
2

Christology in the Thessalonian Correspondence

OUR 1 THESSALONIANS¹ PROBABLY WAS written within a year after Paul (and Silas) had been hurried out of town in the dead of night (Acts 17:10).² His anxiety about the status of the beleaguered community he had left behind, and his own thwarted attempts to return, had finally resulted in their sending Timothy, who had returned to Paul and Silas in Corinth with basically good news (1 Thess 2:17–3:10). But not everything was as it should be, so he sent this letter, most of which is a rehearsal, from his perspective, of the intervening year (chs. 1–3) but which also offers some correctives (4:1–12), plus information about the coming of the Lord in light of someone who had died in the meantime (4:13–5:11).

Not long after, news reached Paul that things had in fact not progressed as he had hoped; indeed, someone apparently had spoken prophetically—as though speaking for Paul—that the Day of the Lord had come (2 Thess 2:1–2, 15),³ thus increasing anxiety in the midst of increased persecution. This resulted in our 2 Thessalonians.⁴

¹Commentaries on 1–2 Thessalonians are listed in the bibliography (pp. 639–40); they are cited in this chapter by author’s surname only. For reasons noted below, the vast majority of commentaries deal with both of these letters in the same volume, which is one reason for keeping them together in the same chapter. The other reason is that, having been written to the same believers probably within one year’s span, the two letters reflect a very similar christological perspective.

²Given the clear angst that Paul reveals in 1 Thess 2:14–3:10 and the sense of suddenness in his departure, there is no good reason to doubt the basic historicity of the account in Acts 17. In this case, the makeup of the community is probably mostly Gentile (see 1 Thess 1:9–10), but with roots in the synagogue, which will account for their presupposed familiarity with the Septuagint.

³For this perspective on the difficulties of 2 Thess 2:2, see G. D. Fee, “Pneuma and Eschatology in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–2: A Proposal about ‘Testing the Prophets’ and the Purpose of 2 Thessalonians,” in *To What End Exegesis? Essays Textual, Exegetical, and Theological* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 290–308.

⁴Doubt about the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians has a long history (see esp. W. Wrede, *Die Echtheit des zweiten Thessalonicherbriefs* [TUGAL 9/2; Leipzig: Hinrichs,

The first thing to be noted, then, is that these two letters have a relationship to one another that is unique to the corpus. Unlike the relationship between 1 and 2 Corinthians, for example, which stands at the opposite end of the spectrum with regard to similarities between them, these two letters are (not surprisingly) especially similar in that Paul in the second letter feels the need once more to cover much of the same ground. At the same time, these similarities are such that it is very difficult to discuss what appears in one without noticing what appears in the other. Nevertheless, I have tried to avoid comparisons in the discussions in 1 Thessalonians, except for a few isolated instances. But this is nearly impossible to do with regard to 2 Thessalonians, especially with regard to its Christology, which is why I have chosen to look at the Christology of the two letters together in the same chapter.

The Christology that presents itself in these letters is especially noteworthy, first of all because there is not a self-consciously christological moment in either of them.⁵ That is, there is no passage where Paul is deliberately trying either to set forth Christ as divine (or human, for that matter) or to explain the nature of his divinity. His interest in Christ, as we come to expect in his later letters, is primarily soteriological.⁶ “Our Lord,

1903]), based mostly on 2:3–12, which is perceived as standing in unrelieved tension with 1 Thess 5:1–11. Other slight differences between the two letters are then also brought to bear (e.g., 2 Thessalonians has less warmth; there are a few stylistic differences and “breaks” from Pauline thought). But, as Marshall (34) has pointed out, “it is very doubtful whether a set of weak arguments adds up to one powerful one.” Indeed, the considerable historical difficulties that one has to overcome to hold this view far outweigh any alleged differences. It also might be pointed out that if the same criteria that bring 2 Thessalonians under doubt were applied to Romans in light of Galatians or to 2 Corinthians in light of 1 Corinthians, one would have a difficult time arguing for the authenticity of either. The evidence of this chapter shows how much the two letters have in common, precisely as one would expect from the same mind, over the same issues, in such close proximity in time. The attempt by M. J. J. Menken to capitalize on the (relatively small) christological differences between the two letters seems in the end to belie what he sets out to prove (“Christology in 2 Thessalonians: A Transformation of Pauline Tradition,” *EstBib* 54 [1996], 501–22). The “Pauline tradition” in this title refers exclusively to 1 Thessalonians! See also K. Donfried, *The Theology of the Shorter Pauline Letters* (Cambridge: University Press, 1993), 94–101, whose discussion seems to lead him to conclusions (the similarity of the Christology of both letters) opposite to his presuppositions about authorship.

