will evaluate uses in the LXX, Philo, and Josephus.

5.1. Septuagint

There are ten uses of ἀναμένω in LXX which, as we will see, generally give the sense

¹ Since Paul regularly uses ἀπεκδέχομαι, little research has been done on waiting from the perspective of ἀναμένω and 1&2 Thessalonians. Cf. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 120; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 52; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 110. Cf. §3.2.1.

of *remain until* (Jdt 7:12, 8:17; 2 Macc 6:14; Job 2:9, 7:2; Sir 2:7, 5:7, 6:19; Isa 59:11; Jer 13:16).² In one case, ἀναμένω conveys a sense of delay and inaction, rather than expectation (‘Do not wait (ἀναμένω) to return to the Lord’, Sirach 5:7). Here *waiting* is contrasted with acting immediately.

Several instances convey the sense of waiting for an object or event, remaining in a certain state until its occurrence, oriented towards it, but also having an expectation of an intermediate duration of time before it occurs. Olophernes and his armies were to wait until the time was ready for victory, while others sabotaged the water supply (‘Wait (ἀναμένω) in your camp [. . .] and let your servants take possession of the spring’, Jdt 7:12).³ God waits patiently to punish until the full extent of sin (‘with the nations, the Lord waits (ἀναμένω) patiently [. . .] to punish’, 2 Macc 6:14). Elsewhere, when he calls on swift repentance before such a day, ἀναμένω is used to express the misguided hopeful expectation of those who have not heeded God’s word — they wait expectantly for blessing, but judgement is coming instead (‘you will wait (ἀναμένω) for light and there is a shadow of darkness’, Jer 13:16 LXX). Life is expressed as a trial with the illustration of a ‘hired-worker awaiting (ἀναμένω) his wages’ (Job 7:1–2 LXX). That is, in this case, ἀναμένω indicates the lack of something desired, and potentially a need to endure in frustration until that lack is met — not instant gratification but *waiting*. In contrast is the confident hopeful waiting for the positive and inevitable fruit of sowing wisdom (‘like the sower [. . .] wait (ἀναμένω) for her [wisdom’s] good fruits [. . .] and soon you will eat her harvest’, Sir 6:19; cf. Jas

² ‘To wait for, to await’, ‘to stay, to remain’, ‘to tarry’. Bernard A. Taylor, *Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint: Expanded Edition* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 36.

³ Translations are ours, unless otherwise indicated.

5:7). Where Job stressed the duration and present lack, Sirach emphasises the object whose goodness seemingly shortens the time to wait.

The remaining four references contain a significant theological object of waiting, and so demand closer inspection. When Job's wife castigates him for saying that he will wait a little longer, the *remain until* nature of waiting is emphasised ('How long will you endure, saying 'Look, I wait (ἀναμένω) a little longer', Job 2:9 LXX). In this intriguing verse Job's passivity is condemned: rather than waiting for God to do something, his wife advises him to say something to God and die (9e) — that is, to end the period of suffering. When Job reportedly says that he waits (ἀναμένω, 2:9a) he adds — 'as I wait (προσδέχομαι)⁴ for the hope of my salvation' (τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς σωτηρίας μου, 2:9a; cf. 1 Thess 5:8). In contrast, his wife complains that she is like a hardworking labourer anxiously waiting (προσδέχομαι) for her grief to end so that she can rest (Job 2:9d LXX). Where Job's waiting was contented, his wife's was in frustration. Job rebukes his wife for her unwillingness to receive bad things from the Lord (Job 2:10 LXX). Thus Job presents waiting for the Lord to act as right action even in hardship (cf. Rom 8:17–25). We see here that προσδέχομαι and ἀναμένω are used similarly, with the meaning of remain until a future event, but also with a sense of passive receptivity, that is, not grasping at that event out of turn.

Rebuking the elders for holding God to ransom (Jdt 8:11–16), giving him five days to rescue them before surrendering the city to their enemies (Jdt 7:26–31), Judith encourages them to call on God while they await his salvation ('Therefore, waiting for

⁴ Cf. §4.3.

(ἀναμένω) salvation from [God], let us call on him to help us', Jdt 8:17). This use of ἀναμένω acknowledges a period of time to pass before the awaited occurrence but does not exclude activity; in this case, praying that God would do what they wait for him to do. Judith also recognises that they wait for a God who will act in his own time and according to his own will (Jdt 8:15; cf. 2 Pet 3:9). That is, they cannot force or bring about by their own desire the thing that they wait for (ἀναμένω). Where the elders impatiently grasped at the awaited object, making an oath to force God's hand, Judith calls on them to wait and pray, pitting passive and trusting action against an impatient disbelieving attempt to bring it about. Prayer is, then, an expression of trust that complements waiting for God to act. This contrast is not between action and inaction, but between right action which expresses patient and trusting waiting, and wrong action which denies God's freedom to act when he chooses, and so, fails to wait.

The context of suffering and seeming defeat also plays into this, for they seemed to think, 'why wait (and so suffer) indefinitely?' Like Job's wife it would seem preferable to act, even in wickedness, to end the period of waiting and hardship (cf. Job 2:9e LXX). Such a context of waiting for God to act in the midst of suffering is quite similar to that of the Thessalonians who converted in the context of suffering (1 Thess 1:5–6) in order to wait (1:10). Moreover, Paul had been concerned that their suffering had caused them to give up on *waiting*, that is, fallen away (1 Thess 3:5). At this point, Judith would seemingly say, wait for God who acts freely; pray, but do not force his hand; continue in *waiting* and do not seek a way out that is contrary to God's good sovereignty.

In Sirach the exhortation to await God's mercy ('You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy', Sir 2:7) is grounded in God's past faithfulness (Sir 2:10). In context, ἀναμένω is parallel to πιστεύω and ἐλπίζω, but these words are not identical in meaning (Sir 2:8–9). Instead, the parallelism builds, and the three ideas work together as a call to wait for God's mercy looking to the faithful Lord in faith and hope.

Isaiah 59 indicates a hopeful but fruitless waiting for justice/salvation ('we waited for justice (κρίσις), and it was not', Isa 59:11 LXX). Here, ἀναμένω translates the piel form of קוה. This identical form is used in Isa 59:9 but translated by ὑπομένω and μένω. The sense in both cases is the same, and this indicates that there is overlap in the meanings of ὑπομένω, μένω and ἀναμένω in the LXX.⁵ The three uses of ἀναμένω that can be compared with *BHS* (Job 7:2, Isa 59:11, Jer 13:16) are all translations of the piel form of קוה. *HALOT* defines קוה (piel) as 'to await, hope' and 'hope inserted within a sequence of expectation and fulfilment'.⁶ This verb is found 47 times in *BHS* (41 times as a piel).⁷ קוה (piel) is consistent with the concept of waiting, but examining its other uses is beyond the scope of this thesis.⁸

⁵ This overlap is important, but sense needs to be determined by context. קוה is translated a number of ways by the LXX, and whereas ἀναμένω is only a translation of קוה and no other word, ὑπομένω is used to translate other words (יחל; ישב).

⁶ Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, 'קוה', *HALOT* 3:1082.

⁷ The other translations of קוה are προσδοκάω (Lam 2:16), ἐπέχω (Job 30:26), ὑπομένω (Isa 51:5, 59:9, 60:9, Jer 14:19, 14:22, Ps 25:5, 25:21, 27:14 (2x), 37:24, 40:2 (2x), 52:11, 56:7, 69:21, 119:95, 130:6 (2x), Job 3:9, 17:13), ὑπομονή (Ps 39:8), περιμένω (Gen 49:18), μένω (Isa 5:2,4,7; 8:17, 59:9), ἐλπίζω (Isa 25:9, 26:8, 51:5), πείθω (Isa 33:20), συνάγω (Jer 8:15, Mic 5:6), ἐγγίζω (Hosea 12:7).

⁸ Denton concludes, 'In the LXX *hypomenein* is the most frequent translation of *qāwāh*, *yāḥal*, and *hākāh*, the words which express expectation and patient waiting'. His proposal, however, is that these ideas come across in the NT as hope and perseverance, rather than waiting. Denton, 'Hope', 318–319.

This analysis demonstrates the general sense of ἀναμένω in the LXX: to wait for something hopefully and expectantly but with a possible sense of passive receptivity and of an expected intermediate time which may or may not involve related action (e.g. prayer). The thing awaited may be good or bad. There is an expectation of a future meeting with somebody or something, and the subject remains, in their current state, in anticipation of that meeting. However, in some cases the period of waiting may be seen as a trial, sometimes futile, and sometimes inevitable. The variety of uses of ἀναμένω indicates that it is not confined to any technical sense nor in only one sphere of custom or life. Again, ἀναμένω is not used in the LXX solely in an eschatological sense, but as a regular word for waiting. Fundamentally, ἀναμένω involves a future orientation and expectation which result in a present patience or enduring, acknowledging that a time must pass before the reception of the expectation. Αναμένω carries both a sense of eager expectation and also a sense of patient endurance that is captured in English by ‘wait expectantly for’.

5.2. Philo and Josephus

We turn now to the works of Philo and Josephus, who, as Jews writing in Greek in the first century AD, provide a close usage to the NT. As we will see, the instances of ἀναμένω in Philo and Josephus give us a fuller picture of its senses and confirm the basic meaning we have derived from the LXX.

We see firstly that ἀναμένω is used as waiting for something in a mundane sense. This includes God's commandment (Philo, *QG* 2.48), the periodic winds (*Flacc.* 26), more thought (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.47), decision (*Ant.* 16.366), and a counsellor (*J.W.* 7.343). From the opposite perspective, ἀναμένω refers to fateful future events awaiting someone: danger (Philo, *Mos.* 1.323) or retribution awaits (*Flacc.* 175). Secondly, ἀναμένω is used in contrast to acting quickly (sometimes rashly and wrongly, sometimes wisely), and can mean to delay. Philo speaks against foolish haste, of doing things in their right time. This has the sense of waiting (ἀναμένω) for the completion of the preliminaries so that things are done in their proper order (*Plant.* 161), or of temperance produced by not greedily grasping at the first fruits, but awaiting (ἀναμένω) their consecration (*Spec.* 4.99), or of waiting (ἀναμένω) for a favourable situation rather than taking unnecessary risk (*Somn.* 2.87).⁹ Conversely, Josephus records that Abraham did not wait (ἀναμένω) to rescue Lot (*Ant.* 1.177), nor do the Romans wait (ἀναμένω) for war to get weaponry experience but are constantly training (*J.W.* 3.73), and that Aretas acted out of turn rather than waiting (ἀναμένω) to receive from Caesar the government of Arabia (*Ant.* 16.355). These uses carry a strong contrast with acting untimely, or rashly, and invest sobriety and patience into the sense of ἀναμένω.

Thirdly, the use of ἀναμένω gives a strong sense of passive reception rather than active obtainment. So, for example, in contrast to false confidence in attainment of knowledge, the divine word comes to aid those who, aware of their weakness, wait for aid (Philo, *Somn.* 1.119). Similarly, Philo approves the eyes as special compared to the

⁹ Similarly but obversely the wise man acts in good time and does not wait for trouble (Philo, *Mos.* 1.325).

effeminate ears, because they do not wait (ἀναμένω) for information but go out to get it (*Abr.* 150). Philo records that during Passover, the people make their own sacrifices, not waiting for (ἀναμένω) the priests (*Decal.* 159; *Spec.* 146), and that the Sabbath law was to teach people to do some things themselves rather than relying on, or waiting for (ἀναμένω), their servants to do it for them (*Spec.* 2.67). Finally, free voluntary service is praised over waiting for (ἀναμένω) commands (*Contempl.* 71). That is, in contrast to reaching out to obtain, the verb ἀναμένω often carries the sense of patiently waiting to receive.

Josephus contrasts ἀναμένω with taking prematurely, when relating how Hyrcanus' daughter Alexandra encouraged her father not to wait for Herod's lawlessness, but to seize beforehand their future hopes (*Ant.* 15.166). She did this, in part, because her father, Hyrcanus, was of mild temper, leaving all things to fortune and content with what that brought him. In this illuminative scenario, *waiting* is likened to contented passivity, and contrasted with taking for oneself prematurely. The sense of ἀναμένω here is similar to perseverance, but stresses passive reception and patiently continuing until fortunes change. Endurance under suffering is present but not emphasised. In many of these cases, a complementary infinitive *to receive* seems implied, which shows that there is a sense that ἀναμένω is used in contrast to grasping at or active obtaining, and portrays patient reception at the proper time. Such passive reception is consistent with Paul's use in 1 Thess 1:10 of waiting for Jesus, since salvation is a gift of the electing God (1 Thess 1:4, 5:9–10, 2 Thess 2:13–14; cf. ch. 6).

There are two further ways that Josephus' use of ἀναμένω are especially pertinent to our study. First he expresses the concept of waiting for someone to come or arrive *from* elsewhere by using ἐκ with no verb of motion. Writing of a Parthian attack in Jerusalem, he records that those in the temple 'waited for [. . .] the multitude out of the country' (ἀνέμενον [. . .] τὸν ἐκ τῆς χώρας ὄχλον, *Ant.* 14.337).¹⁰ This passage provides an important parallel to Paul because he uses similar syntax, seemingly eliding a verb of motion that would naturally fit with ἀναμένω and ἐκ. Paul describes the Thessalonians as those who turned ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν (1 Thess 1:10). While not a perfect parallel, this provides support for understanding ἐκ as modifying not ἀναμένω but an elided verb of motion (cf. §6.7.2).

Second, Josephus twice uses ἀναμένω in the context of a royal arrival.¹¹ When Josephus recounts how Rome received Vespasian (*J.W.* 7.74), he writes that instead of waiting (ἀναμένω) in Rome for Vespasian, many eagerly went out to meet him, not being able to bear the delay (*J.W.* 7.68). Elsewhere, Josephus portrays the reception of Titus to Rome: first how Titus imagines his reception and meeting (ὑπάντησις) outside Rome, and then, how, with Vespasian, Titus was received in triumph (*J.W.* 7.126).¹² In this last case dignitaries had gathered at Octavian's Walks and there waited (ἀναμένω) for Vespasian and Titus, who on arriving were acclaimed with joy and received in triumph. Therefore, ἀναμένω is used here to refer to remaining at a place expectant of someone's arrival (cf. 1 Thess 1:10).

¹⁰ Whiston 'translates' 'coming' for the elided verb.

¹¹ Many scholars suggest that the main sense of παρουσία is royal arrival (1 Thess 4–5). See, e.g., Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1063, 1082–85; Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 145; cf. Harrison, 'Imperial Gospel', 92; Khio-Khng, 'Political', 81–82.

¹² Cf. Matt 8:34; 25:1; John 12:13.

This presents an interesting comparison to the parousia of Jesus, if it should be likened to the arrival of an Emperor.¹³ Josephus does not use *παρουσία* here, but he clearly portrays the glad reception of a ruler. In one case, *waiting* is set in contrast to going out to meet the ruler, but in the other the important people waited (*ἀναμένω*), having already gone to the place of reception. In both of Josephus' uses in this context, *ἀναμένω* has a stationary and passive sense, contrasted with going out or leaving. If there is a parallel to the use in 1 Thess 1:10, it would be that Paul's use of *ἀναμένω* indicates that there need not be any *going out to get ready to meet him* but instead just to wait for Jesus' arrival. It has a sense of being ready to receive but not preparing nor going out to obtain. That is, this possibly increases the sense that there is nothing to do to prepare for Jesus' arrival but only to wait for him. Paul's reference to meeting Christ in the air does not contradict this idea, since that is an event at or post his return (1 Thess 4:16–17). Moreover, believers will be snatched up — a passive voice verb. The inexact parallels here militate against claiming too much, but these references provide important windows onto our own research.

In sum, Josephus and Philo use *ἀναμένω* consistently as to remain in a state/place until a future expected occurrence, with some sense of expected delay. Their use reveals a strong sense of passive reception in contrast to active obtainment, and a contrast with hasty action out of time. Additionally, Josephus provided support for understanding an elided verb of motion together with *ἀναμένω* and *ἐκ* in 1 Thess

¹³ E.g. Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1063, 1082–85; Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 145; cf. Harrison, 'Imperial Gospel', 92; Khiok-Khng, 'Political', 81–82. Cf §2.2.3.

1:10. Josephus' use in the context of royal arrival implied that ἀναμένω meant to wait expectantly, but not to do anything in order to bring about that day.

5.3. Summary of Meaning of ἀναμένω

In sum, the instances of use in LXX, Philo, and Josephus indicate that the meaning of ἀναμένω is to remain in a state or place until a future expected thing occurs with an orientation towards/expectation of that thing. Moreover, there are some clear nuances in the sense of ἀναμένω that are not highlighted by a gloss of *to wait for*. Ἀναμένω carries the sense of passive receptivity (of something presently lacking), of expecting a preceding duration, of anticipation and is contrasted with acting prematurely, impatience and of active obtainment.

Chapter 6

6. Waiting in 1 Thess 1:10: An Exegetical Investigation

6.1. Introduction

In chapters 4 & 5 we identified key NTG words for *waiting*, and then, focussing on ἀναμένω, ascertained the meaning and sense of ἀναμένω in LXX, Philo and Josephus. In this section we will analyse 1 Thess 1:10 in context to ascertain the meaning and significance of *waiting* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians. We will examine preliminary textual matters; the purpose of 1 Thessalonians; the context, function, and meaning of ἀναμένω in light of its use in 1 Thessalonians; and finally, the details of *waiting* in 1:10.

6.2. Textual Variants

Of the three variants of 1 Thess 1:10 noted in NA²⁸ one is important to our study:

P⁴⁶vid records ὑπομένειν not ἀναμένειν. P⁴⁶ is a significant early witness to the presence of ὑπομένειν, even if its reading cannot be established with certainty. However, other reliable witnesses across different families of manuscripts all attest to ἀναμένειν, making it more likely. Furthermore, although a change from ὑπομένειν to ἀναμένειν is difficult to explain, especially since ἀναμένω is a NT *hapax legomenon*, we can easily see how the rare ἀναμένω would be changed to the more common ὑπομένω (4x in Paul, 17x in NT), especially because of the context of suffering (1 Thess 1:6, 2:14, 3:3) and the use of the cognate noun (ὑπομονή) in 1:3. The LXX of Psalm 26:14 has ὑπόμεινον τὸν κύριον, and so *conceptually* the use of ὑπομένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ in 1 Thess 1:10 is not unprecedented. For these internal and external reasons, we conclude that with very high probability ἀναμένειν is original.

6.3. Purpose

The main purpose of 1 Thessalonians is to strengthen their faith and encourage the Thessalonians to stand firm.¹ Paul had sent Timothy (1 Thess 2:17–3:2) because of his concern that suffering (his and theirs) may have led to them giving up on Christ (3:3–5). Timothy returned with the good news that they were enduring faithfully (3:6–8), and likely also with questions from the church (cf. 4:13, 5:1). Joyful at such good news, but still unable to visit (2:18, 3:11), Paul writes to encourage and strengthen their faith: explicitly, addressing particular issues (4:1–5:28); and implicitly, pointing to

¹ For simplicity we shall denote Paul as the author of the letter rather than Silas or Timothy or a co-authorship (1 Thess 1:1).

the powerful gospel moment amongst them in thanksgiving and commendation (1:2–3:13). The gospel moment forms the main theme of Paul's long thanksgiving prayer (1:2–3:13).² It functions to strengthen faith by recalling the power and integrity of Paul's mission visit (1:5–2:16).

The power and integrity of the gospel moment were evident in two ways, both in the context of suffering. First, Paul faithfully preached the gospel (1 Thess 2:1–2). Second, the Thessalonians, by the Spirit's joy (1:6), received Paul's message as God's word (1:5, 2:13) and so powerfully reoriented their lives in order to serve God and to wait for his Son (1:9–10). This dual nature of the powerful gospel moment, namely, Paul's preaching and conduct (1:5)³ and their response (1:6), is a thread that runs through the entire section (chs. 1–3), as Paul reminds them of both aspects: their faith (1:7–10, 2:13–16, 3:6–13)⁴ and his conduct (2:1–12, 2:17–3:13). Paul's thanksgiving, therefore, revolves around this gospel moment: his preaching and their response. It also implicitly commends their behaviour as imitators (1:6, 2:14) and models (1:7–10) — their exemplary behaviour in turning to God to serve and to wait (1:5–10).

Paul's commendation of them, implicit in his thanksgiving, is further conveyed when he recalls their good reputation elsewhere (1:7–10). He encourages them with the news heard from others (1:8–9a) of their faith (1:9b–10), and his time among them

² Fee, *Thessalonians*, 9–12, Peter T. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* (SNT; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 144.

³ J. Gillman, 'Paul's Εἰσοδος: The Proclaimed and the Proclaimer (1 Thes 2:8)', in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. Raymond F. Collins; vol. 89; BETL; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), 62–70 (here 67).

⁴ Furnish, 'Faith, Love and Hope', 226.

