

1 Thessalonians

Salutation

1:1 From Paul¹ and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians² in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace and peace to you!³

Thanksgiving for Response to the Gospel

1:2 We thank God always for all of you as we mention you constantly⁴ in our prayers, **1:3** because we recall⁵ in the presence of our God and Father⁶ your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope⁷ in our Lord Jesus Christ. **1:4** We know,⁸ brothers and sisters⁹ loved by

God, that he has chosen you,¹⁰ **1:5** in that¹¹ our gospel did not come to you merely in words,¹² but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (surely you recall the character we displayed when we came among you to help you).¹³

1:6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, when you received¹⁴ the message with joy that comes from the Holy Spirit, despite great affliction. **1:7** As a result you became an example¹⁵ to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. **1:8** For from you the message of the Lord¹⁶ has echoed forth not just in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place reports of your faith in God have spread,¹⁷ so that we do not need to say anything. **1:9** For people everywhere¹⁸ report how you welcomed us¹⁹ and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God **1:10** and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath.²⁰

¹ **tn** Grk "Paul." The word "from" is not in the Greek text, but has been supplied to indicate the sender of the letter.

² **map** For the location of Thessalonica see JP1-C1; JP2-C1; JP3-C1; JP4-C1.

³ **tc** The majority of witnesses, including several early and important ones (N A [D] I 33 M bo), have ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (*apo theou patros hēmōn kai kuriou Iēsou Christou*, "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ") at the end of v. 1. The more abrupt reading ("Grace and peace to you") without this addition is supported by B F G Ψ 0278 629 1739 1881 pc lat sa. Apart from a desire to omit the redundancy of the mention of God and Christ in this verse, there is no good reason why scribes would have omitted the characteristically Pauline greeting. (Further, if this were the case, why did these same scribes overlook such an opportunity in 2 Thess 1:1-2?) On the other hand, since 1 Thessalonians is one of Paul's earliest letters, what would become characteristic of his greetings seems to have been still in embryonic form (e.g., he does not yet call his audience "saints" [which will first be used in his address to the Corinthians], nor does he use ἐν (*en*) plus the dative to refer to the location of the church). Thus, the internal evidence is overwhelming in support of the shorter reading, for scribes would have been strongly motivated to rework this salutation in light of Paul's style elsewhere. And the external evidence, though not overwhelming, is supportive of this shorter reading, found as it is in some of the best witnesses of the Alexandrian and Western texttypes.

tn Grk "Grace to you and peace."

⁴ **tn** Or "mention you in our prayers, because we recall constantly..."

⁵ **tn** Grk "making mention...recalling." The participle ποιούμενοι (*poioumenoi*) in v. 2 has been translated as temporal, and μνημονεύοντες (*mnēmoneuontes*) in v. 3 has been translated as causal.

⁶ **tn** Or The phrase may connect at the end of the verse: "hope...in the presence of our God and Father."

⁷ **tn** These phrases denote Christian virtues in action: the work produced by faith, labor motivated by love, and endurance that stems from hope in Christ.

⁸ **tn** Grk "knowing." Because of the length and complexity of the Greek sentence, the participle εἰδότες (*eidotes*) has been translated as a finite verb and a new sentence started here in the translation.

⁹ **tn** Grk "brothers," but the Greek word may be used for "brothers and sisters" or "fellow Christians" as here (cf. BDAG 18 s.v. ἀδελφός 1, where considerable nonbiblical evidence for the plural ἀδελφοί [*adelphoi*] meaning "brothers and sisters" is cited).

¹⁰ **tn** Grk "your election."

¹¹ **tn** Or "because."

¹² **tn** Or "speech," or "an act of speaking."

¹³ **tn** Grk "just as you know what sort of people we were among you for your sakes." Verse 5 reflects on the experience of Paul and his fellow preachers; v. 6 begins to describe the Thessalonians' response.

¹⁴ **tn** Or "after you received."