⁵See R. Jewett, “A Matrix of Grace: The Theology of 2 Thessalonians as a Pauline Letter,” in *Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (vol. 1 of *Pauline Theology*; ed. J. M. Bassler; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 70. Implicit in this observation is the fact that the Thessalonians will also have been on the same page regarding Christ and do not need “proof.”

⁶This also readily explains why there is so little interest in this topic in the literature, including in the commentaries. The exceptions (noted only if the interest is in Christology per se): “Note D” in Milligan, 135–40; R. F. Collins, “Paul’s Early Christology,” in *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians* (BETL 66; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1984), 253–84; L. Morris, chapter 2 (“Jesus Christ Our Lord”) in *1, 2 Thessalonians* (WBT; Dallas: Word, 1989), 27–40. R. E. H. Uprichard’s “The Person

Jesus Christ” is the divinely given Savior, who “died for us”⁷ (1 Thess 5:9–10) and whose resurrection has assured us that “we will live with him” (5:10) because he has also secured our “rescue from the coming wrath” (1:10) and our sharing in the coming glory (2 Thess 2:14). Thus “the Lord” is also the one whom believers “imitate” in their present suffering (1 Thess 1:6).⁸ In a similar manner, and as turns out to be the norm, Christ is therefore the basic content of the gospel (1 Thess 3:2; cf. 2 Thess 1:8), as well as the divine agent of much (the apostolic “instructions” [1 Thess 4:2]; the divine will [5:18]).

What is noteworthy, therefore, is the remarkably high Christology that one meets here, presupposed at every turn and in the most off-handed of ways. Thus, Jesus Christ, the present, reigning Lord, is understood to share in any number of divine prerogatives, yet Paul never loses sight of Christ’s prior earthly existence. And although no point is made of it here, in his next letter (1 Corinthians) it appears quite clear that Paul does this while maintaining his rigorous monotheism (1 Cor 8:4–6).⁹ Paul’s “Christology” in these first two letters, therefore, is not a matter of christological assertions or explanations; rather, one is struck by the reality that this rigorous monotheist can speak about Christ in ways as remarkable as one finds here—statements that by their very nature would seem to put considerable pressure on that monotheism.

I. Christology in 1 Thessalonians

Christology in 1 Thessalonians sets the pace for the discussion of Christology in all the subsequent letters, not because all of Paul’s christological emphases get a hearing here but because the major matters appear on the

and Work of Christ in 1 Thessalonians” (*EvQ* 53 [1981]: 108–14) has only a small portion devoted to the person of Christ.

⁷As early as 1 Thess 1:10 Paul sets a pattern that will continue throughout the twelve-to-fourteen-year span of his letters, where in the context of addressing the community in the second person plural (“*you* turned from idols”), he changes mid-stream to the first person plural (“Jesus, who rescues *us* from the coming wrath”), so as to include himself with them when speaking of the saving events. In 5:1–11 this switch takes place in v. 5 (“You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night”).

⁸This is one of the rare instances where Paul uses the title ὁ κύριος in reference to Jesus’ earthly life, although 1 Thess 2:15 might also qualify here (“they killed τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν”), as might 2 Thess 2:13, where “loved by the Lord” is probably a reference to his death on their behalf (see the discussion below). The usage noted here (1 Thess 1:6) is the kind of thing that should keep scholars from being too dogmatic about “Pauline usage.” Every once in a while he surprises us. In this case the present exalted Lord is the one who also suffered in his earthly life. The same thing happens in 1 Thess 2:15, which implies that the earthly Jesus was a prophetic figure whose death was in the long line of prophets who were killed.

⁹But see the discussion of 1 Thess 1:10 below for a different kind of emphasis on Jewish monotheism.

first page of the first letter, as presupposition and without emphasis. The special emphases within the letter itself are to be found first of all in the data themselves.