(1:9a). Paul, then, encourages them: of his love for them (2:17–3:2), to stand firm in the faith, and to persevere through hardship in serving God and waiting for Jesus. That is, he wants them to continue in what they started in believing the gospel (1:9–10). Since Jesus has not yet arrived, Paul writes to remind them of that powerful gospel moment among them so that they would continue as they started, in faith, service, and waiting (cf. 1:3, 5:8).⁵

The importance of Paul's mission visit for understanding the purpose of 1 Thessalonians has previously been noted, but without satisfactorily accounting for the wider context (1 Thess 1:2–3:13). In 1970, Malherbe argued that Paul's language and concerns are the same as Dio Chrysostom's ideal cynic, and consequently 1 Thess 2:1–12 cannot be read as an apology,⁶ but as self-commendation in order to speak boldly (and gently) for his neighbour's improvement.⁷ Malherbe later contended that the thanksgiving prayer imitated hortatory speech, especially through developing rapport and imitation.⁸ Therefore, Paul writes chs. 1–3 in order to establish good relationship with the Thessalonians to improve their virtue through exhortation and imitation (chs. 4–5). Malherbe's view of developing virtue has merit, but Paul's main concern is to establish faith, as can be seen by his detailed reminder of their conversion, recounting of his joy at hearing that they stand firm, and informing them of his desire to fill up what is lacking (1:4–10, 2:13–3:13).

⁵ Cf. Snyder, 'Summary of Faith', 359.

⁶ Malherbe, 'Gentle' 203–17. Malherbe is responding primarily to Walter Schmithals, 'Die historische Situation der Thessalonicherbriefe', in *Paulus und die Gnostiker* (1965), 89–157.

⁷ Malherbe, 'Gentle', 217, 214, *passim*. cf. Malherbe, 'Exhortation', 238–56.

⁸ Malherbe, 'Exhortation', 238–56.

Refuting Malherbe, Winter argues that Paul wrote to ensure he was not identified with philosophers or orators, who were known to ‘leav[e] their pupils in the lurch’, seeking instead to solidify his existing relationship and by word and deed call on them to live worthy of the Lord.⁹ Following Winter, Kim also rejects Malherbe’s view, demonstrating that no such poor relationship existed, and that Paul’s purpose was apologetic, namely, ‘to solidify their positive appreciation of the integrity of his εἴσοδος’ (1 Thess 1:9, 2:1).¹⁰ Paul intended to protect them from temptation and persecution, but also ‘to equip his readers’ in evangelism, by praising their evangelism in Macedonia and Achaia (1:7–10), and, since they used Paul’s unique εἴσοδος as an evangelistic tool for the truth of the gospel, to enable their doing this more.¹¹ Kim is correct about Paul’s intention but neglects the Thessalonian side to the gospel moment. When Paul appeals to his εἴσοδος amongst them, he means not only *his* conduct and preaching but also *their* conduct and reception of the gospel (e.g. 1:9–10).¹² The purpose of this thanksgiving (apart from thanksgiving!) is to strengthen faith, namely, to aid continuing in faith, serving and *waiting* in light of temptation and persecution, and to encourage evangelistic activity. This is achieved as Paul reminds them of the initial gospel moment amongst them in power.

In sum, Paul’s primary purpose in writing 1 Thessalonians was to strengthen faith, and he does this, in part, through recalling the gospel moment in Thessalonica, his

⁹ Bruce Winter, ‘The Entries and Ethics of Orators and Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:1–12)’, *TynBul* 44/1 (1993): 72.

¹⁰ Seyoon Kim, ‘Paul’s Entry (εἴσοδος) and the Thessalonians’ Faith (1 Thessalonians 1–3)’, *NTS* 51/4 (2005): 540; cf. Jeffrey A. D. Weima, ‘An Apology for the Apologetic Function of 1 Thessalonians 2.1–12’, *JSNT* 68 (1997): 73–99.

¹¹ Kim, ‘Paul’s Entry’, 540; cf. Gillman, ‘Paul’s Εἴσοδος’, 62.

¹² Kim observes this but fails to include it in his case for Paul’s purpose.

conduct and their response in the midst of suffering. This reminder encourages perseverance and elicits ongoing persistence in serving God and waiting for Jesus (1 Thess 1:9–10).

6.4. Context

We have just argued that the two-sided gospel moment in Thessalonica constitutes the primary content of Paul's thanksgiving (1 Thess 1:2–3:13). The immediate context of 1:10 also highlights that gospel moment. This first part of Paul's thanksgiving (1:5–10) focusses on the historical event of their reception of the gospel and subsequent mission-evangelism. Paul thanks God (1:2) because (1:5) when he preached the gospel it was received with joy (1:5–6).¹³ The Thessalonians were not only imitators of Jesus and Paul (1:5–6) but in both their reception of the gospel and their mission-evangelism were a model to other believers (1:7–8).¹⁴ Their mission-evangelism, just like Paul's, involved both proclamation and life (2:1–12).¹⁵ The report that Paul had heard, in fact, was not solely about the faith but *their* faith going out (1:8c–10). Their mission-evangelism took the form of testifying about their own conversion — both

¹³ Taking the three participles (v. 2b, 3, 4) as subordinate to εὐχαριστέω, and ὅτι (v. 5) as indicating the reason for his thankfulness, not the reason for knowing their election (v. 4). The sense is not significantly different if ὅτι (v. 5) explains οἶδα (v. 4). cf. Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 78; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 13.

¹⁴ Despite recent challenges this remains the most common position. We present recent arguments below (§9.2.1); cf. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 16; G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians* (vol. 13; IVP New Testament Commentary Series; Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 64; Barclay, 'Conflict', 522–523; de Vos, *Church*, 161; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 118; Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: A & C Black, 1972), 80; Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 101–102; Gorman, *Becoming*, 75–76; Johnson, 'Ecclesiology', 254; Míguez, *Practice*, 92–94.

¹⁵ Cf. Gorman, *Becoming*, 73.

Paul's time amongst them (εἵσοδος, 1:9) and their response to the gospel was reported around Macedonia and Achaia (1:8–10). These two aspects are indicated in the report by the functionally parallel ὁποῖαν and πῶς (1:9), and lead into the discussion of Paul's mission conduct and proclamation (εἵσοδος, 2:1–12) and their response (2:13). Consequently, their own conversion, the exemplary fruit of which was to serve God and wait for Jesus (1:9b–10), forms the heart of their mission-evangelism.

This context enhances the significance of the Thessalonians' conversion because Paul not only narrates an historical event, but recounts (a) a powerful gospel moment wherein the Thessalonians both imitated the Lord Jesus and also modelled gospel-response to others, and (b) reports on such behaviour as reported to him from elsewhere. Therefore, *waiting* must be seen (a) as exemplary for believers, (b) a right response to gospel-proclamation, (c) as part of the content of gospel proclamation in Thessalonica and subsequently by the Thessalonians themselves, and (d) evidence of God's work in them which produces thanksgiving.

There are indications in the text that Paul sees that gospel moment in Thessalonica in eschatological terms. He speaks of the power of the gospel (1 Thess 1:5; cf. Joel 2:28–32; Isa 40:8, 55:11), the presence of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1:5–6; cf. Luke 3:15–17; John 7:39; Joel 2:28–32; Isa 44:3–5; Jer 31:34; Ezek 36:24–29, 39:29), conversion of Gentiles (1 Thess 1:9, cf. Matt 28:18–19; Isa 2:2–4; Mic 4:1–5), of waiting for Jesus who is the deliverer from the coming wrath (1 Thess 1:10 cf. 1 Thess 5:9; 2 Thess 1:6–10; Matt 3:7; Rom 5:9; Amos 5:18; Mal 4:1), and that their Godward faith went forth

ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, which, as Ciampa and Rosner have shown in 1 Corinthians, is a allusion to the eschatological worship of God (Mal 1:11 LXX cf. 1 Cor 1:2).¹⁶

There has been much debate around whether Paul here quotes an early gospel formula (1 Thess 1:9b–10).¹⁷ If he does, it would indicate that *waiting for Jesus* was part of the mission proclamation from very early on in the Christian mission (cf. Acts 3:19–21).¹⁸ However, our case does not depend on any particular conclusion to that debate. Paul's own referent is to the report he heard (1 Thess 1:8–10) and the historical gospel moment in Thessalonica (1 Thess 1:5–7), and so that is how it is read here.¹⁹

In sum, the immediate context of 1 Thess 1:10, describing a powerful, exemplary gospel moment, highlights the significance of their conversion. Indeed, the Thessalonians' response — to serve and wait — is held up as exemplary behaviour and, moreover, constituted part of their own mission-evangelism both in practice and proclamation.

¹⁶ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Pillar; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 57–58; cf. §9.2.1.

¹⁷ For the possible background see Munck, '1 Thess 1:9–10', 95–110; Collins, *Studies*, 20–23, 253–261; Karl P. Donfried, '1 Thessalonians, Acts and the Early Paul', in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. Raymond F. Collins; vol. 89; BETL; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), 3–26; Ivan Havener, 'The Pre-Pauline Christological Credal Formulae of 1 Thessalonians', *SBLSP* 20 (1981): 105–28; Morna D. Hooker, '1 Thessalonians 1.9–10: A Nutshell — but What Kind of Nut?', in *Geschichte--Tradition--Reflexion: Festschriften Für Martin Hengel Zum 70 Geburtstag* (ed. H. Cancik, H. Lichtenberger, and P. Schäfer; vol. 3: Frühes Christentum; Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 435–48; and various commentaries: for traditional or not-exclusively Pauline formula e.g., Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 74, Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 19; for Pauline e.g., Furnish, *Thessalonians*, 48–49; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 108, Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 84–85.

¹⁸ Cf. John A. T. Robinson, 'Most Primitive Christology of All', *JTS* 7/2 (1956): 177–89.

¹⁹ Cf. Ascough, 'Redescribing', 68.

6.5. Function

The primary way that the ἀναμένω clause (i.e. ἀναμένειν [. . .] ἐρχομένης, 1 Thess 1:10) functions is to elicit ongoing waiting for God's Son, by reminding the Thessalonians that this was their purpose in conversion.

The Thessalonians turned to God from idols, that is, converted (1 Thess 1:9b),²⁰ with two purposes, indicated by the dependent clauses beginning with δουλεύειν (1:9c) and ἀναμένειν (1:10). Both infinitives (anarthrous, present, active and without a governing preposition) are dependent on the main verb ἐπιστρέφω (1:9b). That they indicate purpose is likely because of the general tenor of the passage.²¹ Paul, here, reminds them of why they converted, pointing especially to the powerful gospel moment amongst them (1:5–6, 2:13–14). Moreover, his anxiety that they may think his time was in vain (2:1) or that they had fallen away (3:1–5), suggests that Paul here is referring to what they converted to do, rather than the direct results of their conversion. As a purpose of conversion, *waiting* is not some secondary, accessory action, but a conscious intention. Thus, by reminding the Thessalonians of this intention, Paul elicits their ongoing waiting for Jesus.

The choice of tense here also aids to elicit ongoing action. Whereas their *conversion* is

²⁰ Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 17–18 (cf. Acts 14:15).

²¹ For *purpose* see Weima, *Thessalonians*, 109, 110; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 52; Robert L. Thomas, Ralph Earle, and D. Edmond Hiebert, *1, 2 Thessalonians; 1, 2 Timothy; Titus* (Expositor's Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 21–22; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 120–121; For *result* see Fee, *Thessalonians*, 51; Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 89–90. Calvin claims the δουλεύω clause (and by implication also ἀναμένω) is both, John Calvin, *1, 2 Thessalonians* (Crossway Classic Commentaries; Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 1999 [1551]), 22.

portrayed as a complete action by the perfective aspect, aorist tense (ἐπιστρέφω, 1 Thess 1:9b), their *conversion purposes* are portrayed by the imperfective aspect, present tense (δουλεύω, ἀναμένω, 1:9b, 1:10) as ongoing modes of being which flow from their completed act of *turning*. That which Paul wants to encourage is presented in the present tense as unfolding. Moreover, by commending them as examples, Paul encourages them to continue thus. The verse functions then, as a call to continue waiting for Jesus while serving his Father. Hence, the significance of *waiting* is manifest: not a once off attitude at conversion, but elicited to be an ongoing mode of standing firm in the faith.

As noted in the literature review, very little is said about how the ἀναμένω clause (1 Thess 1:10) functions, except to comment on its epistolary function of anticipating later themes; Snyder, for instance, sees that 1:9–10 ‘ties together the whole letter’.²²

In sum, by reminding them of their purpose in turning to God, the ἀναμένω clause (1 Thess 1:10) functions to elicit ongoing waiting for Jesus.

6.6. Meaning of ἀναμένω

Having examined the purpose of the letter, immediate context and function of the clause itself, we must now ascertain the meaning and sense of ἀναμένω as used in 1 Thess 1:10.

²² Snyder, ‘Summary of Faith’, 362. Cf. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 121; Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 76; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 89; Michael W. Holmes, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 47; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 75; Beale, *Thessalonians*, 60; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 75–76.

6.6.1. Modern Commentators on ἀναμένω

Modern commentators agree that ἀναμένω basically means *to wait expectantly*. Many redirect the reader to ἀπεκδέχομαι as conveying the idea of *eschatological waiting*, e.g., Weima says ἀπεκδέχομαι ‘is normally used’.²³ This makes its meaning effectively synonymous with ἀπεκδέχομαι. To the same end others flatten the meaning to be *hope* or *expect*.²⁴ Some offer meanings based on modest LXX use (Isa 59:11, Jdt 8:17, Sir 2:6–8): Malherbe defines ἀναμένω as ‘waiting with faith and full assurance for God’s righteous judgement, mercy and salvation’.²⁵ There is some nuance of meaning offered: ‘waiting for God’s intervention’,²⁶ ‘patient expectation and trust’,²⁷ ‘the hope the people of God have for the salvation or mercy of God’,²⁸ ‘constant and patient waiting’.²⁹ Denney likens it to an attitude of expectation which, he says, ‘is the bloom, as it were, of Christian character. Without it, there is something lacking’.³⁰ Our previous work in chapter 5 will enable us to build on these observations as we engage with the text below.

²³ Weima, *Thessalonians*, 110; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 11; cf. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 121; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 52; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 86; Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 74; Eadie, *Thessalonians*, 52.

²⁴ George G. Findlay, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), 59; Best, *Thessalonians*, 83.

²⁵ Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 121; cf. Shogren, *Thessalonians*, 74; Furnish, *Thessalonians*, 49; Green, *Thessalonians*, 109. Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 93–94.

²⁶ Shogren, *Thessalonians*, 74.

²⁷ Richard D. Phillips, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Reformed Expository Commentary; Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2015), 50; cf. Eadie, *Thessalonians*, 52; Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 63–64.

²⁸ Green, *Thessalonians*, 109.

²⁹ Alfred Plummer, *A Commentary on St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Thessalonians* (London: Robert Scott, 1918), 14.

³⁰ James Denney, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1892), 59.

6.6.2. Sense of ἀναμένω in 1 Thess 1:10

We earlier suggested (ch. 5) that ἀναμένω broadly meant to remain in a state or place until the occurrence of an expected future event and included the sense of passive receptivity, of expecting a preceding duration, of anticipation. This was contrasted with acting prematurely, impatience and of active obtainment. That meaning is consistent with its use in 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

In 1 Thess 1:10 itself some of those senses are conveyed. The sense of *remain* is conveyed as they are to remain in their present state until they meet with Jesus at his parousia, an event which dominates the two epistles (1 Thess 1:3, 2:19–20, 3:13, 4:14–5:11, 5:23, 2 Thess 1–2). The sense of *passive receptivity* is emphasised since they wait for Jesus, who will arrive in his own time, and they cannot go to be with him, or make his arrival happen, by their own efforts (cf. Phil 1:21–24, Rom 10:6). That *waiting* may be accompanied with appropriate action, like Judith's call to prayer (Jdt 8:17), is conveyed here by the dual purpose of conversion to serve God and to wait for his Son (1 Thess 1:9–10). *Serving* and *waiting* are complementary, and serving God is not an attempt to grasp in an untimely manner at Jesus.

The broader context of 1 & 2 Thessalonians confirms this broad meaning of ἀναμένω. The sense of *remaining* until a future event is conveyed by Paul's various exhortations which assume the passage of time prior to Jesus' return. As such, it conveys a sense of expectancy and readiness without fanatical excitement. So, for example, the Thessalonians are called to mutual encouragement with respect to the parousia (1 Thess 4:18, 5:11) Reading this together with Paul's moral instruction

(4:1–12, 5:12–22), including aspiring to a quiet life, working for their own needs (4:11), walking properly before outsiders (4:12), and honouring their leaders (5:13), suggests that the period of waiting was not expected necessarily to finish immediately. That is, they were to live God-pleasing lives in their communities, expectant of the end, but remaining as they are until that date. In 5:1–11, the unknowability of the time of the parousia (1 Thess 5:1–2) creates both a sense of being alert (γρηγορέω) and yet sober realisation that the master may delay (νήφω, 5:6).³¹ That is, they are to be ready for it and yet not naïvely lose hope or be distracted if it does not arrive immediately. *Waiting*, then, indicates an expectation of the future event and the expectation of the possibility of time passing before that future event.

Additionally, the portrayal of salvation, as something done for them (1 Thess 1:10, 2:16, 5:9–10; 2 Thess 2:13), and centred upon being with Christ at the parousia (e.g. 1 Thess 4:17), confirms the sense of *waiting* as being passively receptive, that is, not grasping at the awaited thing, but receiving it at the appropriate time.

Therefore, the immediate and broader contexts show that ἀναμένω (1 Thess 1:10) carries those senses in 1 Thessalonians. Paul means, in fact, by reference to their *waiting*, that they are expectant of Jesus' arrival, oriented towards it, aware that some time may pass before his coming and so of the need to wait, and that they will receive that which they wait for rather than trying to obtain it.

³¹ See §6.7.4 for our argument for this reading.

6.7. Nature of Waiting

Having examined the general sense of ἀναμένω in context, we turn now to the details of *waiting* in 1 Thess 1:10: who waits, what is awaited, why they wait, how they wait, and when they wait.

6.7.1. Who Waits?

The subject of ἀναμένω is the Thessalonians, indicated by the head verb ἐπιστρέφω (1 Thess 1:9). We may, however, conclude more broadly, that it is Christians who wait, since Paul calls the Thessalonians a model to other believers in their conversion (1:7), a model which includes *waiting*.

6.7.2. What is Awaited?

The Thessalonians turn to wait for Jesus (1 Thess 1:10). Paul gives a four-fold description of the object of their waiting, but each description refers to the same person: Jesus.³² He is described as God's Son from heaven, whom God raised from the dead, Jesus, and their deliverer from the coming wrath. We shall examine each of these below.

(A) God's Son From Heaven.

The first stated object of ἀναμένω is τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν. The antecedent of αὐτοῦ is clearly θεός to whom they turned and whom they serve (1 Thess 1:9). There are two significant points here: (a) Paul's use of υἱός and (b) ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν.

³² Each exists as an accusative apposite or expegetical phrase.

This is the only place where Paul uses υἱός in a parousia context.³³ Some scholars say that *son* here speaks of the intimacy of relationship between God and the awaited saviour, and therefore, of Jesus' ability to save.³⁴ This seems misdirected, since (a) the pronoun αὐτοῦ already indicates the relationship, (b) there is no emphatic ἰδιος (Rom 8:32) or ἐαυτοῦ (Rom 8:3), and (c) the basis for future assurance is Jesus' death and resurrection; not his eternal sonship (1 Thess 4:14). *Son* does indicate relationship, which is important, but Paul here refers to Jesus as Messianic King (cf. Rom 1:4, 9; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7, Matt 26:63). This view is consistent with the Acts record of Paul's preaching (Acts 17:1–6) and the exalted view of Jesus as Lord in 1 & 2 Thessalonians (e.g. 1:1, 3:11, 3:12–13, 4:2, 4:6, 4:16–17). It is also confirmed by expressing his present location as in heaven, which is the place of God's rule (Ps 110:1). Kim argues that by his resurrection Jesus was 'installed Son of God in power (Rom 1:4)', and so *son* here, like Lord, 'designate[s] the exalted Jesus Christ', and so, 'we wait for him as [. . .] the Lord from heaven'.³⁵ The Thessalonians are not waiting for someone who can save because of his close relationship to the Father solely, but one who has assumed the Messianic throne, who presently reigns, and who will come in triumph to deliver.

Elsewhere in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, οὐρανός is used twice, but in the singular and with ἀπό, referring to the place from which Jesus will arrive (1 Thess 4:16, 2 Thess 1:7).

³³ Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 94.

³⁴ Weima, *Thessalonians*, 110; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 86; Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 94–96; Koperski, 'Resurrection Terminology', 266. For Son of Man tradition being adapted by Paul here cf. Richard, *Thessalonians*, 56.

³⁵ Seyoon Kim, *The 'Son of Man' as the Son of God* (WUNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 100–101, 101 n. 2; cf. Fee, *Thessalonians*, 49; Gorman, *Becoming*, 71.