¹⁵ **tc** Most mss (N A C D² F G Ψ 0278 M) have the plural τύπους (*tupous*, "examples") here, while a few important witnesses have the singular τύπον (*tupon*, "example"; B D^{*c} 6 33 81 104 1739 1881 pc lat). With ὑμᾶς (*humas*, "you") immediately preceding, the plural form looks motivated: Scribes would be expected to change the singular to the plural here. Although the external evidence for the singular reading is not overwhelming, the internal evidence for it is compelling.

¹⁶ **tn** Or "the word of the Lord."

sn "The word of the Lord" is a technical expression in OT literature, often referring to a divine prophetic utterance (e.g., Gen 15:1, Isa 1:10, Jonah 1:1). In the NT it occurs 15 times: 3 times as ῥῆμα τοῦ κυρίου (*rhēma tou kuriou*; Luke 22:61, Acts 11:16, 1 Pet 1:25) and 12 times as λόγος τοῦ κυρίου (*logos tou kuriou*; here and in Acts 8:25; 13:44, 48, 49; 15:35, 36; 16:32; 19:10, 20; 1 Thess 4:15; 2 Thess 3:1). As in the OT, this phrase focuses on the prophetic nature and divine origin of what has been said. Here the phrase has been translated "the message of the Lord" because of the focus upon the spread of the gospel evident in the passage.

¹⁷ **tn** Grk "your faith in God has gone out."

¹⁸ **tn** Grk "they themselves," referring to people in the places just mentioned.

¹⁹ **tn** Grk "what sort of entrance we had to you" (an idiom for how someone is received).

²⁰ **sn** *The coming wrath.* This *wrath* is an important theme in 1 Thess 5.

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica

2:1 For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters,¹ about our coming to you – it has not proven to be purposeless.² **2:2** But although we suffered earlier and were mistreated in Philippi,³ as you know, we had the courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God⁴ in spite of much opposition. **2:3** For the appeal we make⁵ does not come⁶ from error or impurity or with deceit, **2:4** but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we declare it, not to please people but God, who examines our hearts. **2:5** For we never appeared⁷ with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed – God is our witness – **2:6** nor to seek glory from people, either from you or from others, **2:7**⁸ although we could have imposed our weight as apostles of Christ; instead we became⁹ little children¹⁰ among you. Like a

¹ **tn** Grk “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:4.

² **tn** Grk “has not become empty.” Paul is defending himself against the charge that he lacked earnestness and personal concern for them, but appeared in their city out of greed or egotism. In his defense he appeals to what they recall of his ministry and what has become of it since he left, all of which demonstrates his God-given earnestness and effectiveness.

³ **map** For location see JP1-C1; JP2-C1; JP3-C1; JP4-C1.

⁴ **tn** The genitive in the phrase τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ (*to euangelion tou theou*, “the gospel of God”) could be translated as either a subjective genitive (“the gospel which God brings”) or an objective genitive (“the gospel about God”). Either is grammatically possible. This is possibly an instance of a plenary genitive (see *ExSyn* 119-21; M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, §§36-39). If so, an interplay between the two concepts is intended: The gospel which God brings is in fact the gospel about himself. This same phrase occurs in vv. 8 and 9 as well.

⁵ **tn** Grk “For our exhortation.” Paul here uses παράκλησις (*paraklēsis*) to speak in broad terms about his preaching of the gospel, in which he urges or appeals to people to respond to God’s salvation (cf. the verb form παρακαλοῦντος [*parakalountos*] in 2 Cor 5:20).

⁶ **tn** Grk “[is] not” (the verb “to be” is implied in the Greek construction).

⁷ **tn** Or “came on the scene,” “came.”

⁸ **tn** Punctuating vv. 6 and 7 is difficult. One must consider the difficult textual problem of v. 7 (see **tc** note on the word “children” in that verse) as well as the grammar of the verse. In the translation above, “little children” is understood to be a predicate nominative connected to the verb “became.” This allows a full stop to be placed at the end of v. 6 and before the phrase “like a nursing mother” in v. 7. This separates the two metaphors which impact the textual problem and allows for greater clarity in the way the sentence is read.