A Preliminary Look at the Data

All of the texts that specifically refer to Christ in some way are given in appendix I (at the end of this chapter); an analysis of usage is given in appendix II. Several matters about this usage need to be pointed out.¹⁰

First, as just noted, all the ways that Paul will speak of Christ in the subsequent letters are already in place in this letter.¹¹ This is all the more remarkable, given both the nature of the letter itself (comfort and correction) and the apparent lack of “need” to say so many of the things that he does. Thus we find the two major aspects of Pauline Christology already in place as presupposition: Jesus as the messianic “son of God,” who is now recognized as the eternal Son; and Jesus as the exalted Lord of Ps 110:1. The one reference to “the Son” (1:9) and the three uses of the earthly name “Jesus” alone are especially related to these realities.

Other usage phenomena also need to be singled out. First, although references to Christ appear slightly less than references to God the Father,¹² most noticeable is the frequency with which Christ and the Father are brought together in clauses and phrases, even though for Paul, as in all his letters, the Father is always seen as the “prime mover” with regard to the saving event.

Second, the fullsome combination of the title “Lord,” the name “Jesus,” and the former title-turned-name “Christ”¹³ occurs slightly less (5x) than does the combination “Lord Jesus” (6x); the combination “Christ Jesus” occurs 2 times.

Third, the most striking feature of usage in this letter, which will stand out even more in 2 Thessalonians, is the predominance of the title κύριος over all other designations. It occurs either alone (13x) or in combination (11x) in all but 9 of the 33 specific references to Christ in this letter. This is probably related to the fact that the Thessalonians’ persecution stems primarily from their affirmation of Christ as κύριος in a city where such allegiance was offered to the Roman emperor. This usage, therefore, will receive the greater attention in this chapter.

¹⁰See also Milligan, 135–40.

¹¹κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (5x); κύριος Ἰησοῦς (6x); Χριστός Ἰησοῦς (2x); (ὁ) κύριος (13x); Χριστός (3x); Ἰησοῦς (3x); υἱός (1x).

¹²There are 33 specific references to Christ and 36 to God the Father; this ratio is slightly reversed in 2 Thessalonians (23 to 18).

¹³The fact that one of the occurrences of Χριστός alone is articular (1 Thess 3:2; cf. 2 Thess 3:5) has led some (e.g., Findlay, 65, 203; Milligan, 136) to think of it as titular (in both instances). While that is possible, it must be noted that both are genitives modifying a noun that is also articular, which casts considerable doubt on the suggestion.

Excursus: The Use of the Definite Article with Κύριος

In this first exegetical chapter we need to note one of the more subtle features of Pauline usage: his use or nonuse of the definite article with the various formulations of κύριος. It has been suggested that anarthrous κύριος is a referent to God the Father,¹⁴ but that is patently not true in the vast majority of cases in the Pauline corpus, beginning with these letters. Indeed, the only certain cases of such are the twelve instances where anarthrous κύριος occurs in a *citation* of the Septuagint and no point is made regarding the identity of κύριος.¹⁵

But in these two letters, for example, anarthrous usage occurs at least once with every name and title and with every combination of them (see appendix II). Usage has nothing to do with the referent (“Christ” in *all* cases in these two letters) and everything to do with other discernible phenomena. For example, a habit of usage found in these letters, which remains fairly consistent throughout the corpus, is Paul’s use of anarthrous κύριος with certain prepositions (especially ἐν and ὑπό). This happens also with some echoes of the Septuagint where κύριος in Paul’s sentences now refers to Christ.¹⁶

This phenomenon is also one of those subtle moments that argue strongly for Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, since this fluctuation of usage, which includes some constants as well, is exactly the same in both of these letters and quite in keeping with the rest of the corpus—a feature that a pseudepigrapher could hardly have been expected to imitate.

Jesus as Messianic/Eternal Son of God

Although there are no inherent reasons in these letters for Paul to make reference to Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, nonetheless there are good reasons to think that such lies behind what has become for most readers the most commonplace of all matters in the corpus: the Pauline salutations. At least such a view seems arguable from the data.¹⁷

¹⁴See, e.g., D. A. Carson, *From Triumphalism to Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10–13* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 147 n. 3.

¹⁵For these exceptions, see n. 7 in ch. 3 (p. 87).

¹⁶This phenomenon, we should note here, also serves to verify that Paul is indeed echoing the Septuagint at these places (see the discussion in the preceding chapter, pp. 20–25).