There is no substantial reason, however, not to read ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν (1 Thess 1:10) and ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ (1 Thess 4:16, 2 Thess 1:7) as having the same referent and meaning.³⁶ Since ἐκ makes little sense with ἀναμένω, it is better to read it as indicating an elided verb of movement (e.g. καταβαίνω, 1 Thess 4:16; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 14.337; §5.2). This is also preferable to reading it as modifying υἱός (cf. 1 Cor 15:47). The sense here is that they await Jesus' coming/arrival from heaven (cf. 1 Thess 4:16–17). Heaven indicates the place where Jesus presently is, and is the place of God's rule (Ps 2:4; Isa 40:22–25).³⁷ Jesus, who currently reigns in heaven, the exalted Lord, will come from there to save. This coming in glory is spoken of elsewhere in these letters as his parousia (1 Thess 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess 2:1, 8–9),³⁸ revelation (2 Thess 1:7), his coming to be glorified (2 Thess 1:10), descent (1 Thess 4:16), and the day of the Lord (1 Thess 5:2).

(B) Whom God Raised from the Dead.

The second phrase describing Jesus here is the relative clause ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ [τῶν] νεκρῶν, seen by many as a traditional formula (cf. §6.4).³⁹ The antecedent to ὃν is τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ; the subject of the verb ἐγείρω is the antecedent of αὐτός, God (1 Thess 1:9). Τῶν should be kept but makes little difference to meaning.⁴⁰ This phrase has been read as interruptive to the sentence flow,⁴¹ but it is actually strongly supportive of

³⁶ Paul's use of both plural (10x) and singular (11x) militates against reading a specific cosmology of multi-tiered heaven here. Weima, *Thessalonians*, 110–111. cf. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 121; Best, *Thessalonians*, 83.

³⁷ Green, *Thessalonians*, 109; Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 97.

³⁸ Green, *Thessalonians*, 109.

³⁹ E.g. Weima, *Thessalonians*, 111.

⁴⁰ NA²⁸ (apparatus); Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 122.

⁴¹ E.g. Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 87; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 57.

the first phrase, because it gives the reason for Jesus' being exalted as Son of God and why he is in heaven (cf. Rom 1:4).⁴² Later in the letter, this truth — Jesus' own resurrection — forms the basis of assurance in future resurrection and so current encouragement (1 Thess 4:14–18). The active verb is used to show that God raised Jesus, indicating three things. First, it joins his description as the living God (1:9b) with his act in history to give life to the dead man, Jesus. Second, it likens believers' resurrections to Christ's, because as God raised Jesus so too will he raise others (4:15). Third, it highlights the unity of God and his Son in salvation — the one you are waiting for, God (whom you serve) raised him from the dead, he is exalted and reigns as Lord, and he will rescue you from God's coming wrath.

(C) Jesus

Best calls this use of Jesus 'peculiar'.⁴³ In 1 & 2 Thessalonians only here and 1 Thess 4:14 is Ἰησοῦς found without another title (Lord or Christ).⁴⁴ These verses refer to his resurrection and emphasise continuity between the one who died and the one who now reigns exalted above.⁴⁵ The one they await is the same person who lived, died, was raised, and exalted. That same one will come from heaven.

(D) Our Deliverer.

The last clause, τὸν ρυόμενον ἡμῶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης,⁴⁶ a participial clause

⁴² Pace Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 121–122.

⁴³ Best, *Thessalonians*, 83.

⁴⁴ 1 Thess 1:1, 3; 2:14, 15, 19; 3:11, 13; 4:2; 5:9, 18, 23, 28; 2 Thess 1:1, 2, 7, 8, 12; 2:1, 2:8, 14, 16; 3:6, 12, 18.

⁴⁵ Best, *Thessalonians*, 83; Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, 100; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 111.

⁴⁶ For reading ἐκ and not ἀπό (NA²⁸ apparatus) see Weima, *Thessalonians*, 114, who rightly opposes Daniel B. Wallace, 'A Textual Problem in 1 Thessalonians 1:10: Ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς vs. Ἀπο τῆς ὀργῆς', *BSac* 147/588 (1990): 470–79.

appositional to Ἰησοῦν, describes Jesus as the deliverer, and what he delivers from (the coming wrath). The present tense of ῥύομαι does not indicate a present saving action; instead, the deliverance occurs at the same time as the wrath.⁴⁷ But the imperfective aspect portrays his personal role as deliverer, even if the specific instance remains future.⁴⁸ By portraying Jesus' deliverance in imperfective aspect, so from the inside, Paul unfolds before them the object of their waiting — this Jesus who delivers, him they await — and so inspires their continued waiting. This stresses his identity rather than the action ('our deliverer'), because they wait for the saviour especially; not the saving act, although that too will occur.⁴⁹ Here, Fee is mistaken, when he says that 'the emphasis is not on believers' being present with the Son at his coming, but on the fact that the now risen Jesus will "deliver us from the wrath that is to come."⁵⁰ At one level he is right to note that in contrast to chs. 4–5, there is no explicit mention of being with Jesus; however, the present tense form of the participle used appositionally stresses his identity as rescuer rather than the act. In fact, the whole phrase (1:10) emphatically presents the person as the one awaited, rather than his saving act. 'Ο ῥύομαι is used in Rom 11:26 and often in LXX, especially Isaiah (Isa 44:6; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7, 26; 50:2; 54:5, 8; 59:20), to refer to God as Israel's deliverer.⁵¹ In the NT, God is always the one who delivers (ῥύομαι), and regularly people are saved from enemies or persecution (Matt 6:13; Luke 1:74; Rom 15:31; 2 Cor 1:10; 2 Tim 3:11, 4:17–18; 2

⁴⁷ Pace Best who says that ῥύομαι is 'used here as a present participle implying that the deliverance is taking place even now before the return of Jesus'. Best's view does not adequately account for either their ongoing suffering (1 Thess 3:3) or Paul's earlier anxiety concerning their possible apostasy (3:5). Best, *Thessalonians*, 84.

⁴⁸ Malherbe following Rigaux: 'a permanent function with a future application', *Thessalonians*, 122. Cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 620.

⁴⁹ Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 19, identifies it as *nomen agentis*. cf. John Albert Bengel, *Bengel's New Testament Commentary* (trans. Charlton T. Lewis and Marvin R. Vincent; vol. 2; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1981), 476.

⁵⁰ Fee, *Thessalonians*, 50.

⁵¹ Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 20; For use of Isaiah 59:17 in 1Thess 5:8 cf. Plevnik, '1 Thess 5,1–11', 86.

Pet 2:7, 9). God rescues from the domain of darkness (Col 1:13). Using ῥύομαι of Jesus indicates his exalted status (cf. 2 Thess 3:2). He delivers people from the coming wrath. Ὁργή is modified by the attributive adjectival participle ἔρχομαι, indicating an inevitable, future event that is approaching in time. This ὁργή is God's eschatological anger and will manifest itself in righteous judgement and vengeance on the enemies of the Thessalonians and all who disobey the gospel (2 Thess 1:8; 1 Thess 5:3–4). The Thessalonians, elected by God (1 Thess 1:4), appointed not for wrath but salvation through Jesus (1 Thess 5:9), have turned to God, and now wait for Jesus who will also save them from the righteous judgement at his parousia (2 Thess 1:9–10).

(E) Summary of What is Awaited

Paul indicates here that they wait for Jesus, a person, not a thing nor an event.⁵² Jesus will perform a saving action for them at his anticipated arrival, but the emphasis remains on *him* as person. Calvin, similarly, observes that Paul writes, 'to wait for his Son instead of the hope in everlasting salvation. For, unquestionably, without Christ we are ruined, and thrown into despair; but when Christ shows himself, life and prosperity do at the same time show forth upon us.'⁵³ Jowett's observation that it is 'remarkable' that instead of speaking of the cross, or of faith, Paul refers them to the hope of his return is important, but his conclusion that it indicates multiple gospels fails to account for the other gospel statements in this letter (e.g. 1 Thess 4:14).⁵⁴

⁵² Cf. Ryrie, 373; Witherington, *Thessalonians*, 74.

⁵³ Calvin, *Thessalonians*, 23.

⁵⁴ Benjamin Jowett, *The Epistles of St Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans, with Critical Notes and Dissertations* (vol. 1, 2nd ed.; London: John Murray, 1859), 50–51.

Significantly, they wait for Jesus.⁵⁵ Jesus is described as the exalted Lord (Son of God), risen and reigning in heaven, and the divine deliverer from eschatological wrath — the same Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified less than twenty years before. That Jesus they await.

6.7.3. Why they Wait?

There is no explicit reason given for why the Thessalonians wait for Jesus, except as the outworking of their conversion. Malherbe insightfully identifies that these verses were a summary not only of Paul's preaching but of 'what they had converted to', and reminded them that '[c]onversion requires that they await his coming from heaven'.⁵⁶ It is also reasonable to infer that they wait for Jesus because he is the one who will save them from the wrath to come, and because of who he is as the risen, ascended Son of God. Further, they wait for him because being with Christ is the essence of salvation, and because their salvation is 'not yet' (See §7.2).

Gieschen argues that the basis for *waiting* is the Father's resurrection of the Son (1 Thess 1:10).⁵⁷ This is surely right, in part, but the context points more broadly to the gospel and their conversion (1:5–6, 9; 4:14). Moreover, the basis for *waiting* is given in the faithfulness of God (5:24, cf. 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13–15) and the purpose of Jesus'

⁵⁵ Neyrey errs in saying the focus is on God; since the four-fold description emphatically stresses Jesus. Neyrey, 221.

⁵⁶ Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 132.

⁵⁷ Gieschen, 'Christ's Coming', 52.

death, that is, in order that believers would live with him at his return (1 Thess 5:9–10).

6.7.4. How they Wait?

The manner of *waiting* is indicated by (a) the meaning of ἀναμένω in its immediate context and (b) 1 Thess 5:1–11, which, as Hooker rightly says, ‘describes how’ they were to wait.⁵⁸

(A) ἀναμένω in its Immediate Context

The meaning of ἀναμένω (to remain in a state or place until the occurrence of an expected future event) indicates the essence of the manner of their *waiting* (1 Thess 1:10). This includes a sense of expectation, of reception rather than grasping at, and of acting in a timely manner (see §5.3). Since they await Jesus’ arrival, they cannot force that to happen, but must wait until the Lord himself chooses to come (cf. 5:1–2), but they expect it hopefully. *Waiting expectantly* is set in contrast to worshipping idols but consistent with serving God; indeed Paul expects *serving* and *waiting* to continue hand in hand (1:9–10). The context of suffering, gospel power, Spirit-joy, perseverance, mission-evangelism, and modelling, all contribute to the manner of *waiting* (1:5–10).

(B) 1 Thess 5:1–11

1 Thess 5:1–11 explains more specifically how the Thessalonians are to wait, namely, to be watchful and sober minded. Although several scholars see an anti-imperial

⁵⁸ Hooker, ‘1 Thess 1.9–10’, 445.

agenda here,⁵⁹ it is more fruitful to examine the background as the OT and the tradition of Jesus' Olivet discourse. This background better accounts for the thrust of this section where Paul's instruction focusses on the Lord's return and being ready despite not knowing when it will happen. Even if the Thessalonians were predominately gentile, we may see an OT allusion here, because the OT formed the 'substructure' of Paul's thought, and he had already spent significant time teaching them (5:1).⁶⁰

Likely behind these verses (1 Thess 5:3) is an allusion to Jeremiah: the refusal to heed God's warning, trumpet and watchmen (Jer 6:17) in light of the imminent judgement (Jer 6:14, cf. Ezek 13:10).⁶¹ This Jeremiah background helps us to see the manner of waiting as one of being watchful and heeding to God's word. Paul, in fact, commends the Thessalonians for their right attitude to God's word (1 Thess 1:5–6, 2:13) and encourages them to continue similarly, even as they wait (3:10, 4:2, 5:8, 11).

Wenham, Waterhouse and Kim have made excellent cases for Paul's knowledge of the tradition of Jesus' teaching about the parousia, and our reading of 5:1–11 will be enhanced by examining that background, especially Matt 24:36–25:13 (cf. Luke

⁵⁹ E.g. Koester, 'Paul's Eschatology', 450; Donfried, 'Imperial Cults', 222; Harrison, 'Imperial Gospel', 95. For a review and critique of this position see White, 'Roman Slogan', and White, 'Greek Aspiration'.

⁶⁰ Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 39–40, referencing Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*; cf. Steele, 'The Use of Jewish Scriptures', 12–17.

⁶¹ Cf. Watson, 'Paul's Appropriation', 75; J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 258–259.

12:34–48, 21:34–36).⁶² There Jesus teaches his disciples that because they do not know the time of his coming (Matt 24:36, 42, 50, 25:13) they are to watch (γρηγορέω), be ready, and not sleep (καθεύδω). Paul uses similar language, teaching the Thessalonians that since they do not know the time (1 Thess 5:1–2), but because they belong to that day (5:5–8), they are not to sleep (καθεύδω), but to watch (γρηγορέω). This means, in part, they are to be aware and prepared (Matt 25:4), knowing the signs (Matt 24:32–33, cf. 2 Thess 2:1–12) and, in part, to be faithful as servants in the tasks left to be done (Matt 24:45–46).⁶³ This faithfulness includes preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth (Matt 24:14), and perseverance to the end (Matt 24:13). Paul's use of these ideas may be seen in his call to faith, hope and love (1 Thess 5:8); but, more generally, he speaks of standing firm (3:8–10), holiness (4:1–12, 5:12–20), mission (1:5–2:16), life and labour (4:11–12, 5:14, 2 Thess 3:6–12 cf. Matt 24:40–41), and of being awake and ready — not surprised — by that day.

There is a second side to this watchfulness that appears in Jesus' teaching and which Paul develops by his antithesis of being sober (νήφω) or drunk (μεθύω) (1 Thess 5:6–7). Although normally taken to mean moral uprightness,⁶⁴ νήφω, set in contrast with

⁶² G. Henry Waterman, 'Sources of Paul's Teaching on the 2nd Coming of Christ in 1 and 2 Thessalonians', *JETS* 18/2 (1975): 105–13; David Wenham, 'Paul and the Synoptic Apocalypse', in *Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels* (ed. Richard T. France and David Wenham; vol. 2; Sheffield: JSOT, 1981), 345–75; David Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 289–337; Seyoon Kim, 'The Jesus Tradition in 1 Thess 4:13–5:11', *NTS* 48/2 (2002): 225–42. cf. Bernard Orchard, 'Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospels', *Biblica* 19/1 (1938): 19–42. Pace Christopher Tuckett, 'Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians?', in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. Raymond F. Collins; vol. 89; BETL; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), 160–82. The question of the referent of the day that Jesus speaks of: his cross, the destruction of Jerusalem, or the parousia, need not detain us here, because we are considering how Paul applies this teaching, and Paul's referent is clearly the parousia (1 Thess 4:17, 5:10), pace Wright, *Fresh Perspectives*, 142; cf. Wright, *People of God*, 460, Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1081, 1290; Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 139–146.

⁶³ Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 937.

⁶⁴ E.g. Kucicki, *Eschatology*, 64; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 194–195; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 184.

drunkenness, means being sober with respect to the impending day of the Lord.⁶⁵ Jesus warned against getting drunk (μεθύω) since the master was seemingly delayed (Matt 24:48–49). Thus, while not actually asleep like the unprepared virgins who faced a similar delay (Matt 25:5), this servant fails to be ready for the Lord’s coming since he was drunk: a self-imposed condition based on his notion that the master will delay. Paul likewise warns the Thessalonians about being drunk, and instead calls on them to be sober (1 Thess 5:6–7) — not simply meaning physiological sobriety but being spiritually aware and expecting the Lord’s coming, even if it seems he may delay. Without such sober thinking, a person might assume, even after a short delay, that Jesus’ parousia will be postponed indefinitely; and so, get drunk, fall asleep, and be surprised by it (1 Thess 5:4). But if the time is not known (5:1–2), they must both be ready for its arrival at any moment and be sober about the possibility of some duration prior to it.⁶⁶ Plevnik concludes similarly,

[Sobriety] involves a clear assessment of hope-filled reality because of the Lord’s coming. Those who are sober entertain no illusions, do not boast, resist the desires arising from the selfish self, and steer clear of the pitfalls ahead.⁶⁷

This is, of course, what we established in our analysis of ἀναμένω (ch. 5). *Waiting* carries both an expectation of possible immediacy and also duration prior to the expected event/thing occurring (e.g. Jdt 8:17; Philo *Plant.* 161, *Spec.* 4.99, *Somn.* 2.87).

⁶⁵ Danker, ‘νήφω’, BDAG 672; cf. L&N, §30.25 1:353; §88.86 1:752.

⁶⁶ Cf. Charles L. Holman, *Till Jesus Comes: Origins of Christian Apocalyptic Expectation* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 124.

⁶⁷ Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, 112.

What Paul means by ἀναμένω in 1:10 is explicated with reference to the Jesus tradition by νήφω and γρηγορέω, and the reason for such teaching is that the timing of Jesus' arrival is unknown (1 Thess 5:1–2), but they belong to the day (5:4–8). A consequence of this reading is that ἀναμένω in 1:10 has a further function of cooling down eschatological excitement. By encouraging them to wait soberly, Paul prepares the Thessalonians to live in expectation, serving God and waiting, but not to get carried away with unrealistic excitement that can only disappoint. Paul's encouragement to wait calls for wakefulness and sobriety — being ready but knowing 'he might be a while'.

The essential way they are to be watchful and sober is to clothe themselves with faith, hope and love (1 Thess 5:8), those three great virtues for which Paul commends them (1:3, 4:9–12).⁶⁸ Being ready for the Lord's arrival is constituted by faith, love and hope, not an exclusive concentration on the possibility of its immediate arrival. Dodd wrote that being focussed on the coming of Christ leads to a devaluation of the present, but in this highly eschatologically focussed section, Paul combines faith and love with hope to ensure that their waiting is done by walking appropriately before those outside and by increasing in love for one another as well as heeding carefully to God's word.⁶⁹

In short, the manner of waiting is indicated by both ἀναμένω in 1 Thess 1:10 and his discussion of being watchful and sober in 5:1–11. In particular, they are to be

⁶⁸ Smalley, 'Delay', 49.

⁶⁹ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 63–64.

watchful and ready, but also soberly recognising possible delay. As they wait, they serve God (1:9) and pursue faith, hope and love (5:8).

6.7.5. When they wait?

The Thessalonians' period of *waiting* begins at conversion, when they turn to God with the purpose of waiting for his Son from heaven (1 Thess 1:9–10). Their waiting period will end by Jesus' arrival from heaven and his delivering them from the future wrath (1 Thess 1:10, 4:16–17).⁷⁰ In context this refers to the parousia (cf. 2 Thess 1). Their *waiting* will conclude when their lack is filled, when the object arrives — Jesus, who will arrive at the parousia to gather them to himself.

Therefore, faith is not 'openness' toward the future,⁷¹ but being futurely oriented towards an *end*. Winter writes that the Thessalonians had 'abandoned their view of the eternity of the world in order to wait for' Jesus,⁷² — not just a future stretching onwards infinitely, but a definite end. An end, as Jensen observes, implies a goal and purpose.⁷³ The future arrival of Jesus to judge (1 Thess 5:3, 2 Thess 1:7–10), deliver (1 Thess 1:10), gather his people (2 Thess 2:1) and to live with them into eternity (1 Thess 4:17, 5:10) gives the present age its goal and purpose. This means that waiting for Jesus orientates a person to that end, and not just the future, and so they rightly understand the goal and purpose of this age, and live for it. This age will not go on

⁷⁰ De Villiers, 'Eschatology', 11.

⁷¹ Bultmann, *Theology*, 320.

⁷² Winter, 'Entries and Ethics', 64.

⁷³ Peter Jensen, *At the Heart of the Universe* (Sydney: Lancer, 1991), 6.

indefinitely, but Jesus is arriving *at any moment*. His arrival gives meaning to the present age, and so, by faith, love, and hope (5:8), they wait for him (1:10).

6.8. Summary of Waiting in 1 Thess 1:10

In this chapter we have seen that Paul's purpose in writing 1 Thessalonians is to strengthen faith, and as a way of doing so, he recalls the gospel moment amongst them as the crucial content to his thanksgiving. That is, by thanksgiving and commendation for that historical moment, he encourages them that as they began, so to keep on going, serving God and waiting for his Son. We saw that *waiting* involved patient and sober expectation and readiness, and not grasping out of time the object of waiting. Most clearly, we saw that they waited for Jesus, who, having been exalted as Messiah, currently reigns in heaven and is their deliverer from the coming eschatological wrath. In short, by reminding the Thessalonians of what they turned to God to do in that powerful, eschatological gospel moment, and of what they were praised for, he encouraged ongoing waiting for Jesus, king and deliverer.

Chapter 7

7. The Theological Significance of Waiting in 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Our research on ἀναμένω and 1 Thess 1:10 requires further consideration of the theological significance of waiting for God's Son in the broader context of the Thessalonian correspondence. Since the Thessalonians wait for *Jesus* (ch. 6, 1 Thess 1:10) it suggests that, from their perspective, Jesus was somehow absent from them. In this chapter, then, we view 1 & 2 Thessalonians through the lens of waiting, and so Christ's absence. By so doing we will see firstly that salvation is primarily focussed on a future presence with Christ and secondly that Jesus, already exalted as God's Son, purposely reigns now with the goal of bringing people into that future presence.