⁹ **tn** Or “were,” “proved to be.”

¹⁰ **tc** The variant ἡπίοι (*ēpioi*, “gentle”) has fair support (ⲛ² A C² D² Ψ^c 0278 33 1739 1881 ㉓), but νήπιοι (*nēpioi*, “little children”) has significantly stronger backing (ⲓ⁶⁵ ⲛ* B C* D* F G I Ψ* pc it bo). It is not insignificant that the earliest Alexandrian and Western witnesses in support of ἡπίοι are actually not Alexandrian or Western; they are the *second* correctors of Alexandrian and Western MSS. Such correctors generally follow a Byzantine Vorlage. The reading νήπιοι is thus superior externally. Further, νήπιοι is much harder in this context, for Paul mixes his metaphors (“we became little children in your midst...Like a nursing mother...”). Thus, the scribes would naturally alter this reading to the softer ἡπίοι (“we became gentle...”). Paul is not known for his consistency of figures, however (cf., e.g., Gal 4:19); hence, the intrinsic evidence points to νήπιοι as original. On the other hand, it is possible that νήπιοι was caused by dittography with the

nursing mother caring for her own children, **2:8** with such affection for you¹¹ we were happy¹² to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. **2:9** For you recall, brothers and sisters,¹³ our toil and drudgery: By working night and day so as not to impose a burden on any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. **2:10** You are witnesses, and so is God, as to how holy and righteous and blameless our conduct was toward you who believe. **2:11** As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his own children, **2:12** exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you live in a way worthy of God who calls you to his own kingdom and his glory. **2:13** And so¹⁴ we too constantly thank God that when you received God’s message that you heard from us,¹⁵ you accepted it not as a human message,¹⁶ but as it truly is, God’s message, which is at work among you who believe. **2:14** For you became imitators, brothers and sisters,¹⁷ of God’s churches in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, because you too suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they in fact did from the Jews, **2:15** who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets¹⁸ and persecuted us severely.¹⁹ They

preceding -μεν (*-men*). It is even possible that νήπιοι was caused by an error of hearing right from the beginning: The amanuensis could have heard the apostle incorrectly. But such a supposition cuts both ways; further, Paul would no doubt have corrected the reading in the ms before it was sent out. If so, one would surely have expected both earlier witnesses on the side of ἡπίοι and perhaps a few first correctors to have this reading. The reading “little children” thus stands as most probably original. (For an extended discussion of this problem, see J. A. D. Weima, “But We Became Infants Among You”: The Case for NHΠΙΟΙ in 1 Thess 2.7,” *NTS* 46 [2000]: 547-64; T. B. Sailors, “Wedding Textual and Rhetorical Criticism to Understand the Text of 1 Thessalonians 2.7,” *JSNT* 80 [2000]: 81-98.)

¹¹ **tn** Grk “longing for you in this way.”

¹² **tn** Or “we are happy.” This verb may be past or present tense, but the context favors the past.

¹³ **tn** Grk “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:4.

¹⁴ **tn** Grk “for this reason,” which seems to look back to Paul’s behavior just described. But it may look forward to v. 13b and mean: “and here is another reason that we constantly thank God: that...”

¹⁵ **tn** Grk “God’s word of hearing from us.”

¹⁶ **tn** Paul’s focus is their attitude toward the message he preached: They received it not as a human message but a message from God.

¹⁷ **tn** Grk “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:4.

¹⁸ **tc** τῶν ἰδίων (*idiōus*, “their own prophets”) is found in D¹ Ψ ㉓ sy Mcion¹. This is obviously a secondary reading. Marcion’s influence may stand behind part of the tradition, but the Byzantine text probably added the adjective in light of its mention in v. 14 and as a clarification or interpretation of which prophets were in view.