¹⁷In most of the following chapters I let the evidence itself lead me to what is discussed first; but since κύριος Christology dominates both Thessalonian letters, I have chosen to put the present secondary christological matter in first position, partly because it comes up first (1 Thess 1:10) but mostly to keep it from getting lost at the end of the longer analysis of κύριος Christology.

1 Thessalonians 1:1, 3 (God as Father)

1:1 Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων
ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ¹⁸
Paul and Silas and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians
*in God the Father **and the Lord, Jesus Christ***¹⁹

1:3 καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος **τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ**
ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν
*and endurance of hope **in our Lord, Jesus Christ***
in the presence of God, even our Father

In their very first appearance in the Pauline corpus (1:1), God and Christ are joined together by a καὶ as the compound object of the preposition ἐν, and they are given the basic designations that will appear in the majority of side-by-side references in the corpus: “God the Father” and “the Lord, Jesus Christ.”²⁰ A sentence later (v. 3), again side by side but not joined by καὶ, they are both independently qualified by ἡμῶν (*our*). In this second instance we also meet for the first time the designation of θεός as τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, which most likely is to be understood as a hendiadys (= “God, even our Father”). The phenomenon of the possessive with both “Father” and “Lord” in 1:3 occurs in the other two instances of the joined names in this letter (3:11, 13).²¹

However, in the first occurrence of the compound in 2 Thessalonians (1:1), Paul begins a habit that will recur regularly hereafter throughout the “church corpus”:²² using the possessive with only the first designation,

¹⁸For further exposition of this passage, esp. the meaning of ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ and the implications of both divine persons as double object of the single preposition, see pp. 48–50 below.

¹⁹Unless otherwise noted, the English translations throughout are my own, usually very “literal” so that the Pauline emphases or echoes of OT usage can be seen clearly in an English rendition. As throughout this study, the items in boldface are references to Christ, while any mention of God is underlined.

²⁰The statistics are telling: πατήρ as a designation for God occurs 37 times in the corpus; in 15 instances Christ is joined to “the Father” with a καὶ (1 Thess 1:1; 3:11; 2 Thess 1:1, 2; 2:16; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:1; 1:3; Rom 1:7; Phlm 3; Eph 1:2; 5:23; 1 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4; 2 Tim 1:2); 5 times God is designated “the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 1:3; 11:31; Rom 15:6; Col 1:3; Eph 1:3); in 15 other instances Christ occurs in immediate proximity (1 Thess 1:3; 3:13; 1 Cor 8:6; 15:24; 2 Cor 1:3; Gal 1:4; 4:6; Rom 6:4; Col 1:2, 12–13; 3:17; Eph 1:17; 2:18; 4:6; 5:20). Only in 2 Cor 6:18 (a citation of the Septuagint) and Eph 3:14 is God mentioned as “our Father” without immediate relationship to Christ. For the full list of passages, see the appendix to ch. 14 (pp. 554–57).

²¹As well as in 2 Thess 2:16, where the names occur in reverse order.

²²This is my designation for the first ten letters (including Philemon, which is also addressed to the church in Colossae and therefore was intended to be read aloud in the church along with Colossians).

“Father.” On the basis of the usage in 1 Thessalonians, one may rightly assume that the “our” in these later instances is intended to do double duty for both nouns (“Father” and “Lord”).

At issue for us christologically is how the designation of “Father” for God, which appears in these first two instances in a fully presuppositional way, came to be Paul’s most common way to refer to God when God and Christ are mentioned in conjunction with one another. The solution to this question does not seem hard to come by. Four strands of evidence suggest that God becomes, in Paul’s thinking, “our” Father because he is first of all the “Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ,” which in turn implies Christ as “the Son”²³—all of which has its origins, I will argue, in Jewish messianism.²⁴

First, even though by the time of these first letters ὁ Χριστός has moved from title to name, Paul will sometimes still use it in a titular way to refer to Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. This is most certainly true of Rom 9:5 and most likely true of 1 Cor 1:23, 30 (see pp. 100–102 below). Thus Jewish messianism not only accounts for its usage in early Christianity as referring to the risen Lord, Jesus, but alone accounts for the universality of this title-turned-name in the early church.²⁵

Second, beginning in 2 Cor 1:3 and repeated in 11:31, the one God is now identified as “the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ,” a designation that will recur several more times in the corpus (Rom 15:6; Col 1:3; Eph 1:3). Inherent in such a designation is the understanding of Jesus as God’s Son.