7.1. Christ as Absent

Paul describes the Thessalonians as waiting for Jesus (1 Thess 1:10) which implies that Christ is currently absent from them. His present location is in heaven *from* where he shall come at the parousia (1 Thess 1:10, 4:16–17). As Orr argues from 1 Thessalonians and the broader Pauline corpus, in the present time, since he possesses a ‘distinct and distinguishable’ body, ‘Christ is located *elsewhere* from believers’.¹ Therefore, ‘[i]t is only when he comes at his *Parousia* that he will be with them (1 Thess 4:17)’.²

Tilling argues that the language of *parousia*, meaning presence, is contrasted in the NT with *absence*, and as such implies current absence. Thus, in 1 Thessalonians, it is clear from the hope of his presence at the parousia that they were ‘*not yet* “with the Lord”’.³ Tilling makes his case for Christ’s absence in the undisputed Pauline letters from the contrast between what is true now and what will be true when he comes. For example, Paul desires to be with Christ, which means that he ‘does not yet live with’ him as he desires and expects in the resurrection (2 Cor 5:6–8, Phil 1:21–24).⁴ Thus, in contrast to their future presence with Christ, the Thessalonians currently wait for him.

Christ’s current absence has the effect of highlighting his future presence. This future presence, in fact, constitutes the essence of salvation in 1 & 2 Thessalonians. We shall now explore how this salvation is portrayed throughout 1 & 2 Thessalonians as being with Christ at his parousia.

¹ Orr, *Christ*, 113–114. Emphasis original.

² Orr, *Christ*, 113–114.

³ Chris Tilling, *Paul’s Divine Christology* (WUNT2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 157, emphasis original.

⁴ Tilling, *Paul’s Divine Christology*, 163.

7.2. Salvation as Being with Christ at his Parousia

Our understanding of the soteriology of 1 & 2 Thessalonians is clarified by viewing the letters through this lens of waiting which, as we have just argued, highlights Christ's current absence and so his future presence. Whereas elsewhere in the Pauline corpus there are statements about what is already soteriologically true for believers: adoption (Gal 4:4–6), justification (Rom 5:1, 9), reconciliation (Rom 5:10), cleansing (1 Cor 6:11) even, 'he saved us' (Titus 3:5); these aspects *as having already taken place* are not explicitly present in 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Rather than simply bringing those other Pauline teachings to bear on 1 & 2 Thessalonians or simply expecting *a priori* that salvation will be presented as past, present and future,⁵ the lens of waiting helps us to focus on the future emphasis of salvation in 1 & 2 Thessalonians and its implications. As we shall see, the primary emphasis of salvation is what will happen in the future, that is, personal union with Christ at his parousia — that for which the Thessalonians wait (1 Thess 1:10). Such a future aspect raises questions for perspectives which overemphasise Pauline eschatology as having been realised in the church or the gospel decision and experience of an individual.⁶ In contrast, in 1 & 2 Thessalonians Paul stresses a future state of being with Christ.

7.2.1. Salvation as Future

In 1 & 2 Thessalonians salvation is presented as temporally future in three main ways.

⁵ Pace Pate, *The End*, 100.

⁶ Cf. Dodd, §2.1.5; Bultmann, §2.1.6; Schweitzer, §2.1.3.

First, the language for *salvation* points towards a future salvation since the temporal context either indicates a future event or, where unspecified, is not explicitly past or present and best interpreted in light of the other future references. Paul uses σώζω twice as the potential (missed) result of hearing the gospel (1 Thess 2:16; 2 Thess 2:10). In these verses ‘being saved’ points towards an eschatological future event, so e.g., σώζω is contrasted with ἀπόλλυμι at the parousia (2 Thess 2:10). Similarly, σωτηρία (1 Thess 5:8, 9; 2 Thess 2:13) refers to a future event,⁷ with both contexts pointing to the parousia, contrasting salvation either with condemnation (2 Thess 2:12) or wrath on that day (1 Thess 5:8–9). Paul uses ῥύομαι in 2 Thess 3:2 to refer to physical deliverance from evil men in this present period. This use does not refer to salvation in an eschatological sense. But in 1 Thess 1:10 ῥύομαι refers to Jesus’ rescuing the Thessalonians from the coming eschatological wrath (ὀργή). Finally, the language of call (καλέω 1 Thess 2:12, 4:7, 5:24; 2 Thess 2:14) and calling (κλήσις 2 Thess 1:11) also points to a future salvation.⁸ God has already called (2 Thess 2:14), and Paul prays that they will be worthy of his calling (2 Thess 1:11) but God has called them εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν (1 Thess 2:12, cf. 5:24), that is, a present call but towards a future goal, viz. glory.⁹ Therefore, the salvific language points towards a parousia time context.

⁷ Gundry Volf, *Paul*, 22; J. G. Van der Watt, ‘The Use of ζάω in 1 Thessalonians: A Comparison with ζάω/ζωή in the Gospel of John’, in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. Raymond F. Collins; BETL; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), 356–369 (here 363–365).

⁸ Cf. Marshall, ‘Election and Calling’, 269–271.

⁹ The final reference (1 Thess 4:7) indicates that sanctification is part of God’s method of calling, Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 86.

Second, Paul's confidence and anxiety for their salvation indicate that salvation is future, because his attitude towards their salvation rests not in thinking they have already been saved, but in their standing firm in the Lord (1 Thess 3:8) who will present them holy at the parousia (5:24). Paul speaks highly of the Thessalonians, calling them brothers (e.g. 1:4), distinguishing them from those outside (4:12) and their persecutors (1:5, 2:14, 2 Thess 1). He is confident of their election by God (1 Thess 1:4, 2 Thess 2:13–14) and calls them imitators of Christ, of himself and of the Judean churches (1 Thess 1:6, 2:14). Their endurance is seen as evidence (ἔνδειγμα) that they will enter God's kingdom (2 Thess 1:5). Nevertheless, Paul had been anxious about them and sent Timothy to see if they had been tempted (to fall away) because of their trials. This would have resulted in Paul's labour being in vain (1 Thess 3:5).¹⁰ There was for Paul, then, a genuine possibility that they had not continued in the faith after he left. He writes this letter, having heard that they stand firm (3:7–9). Nevertheless, he still wants to see them to supply what is lacking in their faith (3:10), and, in the meantime, prays for Christ to establish their hearts (3:13), and instructs them to encourage one another (4:18), build each other up (5:11), and to stand firm (2 Thess 2:15) because they have not already entered into salvation but will do so at the parousia. Furthermore, Paul prays that they will be acceptable to God at the parousia (1 Thess 3:13, 5:23) and is confident that God will accomplish this (5:24). Both Paul's fear that his labour was in vain, and his confidence that God will faithfully accomplish what he started in calling the Thessalonians indicate that Paul views salvation as a future occurrence.

¹⁰ Gundry Volf, *Paul*, 262–271.

The third way that salvation is portrayed as future in 1 & 2 Thessalonians is by its character of being with Christ. Since Christ is absent from them and they wait for him, it follows that salvation is primarily a future event, if being with Christ is central to salvation. In fact, it is future *because* it is about being physically in the presence of Christ who has not yet come. We turn now to examine the evidence and significance of this third aspect, that salvation is presented as being with Christ.

7.2.2. Salvation as Being with Christ

Paul portrays in three primary ways that central to salvation in 1 & 2 Thessalonians is being with Christ. First, two significant words indicating fellowship are used of the state of believers at Christ's parousia. In 2 Thess 2:1, Paul refers to the events of the day of the Lord as Christ's parousia and believers' assembly with him. He uses here ἐπισυναγωγή, a word used only here and in Hebrews 10:26 where it refers to the 'weekly gatherings' of Christians. The verbal form (ἐπισυνάγω)¹¹ means 'to gather together' (to a place).¹² Jesus wishes ἐπισυναγαγεῖν Jerusalem's children together like a hen her chicks (Matt 23:37, cf. Luke 13:34). The angels are sent to gather (ἐπισυνάγω) the elect (Matt 24:31 cf. Mark 13:27).¹³ Paul picks up the OT hope of the scattered people of God being gathered to the Lord (Isa 43:4–7, 52:12, 56:8, Jer 31:8),¹⁴ assembled around his throne as at Sinai (Ex 19), the curse finally and completely

¹¹ Matt 23:37; 24:31; Mark 1:33; 13:27; Luke 12:1; 13:34; 17:37.

¹² L&N §§15.124, 126 1:198–199; cf. Danker, 'ἐπισυνάγω', BDAG 382.

¹³ Μετὰ σάλλπιγγος (Matt 24:31) cf. ἐν σάλλπιγγι θεοῦ (1 Thess 4:16).

¹⁴ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 239; Green, *Thessalonians*, 302.

resolved (cf. Gen 11:9). In 2 Thess 2:1 ἐπισυναγωγή is used to refer to believers being gathered to Christ at the parousia.

The second key word describes the goal to which at Jesus's descent believers are snatched up toward— εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου εἰς ἀέρα (1 Thess 4:17). The word ἀπάντησις has the sense of a meeting or encounter (Matt 25:6, Acts 28:15, cf. ὑπάντησις, Matt 8:34; 25:1; John 12:13). Gundry writes, 'ἀπάντησις is bound to conjure up the hellenistic practice of going out to meet the approaching dignitary in order that he might enjoy an honorary escort into the city'.¹⁵ The basic idea of *going out to meet somebody* is confirmed in every other NT use by a related verb of motion: ἐξέρχομαι (Matt 8:34; 25:1, 6; John 12:13) or ἔρχομαι (Acts 28:15). In 1 Thess 4:17, this sense is provided by the future passive of ἀρπάζω (4:17) probably to indicate its supernatural and passive character.¹⁶ Whatever the background, its function is clear: Paul uses εἰς ἀπάντησις to portray a joyful encounter with the Lord, together with those raised by him (4:17) — the 'festive reception of the Lord at his coming'.¹⁷ There has been much discussion about what Paul expected would happen next, whether a joint descent to earth (cf. Matt 25:6),¹⁸ or an assumption into heaven.¹⁹ However, Paul does not indicate a subsequent spatial destination but speaks of the joyous result that

¹⁵ Gundry, 'Hellenization', 165–166; cf. Harrison, 'Imperial Gospel', 85; Khiok-Khng, 'Political', 82.

¹⁶ Cf. Acts 8:39.

¹⁷ Koester, 'Paul's Eschatology', 447.

¹⁸ E.g. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 139–145; Gundry, 'Hellenization', 165–166.

¹⁹ E.g. Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 175.

all, those already dead and those still alive, will be with Christ always (4:17).²⁰ This relational union is highlighted because the spatial aspect fades away from the narrative.²¹ The destination is not a location but a relationship.

Each of these key words (ἐπισυναγωγή, ἀπάντησις) indicates that central to the parousia for believers is to be in Christ's presence. On the one hand, they will be gathered to him — an assembling together in one location, and on the other, they will be taken up in order to meet him at his coming. Both pictures present personal communion with Christ as the centrepiece of his coming and of what believers will experience at that time.

Second, the climactic truth of that day is that all believers, dead or alive, will be with the Lord forever (οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἔσόμεθα, 1 Thess 4:17). Here Luedemann is surely right that Paul's hope is a 'parousia-hope', and that resurrection is not the climax but *enables* the primary goal, namely, to be with Christ.²² The resurrection of

²⁰ Cf. discussion in Plevnik, 'The Destination', 87–88, and Plevnik, '1 Thess 4:17', *passim*, where Plevnik reviews various interpretations of parousia, critiquing both the idea of 'royal arrival' and a Sinai echo. Plevnik instead proposes an assumption into heaven motif and exodus motif for 4:14, Joseph Plevnik, 'The Parousia as Implication', 199–277. For assumption motif cf. Kucicki, *Eschatology*, 229–231; Edward Adams, 'The 'Coming of God' Tradition and Its Influence on New Testament Parousia Texts', in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb* (ed. Charlotte Hempel; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1–19 (here 13–14). Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1082–1085, takes both meanings critiqued by Plevnik as likely. Proponents of both sides agree, however, that the result is being with Christ, although the location is different, Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 145; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 175, cf. Plevnik, 'The Taking up', 276. An alternative but unpersuasive view that the air represents the final battleground where Christ finally defeats the demons is presented by Randall E. Otto, 'The Meeting in the Air (1 Thess 4:17)', *HBT* 19/2 (1997): 192–212.

²¹ Cf. Fee, *Thessalonians*, 181–182.

²² Gerd Luedemann, 'The Hope of the Early Paul: From the Foundation Preaching at Thessalonika to 1 Cor 15:51-57.', *PRSt* 7/3 (1980): 196. Donfried, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians', 13; cf. Kim, 'Jesus Tradition', 226–227.

the dead (4:16) is *in order that* they be with Christ (4:17).²³ Ἀρπάζω (4:17) includes both those resurrected and those left alive since the sequence runs (1) the dead are raised and ἔπειτα (2) *together with them* the living are caught up.²⁴ Here οὕτως sums up and applies the means previously stated to indicate the basis of being with the Lord (4:17). That is, by (a) the Lord's descent and (b) being taken into the clouds, they will (c) meet him and thus (d) be with him always. Since (a) and (b) are required for (c) and then (d), they cannot yet be with the Lord, and so wait for him (1:10).

This climax is recapitulated in the second major parousia-unit (1 Thess 5:1–11, both climax in this way, cf. 4:13–18) by ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν (5:10) — the end time purpose of Jesus' death.²⁵ By combining ἅμα and σὺν, Paul emphasises the togetherness of that end time living. Here ἅμα has a relational rather than temporal meaning since Christ is already alive (cf. 4:17).²⁶ It emphasises togetherness with Christ rather than with other believers as in 4:17.²⁷ The purpose of Jesus' death is not only new life for believers but new life *together* with him.

This life together is in the future, indicated by the temporal context of the day of the

²³ We take ἐν Χριστῷ to modify the verb ἀνίστημι, cf. David Konstan and Ilaria Ramelli, 'The Syntax of ἐν Χριστῷ in 1 Thessalonians 4:16', *JBL* 126/3 (2007): 579–93. Contra Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 174; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 101; Weima, *Thessalonians*, 329.

²⁴ Green, *Thessalonians*, 225–226; Plevnik, 'The Taking Up', 278–279.

²⁵ Ζήσωμεν is to be preferred over ζῶμεν and ζήσομεν, because of the variety and quality of witnesses (NA²⁸ apparatus).

²⁶ Danker, 'ἅμα', BDAG 49.

²⁷ Pace Weima, *Thessalonians*, 370.

Lord (1 Thess 5:1–11).²⁸ This future life is for both those who will be alive at the parousia and those who will have died prior. 5:10 combines the concerns of the latter (asleep, 4:13–18) with the former (awake, 5:1–11).²⁹ At *the parousia*, those alive (awake) and those dead (asleep, having been resurrected) will live with Christ (5:10).³⁰ That is why Jesus died. Thus the purpose of Jesus' death is that at his future parousia believers will live with him.

This verse (1 Thess 5:10), the 'most explicit statement [. . .] of the saving purpose of the death of Christ' in these letters, is highly significant.³¹ In quick succession, Paul connects soberly waiting for Jesus (5:8), with gaining salvation and avoiding wrath through Jesus (5:9),³² with Christ's purpose in dying 'for us' that 'we would live together with him' (5:10). The clear purpose of Christ's death was that believers would live with him at his parousia and onwards. Elsewhere, Paul expresses the purpose of Christ's death as to deliver us from the present evil age (Gal 1:4), to be Lord over those who live and those who have died (Rom 14:9), and in order that believers might live for him (2 Cor 5:15) and be the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21).³³ Here, the goal of Jesus' death finds its fulfilment in the new age when he is physically present with those for whom he died (1 Thess 5:10). The Thessalonians are

²⁸ Van der Watt, 'ζάω', 364. The purpose clause (ἵνα and subjunctive ζήσωμεν, 5:10) naturally indicates the future goal of Jesus' action, and the temporal context of day of the Lord indicates that this is future (parousia), *pace* Koester, 'Imperial Ideology', 163–164.

²⁹ Kucicki, *Eschatology*, 63.

³⁰ Despite the difficulty presented by two words for sleeping (καθεύδω, κοιμάω), this is the most probable meaning, given the broad context, *pace* John Paul Heil, 'Those Now 'Asleep' (Not Dead) Must Be 'Awakened' for the Day of the Lord in 1 Thess 5.9-10', *NTS* 46/3 (2000): 464–71.

³¹ Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 114.

³² Cf. Gundry Volf, *Paul*, 22–25 for περιποίησις as 'receive'.

³³ Cf. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 114.

encouraged to wait for Jesus by this reminder that he came and died for them, not for their present blessing, but so that at the parousia they would be with him. When Christ comes, they will be rescued from wrath (5:9 cf. 1:10), and obtain salvation (5:9). This further underscores Paul's encouragement to those who mourn, since the very purpose of Christ's death is that they would *live* with him, not now, but after the resurrection, and forever (5:10–11, cf. 4:13–18).

Both these verses (1 Thess 4:17, 5:10) indicate being physically present with Christ by *σύν* (cf. 4:14). The context in each case of being with (*σύν*) Christ indicates a physical presence when Christ comes (1 Thess 4:13–5:11). Reflecting on several uses of *σύν* in Paul, O'Brien concludes: 'the preposition *σύν* ('with') was suited to express intimate personal union with Christ'.³⁴ O'Brien points to the Psalter as the conceptual background to this personal union, especially the idea of eternal fellowship with God that conquers death (cf. Ps 16, 139:14; 20:7; 138:18).³⁵ In 1 Thessalonians, Christ establishes this intimate personal union by gathering his people to be physically together at the parousia, including raising those who have died to new life (1 Thess 4:16–17). This intimate, personal, physical being *σύν* Christ is the climax of that day (1 Thess 4:17, 5:10), the purpose of Jesus' death (5:10), the goal of resurrection (4:17) and the primary focus of salvation (4:13–5:10). Thus, they wait for Jesus (1:10).

³⁴ Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 132–133. His references are Phil 1:23; 1 Thess 4:14, 17, 5:10; 2 Cor 4:14, 13:4; Rom 6:8, 8:32; Col 2:13, 20, 3:3, 4. Cf. Danker, 'σύν', BDAG, 961; Van der Watt, 'The Use of ζῶω', 365; Campbell, *Union*, 223; John D. Harvey, 'The 'with Christ' Motif in Paul's Thought', *JETS* 35/3 (1992): 332.

³⁵ O'Brien, *Philippians*, 133–134. cf. Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology*, 158.

Third, the punishment of eschatological wrath (1 Thess 1:10) includes being separated from Jesus (2 Thess 1:9), that is, unbelievers will suffer eternal destruction away from him (1 Thess 5:3–4; cf. 1 Thess 2:17, 3:10). Here ἀπὸ προσώπου refers to separation away from Christ’s presence, rather than that their destruction is the result of his presence.³⁶ Fee writes, ‘it reflects a Hebraism in which the nature of the judgment itself (“destruction”) is collapsed into its ultimate result (being cut off “from the face of the Lord”).’³⁷ Those who reject Jesus’ gospel remain unreconciled and their alienation and exclusion is ultimately confirmed as Jesus banishes them away from his presence and into eternal destruction (2 Thess 1:8–9 cf. Matt 7:23, 25:41; Luke 13:27). This separation away from Jesus’ presence is exclusion from being gathered around Jesus in glory — joining the great crowd gathered to glorify him, including his retinue of holy ones (1 Thess 3:13, 2 Thess 1:7),³⁸ and those believers presented before his throne in holiness (1 Thess 2:19, 3:13). Instead of joining to marvel at and glorify Jesus (2 Thess 1:10), they are cast away from him and this glory (2 Thess 1:9). Hence this punishment confirms that salvation is primarily about being with Jesus.

There are other portrayals of salvation in these letters, namely, deliverance from wrath (1:10), obtaining glory (2 Thess 2:14 cf. 1 Thess 2:19–20) and being presented before God in perfect holiness (3:13, 5:23). Although a future state of being with Christ is not the primary emphasis of these motifs, it is nevertheless implied because

³⁶ Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 152.

³⁷ Fee, *Thessalonians*, 258–259.

³⁸ This probably means angels, Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 145. 1 Thess 4:16–17 suggests that humans are raised after his coming, and so ἅγιος likely does not mean human believers. But see Justin D. King, ‘Paul, Zechariah, and the Identity of the ‘Holy Ones’ in 1 Thessalonians 3:13: Correcting an Un’fee’sible Approach’, *PRSt* 39/1 (2012): 25–38. Cf. Adams, ‘Coming of God’, 12.

their contexts assume being with Christ at the parousia (cf. 5:9–10). For example, it is not only the holiness that constitutes salvation, but being presented before God at the parousia in that holiness (1 Thess 3:13, 5:23). We may conclude, then, that in 1 & 2 Thessalonians: (a) being with Christ is both central and climactic to salvation and (b) salvation is presented as a future parousia-time event. Their hope is to be with Christ forever. This will begin at the parousia.³⁹

Our argument is not undermined by Paul's prayer-blessing that the Lord be 'with you all' (μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν, 2 Thess 3:16). This blessing is reminiscent both of God's blessing in the OT (e.g. Ruth 2:14, 1 Sam 17:37, cf. Gen 31:3, Deut 31:23, Jer 1:8) and Jesus' promise to always be with (μετά) his people (Matt 28:20, Acts 18:10).⁴⁰ It is a promise of God's faithfulness and support, and does not indicate his physical presence. In contrast to Christ's physical presence at the parousia (1 Thess 4:16–17), this prayer expects him to be with them by his mediated presence in the Spirit (Rom 8:9–10 cf. John 14:23–26; cf. Rom 15:33; Phil 4:9).⁴¹ This contrast is also seen in the use of ἔμπροσθεν, which conveys both the sense of current spiritual presence in the context of prayerfully thanking God (1:3, 3:9), and of a future physical presence with Jesus at the parousia (2:19, 3:13). These references do not demonstrate that believers presently experience Christ's presence as they will at the parousia but indicate a distinction between a current mediated presence and a future physical presence.⁴²

³⁹ Cf. de Villiers, 'In the Presence', 317–320; de Villiers, 'The Future Existence', 3–4.