¹⁹ **tn** Or “and drove us out” (cf. Acts 17:5-10).

are displeasing to God and are opposed to all people, 2:16 because they hinder us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. Thus they constantly fill up their measure of sins,¹ but wrath² has come upon them completely.³

Forced Absence from Thessalonica

2:17 But when we were separated from you, brothers and sisters,⁴ for a short time (in presence, not in affection)⁵ we became all the more fervent in our great desire⁶ to see you in person.⁷ 2:18 For we wanted to come to you (I, Paul, in fact tried again and again)⁸ but Satan thwarted us. 2:19 For who is our hope or joy or crown to boast of⁹ before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not of course you? 2:20 For you are our glory and joy!

3:1 So when we could bear it no longer, we decided to stay on in Athens¹⁰ alone. 3:2 We¹¹ sent Timothy, our brother and fellow worker for God¹² in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen you

¹ **tn** Grk "to fill up their sins always."

² **tc** The Western text (D F G latt) adds τοῦ θεοῦ (*theou*) to ὀργή (*orgē*) to read "the wrath of God," in emulation of the normal Pauline idiom (cf., e.g., Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6) and, most likely, to clarify which wrath is in view (since ὀργή is articular).

tn Or "the wrath," possibly referring back to the mention of wrath in 1:10.

³ **tn** Or "at last."

⁴ **tn** Grk "brothers." See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:4.

⁵ **tn** Grk "in face, not in heart."

⁶ **tn** Grk "with great desire."

⁷ **tn** Grk "to see your face."

⁸ **tn** Or "several times"; Grk, "both once and twice." The literal expression "once and twice" is frequently used as a Greek idiom referring to an indefinite low number, but more than once ("several times"); see L&N 60.70.

⁹ **sn** Crown to boast of (Grk "crown of boasting"). Paul uses boasting or exultation to describe the Christian's delight in being commended for faithful service by the Lord at his return (1 Cor 9:15-16; 2 Cor 1:12-14; 10:13-18; Phil 2:16; and 1 Cor 3:14; 4:5).

¹⁰ **map** For location see JP1-C2; JP2-C2; JP3-C2; JP4-C2.

¹¹ **tn** Here καί (*kai*) has not been translated because of differences between Greek and English style.

¹² **tc** A variety of readings occurs in this verse. Instead of "and fellow worker for God" (καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, *kai sunergon tou theou*), B has "and fellow worker" (καὶ συνεργόν); **NA** P Ψ 0278 G 81 629* 1241 1739 1881 2464 lat co read "and servant of God" (καὶ διάκονον τοῦ θεοῦ, *kai diakonon tou theou*); D² **℣** and a few versional witnesses read "and a servant of God and our fellow worker" (καὶ διάκονον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ συνεργὸν ἡμῶν); and F G have "servant and fellow worker for God" (διάκονον καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ). The reading of the text (καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ) is found in D* 33 b (d m o) Ambst (Pel). It may be argued that all readings that do not collocate συνεργὸν with θεοῦ are secondary, as this is certainly the harder reading. Indeed, in only one other place in the NT are human beings said to be συνεργοὶ θεοῦ (*sunergoi theou*; 1 Cor 3:9), and the simplest (though by no means the only) interpretation is that the genitive should be taken associatively ("a fellow worker in association with God"). It is difficult to account for συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ here unless it is authentic because of the theological difficulty that would be easily seen in this wording. A genealogy of the readings suggests that various scribes may have deleted τοῦ θεοῦ or swapped διάκονον for συνεργὸν to remove the offense. The readings of the Byzantine text and two Western mss (F G) appear to be conflation of earlier readings, but the reading of F G nevertheless indirectly supports καὶ

and encourage you about your faith, 3:3 so that no one would be shaken by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. 3:4 For in fact when we were with you, we were telling you in advance that we would suffer affliction, and so it has happened, as you well know.¹³ 3:5 So¹⁴ when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter somehow tempted you and our toil had proven useless.

3:6 But now Timothy has come¹⁵ to us from you and given us the good news of your faith and love and that you always think of us with affection¹⁶ and long to see us just as we also long to see you!¹⁷ 3:7 So¹⁸ in all our distress and affliction, we were reassured about you, brothers and sisters,¹⁹ through your faith. 3:8 For now we are alive again,²⁰ if you stand firm in the Lord. 3:9 For how can we thank God enough for you,²¹ for all the joy we feel²² because of you before our God? 3:10 We pray earnestly night and day to see you in person²³ and make up what may be lacking in your faith.

3:11 Now may God our Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. 3:12 And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we do for you, 3:13 so that your hearts are strengthened in holiness to be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.²⁴

συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ since it does not remove the offense. Although the witnesses for καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ are minimal, the internal evidence is quite strong in favor of this reading. With hesitation, it is adopted as authentic.

tn Although 1 Thess 3:2 is frequently understood to mean that Timothy is "God's fellow worker," such a view assumes that the genitive θεοῦ (*theou*) is associative for it is related to συνεργὸν (*sunergon*). However, a genitive of association is not required by the syntax (cf. ExSyn 130).

¹³ **tn** Grk "just as it also occurred and you know."

¹⁴ **tn** Or "for this reason."

¹⁵ **tn** Grk "but now Timothy having come," a subordinate clause leading to the main clause of v. 7.

¹⁶ **tn** Grk "you have a good remembrance of us always."

¹⁷ **tn** Grk "just as also we you."

¹⁸ **tn** Or "for this reason."

¹⁹ **tn** Grk "brothers." See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:4.

²⁰ **tn** Grk "because now we live," in comparison with his feelings of dread in not knowing how they were doing (cf. 2:17-3:5).

²¹ **tn** Grk "what thanks can we render to God about you."

²² **tn** Grk "all the joy with which we rejoice."

²³ **tn** Grk "to see your face."

²⁴ **tc** ‡ Important and early witnesses (**NA*** A D* 81 629 lat) have ἄμην (*amen*, "amen") at the end of this benediction, while the majority of mss, including several excellent witnesses (**N**² B D² F G Ψ 0278 1739 1881 **℣** it sy sa), lack the particle. A decision is difficult, but in light of Paul's habit of adding the ἄμην to his notes of praise, even in the middle of his letters (cf. Rom 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; Gal 1:5), one might expect scribes to emulate this practice. Although a decision is difficult, it is probably best to follow the shorter reading. NA²⁷ has the particle in brackets, indicating some doubts as to its authenticity.

A Life Pleasing to God

4:1 Finally then, brothers and sisters,¹ we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received instruction from us about how² you must live and please God (as you are in fact living)³ that you do so more and more. **4:2** For you know what commands we gave you through the Lord Jesus. **4:3** For this is God's will: that you become holy,⁴ that you keep away from sexual immorality, **4:4** that each of you know how to possess his own body⁵ in holiness and honor, **4:5** not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God. **4:6** In this matter no one should violate the rights of his brother or take advantage of him,⁶ because the Lord is the avenger in all these cases,⁷ as we also told you earlier and warned you solemnly. **4:7** For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. **4:8** Consequently the one who rejects this is not rejecting human authority⁸ but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

4:9 Now on the topic of brotherly love⁹ you have no need for anyone to write you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. **4:10** And indeed you are practicing it toward all the brothers and sisters¹⁰ in all of Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more,¹¹ **4:11** to aspire to lead a quiet life, to attend to your own business, and to work with your hands, as we commanded you. **4:12** In this way you will live¹² a decent life before outsiders and not be in need.¹³

The Lord Returns for Believers

4:13 Now we do not want you to be uninformed,¹⁴ brothers and sisters,¹⁵ about those who are asleep,¹⁶ so that you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope. **4:14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that¹⁷ God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep as Christians.¹⁸ **4:15** For we tell you this by the word of the Lord,¹⁹ that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep. **4:16** For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel,²⁰ and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ

1 tn Grk "brothers." See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:4.