⁴⁰ Green, *Thessalonians*, 358.

⁴¹ Orr, *Christ*, 209–210. Cf. §9.1.1. (A).

⁴² Danker, 'ἔμπροσθεν', BDAG 325.

If the primary focus of salvation is future and to be with Christ, it is clear then that *waiting*, *hope* and *perseverance* form a significant part of what it means to be a Christian according to the Thessalonian correspondence. This truth focusses both the object of *waiting* and the reason for *waiting*, because the object is not ultimately the parousia, nor an imperishable inheritance (cf. Eph 1:14; 1 Pet 1:4–9), although those are true, but *Christ himself*, because they wait to be with him. The reason for *waiting* is clear: they are not presently with him and their salvation consists in being with him, so they wait for him to arrive so that they would be gathered to him. We see, then, how the lens of *waiting* clarifies our understanding of salvation in 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

7.3. Christ as Exalted Lord

A second important truth, similarly clarified by considering 1 & 2 Thessalonians through the lens of waiting, is the nature and purpose of the present exaltation and active reign of Jesus as God's Son. Christ may be absent from them, but he has not disappeared. Instead, being in heaven, he reigns for their sake (cf. Eph 1:22). We argued above (§6.7.2) that Paul used the messianic title Son of God to describe Jesus, and by so doing indicated that he had already been exalted to God's right hand in heaven as Lord (1 Thess 1:10). This eschatological 'already' has profound impact upon Christian *waiting*, not in the sense that believers already enter into that eschatological reality, but because Jesus, as exalted Lord, reigns purposely towards the future secure arrival of his people to live with him at the parousia. And thus they wait. Some portrayals of this eschatological period emphasise that Jesus' exaltation means

that the church works now towards that future recreation, united and holy communities establishing God's presence on earth.⁴³ The Thessalonian correspondence, however, emphasises on the one hand Jesus' activity towards *future* salvation, and on the other, Christian *waiting* in faith, hope and love. Consequently, the purpose and orientation of Jesus' current reign is highly significant, and so we turn now to see its portrayal in these letters.

Jesus is called God's Son (1 Thess 1:10), Christ (2:7), Lord (1:6, 2:15), and given a status like God the Father (1:1, 3:11).⁴⁴ His exalted status is also indicated by reference to churches *in* Jesus (1:1, 2:14), the gospel *of* Christ (3:2), and God's will for them *in* Jesus (5:18). Furthermore, judgement is based on obedience, or otherwise, to *his* gospel (2 Thess 1:8).

Jesus' current, active reign *in this present age* is further indicated in 1 & 2 Thessalonians in the following ways: They have hope, love, faith . . . in Jesus (1 Thess 1:3); Jesus is prayed to (3:11); he can enable Paul to travel to Thessalonica (3:11) despite Satan's hindrance (2:18); and he empowers people to love (3:12; cf. 2 Thess 1:3), in order to establish their hearts for the parousia (1 Thess 3:13). Moreover, Jesus' authority is appealed to (1 Thess 4:1–2, 5:12; 2 Thess 3:6); his name glorified in the Thessalonians through their God-enabled works of faith and goodness, even as they are glorified in him (2 Thess 1:12); he loves them (2 Thess 2:13, 16); he gave Paul eternal comfort and

⁴³ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1509; cf. 'Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven'. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 305.

⁴⁴ These references to Jesus' earthly life justify reading the referent of Paul's use of Lord in these epistles to be Jesus (exalted), unless indicated otherwise.

good hope (2 Thess 2:16); and he can comfort hearts (2 Thess 2:17). Further, Jesus establishes them in every good work and word (2 Thess 2:17; cf. 2 Thess 1:12); he delivers Paul from wicked men (2 Thess 3:2); he establishes and guards them (2 Thess 3:3); he directs hearts to the love of God and steadfastness of Christ (2 Thess 3:5); and he can grant peace at all times and in every way (2 Thess 3:16; cf. 1 Thess 5:28; 2 Thess 1:2, 3:16, 18).

We may observe several important themes here, but most importantly, Jesus' present active reign revolves around three focal points: moral excellence (1 Thess 3:12, 2 Thess 2:17; cf. 1 Thess 3:13, 5:23–24), perseverance (1 Thess 3:13, 2 Thess 3:5) and gospel effectiveness (1 Thess 3:11; 2 Thess 1:12, 3:2, 2:16, 18). Each focal point is drawn towards his parousia — as those saved through effective mission have stood firm and are presented before him in blamelessness (cf. 3:11–13, 5:23–24; 2 Thess 2:13–17). Jesus' present reign, therefore, points to and magnifies his coming in glory and joining with his people. Having entered glory, he acts to bring others safely there, evangelised, having persevered, and being blameless. His present rule does not indicate that his people will be spared suffering, or be presently morally perfect, but anchors hope for future rest, reward and retribution (1 Thess 1:10, 4:14, 5:10; 2 Thess 1:6–10). Jesus reigns towards his people being present at his parousia — enabling mission, establishing hearts, and empowering perseverance.⁴⁵ Therefore, when Paul writes to encourage them to wait for Jesus, he not only points out the goal of their *waiting*, but strengthens their faith to wait by anchoring that goal in the present Lordship of Jesus.

⁴⁵ So Cullmann writes that Christ has 'begun this [parousia-salvation] work and is pursuing it today, though in ways hidden from our eyes', 'The Return', 158.

In sum, throughout these letters, the mention of Jesus' present reign points to and magnifies his coming in glory and joining together with his people. He purposely acts through mission and perseverance towards the goal of being with his people. This grounds the Thessalonians' *waiting* in the person and power of Christ. He guarantees that what they wait for, will come about (1 Thess 5:24) and so they are strengthened to continue in waiting for him.

The recent trends in apocalyptic readings of Paul have rightly highlighted Christ's present reign and activity in the world.⁴⁶ By missing the motif of *waiting* however, this parousia focus of Jesus' reign is not emphasised. For example, many apocalyptic readings of 1 & 2 Thessalonians focus on community formation and on political action.⁴⁷ Duff, for instance, sees the ethical impact of Christ's lordship as a call 'to resist the powers and principalities which claim illegitimate lordship in the world'.⁴⁸ She rightly affirms obedience to Christ and radical humility, and yet, despite calling for separation of church and state, ends up interpreting Christ's lordship at the level of human politics and tyranny. In contrast, the political realm is of little concern to Paul. Instead, in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, the function and goal of Jesus' present activity as risen and ascended Lord is towards the safe and sanctified arrival of his people in his presence at the parousia, through mission, moral empowerment and perseverance. His kingdom is, after all, not of this world (Jn 18:36). He will come in triumph to

⁴⁶ E.g. J. Louis Martyn, 'Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians', *NTS* 31/3 (1985): 410–24; J. Louis Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Studies of the New Testament and Its World; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997); J. Louis Martyn, 'The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians', *Interpretation* 54/3 (2000): 246–66; Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (JSNTSSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988); Martinus C. de Boer, 'Paul, Theologian of God's Apocalypse', *Interpretation* 56/1 (2002): 21–33.

⁴⁷ See §2.2.2. (A), §2.2.3, 2.2.4.

⁴⁸ Duff, 'Significance', 284; cf. Elias, 130.

gather his people for life with him (1 Thess 1:10, 4:16–17, 5:9–10, 2 Thess 1:10–2:2). Christ's active reign, drawing people to his parousia has three foci: perseverance, mission and holiness. Therefore, the Thessalonians serve God and wait for his Son from heaven.

For Käsemann, Christ's reign indicated the eschaton had begun and guaranteed its future,⁴⁹ similar to what was just argued (1 Thess 1:10, 4:6, 4:15–17, 5:3, 2 Thess 1:6–10, 2:8). We have questioned, however, the lack of focus on *personality* of Christ in Käsemann's presentation.⁵⁰ This personality is central to his future coming, as αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος (1 Thess 4:16) will descend, Jesus, who died and rose (1:10, 4:14, 5:9–10), to be with his people (4:17, 5:10). Likewise in his present reign — Paul prays to him (3:11), expects his activity in their hearts (3:13, 2 Thess 2:17, 3:3, 5, 16) as well as in the world (1 Thess 3:11, 2 Thess 3:2), and describes them as loved by Jesus (2 Thess 2:13, 16). Christ's person, then, is evident in both his present activity as reigning Lord and his future arrival as saviour and judge.

In sum, the lens of waiting enables us to see with greater clarity the nature of the present exaltation of Jesus as the Son of God. It also highlights his current active reign though mission, perseverance and holiness. Jesus acts now in the world towards the parousia goal of his people living together with him. Jesus' present reign, therefore, points to and magnifies his coming in glory and joining together with his people.

⁴⁹ Käsemann, 'Primitive Christian Apocalyptic', 133.

⁵⁰ Above §2.1.8. Orr, *Christ*, 36.

7.4. Summary of the Theological Significance of Waiting in 1 & 2 Thessalonians

In this chapter we have shown that by looking at 1 & 2 Thessalonians through the lens of waiting for Jesus, which touched upon Christ's absence, our understanding of salvation and of Christ's present status is clarified. We saw that salvation in these letters is focussed on being present with Christ at his parousia, and that Christ reigns towards that end. Held together, these truths reinforce the idea that waiting involves patient trust and receptivity — not a sedentariness, but a sober clarity as to Christ's role in salvation (cf. ch. 5, 6). They wait for Jesus, because they are absent from him, and wait to be present with him when he arrives in glory. This is their salvation — an outcome guaranteed in Christ who died with a view to that goal (1 Thess 5:9–10) and who currently actively reigns both over individuals and the world to that end.

Chapter 8

8. Waiting in the Rest of the New Testament

In this chapter, we demonstrate that the sense and nuances of *waiting* found in 1 & 2 Thessalonians are evident elsewhere in the NT, so that the concept of *waiting*, established on the basis of ἀναμένω in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, can be seen as making a positive contribution to a more general theology of *waiting*. This will be done on the basis of the group of NTG words and NT texts identified above (§4.5). We will focus on texts considered highly relevant (category A). Space precludes detailed analysis of each word, its more general background and specific uses in the NT, as we have done with ἀναμένω (ch. 5–7). Thus, rather than defining each word, we shall demonstrate that the various senses of *waiting* seen in ἀναμένω and 1 & 2 Thessalonians, are seen also in those other words and texts, not comprehensively nor definitively, but nevertheless extant in actual NT instances. Such consistency can be found at the level of the sentence. Establishing consistency of the meaning and sense of *waiting* across a broad spectrum of words and texts will enable us to achieve our aim, not of finding

definitions of those words, but of contributing towards a NT theology of waiting. Consequently, this chapter will emphasise consistency with senses already seen in ἀναμένω and 1 & 2 Thessalonians, rather than looking for unique and new contributions, since that would require more detailed examination.

After showing consistency of meaning and senses of waiting in the key texts and NTG words (category A), we will consider texts where the concept of *waiting* is present, but not in a NTG word for *waiting*. This is done in recognition that concepts may be conveyed without being limited to certain word choice. For reasons of space, a sample selection of texts will be considered. We will see that our conclusions about *waiting* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians are confirmed in other parts of the NT both those containing a NTG word for *waiting* (§8.1) and those which do not (§8.2). Therefore we are able to make a positive contribution towards a NT theology of *waiting* rather than just a motif of the Thessalonian correspondence.

This analysis will be followed by an example of the interpretive potential provided by our research into *waiting* (§8.3).

8.1. Nature of Waiting in the New Testament

We argued above (ch. 5–7) that *waiting* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians means (1) remaining until an expected future event, with the senses of (2) passive receptivity, yet (3) with accompanying appropriate action and of (4) readiness for an imminent arrival and yet

soberly expecting possible delay. We also saw (5) that it emphasised waiting for the person Jesus and a future salvation. The other passages containing GNT words for *waiting* support and enhance these ideas, without reducing the concept to a single monochrome idea.

8.1.1. Sense of Remaining Until a Future Event

The meaning of *remaining until a future event* can be seen in several places. Jesus is promised to appear a second time with salvation for those eagerly awaiting him (τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀπεκδεχομένοις, Heb 9:28). Here Jesus has dealt with sin once for all (9:26), but nevertheless, it will be at his future coming that salvation is received (9:28).¹ Paul reassures the Corinthians that they lack no spiritual gift as they await (ἀπεκδέχομαι) Jesus' future arrival (1 Cor 1:7–8). Paul indicates his hope is the same as that of 'the Jews' (Acts 24:9) who await (προσδέχομαι) the future general resurrection (Acts 24:15). Jesus teaches his disciples to be ready and dressed for action like servants who wait for (προσδέχομαι) the return of their master (Luke 12:35–36), not like the wicked servants who are caught out by not waiting (προσδοκάω, Matt 24:50, Luke 12:26). All these references point to a continued state of existence until the arrival of a future event, and support this meaning of *waiting* (cf. Heb 11:9–10).

8.1.2. Sense of Passive Receptivity

The sense of *passive receptivity* as part of *waiting* is found in several places. Paul desires

¹ Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (Pillar; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 342.

the Galatians to wait (ἀπεκδέχομαι) for righteousness through the Spirit and by faith (Gal 5:5) instead of actively attaining to righteousness by law (Gal 5:2–4). Similarly, the Philippians await (ἀπεκδέχομαι) a saviour who will transform their bodies (Phil 3:20–21). In Philippians, although Paul strives to attain to the resurrection (Phil 3:13–14), righteousness is by faith (3:9), and his attaining to the power of Jesus’ resurrection (3:11) is by Christ’s power (3:21), for which also Christ has taken hold of him (3:12). A further example is found in the eager waiting (ἀπεκδέχομαι) for adoption, namely, the redemption of believers’ bodies (Rom 8:23), that is, transformation² or resurrection — something done by God for them (cf. Phil 3:21).³ These passages affirm that they wait for something to be given them and so they must receive and not attempt to attain it, but also that Christ has worked and is working towards that end, by his Spirit. Thus, the correct response is faith, hope and love (cf. 1 Thess 5:8). This passive receptivity acknowledges that salvation is the work of God and a gift to Christians. This is highly significant in preserving the absolute sufficiency of Christ’s work (Heb 10:12–14) and his unique glory. Thus, by waiting for Christ and his actions on their behalf, Christians indeed depend and hope on him, whether it be for righteousness (Gal 5:5), resurrection (Rom 8:23) or salvation (Phil 3:20–21). And so, having not yet received, they wait patiently to receive these things, so preserving the role of Christ in salvation and God’s timing in granting these at the parousia (Rom 8:24–25).

² Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 521.

³ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Pillar; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 324.

8.1.3. Sense of Appropriate Accompanying Action

The sense that *waiting* is accompanied with appropriate action is seen in Titus 2 where grace trains people to renounce ungodliness and to live self-controlled lives in the present age while they wait (προσδέχομαι) for their blessed hope, namely, Jesus' appearance in glory (Titus 2:11–14). Such appropriate action is expected by Jesus of his disciples, who, 'dressed for action' (Luke 12:35 cf. Exod 12:11) are encouraged to be like those blessed servants found 'so doing' at the master's return (Luke 12:43, cf. Matt 24:46). The servants' task is related to their future reward, that of stewardship, and is summarised as the supervision of food distribution (Luke 12:42, Matt 24:45). Given the context of Jesus' assurance that their heavenly Father will provide their food (Luke 12:22–34), this faithful stewardship means loving and caring for people the way that God does.⁴ So, by waiting for the master they do not attempt to attain to his arrival but faithfully undertake the tasks of being his servant, imitating the Lord in love and care (Matt 25:35, 42). Such love includes evangelism (Matt 24:14). The Lord will reward those servants who were faithful with what he left them (Matt 25:14–30). Such faithful action rests upon God's Spirit who enables prayer and intercedes 'for us' with a view to that which is awaited (Rom 8:23–27).⁵ This is reminiscent of Judith's instruction to the elders not to force God's hand but to await (ἀναμένω) his sovereign free action, and so call on him in prayer (Jdt 8:17, cf. §5.1).

It seems at first glance, however, that 2 Peter works against this sense of *appropriate* accompanying action that complements *waiting* and does not attempt to attain or

⁴ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 504.

⁵ Morris, *Romans*, 326.

achieve that which is awaited. 2 Peter's readers are instructed both to wait (προσδοκάω) for the Lord's coming and to *hasten* it (σπεύδω, 2 Pet 3:12). However the way the day is hastened is through repentance, because the Lord delays his coming while he waits patiently (μακροθυμέω) for people to repent (3:9). Consequently they ought to count his patience as salvation (3:15), and hasten that day by repenting and encouraging repentance (cf. Acts 3:19–20). Thus, the repentance of God's people is connected to the timing of the parousia, which in this account is not a fixed day,⁶ but rests in God's free sovereign choice and compassionate, patient waiting (2 Pet 3:9, 15).⁷ Since 2 Peter is careful to preserve God's sovereignty, and clearly explains that the timing of the delay belongs to God (3:9), this hastening of the day is not an inappropriate attaining to that which is awaited out of turn, but instead is the complementary and faithful action of the servant who understands her master's desires and plan. It is action which corresponds to the Lord's coming and is done in expectation of it. In context this repentance may involve mission-evangelism, since God's desire is that *all* would repent (3:9),⁸ and if so, would be consistent with both the mission context of 1 Thessalonians 1 (cf. §6.4 & §9.2) and Jesus' expectation and desire that the gospel would be preached in all the earth before his coming (Matt 24:14; cf. Luke 24:46–47).⁹

8.1.4. Sense of Being Ready but Expecting Delay

⁶ Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (Pillar; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 290–291.

⁷ Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (vol. 50; Word Biblical Commentary; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 325.

⁸ Davids, *2 Peter*, 281; Pace Bauckham, *2 Peter*, 313.

⁹ Cf. Cullmann, 'The Return', 159.

The sense of being ready (cf. Luke 12:36) and yet expecting some duration is seen when James encourages his readers to wait patiently (μακροθυμέω) like the farmer, who waits expectantly (ἐκδέχομαι) for his fruit but knows that the rains must come first (Jas 5:7).¹⁰ At the same time, James warns them that Jesus' parousia is near (ἐγγίζω, 5:8) and that the Judge stands at the door (5:9).¹¹ James expects his readers to endure suffering patiently (5:10–11), to help one another (5:8, 11), and not to be like the unrighteous rich who are consumed by this world's riches (5:1–6). Instead of laying up treasure in the last days like the rich (5:3), they are to wait patiently for Jesus (5:7–8).¹²

The two groups are contrasted but connected by οὖν (5:7) so that the actions of the rich are set against what believers ought to be.¹³ So, on the one hand, instead of impatiently hoping for judgement on the rich, James' readers are to be patient, but on the other, they are to heed James' condemnation of the failure of the rich to know the times. The rich (5:1–6) are condemned for their wicked behaviour including arrogantly presuming life will go on indefinitely without any accounting (4:13–16), and activity inappropriate for the last days, namely, storing up wealth (5:3). It is not their wealth that condemns the rich, but the fact that the gold has *corroded* since instead of being used, it has been *stored* up (Jas 5:3; cf. Luke 12:13–21). Their wealth was used wickedly, 'in self-indulgence', despite the eschatological moment (Jas 5:4–6).

¹⁰ Ralph P. Martin, *James* (vol. 48; Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1988), 189–191; James B. Adamson, *The Epistle of James* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 190–191.

¹¹ Martin, *James*, 191–192.

¹² Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 181.

¹³ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Pillar; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 221.

James expects his readers, in contrast, to know the time, that both the judge is at the door (5:8–9), and yet the rains are to come (5:7), and so to wait patiently. Consequently *waiting patiently* consists in understanding the time (last days, 5:3) and so acting appropriately, which means not only justice and endurance, but the right use of wealth, in contrast to the faithless rich. *Waiting patiently* means both recognising a possible delay — and so using righteously one's wealth — and being ready for Jesus' imminent arrival — and so not storing up such wealth. In short, it is to be a faithful steward (Matt 25:14–30) and to be rich towards God (Luke 12:21). Such waiting is possible by recalling God's proven compassion (Jas 5:11). Hence James illustrates a failure to know the times (Jas 5:1–6), and calls on his readers to wait patiently, understanding a possible delay and yet Jesus' nearness (Jas 5:7–11).