2 sn As you received instruction from us about how (Grk "as you received from us how"). The Greek word translated *received* is used for accepting instructions passed on as fixed traditions from teacher to follower. Paul speaks in these terms about doctrinal traditions as well as ethical instruction that he passes on to his converts and expects them to keep (cf. 1 Cor 11:2, 23; 15:1-3; Gal 1:9; Phil 4:9; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6).

3 tc This parenthetical clause is absent in several later witnesses (D² Ψ ̅), but it may have been expunged for sounding redundant. The longer text, in this instance, is solidly supported by Ɀ A B D* F G 0183^{vid} 0278 33 81 104 326 365 629 *al* *co* and should be unquestionably preferred.

4 tn Or "your sanctification."

5 tn Grk "to gain [or possess] his own vessel." "Vessel" is most likely used figuratively for "body" (cf. 2 Cor 4:7). Some take it to mean "wife" (thus, "to take a wife for himself" or "to live with his wife"), but this is less likely. See J. Smith, "1 Thess 4:4 – Breaking the Impasse," *BBR* 10 (Fall 2000), who argues that "vessel" in this context is very likely a euphemism for the sexual organs.

6 tn Grk "not to transgress against or defraud his brother in the matter," continuing the sentence of vv. 3-5.

7 tn Grk "concerning all these things."

8 tn Grk "rejecting man."

9 tn Grk "concerning brotherly love."

10 tn Grk "brothers"; this applies to the second occurrence as well. See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:4.

11 sn To do so more and more. See 1 Thess 4:1.

12 tn Grk "that you may live," continuing the sentence of 4:10b-11.

13 tn Or "not be dependent on anyone"; Grk "and have need of nothing," "of no one."

14 tn Grk "ignorant."

15 tn Grk "brothers." See note on the phrase "brothers and sisters" in 1:4.

16 tn The verb κοιμάω (*koimāō*) literally means "sleep," but it is often used in the Bible as a euphemism for death when speaking of believers. This metaphorical usage by its very nature emphasizes the hope of resurrection: Believers will one day "wake up" out of death. Here the term refers to death, but "sleep" was used in the translation to emphasize the metaphorical, rhetorical usage of the term. This word also occurs in vv. 14 and 15.

17 tn "we believe that" is understood from the first clause of the verse, which is parallel. Grk "so also God will bring."

18 tn Grk "those who have fallen asleep through Jesus." It is possible that "through Jesus" describes "bring," but this gives the unlikely double reference, "through Jesus God will bring them with Jesus." Instead it describes their "falling sleep," since through him their death is only sleep and not the threat it once was. Also Christians are those whose total existence – life and death – is in and through and for Christ (1 Cor 8:6).

19 sn The word of the Lord is a technical expression in OT literature, often referring to a divine prophetic utterance (e.g., Gen 15:1, Isa 1:10, Jonah 1:1). In the NT it occurs 15 times: 3 times as ῥῆμα τοῦ κυρίου (*rhēma tou kurīou*; Luke 22:61, Acts 11:16, 1 Pet 1:25) and 12 times as λόγος τοῦ κυρίου (*logos tou kurīou*; here and in Acts 8:25; 13:44, 48, 49; 15:35, 36; 16:32; 19:10, 20; 1 Thess 1:8; 2 Thess 3:1). As in the OT, this phrase focuses on the prophetic nature and divine origin of what has been said.