8.1.5. Objects that are Awaited

Although there are a variety of things awaited in the NT and not just the person Jesus, these still promote the significance of Jesus' return and that salvation has a significant future aspect. In the NT, believers wait for Jesus (Heb 9:28, Phil 3:20), Jesus' arrival (Titus 2:13, 1 Cor 1:7, Jas 5:7–8), mercy (Jude 21), the hope of righteousness (Gal 5:5), a new heavens and earth (2 Pet 3:12–14), and the redemption of their bodies (Rom 8:23, 25, cf. Acts 24:15). In Jesus' parables, as we have already noted, they wait for the master to return (e.g. Luke 12:36–37, cf. Matt 24:42, 50). In those verses where the object of waiting is not Jesus, the temporal context is still his future parousia. Therefore, those other 'objects' of *waiting* enhance the picture of future salvation.

8.2. The Waiting Concept in Other Passages without the Language of Waiting.

This broad meaning of *waiting* is also manifest in passages that include the concept of waiting but do not use those NTG words for *waiting*. In Rom 13:11–14, Paul expects *wakefulness*, putting on the armour of light, not drunkenness nor satisfying the flesh, since salvation is nearer than before, and because the hour has come. Such wakefulness manifests in godly behaviour (Rom 13:13–14). When he explains to the Corinthians why he does not lose heart in ministry (2 Cor 4:16–18), Paul speaks of *longing for* his eternal heavenly home (5:1–2), namely, the future resurrected body, at which point he would be ‘at home with the Lord’ (5:8). Yet this longing does not cause sloth. Instead, he aims to please the Lord at all times (5:9), because he will appear before his throne in the future (5:10). Paul expresses both his intense desire to be with Jesus and his recognition that there is still work to be done, and so the time is *not yet*. His recognition of both a possible delay and yet the Lord’s imminence motivates his mission work (4:14–16, 5:1–21). Such ministry is appropriate action related to his future hope even as he waits for it (cf. Phil 1:21–23). Although slightly ambiguous, 2 Tim 4:8 also suggests waiting for Jesus’ coming and a crown of righteousness. Because of the eschatological context (4:1, 6–7), those ‘who have loved his appearing’ here is best understood as referring to those ‘whose lives have been marked by a determined and expectant forward look to the parousia and the consummation of the victory of God’.¹⁴

¹⁴ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 617.

Finally, Jesus' instruction to store treasures in heaven (Matt 6:19–21) and promise of heavenly reward (Luke 6:20–26) also indicates that instead of finding value in this world, the believer is *to anticipate and wait for true glory* in the coming kingdom of God (cf. Matt 6:1, 4, 18, 16:26–28; Mark 9:41; 10:21; Luke 10:20, 12:13–21, 12:32–34, 14:14, 16:11, 18:22; Rom 8:17–18; Col 3:23–24; 1 Tim 6:17–19; Heb 10:34; 1 Pet 1:3–5; 2 John 8). The regular teaching across the NT of future reward and salvation, of future treasure and glory, and of future presence with Christ enhances our understanding of *waiting*. This, in particular, emphasises that, according to the NT, the best is yet to come, and therefore, since believers belong to that kingdom, they eagerly await Jesus and all that he brings with him.

We see then, that the concept of *waiting* from 1 Thess 1:10 is seen throughout the NT. *Waiting* for Jesus', or his return and the blessings associated with it, is not unique to 1 & 2 Thessalonians, but a normal and significant aspect of Christianity. In particular, although we have not explored new senses of *waiting* in these other words and texts, we have been able to establish that the sense and meaning of *waiting* found in ἀναμένω and in 1 & 2 Thessalonians is consistent across many passages. Our conclusions about *waiting* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, then, are on surer ground.

8.3. Waiting as Interpretive Aid

Our research into *waiting* showed that *waiting* is a positive concept, expected of Christians and illustrative of a right perspective on Christ's Lordship and salvation. In

the following chapter (ch. 9) we engage with some of the concerns about *waiting* that we observed in the literature review (ch. 2). But here, briefly, we wish to demonstrate that our research into *waiting* provides interpretive potential by considering two other *waiting* passages in light of it (Rom 8, 2 Pet 3).

First, some scholars conclude from Romans 8 that, through the church, the creation is being recreated and set free during the present age. For example, Beker expects the church as ‘beachhead’ to ‘prepare the world for its coming destiny’ which is righteousness,¹⁵ and Wright sees salvation of people as serving God’s mission of ‘restorative justice for the whole creation’ (cf. ch. 2).¹⁶

Each perspective considers *waiting* a negative idea. Beker affirms the church’s positive preparatory action towards the kingdom, and takes a dim view of simply ‘waiting patiently’ for ‘God’s ultimate establishment of his kingdom’.¹⁷ Similarly, Wright sees God’s eschatological action in Christ’s resurrection and the promise of future resurrection for all as the reason ‘not for sitting back and waiting for it all to happen’ but to work hard towards that new creation.¹⁸ The practical effect of these views in Romans 8 is to diminish the place of Christian *waiting* and magnify creation’s *waiting*. Moreover, it identifies Christian *activity*, rather than Christian *waiting*, as the complement to creation’s *waiting*, despite the repeated reference to Christian *waiting* in the text (e.g. Rom 8:23–25).

¹⁵ Beker, *Paul*, 326; cf. Käsemann, ‘Cry for Liberty’, 126.

¹⁶ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 165.

¹⁷ Beker, *Paul*, 326.

¹⁸ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 37.

Our work in 1 & 2 Thessalonians has shown that *waiting* need not be negative, and in fact, gives Christians the right orientation towards both the new and present ages with regard to salvation and Christ's exalted role. *Waiting* is both positive and significant in 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Given the basic unity of the NT, and the consistency seen above (§8.1, §8.2), we have good reason to suppose that elsewhere, likewise, *waiting* is potentially considered both positive and significant. Reading Rom 8 from such a perspective would temper the interpretive reflex to invest the passage with present progressive action to bring about what creation waits for, and instead, allow for positive Christian *waiting* to be given a proper hearing. That is, in fact, it would permit Rom 8:24–25 to have a more decisive role in the interpretation of the text, whose central theme, as Moo says, is 'the need, in this age of salvation history, for "earnest waiting"'.¹⁹ Acknowledging the present moment of *waiting* neither excludes recreation nor necessitates a disembodied escape to heaven,²⁰ but suggests that recreation rests in Christ's work and his timing (Rom 8:23). Additionally it provides potential for a positive conception of Christian *waiting* to be the complement to creation's *waiting*. Such a reading, furthermore, maintains Paul's careful distinction between present sufferings and future glory (Rom 8:17–18), rather than blurring or even conflating that which is already true and that which is held back until the parousia and resurrection.

Second, in 2 Peter 3, the readers are called to wait for Jesus' coming (2 Pet 3:12–14) in light of its seeming delay (3:3–4). 2 Peter directs their thoughts to God's sovereignty

¹⁹ Moo, *Romans*, 522. Cf. Cullmann, 'The Return', 146–147.

²⁰ So the concerns of Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 164–165.

over time (3:8) as partly explaining the supposed delay. On this Käsemann comments that if God's time scale differs from ours, 'we are no longer in a position to maintain seriously the "soon" of the apocalyptic believer', and so cannot speak of the time of the parousia.²¹ But if we are right that *waiting* acknowledges both imminence and potential delay (1 Thess 5:6–8, cf. §6.7.4; Jas 5:7–8 cf. §8.1.4), this suggests that potentially the concept of *waiting* in 2 Peter, likewise, maintains such a tension. Consequently we can hold to God's sovereignty over time and a call both to wait for him to act and to act to hasten his coming (2 Pet 3:12, cf. §8.1.3). Indeed this imminence-delay tension more adequately provides for the timing of the Lord's coming to rest in God's person. Space prevents further analysis, nevertheless this overview shows that a right understanding of *waiting* potentially provides clarity in interpretation of such passages in the NT.

8.4. Summary of Waiting in the Rest of the New Testament

In summary, the NT exhibits in several places the theme of *eschatological waiting*, and our conclusions about *waiting* from 1 & 2 Thessalonians are consistent with passages both containing other key NTG words and not. Additionally, viewing *waiting* positively and seeing its significance in 1 & 2 Thessalonians provides interpretative potential for other texts.

²¹ Käsemann, 'An Apologia', 194.

Chapter 9

9. Implications

In this chapter, we consider the implications of our research into *waiting* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians for eschatology, mission and ethics. We shall do this in light of the issues that we identified in our literature review (ch. 2). As we will show, *waiting* brings clarity and balance to those three areas. We begin with eschatological implications and then look at missional and ethical implications.

9.1. Eschatological Implications

There are two major implications for eschatology arising out of our research into *waiting for Jesus* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians: first, the nature of already-not yet eschatology (ANYE); and second, the nature of the parousia as an event in world history.

9.1.1. Already-Not Yet Eschatology

As we have seen, since the seminal work of Vos and Cullmann, much discussion of Pauline eschatology has involved varying understandings of the ANYE tension.¹ The eschatologies of Schweitzer, Barth, Dodd and Bultmann, though different from one another, all left little place for the fulfilment of the not-yet.² Various Pauline scholars in recent years, while holding to ANYE, interpret the present interim period as the time when God will progressively bring about the *not yet*, whether through cosmic battle (Käsemann, Beker), or the recreation of the cosmos as God's glory spreads throughout the world in, and by, the church (Wright).³ By contrast, Paul presents eschatology in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, as in some senses, definitely having taken place, and in other senses, definitely to take place at the parousia. This is made clear by the language of waiting for (not yet) God's Son from heaven (already) (1 Thess 1:10). *Waiting*, in fact, provides a window onto greater clarity and balance in ANYE. We will endeavour to demonstrate this by considering (a) how 1 & 2 Thessalonians provides a framework for ANYE, and then, (b) addressing the question of progress between the already and the not yet.

(A) A Framework for ANYE

As we argued above, Paul stresses both aspects of ANYE throughout 1 & 2 Thessalonians (ch. 7). *Waiting* indicates that certain central aspects of eschatological salvation have not yet happened. They are not yet with Jesus (1 Thess 1:10, 4:17), resurrected (4:14–17), at peace/rest (2 Thess 1:7), blameless (1 Thess 3:13, 4:1–7,

¹ See §2.1.

² See §2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.5, 2.1.6.

³ See §2.1.8, 2.1.9, 2.1.12.

5:23–24), with their beloved (4:13, 17), avenged (2 Thess 1:6–10), or ‘saved’ (1 Thess 5:8–10). Conversely, Jesus’ present exaltation indicates that some aspects of eschatology are already achieved. Primarily, Paul views the Messiah as having already come and been exalted: Jesus is God’s Son, raised from the dead, exalted to heaven, and deliverer from wrath (1:10). He is reigning Lord (e.g. 1 Thess 3:11–13).⁴ Another aspect of eschatology that is already true is the presence and activity of the Spirit (1:5, 5:19).⁵ Cullmann writes that ‘the presence of the Holy Spirit [. . .] makes the action of the church [. . .] eschatological’.⁶ In particular, the presence of the Spirit in the gospel preaching to Gentiles, resulting in their turning to serve God, indicates that the last days have arrived (1:5–6, 2:13; Luke 24:46–47, Acts 2:17; cf. Isa 2:2–4, 49:6; Micah 4:1–4).⁷

But how might these two aspects best be held together? Or, as was raised by looking at Schweitzer, how are believers able to wait to be with Christ and yet also participate with him now?⁸ The mode of being ‘with Christ’ then, and ‘in Christ’ now, should provide clear language to speak of ANYE.

This question may be answered in 1 Thess 3:6–8. Having sent Timothy to find out whether or not they had apostatised, Paul exclaims with relief that they stand firm ἐν

⁴ See §7.3.

⁵ Trevor J. Burke, ‘The Holy Spirit as the Controlling Dynamic in Paul’s Role as Missionary to the Thessalonians’, in *Paul as Missionary: Identity, Activity, Theology and Practice* (ed. Trevor J. Burke and Brian S. Rosner; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 142–57.

⁶ Cullmann, ‘Missions’, 412–413.

⁷ Cf. Seyoon Kim, ‘Paul as an Eschatological Herald’, in *Paul as Missionary: Identity, Activity, Theology and Practice* (ed. Trevor J. Burke and Brian S. Rosner; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 9–24. Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 805–806.

⁸ See above §2.1.3.

κυρίῳ (3:8). This is because they continue in faith (3:6–7). So, standing firm in the Lord is a function of faith (cf. 2 Thess 2:13–17, 3:3). That is, their present relation to Christ is *by faith*. At the parousia, however, they will be present with him and no longer absent (1 Thess 4:17, 5:10 cf. 2:19–20, 3:11–13, 5:23, 2 Thess 1:10). This fits with Paul’s description elsewhere: ‘We are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight’ (2 Cor 5:6–7). Thus, faith and sight, absence and presence, provide a framework for ANYE.

This perspective is not undermined by Paul’s prayer that the Lord be with (μετά) them now (2 Thess 3:16), as we argued above (§7.2.2). Although not mentioned explicitly, it is likely that Paul understands that Christ would be with (μετά) them by the Spirit (cf. Rom 8:9–10),⁹ whose personal presence empowers holiness (1 Thess 1:5–6, 4:8). This fits with his understanding that they are elected to salvation in the Spirit and faith (2 Thess 2:13–14 cf. 1 Thess 1:3–6). As such, they are to stand firm (2 Thess 2:15), but it is Christ who strengthens them to do so (2 Thess 2:17, 3:3). Hence, their mode of being with Christ *now* is by faith and by the Spirit, and at his parousia, it will be (resurrected) physical presence, by sight. Therefore, to speak of ANYE, we are equipped with the language of faith and Spirit, on the one hand, and, on the other, sight and physical presence. *Waiting for Jesus* is indicative of such faith, since being anchored in a relationship with Christ *by faith and Spirit*, it anticipates the consummation and remains until receiving that relationship by *sight* and in physical *presence*.

⁹ Orr, *Christ*, 209–210.

Such a framework of faith and sight, of spirit and presence, enables us to identify how that which is already true anticipates and motivates towards the fulfilment of what is not yet. Such motivation is a product of Christ's exaltation and mediated presence, so that Paul can say, 'I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own' (Phil 3:12). Along these lines Vos wrote that 'the partial enjoyment has rather whetted the appetite for the true food in its abundance'.¹⁰ Likewise, Barth spoke of the discontentment of faith, which, while perhaps too strong a word (cf. Phil 4:4, 12–13; 1 Thess 5:16), highlights faith's desire to attain to sight, a desire seen throughout 1 & 2 Thessalonians and manifest in the Thessalonians' purpose in converting, namely to wait for Jesus (1 Thess 1:9–10).¹¹ One who so waits declares that she belongs 'to the day' (1 Thess 5:5), and heeds Jesus' words that his kingdom is 'not of this world' (John 18:36). While serving God (1 Thess 1:9), and striving for holiness (1 Thess 4:1–8), love (4:9–12), and goodness (5:15), he who *waits* expects a greater reality, one centred in physical presence with Christ (1 Thess 4:17, 5:10; 2 Thess 1:10; 2 Cor 4:14, 5:8; Phil 1:21–23; John 14:3; Rev 21:3). They are not filled up by faith, but stand firm, yearning for sight (cf. Heb 11:24–26). Therefore, the theme of waiting presents a framework for ANYE but also speaks against claiming too much for now, and points to the much greater future which will be by sight and presence.

(B) Progress?

Does this expectation that faith will become sight; or the desire for a greater future, suggest, however, that we ought to expect progress in this present age; that, somehow,

¹⁰ Vos, *Eschatology*, 40.

¹¹ Barth, *Romans*, 314–315.

the *already* becomes progressively the *not yet*?¹² In our review of Pauline eschatology, we noted a tendency to speak of an upward trajectory,¹³ of the new creation emerging from the old through Christ's present reign,¹⁴ towards God's cosmic victory;¹⁵ a sure progress from the already to the not yet¹⁶ and that the future, through God's renewal of creation, would be 'implicated more and more in the present'.¹⁷

In contrast, we have argued that the concept of *waiting* points towards a clear distinction between what is already true and what will only be true at the parousia. This can be seen in three aspects: first, how Paul portrays salvation; second, how Christ's rule is understood; and third, the emphasis of the resurrection.

First, Paul emphasises future salvation, namely, to be with Jesus (1 Thess 4:17, 5:10, 2 Thess 1:10), being presented holy (1 Thess 3:13, 5:23), and saved from wrath (1:10) at the parousia. Paul's hope is a parousia-hope; thus the eschatological climax is not God's cosmic victory, nor the general resurrection, nor a renewed earth but instead that believers would be with Christ — for which purpose Christ died (5:9–10) and they are raised (4:16–17). Paul's choice of word, ἀναμένω (1 Thess 1:10), further speaks against the idea of progress, since it suggests both remaining until the future occurrence and of passive receptivity rather than untimely acting towards attaining

¹² Above ch. 2; cf. Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 313; Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 226; Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 441.

¹³ Cullmann, *Christ*, 147; cf. 57 n.2, 59.

¹⁴ Käsemann, 'Justification and Salvation History', 67.

¹⁵ Beker, *Paul*, 326.

¹⁶ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 468; Dunn, *Theology*, 493.

¹⁷ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 226.

that thing awaited.¹⁸ The very nature of *waiting* speaks to a future object *to be received*, not something ongoing and progressively attained. Such a view of salvation, of personal presence at the parousia, does not become progressively more true and so there is little in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, therefore, that supports a view that this age progressively becomes the next.

Second, the goal of Christ's rule in the Thessalonian correspondence does not support a view of a progression from the already to the not yet. Jesus is not pictured as subduing the world to himself before his return,¹⁹ or of spreading his glory everywhere.²⁰ Instead, he reigns to bring his people through conversion and perseverance to live with him at the parousia, even in the midst of sin and rebellion.²¹ Although Jesus currently reigns as exalted Messiah, Paul expects ongoing suffering requiring perseverance (1 Thess 3:3; 2 Thess 1:5), and that at the parousia Jesus will encounter a world not ready for him (1 Thess 5:2–3), in rebellion (2 Thess 2:3–12), and, consequently, receiving wrath (1 Thess 1:10, 5:9, 2 Thess 1:6–9). The direction of Jesus' rule is towards physical personal presence with his people at the parousia — a rule seen in their election (1 Thess 1:4, 2 Thess 2:13), calling (1 Thess 1:5–10, 5:24, 2 Thess 2:14), turning (1 Thess 1:5–10, 2:13), persevering (1 Thess 3:11–13, 5:23–24) and, having been resurrected and/or caught up, meeting their Lord (4:16–17). Christ currently acts to that end — to see people saved from parousia wrath and to live with

¹⁸ Cf. chs. 5, 6 above.

¹⁹ Pace Käsemann, 'Righteousness of God', 182.

²⁰ Pace Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 754, 1075, 1509.

²¹ Above §7.3; also §9.2 below.

him. His present salvific acts are towards a parousia goal, not about progression now, but salvation then.²² Those called must wait until his arrival to be with him.

Third, in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, the language of resurrection points forward to the new age rather than emphasising the present time. In our literature review we noted how Wright understood that in Jesus' resurrection the future age had been brought forward and had radically changed the present time, such that what had been reserved for the future was now being accomplished in the Messiah and Spirit (§2.1.12). This new 'messianic time' was the time of the new creation, temple, and Sabbath.²³ Consequently, Jesus' resurrection has the effect of making the present time more 'vital' than the future.²⁴ The emphasis of resurrection in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, however, is the future age. This is exemplified by Paul's call to await Jesus whom God raised from the dead (1 Thess 1:10). The only other explicit references to resurrection concern those currently dead and the promise of their future life with Christ at his parousia. So, they will rise in Christ (4:16), in order that all believers are caught up together for that future life (4:17). The assurance of this future resurrection is Jesus' own (4:14).²⁵ Hence, resurrection in these letters emphasises future parousia life; not this present age. This is a matter of emphasis, but important, in keeping the eschatological reality eschatological. Recognising the significance of *waiting* in these epistles enables clarity on the key emphasis of Jesus' resurrection: it guarantees his return and future resurrection; rather than focussing on its effect on this present age.

²² Cf. de Villiers, 'Eschatology', 7.

²³ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 558.

²⁴ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 554.

²⁵ Koperski, 'Resurrection', 267–268.

Barth's important point about not being satisfied with this present time is pertinent here. Barth writes, '[c]ould we see nothing but the visible world, we should not wait: we should accept our present situation with joy or with grumbling'.²⁶ *Waiting* means not accepting what we presently see to be God's eschatological end (despite seeming 'improvement'). Instead, *waiting* hopes for his promised new age. Overconfidence in the present age, even understood as improving and heading towards the perfection of the next, is an odd bedfellow with the groaning of creation — and our own groaning (Rom 8:19–25). Such groaning, Barth argues, indicates that the 'resurrection of the dead is, in the present order, a matter of faith only'.²⁷ Resurrection, then, points to a new age in the future; not that the present age is when God's eschatological project will be undertaken. *Waiting* for the risen one indicates that *now* we know Christ in faith and not sight. Our redemption, adoption and resurrection — and even that of creation — is only now in faith; but when Jesus arrives, it shall be seen. In short, the eschatological blessings are future and something to wait for, not attain to in the present period, except by Spirit and faith. As such, we do not see any hint, in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, of progress from already and not yet.