20 tn Neither noun in this phrase (ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου, *en phōnē archangelou*, "with the voice of the archangel") has the article in keeping with Apollonius' Canon. Since ἀρχάγγελος (*archangelos*) is most likely monadic, both nouns are translated as definite in keeping with Apollonius' Corollary (see *ExSyn* 250-51).

will rise first. **4:17** Then we who are alive, who are left,¹ will be suddenly caught up² together³ with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. **4:18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The Day of the Lord

5:1 Now on the topic of times and seasons,⁴ brothers and sisters,⁵ you have no need for anything to be written to you. **5:2** For you know quite well that the day of the Lord⁶ will come in the same way as a thief in the night.⁷ **5:3** Now when⁸ they are saying, “There is peace and security,”⁹ then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains¹⁰ on a pregnant woman, and they will surely not escape. **5:4** But you, brothers and sisters,¹¹ are not in the darkness for the day to overtake you like a thief would. **5:5** For you all are sons of the light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness. **5:6** So then we must not sleep as the rest, but must stay alert and sober. **5:7** For those who sleep, sleep at night

and those who get drunk are drunk at night. **5:8** But since we are of the day, we must stay sober *by putting on the breastplate¹² of faith and love and as a helmet our hope for salvation.*¹³ **5:9** For God did not destine us for wrath¹⁴ but for gaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. **5:10** He died¹⁵ for us so that whether we are alert or asleep¹⁶ we will come to life together with him. **5:11** Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, just as you are in fact doing.

Final Instructions

5:12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters,¹⁷ to acknowledge those who labor among you and preside over you in the Lord and admonish you, **5:13** and to esteem them most highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. **5:14** And we urge you, brothers and sisters,¹⁸ admonish the undisciplined, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient toward all. **5:15** See that no one pays back evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all. **5:16** Always rejoice, **5:17** constantly pray, **5:18** in everything give thanks. For this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. **5:19** Do not extinguish the Spirit. **5:20** Do not treat prophecies with contempt. **5:21** But examine all things; hold fast to what is good. **5:22** Stay away from every form of evil.

¹ **tc** The words οἱ περιλειπόμενοι (*hoi perileipomenoi*, “[the ones] who are left”) are lacking in F G (0226^{ms}) ar b as well as a few fathers, but the rest of the textual tradition has the words. Most likely, the Western mss omitted the words because of perceived redundancy with οἱ ζῶντες (*hoi zōntes*, “[the ones] who are alive”).

² **tn** Or “snatched up.” The Greek verb ἀρπάζω implies that the action is quick or forceful, so the translation supplied the adverb “suddenly” to make this implicit notion clear.

³ **tn** Or “simultaneously,” but this meaning does not fit as well in the parallel in 5:10.

⁴ **tn** *Grk* “concerning the times and the seasons,” a reference to future periods of eschatological fulfillment (cf. Acts 1:7).

⁵ **tn** *Grk* “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:4.

⁶ **sn** The *day of the Lord* is the period of time in the future when the Lord will intervene in the events of this earth to consummate his redemption and his judgment (Isa 2:11-12; 13:6-13; Ezek 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:32; 3:18; Amos 5:18-20; Obad 15-17; Zeph 1:7-18; 2:2-3; Zech 14:1, 13, 20-21; Mal 4:1, 5; 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10). It includes both blessings and curses, though the latter is emphasized here.

⁷ **sn** Jesus used a *thief* coming at *night* as an illustration of the unexpected and hostile nature of the coming of God’s judgment in the future. This is repeated in various ways in v. 4; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:15.

⁸ **tc** † δέ (*de*, “now”) is found in **N*** B D 0226 6 1505 1739 1881 *al*, but lacking in **N*** A F G 33 *it*. γάρ (*gar*, “for”) is the reading of the Byzantine text and a few other witnesses (Ψ 0278 *ms*). Although normally the shorter reading is to be preferred, the external evidence is superior for δέ (being found in the somewhat better Alexandrian and Western witnesses). What, then, is to explain the γάρ? Scribes were prone to replace δέ with γάρ, especially in sentences suggesting a causal or explanatory idea, thus making the point more explicit. Internally, the omission of δέ looks unintentional, a case of homoiocartion (ΟΤΔΝΔΕ ΑΕΓΩCΙΝ). Although a decision is difficult, in this instance δέ has the best credentials for authenticity.

⁹ **tn** *Grk* “peace and security,” with “there is” understood in the Greek construction.

¹⁰ **tn** *Grk* a singular “birth pain.”