Therefore, *waiting for Jesus* provides a framework for ANYE, of which, on the part of the believer, is clearly understood by the language of faith and Spirit, or of sight and presence.²⁸ This framework, understood in light of *waiting*, clarifies that the evidence

²⁶ Barth, *Romans*, 315

²⁷ Barth, *Romans*, 313

²⁸ Christ has truly been raised and exalted, not just in faith, and yet, his reign is not public as it will be at his return. Cullmann describes it as his 'invisible reign', 'The Return', 158.

of 1 & 2 Thessalonians goes against speaking of any progression in the present age of the already becoming the not yet. Moreover, if Paul can speak at length, about eschatology and living in light of the parousia to an exemplary Christian community, without mentioning this idea of progression, then, we need to question how central the idea of progression really is to Pauline, and indeed NT, eschatology.

9.1.2. The Parousia as an Event in World History

We raised the question in our review of Pauline eschatology whether the parousia as an event in world history was given enough weight, because several scholars seemed to work from the perspective that it is inconsequential whether or not it happens. For example, Barth said that as an eternal moment the parousia would never ‘enter in’;²⁹ Schweitzer argued that our current mystical union with Christ was how the future was experienced and, as such, the future coming of Jesus ‘becomes valid for all time’.³⁰ Bultmann similarly focussed on the present experience of decision, and thus ‘hope is the freedom for the future and the openness toward it’.³¹ These views do not require an historical, temporal parousia, indeed work against such an idea. But, as we shall see, Paul presents the parousia as an event in future world history in a number of different ways, and relies on that truth for his pastoral care in 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

First, by identifying the object of waiting as *Jesus*, (1 Thess 1:10), Paul connects the person who was crucified as the same risen, exalted Son who will return. He thus

²⁹ Barth, *Romans*, 501. See above §2.1.2.

³⁰ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 380. See above §2.1.3.

³¹ Bultmann, *Theology*, 320. See above §2.1.6.

indicates a definite historical continuity between the time prior to Jesus' resurrection, the present time and the parousia time. Such historical continuity is also indicated by Paul's diction to portray the relation of the present to the parousia as *waiting*; ἀναμένω was an everyday word for remaining until an expected future event (ch. 5).

Second, despite various apocalyptic images, Paul gives specific details only intelligible if the parousia were an event in world history: Jesus will avenge them (4:5, 2 Thess 1), they do not know times and seasons (5:1–2),³² but must be alert since some will be surprised by the day of the Lord (5:3–8). Paul's pastoral encouragement in light of their dead brethren only makes sense if they will indeed see them again (4:13–18), namely, that the parousia will occur in time.

Moreover, the effects of mission imply that the parousia is a future event in time. Paul's mission efforts have a parousia reward: a crown (1 Thess 2:17–20). Conversely, the negative consequences of hindering gospel preaching is that the gentiles will not be saved (1 Thess 2:16). Indeed, some believe a lie now, resulting in parousia judgement (2 Thess 2:11–12). But Paul's crown consists of the very people who believed his message (1 Thess 2:20). Those same people who heard him preach in Thessalonica will be together with him *in glory* at the parousia. Those who hear and believe *are* those who wait and persevere; who also *are* those who live with Christ into eternity, because Christ reigns towards that end. All this points significantly to the parousia being an event in world history.

³² The time is *unknown* but still has the nature of a historical event.

Therefore, the views of Barth, Schweitzer and Bultmann do not fit with the perspective of 1 & 2 Thessalonians which presents the parousia as an event in future world history.³³ Paul commends and encourages the Thessalonians to wait for that moment in time when Jesus will ‘enter in’ by descending from heaven to raise their loved ones and so gather all his people (1 Thess 4:16–18). They are comforted now, not because they already experience that salvation, but because it *will* happen and so they can *wait* expectantly for it. Such comfort is not a result of being open to the future, but because of the very real and concrete object of hope, that in a short while they would both be reunited with their loved ones and would be with Jesus (4:13–18). The gospel moment, their ‘decision’,³⁴ results in their turning to wait for Jesus to ‘enter in’ and be present with them (1:9–10).

9.1.3. Summary

In this section we have explored two clear implications for eschatology of the concept of *waiting* for Jesus in 1 & 2 Thessalonians: specifically, how it clarifies and provides balance to ANYE and also that it presents Jesus’ parousia as an event in world history and specific object of *waiting*. We argued that the evidence of 1 & 2 Thessalonians does not support eschatologies that dehistoricise the parousia or that emphasise progress.

³³ Cf. Cullmann, ‘The Return’, 144–145.

³⁴ Bultmann, ‘New Testament and Mythology’, 16; cf. Hoekema, *The Bible*, 310–311; Matlock, *Unveiling*, 101.

9.2. Mission Implications

We will explore the mission implications of *waiting* for Jesus in three areas: (a) were the Thessalonians involved in mission? (b) What connection exists between Jesus' imminence and worldwide mission? And (c) how does *waiting* in this context contribute to understanding mission?

9.2.1. The Thessalonians and Mission

One of the issues we saw concerning *eschatological waiting* was that it seemingly opposes mission. Wright, for instance, says that rather than waiting for God to do something, the future is to be implicated now through works of justice and beauty that establish God's glory through the earth.³⁵ Such a position, however, is undermined if the Thessalonians were commended by Paul for their mission work, as 1 Thess 1:7–10 suggests. We will briefly overview recent debates over the Thessalonians and mission, and seek to show that a case can be made that they were conducting mission-evangelism, for which Paul commends them. If we are right, then the idea that one waits for Jesus or one gets on with mission will prove to be a false dichotomy.

Contrary to many commentators, Dickson has recently argued that 1 Thess 1:8 does not indicate that the Thessalonians were involved in mission-evangelism.³⁶ Ascough

³⁵ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 226; Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1494, 1509.

³⁶ John P. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission* (WUNT2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 95–103; cf. Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 83. Dickson mainly opposed James P. Ware, 'The Thessalonians as a Missionary Congregation: 1 Thessalonians 1,5-8', *ZNW* 83/1-2 (1992): 126–31. Other commentators who see the Thessalonians practising mission include Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 16; Beale, *Thessalonians*, 60–62; Barclay, 'Conflict', 522–523; de Vos, *Church*, 161; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 118; Best, *Thessalonians*, 80; Green, *Thessalonians*, 101–102.

agrees with Dickson that it ‘does not reflect an active missionary congregation’.³⁷ Dickson and Ascough both read 1:8a as reports about their conversion-faith, rather than their own evangelism.³⁸ Gorman rightly opposes Ascough’s view that the group’s main aim was to promote Paul and their new God, and that they did not aim to recruit.³⁹ Gorman’s own proposal is that Paul expected them to embody the gospel by their public faithfulness, love and hope, which would include oral proclamation (1:7–10).⁴⁰ Likewise, Johnson sees their mission as involving many ways of ‘narrating the gospel’⁴¹ as they imitated Paul et al. (1:6), they ‘became proclaimers of the gospel as well as a public embodiment of the gospel’s essence’.⁴²

Although they see oral proclamation as important to the Thessalonian mission, Gorman and Johnson overstate the place of gospel embodiment in mission, because Paul’s model (1 Thess 2:1–12), even his parental metaphors (2:8, 12), emphasises speech (2:2, 4, 8, 9, 12). Oral gospel proclamation like Paul’s own seems to be the best way to read ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου (1:8), for which a report of their conversion is too weak a referent. Their oral proclamation included their own story of conversion, and so likewise, called others to turn to serve and wait (1:9–10).⁴³ In 1:8–10, Paul explains how they were also a model — by the word of the Lord going forth not only to believers in Macedonia and Achaia, but also ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ. Ciampa and Rosner have

³⁷ Ascough, ‘Redescribing’, 65; Dickson, *Mission-Commitment*, 102–103.

³⁸ Dickson, *Mission-Commitment*, 102–103.

³⁹ Ascough, ‘Redescribing’, 69. Gorman, *Becoming*, 76, n. 29.

⁴⁰ Gorman, *Becoming*, 75–76.

⁴¹ Quoted from his forthcoming (Sep, 2016) *1–2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016) in Gorman, *Becoming*, 73, n. 22.

⁴² Johnson, ‘Ecclesiology’, 254; cf. Míguez, *Practice*, 92–94.

⁴³ Cf. Kim, ‘Paul’s Entry’, 540.

demonstrated the missional and eschatological significance of ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ (1 Cor 1:2), arguing that by it Paul ‘refer[s] to the worship of God which is spreading around the world’.⁴⁴ Given the eschatological nature of this context, it likely has a similar sense here, suggesting it was the gospel that sounded forth from them. In sum, Paul explains in 1 Thess 1:8 that they were models to the believers because of their mission-evangelism in their locality and every place.⁴⁵

Therefore, the idea that they either wait for Jesus or get on with mission is a false dichotomy because in the same breath Paul commends them for their evangelism and thanks God that they turned to wait (1 Thess 1:2–10).⁴⁶ Furthermore, if we are right to see the Jesus tradition behind Paul’s teaching of how to wait (1 Thess 5:1–11, §6.7.4), then it is expected that part of *waiting* is seeing the gospel preached throughout the whole world (Matt 24:13–14). *Waiting*, in fact, contributes not insignificantly to mission: sharpening the focus and providing the context of mission. We examine this below (§9.2.3).

9.2.2. Imminence and Mission

Another major point we raised concerning mission from our literature review, was that of Cullmann and Munck, that mission was a necessary moment in salvation history, but if so, how could *waiting* be for an imminent arrival of Jesus? Cullmann is

⁴⁴ Ciampa and Rosner, *1 Corinthians*, 57–58, arguing that Paul echoes Mal 1:11.

⁴⁵ Beale, *Thessalonians*, 60–61; cf. Dean Flemming, *Recovering the Full Mission of God: A Biblical Perspective on Being, Doing and Telling* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 195–196.

⁴⁶ E.g. Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 18, 441.

right to acknowledge the necessity of the preaching of the gospel to the nations (cf. Matt 24:14, Mark 13:10, Luke 24:47).⁴⁷ But the question remains: if the gospel *must* be preached to the ends of the earth before Jesus returns, how then can his return be imminent?

Cullmann and Munck emphasised Paul's role as an eschatological figure. Munck, for instance, contends that Paul saw his task as necessary before Christ could come; that it depends on him.⁴⁸ That is, mission is primarily a human action. Paul, on the other hand, in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, presents Christ as enabling mission (1 Thess 1:5–6, 3:11, 5:24; 2 Thess 2:13–17, 3:1–2). The same Lord who will descend is the one who presently reigns over all, enabling mission and perseverance, and drawing people towards his parousia. Hence, the timing of the parousia does not depend on human agency but on Christ's action, and believers are thus called to serve and wait. Therefore, worldwide mission and waiting for Christ's imminent arrival can be held together in the person of the exalted Christ.⁴⁹

9.2.3. Contribution to Mission

We argued above that, despite several scholars raising concerns that *waiting* was prohibitive to productive mission theology and practice, *waiting* and *mission* were held

⁴⁷ Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, 250, 254; cf. Smalley, 'Delay', 45.

⁴⁸ Munck, *Paul*, 41–42; cf. Leon Morris, 'Review of Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*', *WTJ* 23/2 (1961): 210–12; Ernest Best, 'Review of Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*', *ThTo* 18/1 (1961): 113–16. W. Paul Bowers, 'Mission', ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993), 617.

⁴⁹ For this perspective on Paul's own mission see Beker, *Paul*, 178.

together in 1 & 2 Thessalonians. *Waiting*, in fact, makes a significant positive contribution to *mission*, and, moreover, provides coherence to the whole idea of mission. As we will now see, there are five significant areas in which *waiting* contributes to mission: (1) *waiting* as the content of proclamation, (2) the goal of mission, (3) the centrality of conversion, (4) preaching with a view to conversion, and (5) the context of mission.

First, since the Thessalonians turned from idols to wait for Jesus as a result of Paul's gospel preaching we may infer that *eschatological waiting* was part of the content of Paul's gospel proclamation amongst them (1 Thess 1:9–10).⁵⁰ Likewise, *waiting* is a missional 'fruit', a sure sign that the gospel has arrived in power and with the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1:5–6).⁵¹ That *waiting* formed part of the gospel message may be inferred from the report of the gospel moment among them, because it is likely that what they converted to also represents what was preached.⁵² Additionally, this is probable since the thrust of salvation is future, and they already knew about the parousia (1 Thess 5:1–2, 2 Thess 2:5).⁵³ Mission in Thessalonica then, because of salvation being primarily about personal communion with Christ at his parousia, involved preaching about waiting for him, and on conversion, resulted in people who were to wait for him.

Second, *waiting* identifies the goal of mission, namely, that mission is fundamentally

⁵⁰ Cf. Ridderbos, *Paul*, 487.

⁵¹ Cf. Still, *Conflict*, 196.

⁵² Dickson, *Mission-Commitment*, 99; cf. Snyder, 'Summary of Faith', 360.

⁵³ Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 132.

about and oriented to the coming of the Lord Jesus. That is, mission is not primarily about solving the injustices of the world,⁵⁴ nor ending political tyranny,⁵⁵ nor doing works of art,⁵⁶ nor of promoting the group,⁵⁷ but about being ready for the Lord who comes to judge, deliver and be with his people (1 Thess 1:10, 5:1–11). Salvation is future resurrected living with Christ. Consequently, mission will revolve around the preaching of the person Jesus, of introducing who he is and what he has done. It will also involve warning of judgement at his arrival (1:10, 5:3–4, 2 Thess 1:6–9), and it will offer the hope of salvation (5:8). Mission will not be focussed on an event, object or outcome, but a person, he who died in order that they would live with him (5:9–10), and for whom, therefore, they are waiting.⁵⁸

This focus and goal further delineate what should not be expected in terms of mission. The context of Jesus' return is a world still in rebellion and not ready to receive him (1:10, 5:3–4, 2 Thess 1–2). This is a different picture to that renewed creation as a result of kingdom work in the world supposed by authors such as Blumhardt (redeemed world),⁵⁹ Käsemann (liberation),⁶⁰ Beker (transformed creation),⁶¹ and Wright (renewed creation full of the glory of God).⁶² A possible

⁵⁴ Beker, *Paul*, 326.

⁵⁵ Beker, *Paul*, 326; Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1504.

⁵⁶ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 218–244.

⁵⁷ Ascough, 'Redescribing', 71.

⁵⁸ Thus, *pace* Krentz, 1 Thess 1 does stress soteriology! Krentz, 'Evangelism', 22–30.

⁵⁹ Blumhardt, *Action*, 29, cf. 40–41, 77–78, 194, 196, 167–179.

⁶⁰ Käsemann, 'Justification and Salvation History', 67; Käsemann, 'Righteousness', 177, 180, 182.

⁶¹ Beker, *Paul*, 313, cf. 325–326, 364.

⁶² Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 760, 1494; cf. Brian K. Peterson, 'Being the Church in Philippi', *HBT* 30 (2008): 163–78.

response to this might be that even if the task is unfinished, it remains the church's mission, and indeed these authors point to the necessity of God's work.⁶³ Yet, there remains no sign in these letters that Paul expected even an *improvement*. On the one hand, eschatological blessings are for the future and to be awaited now (1 Thess 1:10) and on the other he expects hardship to continue, and perhaps to worsen (2 Thess 2:3–6). Of significance here, also, is that as Paul goes about preaching the gospel he asks for Christ to deliver him from evil men, because οὐ [. . .] πάντων ἡ πίστις (2 Thess 3:2). As such, in this highly eschatological correspondence, Paul does not mention a new creation ongoing and underway. Instead, he focusses on people turning to Christ and standing firm in the Lord (2:17–3:10). Paul shows no concern for, or expectation of, a renewal of creation in these letters; instead he proclaims relationship with Christ by means of the preaching of the gospel (2 Thess 2:13–14). The Thessalonians' doing good (5:15), living well before outsiders, and working so as not to be a burden (4:11–12), within the context of waiting for Jesus and mission is their 'salvific intentionality' — a mode of being towards others that is for their good, ultimately to be with Jesus.⁶⁴ Therefore, waiting to be with Jesus in the future highlights that the goal of mission is people in relationship with Jesus, and there is no support in these letters for the views of mission that emphasise world renewal in the present age.

Third, as a result of the first two points, conversion is central to mission, as

⁶³ E.g. Blumhardt, *Action*, 15–16, 25, 165. Blumhardt, *The Gospel*, 107; Käsemann, 'Righteousness', 170; Beker, *Paul*, 313; Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1072.

⁶⁴ Michael Barram, 'Pauline Mission As Salvific Intentionality: Fostering A Missional Consciousness In 1 Corinthians 9.19–23 And 10.31–11.1', in *Paul as Missionary: Identity, Activity, Theology and Practice* (ed. Trevor J. Burke and Brian S. Rosner; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 234–246 (here 236–237).

demonstrated by the Thessalonians' turning from idols to God (1 Thess 1:9), and Paul's anxiety that they had turned back (3:1–10). Paul's clear distinction between the Thessalonians and others is parousia-oriented, that one group belongs to that day, and the other is facing destruction (5:1–10). Honouring the gospel (2 Thess 3:1; cf. 1 Thess 1:5–6, 2:13) involves turning to God, and so joining that group who wait in hope for Jesus (5:6–10). Thus, through Paul's gospel they are called (2 Thess 2:13–14). Those who will be with Jesus at the parousia are those who, called by God, have believed the gospel (1 Thess 1:5–6, 5:9–10, 2 Thess 1:8–10).

Fourth, mission is about preaching the gospel with a view to that conversion. For without such preaching (1 Thess 2:16, 2 Thess 2:13–14), people cannot wait for Jesus (1:10, 5:5–10), and so will be overtaken by the day of his coming (5:3–4). Notice that the Jews had been hindering Paul from τοῖς ἔθνεσιν λαλῆσαι ἵνα σωθῶσιν (1 Thess 2:16) — namely, their future and awaited salvation results from the speaking of the gospel in the present time (cf. 2:13; 1:5–6). Conversely, God's punishment involves causing those rebelling against him to believe a lie (2 Thess 2:10–12).

Fifth, *waiting*, since it indicates a future salvation, illuminates the temporal context of mission. That is, since they *wait*, mission is possible; Jesus has not yet arrived. God 'acts salvifically' in the present-time, even though salvation is a future event.⁶⁵ But the grounds for mission is also provided by the object of *waiting*: God's Son, coming from heaven (1 Thess 1:10). Jesus is exalted Lord; he sends the Spirit and continues to enable mission. When we consider also that *waiting* rightly includes the sober

⁶⁵ De Villiers, 'Eschatology', 7.

realisation that the master might delay, we can further understand this context.⁶⁶ Why the master delays is not explicitly explained in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, but Jesus taught that the end would come when the gospel had been preached to the whole world (Matt 24:14) and 2 Peter explains that it is because of God's compassion for the lost, that they might have time to repent (2 Pet 3:9; cf. Acts 3:19–20; Rom 2:4). It is possible that Christ's perseverance in 2 Thess 3:5 refers to this compassionate long-suffering granting further opportunity for repentance, especially in light of the context of mission and suffering (2 Thess 3:1–5), but this reading is by no means certain. Nevertheless, because of the master's 'delay' for the sake of gospel preaching: rather than seeing that Jesus' resurrection was 'brought forward',⁶⁷ it is better to understand the present period as a postponement of the general resurrection to provide further opportunity to repent (cf. 2 Cor 6:1–2). Knowledge of the time motivates mission; mission is grounded in both Jesus' resurrection and his future coming.⁶⁸ Reflecting on salvation history as past (crucifixion), present (Christ's invisible reign) and future (Christ's return) Cullmann writes that the 'eschatological determination of the present does not entail a paralysis of the Church's activity; on the contrary it inspires and encourages it in the most effectual way'.⁶⁹ Thus believers wait (1 Thess 1:10), in borrowed time. Their *waiting* is a fruit of the gospel and the ground for mission.

⁶⁶ See above §6.7.4.

⁶⁷ Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 760.

⁶⁸ For Paul's own mission cf. Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1983), 48–54; trans. of 'Die Ursprünge der Christlichen Mission', *NTS* 18 (1971), 15–38.

⁶⁹ Cullmann, 'The Return', 160, cf. 141–162; cf. Smalley, 'Patterns', 149.

9.2.4. Summary

In this section we explored some important implications for mission that arose from the concept of waiting for Jesus. In particular, we argued that waiting for Jesus highlights the personal and future nature of salvation, and so mission-evangelism, as opposed to world renewal. We also argued that *waiting* and *mission* were held together by Paul as pointing to the ground and goal of mission.

9.3. Ethical Implications

We turn now to consider the ethical implications of *waiting*. In our literature review, we saw several scholars who were concerned that looking to the future would disregard present responsibility. Dodd, for example, wrote,

an exclusive concentration of attention upon glory to come, with the corresponding devaluation of the present, its duties and opportunities, its social claims and satisfactions, obscures the finer and more humane aspects of morality.⁷⁰

Others presented a concern that, by *waiting*, believers would fail to live *for* the world. For example, Beker sees Christian activity as directed towards the redemption of the world, and so opposing anti-divine powers, namely in social injustice and political tyranny,⁷¹ and as such the church must not ‘wait patiently’, but ‘strain itself in all its

⁷⁰ Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 64; cf. Blumhardt, *Action*, 27; Ware, ‘The Coming of the Lord’, 118; Furnish, *Thessalonians*, 34.