¹¹ **tn** *Grk* “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:4.

¹² **sn** An allusion to Isa 59:17.

¹³ **tn** *Grk* “hope of salvation” (“a helmet...for salvation”) is an allusion to Isa 59:17).

¹⁴ **sn** *God did not destine us for wrath*. In context this refers to the outpouring of God’s *wrath* on the earth in the day of the Lord (1 Thess 5:2-4).

¹⁵ **tn** *Grk* “the one who died,” describing Jesus Christ (1 Thess 5:9). Because of the length and complexity of the Greek sentence, a new sentence was started at the beginning of v. 10 in the translation.

¹⁶ **sn** The phrases *alert or asleep* may be understood (1) of moral alertness (living in faith, love, and hope as vv. 6, 8 call for, versus being unresponsive to God) or (2) of physical life and death (whether alive or dead). The first fits better with the context of 5:1-9, while the second returns to the point Paul started with in 4:13-18 (no disadvantage for the believing dead).

¹⁷ **tn** *Grk* “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:4.

¹⁸ **tn** *Grk* “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:4.

Conclusion

5:23 Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **5:24** He who calls you is trustworthy, and he will in fact do this.¹ **5:25** Brothers and sisters,² pray for us too. **5:26** Greet all the brothers and sisters³ with a holy kiss. **5:27** I call on you solemnly in the Lord⁴ to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.⁵ **5:28** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.⁶

¹ **tn** *Grk* “who will also do,” with the object understood from v. 23.

² **tn** *Grk* “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:4.

³ **tn** *Grk* “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:4.

⁴ **tn** *Grk* “I adjure you by the Lord,” “I put you under oath before the Lord.”

⁵ **tc** Most witnesses, including some important ones (**ℵ**² A Ψ [33] 1739 1881 **℣** ar vg sy bo), read “holy” before “brothers [and sisters]” (ἁγίοις ἀδελφοῖς, *hagiois adelphois*). It is possible that ἁγίοις dropped out by way of homoioteleuton (in uncial script the words would be written ΔΓΙΟΙCΔΔΕΛΦΟΙC), but it is equally possible that the adjective was added because of the influence of ἁγίω (*hagiō*) in v. 26. Another internal consideration is that the expression ἁγιοὶ ἀδελφοί (*hagioi adelphoi*, “holy brothers”) is not found elsewhere in the *corpus Paulinum*, though Col 1:2 comes close. But this fact could be argued either way: It may suggest that such an expression is not Pauline; on the other hand, the unusualness of the expression could have resulted in an alteration by some scribes. At the same time, since 1 Thessalonians is one of the earliest of Paul’s letters, and written well before he addresses Christians as *saints* (ἅγιοι) in 1 Corinthians for the first time, one might argue that Paul’s own forms of expression were going through something of a metamorphosis. Scribes insensitive to this fact could well impute later Pauline collocations onto his earlier letters. The internal evidence seems to support, albeit slightly, the omission of ἁγίοις here. Externally, most of the better witnesses of the Alexandrian and Western texts (**ℵ*** B D F G 0278 it sa) combine in having the shorter reading. Although the rating of “A” in UBS⁴ for the omission seems too generous, this reading is still to be preferred.

tn *Grk* “brothers.” See note on the phrase “brothers and sisters” in 1:4.

⁶ **tc** Most witnesses, including a few important ones (**ℵ** A D¹ Ψ 1739^a **℣** lat sy bo), conclude this letter with ἁμήν (*amēn*, “amen”). Such a conclusion is routinely added by scribes to NT books because a few of these books originally had such an ending (cf. Rom 16:27; Gal 6:18; Jude 25). A majority of Greek witnesses have the concluding ἁμήν in every NT book except Acts, James, and 3 John (and even in these books, ἁμήν is found in some witnesses). It is thus a predictable variant. Further, the witnesses for the omission are sufficiently early and diffuse (B D* F G 0278 6 33 1739* 1881 it sa) to render the verdict against the particle here.