⁷¹ Beker, *Paul*, 278.

activities to prepare the world for its coming destiny in the kingdom'.⁷² Likewise, Wright expects God's 'putting-the-world-to-rights future' to be 'implicated more and more' *now*, as believers live out in their lives the restoration of Adamic glory (dominion) throughout creation. It 'isn't a matter of waiting' for God to act at the parousia.⁷³ Therefore, being a good citizen in and for the world does not seem to fit with *eschatological waiting*. We will see, however, that for Paul, living ethically and being a good citizen are consistent with *waiting* for Jesus.

9.3.1. A False Dichotomy

It is a false dichotomy to suggest that eschatological expectation and ethical exhortation are mutually exclusive. In 1 & 2 Thessalonians *waiting* and *serving* are two complementary sides to conversion.⁷⁴ Not only are they complementary, they are also connected because the Thessalonians serve God and wait for *his* Son (1 Thess 1:9–10).⁷⁵ Since the one they await, is the Son of the one they serve now, clearly for Paul, ethics and *waiting* interrelate. Further, Paul contrasts the character of those who belong to the day, and, so, wait in readiness for it and those who, as sons of darkness, will be overtaken by it (1 Thess 5:3–8). The way they are to wait is by faith, hope, and love (5:8). It is, in fact, a *failure* to wait that yields ungodliness. Further, *waiting* is connected with moral action that is more specifically aimed at the Christian community — perseverance (1:3), encouragement (4:18) and edification (5:11).

⁷² Beker, *Paul*, 326.

⁷³ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 226; Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 488–489.

⁷⁴ Cf. Gieschen, 'Christ's Coming', 40.

⁷⁵ Donfried, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians', 9.

The Olivet tradition which we argued was behind Paul's exhortation to wait (1 Thess 5:1–11) combines waiting for the master with acting faithfully in his service (Matt 24:45–46, 25:13–30), including mission, perseverance and the mundane activities of life and labour (Matt 24:13–14, 37–42; cf. §6.7.4). In contrast to the wise servant who is ready and watching, the wicked servant leaves his task and gets drunk (Matt 24:48–51, cf. 1 Thess 5:1–11). That is, in Jesus' teaching (Matt 24–25) and Paul's application (1 Thess 5:1–11), right *waiting* manifests itself in faithful service, and, in contrast, wickedness is a fruit of not expecting Jesus' arrival.

The falseness of the dichotomy is further highlighted by Paul's presentation of holiness in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, which is closely connected to the parousia. As they wait (1 Thess 1:10), Paul exhorts them to holiness (4:1–8) and prays that God, who grants his Spirit to produce holiness (4:8), will likewise present them in complete holiness before Jesus whom they await (3:11–13, 5:23–24). In 1 & 2 Thessalonians holiness is presented as continuous between the present time and parousia and as the primary way that the future is 'implicated' or 'anticipated' now. That is, the future is implicated not through social justice, or through establishing kingdom social structures now, but in sanctification. Duff and Beker speak of the church living out 'anticipatory reflections' of the new creation,⁷⁶ 'beachheads [. . .] of God's new world',⁷⁷ and Barth sees that it already partakes of an eternal virtue by love.⁷⁸ But in 1 & 2 Thessalonians this is displayed most clearly in Spirit-led holiness, and by current relationship with Christ by faith and Spirit, in anticipation of the future being present

⁷⁶ Duff, 'Significance', 282.

⁷⁷ Beker, *Paul*, 155.

⁷⁸ Barth, *Romans*, 501.

with him. Yet as with that relationship, there remains a clear distinction between present and parousia holiness. Nevertheless, Paul's entwining of holiness and the parousia reveal that to say that the church must either be ethical or focused on the future is a false dichotomy. Instead, ethics and *waiting* go hand in hand.

But how do ethics and *waiting* cohere? We shall illustrate below several ways in which Paul holds ethics and *waiting* together positively, especially in serving and trusting God (1 Thess 1:3; 5:8). He expects his readers to strive for that holiness which God will grant (4:1–8; 5:23–24), he desires them to persevere in love, imitation and faith (cf. §6.3). Roetzel observes how 5:12–28 makes concrete the 'admonition' to encourage and edify one another with which the call to wait (5:1–11) concludes (5:11).⁷⁹ They are to be awake (5:1–8), that is, ready, by being faithful servants (cf. 1:9) of the master (cf. §6.7.4), undertaking the tasks left by him, not least evangelism (1:8) and prayer (5:17–18, 25). We shall explore further these positive implications below (§9.3.3), but first we consider a specific instance of these ethics, viz., work.

9.3.2. Work

Work presents a touchstone of the potential crisis that *waiting* causes for ethics. Schweitzer, for example, saw Paul's ethic of work (1 Thess 4:11–12) as a result of realising that the parousia would not arrive.⁸⁰ Or, specifically of the situation in Thessalonica, Russell writes,

⁷⁹ Calvin J. Roetzel, '1 Thess 5:12-28', ed. Lane C. McGaughey, *SBLSP* (1972): 368.

⁸⁰ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 312–313.

[m]ost scholars find the [Thessalonian] idleness to be rooted in eschatological excitement [. . . —] their belief that Christ would soon return led them to abandon ordinary earthly pursuits such as working for a living so that they could give full attention to spiritual preparation, prayer and eschatological discussion.⁸¹

Others see Paul's eschatological teaching or apocalyptic imagery to encourage social withdrawal, or to embrace social alienation, as he hardens the boundaries of community.⁸² Does *waiting* discourage work and social interaction as implied in these perspectives? Not at all, because the issue has been wrongly framed.

Idleness was a problem in Thessalonica, but was not related to Paul's teaching about waiting. Russell argues that idleness was an issue when Paul first visited Thessalonica since Paul appeals to his teaching and example while there (2 Thess 3:6–10). Thus it cannot have arisen from eschatological expectation.⁸³ It probably resulted from an abuse of the patron-client relationship.⁸⁴ Paul's own example of refusing money, suggests a particular historical situation in Thessalonica (1 Thess 2:9, 2 Thess 3:7–9, cf. Phil 4:16), rather than that the idleness arose out of misguided expectation.

Paul's positive reasons for working were self-dependence (2 Thess 3:12), to be able to do good (3:13), and not to be a burden (3:8 cf. 1 Thess 2:9, 4:12) nor to interfere (1 Thess 3:11). In 1 Thess 4:11–12 the command comes in the framework of brotherly

⁸¹ R. Russell, 'The Idle in 2 Thess 3.6-12: An Eschatological or a Social Problem?', *NTS* 34/1 (1988): 105. E.g. Gieschen, 'Christ's Coming', 54.

⁸² Tellbe, 'Paul', 135–136; de Vos, *Church*, 174–175.

⁸³ Russell, 'The Idle', 108; see also Bruce Winter, "If a Man Does Not Wish To Work . . ." A Cultural and Historical Setting For 2 Thessalonians 3:6-16', *TynBul* 40 (1989): 303.

⁸⁴ Winter, 'Cultural and Historical Setting', 303–305.

love (4:9), indicating the social dimension to this command. This, Winter argues, fits generally with Paul's social ethic of his communities working for the 'welfare of their city', that is, being good citizens.⁸⁵ This is not in the sense of transforming society structures, but being equipped to do good, love and not be a burden. Their work then, was an outworking of faith, hope and love (5:8). Working well for the benefit of others is an expression of waiting for Jesus. Since Paul expected them to work for the benefit of others, and to do good, we may conclude with Roetzel that Paul urged 'a positive, fruitful participation in this world', and that *waiting* involved social activity and participation and not withdrawal.⁸⁶

The quiet life is closely associated with this work ethic (4:11–12 cf. 2 Thess 3:12). Living *quietly* (ἡσυχάζω) likely means not disturbing public peace,⁸⁷ or maintaining a low profile,⁸⁸ or 'not being disruptive regarding the lives of others'.⁸⁹ Read together with working not to be a burden, Paul expects the believers in Thessalonica to be a benefit to society by doing good (1 Thess 5:15), being peaceful and not causing disruption in community or politics.⁹⁰ All this presents a moral vision different from the call to societal revolution,⁹¹ or to end political tyranny.⁹² Such a difference might be explained by the historical situation in Thessalonica. If they were a

⁸⁵ Winter, 'Cultural and Historical Setting', 314.

⁸⁶ Roetzel, 'Paul', 234.

⁸⁷ Danker, 'ἡσυχάζω', BDAG 440.

⁸⁸ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 162–163.

⁸⁹ Fee, *Thessalonians*, 162.

⁹⁰ Cf. Roetzel, 'Paul', 234.

⁹¹ Beker, *Paul*, 326; cf. Duff, 'Significance', 292.

⁹² Wright, *Faithfulness of God*, 1288.

disenfranchised, powerless group it would be a stretch to expect Paul to incite them to revolution,⁹³ but nevertheless, fits with Paul's general ethic elsewhere (Rom 12:9–13:7, 1 Tim 2:1–2).⁹⁴ It is, however, a moral vision that only makes sense for those who belong to a different day (1 Thess 5:5–8) and in light of waiting for Jesus who will come to save, judge and avenge (1 Thess 1:10, 4:6; 2 Thess 1–2). As such, the Thessalonians, because they wait quietly for such a Saviour and Judge (cf. Lam 3:25–26), may persevere in their normal tasks of living well in society, working quietly, and doing good to all (5:15).

This picture is not dissimilar to that of the exiles in Babylon, who were told through Jeremiah to build houses, plant gardens, have children and to pray for its peace (Jer 29:5–7). God will act in his own time (29:10), so live upright lives while you wait.⁹⁵ *Waiting* and expecting the return from exile does not mean social upheaval, nor idleness, but a patient trust manifesting itself in godly living. This patient waiting for God to act in his own time, is demonstrated likewise when David who, though anointed and ready, chose not to kill Saul, waiting instead for God's timing (1 Sam 24:5) and when Abraham waited 25 years for Isaac (Gen 12:4, 21:5). Although, in this last case, Abraham was guilty of trying to obtain God's promises by his own means, with Ishmael's conception and birth (Gen 16:1–4). God, however, patiently reiterates his promise and calls for Abraham to trust in him (Gen 17:15–21). Indeed, God has

⁹³ E.g. Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 85; Jewett, *Thessalonian*, 125, 165; Khiok-Khng, 'Political', 86. cf. Callia Rulmu, 'Between Ambition and Quietism: The Socio-Political Background of 1 Thessalonians 4,9-12', *Bib* 91/3 (2010): 393–417.

⁹⁴ Winter, 'Cultural and Historical Setting', 314.

⁹⁵ Cf. Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 546–547; Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26–52 (vol. 27; Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1995), 72–73, 80–81.

always elicited *waiting* by making promises: received in faith, and yet requiring a trusting waiting for God to act.

Consequently, waiting for Jesus does not discourage work, as many have implied. Rather it is the ground and motivation for being a good citizen in the world, which primarily manifests itself in love and doing good for others, knowing that the world will continue in rebellion, but that vengeance and deliverance belongs to the Lord. Hence, by waiting for his sure and gracious salvation, believers can now live as good citizens.

9.3.3. Other Ethical Implications

We have already dealt in detail with the problems that are associated in terms of ethics and *waiting*, but what positive points can be made for Christian living that arises out of the key truth of *waiting* for Jesus?

First, *waiting* for Jesus, a saviour, indicates that salvation is not merit-based, and likewise, their ethical living and holiness are not in order to gain merit. Salvation, being primarily a relationship but also deliverance from wrath, is fundamentally a gracious action of Jesus for their sakes, of which they benefit. Gundry Volf has convincingly demonstrated that Paul's use of *περιποίησις* does not indicate achievement, but God's gracious activity — Christ 'will make us participate in his glorious life — the ultimate goal of his death for us — and so mediate in the fullest

sense our gaining possession of salvation' (1 Thess 5:19, 2:14).⁹⁶ This truth is clear elsewhere, that since we wait for salvation, it is a gift that we cannot merit, now, or ever (cf. Gal 5:5). Consequently, Christians live ethically not for their *own* salvation but in *love*; they are freed from their very selves in order to serve others in love (Gal 5:6, 13–14; cf. Gal 2:20–21; 2 Cor 5:14–15).

Second, *waiting for Jesus* was given as a goal of conversion for the Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:9–10) and represents for them a fundamental mode of being toward God. Some have argued that this was an historical situation unique to them, that Paul wrote that way since they had lost hope of the coming of Jesus,⁹⁷ or were threatened by other eschatologies.⁹⁸ Even if this were so, however, how much more ought it be true of people who have not lost hope or are not threatened by mistaken eschatologies? Hence, we conclude that *waiting for Jesus* is a mode of being Christian, and not only during times of crisis. This involves patience — for we can but soberly recognise he may delay (1 Thess 5:6–8), and yet readiness — because no one knows when he will come (1 Thess 5:1–4). It necessitates acknowledging that we cannot force his hand, but must wait to receive from him, and yet in the meantime we serve his Father (1 Thess 1:9), clothed with faith, hope and love, and strive for that holiness in which God will present us to him (1 Thess 4:1–8, 5:23–24). *Waiting* implies both a lack and a future end to that lack. In this case it means that while we are absent from Christ, we wait to be with him. *Waiting*, as Barth intimated, yields a bold refusal to accept the

⁹⁶ Gundry Volf, *Paul*, 25; cf. Fee, *Thessalonians*, 197.

⁹⁷ E.g. Donfried, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians', 20.

⁹⁸ E.g. Pate, *Apostle*, 78.

present condition.⁹⁹ It indicates there is something better, that the best is yet to come, and so Christians do not fill themselves up with the present life, but hunger for that time when they will be forever with her Lord, ‘who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him’ (1 Thess 5:10). Hence, *waiting for Jesus* in itself is a right ethical mode of being in relation to Christ and the parousia.

Third, *waiting* gives an orientation to the Christian life, an orientation that is towards the end. As we noted, this is not a blinkered focus that results in a failure to live rightly in this world, since while they wait they serve (1 Thess 1:9–10). But, indeed, the believer is enabled to live rightly because she waits, since *waiting* gives her the right orientation towards the future, the end, and to their coming saviour from wrath (e.g. forgoing vengeance, 1 Thess 5:15). Such an orientation enables right living because it sharpens ethical and missional action according to the coming end. Consequently, the future impacts the present but also has significance as future.

In conclusion, ethics is consistent with waiting for two primary reasons. First, the parousia focus of 1 & 2 Thessalonians provides the framework for how to live well in this world and age. Second, throughout 1 Thessalonians, Paul combines waiting with serving and holiness.

9.4. Summary of Implications

By engaging with the issues raised in our review of the literature on 1 & 2

⁹⁹ Barth, *Romans*, 314–315. See §2.1.2.

Thessalonians and Pauline eschatology we have explored the implications of *waiting* from 1 & 2 Thessalonians. We have tried to argue for greater clarity in eschatology, namely, clear language of faith and Spirit for that which is already realised, and language of sight and presence for that which has not yet been realised. Moreover, since 1 & 2 Thessalonians speaks of the parousia as an event in world history, and is silent on the question of progress, we have suggested that eschatological views that emphasises aspects contrary to this are at odds with 1 & 2 Thessalonians. We saw also that *waiting* provides a context and ground for ethics and mission, and that in 1 & 2 Thessalonians, mission and ethics cohere with *waiting* for Jesus. Furthermore, *waiting* offers significant positive contributions to eschatology, mission and ethics.

Chapter 10

10. Conclusion

Our research into the concept of *waiting* has centred on the meaning and significance of ἀναμένω in the context of 1 & 2 Thessalonians. We set the scene by identifying presenting issues with respect to *waiting* and 1 & 2 Thessalonians, highlighting how *waiting* had generally been neglected in scholarship. We then proposed that an exegetically based word study would provide significant data for research into the meaning of *waiting* in the NT. Beginning with semantic domains, we concluded that the following words and texts would provide solid ground for such study: ἀναμένω (1 Thess 1:10), προσδέχομαι (Luke 12:36, Acts 24:15, Titus 2:13, Jude 21), ἐκδέχομαι (Heb 10:13, 11:10; Jas 5:7), ἀπεκδέχομαι (Rom 8:23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:20; Heb 9:28), προσδοκάω (Matt 24:50; Luke 12:46; 2 Pet 3:12, 13, 14), and μακροθυμέω (Jas 5:7, 8).

Focussing on ἀναμένω in the richly eschatological context of 1 & 2 Thessalonians, we

first considered its meaning and sense in LXX, Philo and Josephus. From those sources we concluded that ἀναμένω meant to remain in a state or place until a future expected thing occurs with an orientation towards/expectation of that thing. Moreover, ἀναμένω carries the senses of passive receptivity, of expecting a preceding duration, of anticipation and is contrasted with acting prematurely, impatience and of active obtainment. We then looked at Paul's use of ἀναμένω in the instance of 1 Thess 1:10, concluding from the context that that meaning and those senses were present there. Further, the context of mission, suffering, and conversion, together with Paul's purpose to strengthen faith, highlighted that *waiting* was very significant. We saw that *waiting* was for Jesus, ascended Lord, returning to save. The manner of *waiting* was to be ready and awake, and yet expecting a possible delay. As they wait, they were to serve, and be clothed in faith, hope and love.

Considering the concept more broadly across 1 & 2 Thessalonians, we concluded that, by indicating Christ's absence, *waiting* highlighted future salvation of being in Christ's presence and Christ's present reign towards that end. We then saw that our conclusions about the meaning and sense of *waiting* in 1 & 2 Thessalonians were consistent with other language and texts throughout the NT. Finally, we examined the implications of *waiting* for eschatology, mission and ethics, seeing, on the one hand, that much of the concern about *waiting* found in the scholarly literature was unfounded, and on the other hand, that *waiting* brought clarity and positive contributions to eschatology, mission and ethics.

Much work is still required towards establishing a theology of waiting, not least a

thorough examination of those other NTG words and NT texts identified as central to such work (§4.4, 4.5). Nevertheless, through the richly eschatological context of 1 & 2 Thessalonians we have been able to draw out some central ideas.

Central to a theology of Christian *waiting* is identifying the object of waiting, which in 1 Thess 1:10 is the Lord Jesus. Having already been exalted he will arrive from heaven as judge and deliverer, but purposely reigns now for those who await his arrival to bring them to himself. But since he is currently absent, Christians presently do not experience their eschatological salvation which, primarily, is about being with Jesus. Thus they wait.

Such *waiting* identifies the goal of faith. We wait to be with Christ. We do not already have, but wait for it. We cannot have in this world either through moral effort, social development or even in Christian community what God has promised for us to receive when Jesus arrives. Jesus wants his servants to store up for themselves treasure in heaven and not on this earth. And so, waiting for him, the Christian identifies where true glory and happiness lie, and is both able to endure hardship and to live through prosperity with a sober clarity of the times. Further, by waiting for Jesus, Christians are able to know the purpose of the continuation of history — that of repentance, and so can be active through being good citizens, brotherly love and most of all, mission-evangelism for the purpose of seeing others repent. They also are able to redeem the right order and priority of relationships now since they wait to be in relationship with him — where true happiness and glory lies. They remember that what they have now in faith will be theirs in sight when Jesus arrives to gather them

up to live with him forever.

In short, *waiting* is an essential and right characteristic of being Christian, tragically neglected, and yet hugely important. It is hoped that this paper may contribute towards a NT theology of waiting, and towards greater clarity in eschatology and mission and ethics as they relate to eschatology.

In Hebrews 11 it says of those who waited for the heavenly city (Heb 11:10) and sought a heavenly homeland (11:14–16) that God is *not ashamed* to be called their God (11:16). Throughout salvation history, God has directed people to the fulfilment of his promises in faith — a forward orientation expressed in perseverance, hope and waiting. Thus ‘in hope we are saved’ (Rom 8:24) but having not yet received, ‘we eagerly wait for it in perseverance’ (Rom 8:25). Having acted decisively in Christ’s death and resurrection and sent the eschatological Spirit, God now desires those he has called, to wait for Jesus’ arrival (1 Thess 1:10): expecting him, being ready for him, desiring him, and yet also acknowledging that he might be a while, and so serving God in the meantime, not getting distracted and seduced into drunken wickedness, but being faithful stewards, loving like him and undertaking the task of seeing the gospel (of the Lord whom they await) reach the ends of the earth.

Our research into *waiting* has not only been a result of a scholarly lacuna, but also because the parousia generally, but more specifically *waiting for Jesus*, seems to have been forgotten in our Christian contexts. We rarely sing about it, preach about it, or ‘encourage one another and build one another up’ (1 Thess 5:11) with these words

(4:18). In many cases, the modern church, at least in this country, may be charged with drunkenness rather than having stayed alert for the Master's return. Have we squandered the master's delay by hoarding wealth in the last days (Jas 5:3), rather than, as exhorted by Paul, being sober, ready, faithful, and even ensuring the gospel is preached to the ends of the earth? So ultimately this is an appeal, that, like the Thessalonians, we might be reminded of our future glory — to be with Jesus forever — and so wait for him.

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