Third, in two later passages, 1 Cor 15:25–28 and Col 1:12–15, Jesus as “the Son” is specifically tied to his kingly reign, and in the latter instance so closely tied to Davidic themes that Jewish messianism can scarcely be gainsaid.

Fourth, and most importantly, God becomes “our Father” through the gift of the Holy Spirit, whom Paul explicitly identifies in Gal 4:6 as “the Spirit of the Son,” whom God sent “into our hearts” and who is thus responsible

²³On this implication see, e.g., R. F. Collins, “The Theology of Paul’s First Letter to the Thessalonians,” in *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians* (BETL 66; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1984), 232–34.

²⁴At this point, one is faced with the primary difficulty in methodology for the “chronological” approach taken in this study: how much can one assume about Pauline presuppositions based on what we know from later texts? Although the issue of “Son of God” has been a considerable one over many years, it needs to be pointed out that in the next letter after these two (1 Cor 15:25–28), also written to a primarily Gentile community, the combination of “King” and “Son” occurs together in a context that suggests that whatever “Son” came to mean in the course of time, its origins as a messianic designation probably lay with the combination of Exod 4:22–23, 2 Sam 7:13–14, and Ps 2. For an even-handed response to the considerable skepticism regarding “Jewish messianism” and its role in early Christology, see W. Horbury, “Jewish Messianism and Early Christology,” in *Contours of Christology in the New Testament* (ed. R. N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 3–24.

²⁵Indeed, it occurs in every document in the NT except 3 John (but it does occur in the companion 2 John).

for believers' crying out to God the Father in the language of the Son ("Abba"). And since the Son, as "God's own Son" (Rom 8:3), has been sent forth by the Father (Gal 4:4), the language of sonship does double duty for Paul: to refer in its first instance to Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, while at the same time referring to the eternal, preexistent Son of God.²⁶

When this evidence is combined with the reality that contemporary Judaism rarely referred to God as "our Father," one is led to conclude that such a designation for the one God, commonplace though it is for later Christians, has lying behind it an implicit "Son of God" Christology. Evidence for this can be found throughout the Pauline corpus, the first instance of which occurs in 1 Thess 1:10, where, hard on the heels of the designation of God as "Father," Paul refers to Christ as "the Son."

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 (Christ as Son)

1:9–10 ἵνα ἐπιστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ¹⁰ καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν ῥυόμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης
⁹how you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God
¹⁰and to await his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath

One of the singular characteristics of 1 Thessalonians as a letter is that it actually has the appearance of one, at the beginning at least. What begins as a (typical) prayer and thanksgiving report (1:2–3) soon evolves into a chronological narrative about Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians. He begins with a reminder about the Thessalonians' actual conversion under the apostles' ministry (1:4–6), a conversion that became so well known that it preceded Paul as he moved from Macedonia down the Achaian Peninsula to Corinth (1:7–10). For his own reasons, he next reminds them of the nature of his own ministry among them (2:1–12); and after returning momentarily to the thanksgiving (2:13), he then resumes the narrative, taking up in turn (1) what had happened to them in the meantime (2:14–16), (2) his own thwarted attempts to return (2:17–20), (3) the sending of Timothy instead (3:1–5), and finally (4) his great relief to receive basically good news about them from Timothy (3:6–10).

The present text occurs at the end of his report about the notoriety of the Thessalonians' conversion, which with obvious deliberation he also uses to score some important theological points.²⁷ What has been noised abroad,

²⁶For the full argumentation for this perspective, see ch. 14.

²⁷Scholarship in the latter half of the preceding century saw a flurry of activity devoted to finding pre-Pauline creedal moments in his letters, of which this passage is usually brought forward as the first. Whether this passage is pre-Pauline is moot. The present interest is not in pre-Pauline Christology but in Paul's. And here, as in

and reported to Paul, is “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 rescues us from the coming wrath.” Three points are made: (1) the contrast between their “before” and “after,” with scarcely hidden Jewish scorn for idolatry and a typically Jewish designation of God as “the living and true God”; (2) that they are currently “between the times” and are waiting for the conclusion of their salvation, which includes escaping the coming wrath (that their persecutors will indeed experience); and (3) that the one responsible for their salvation is the risen Jesus, here designated as “the Son of God.”

We begin by noting that the text breathes the perspective of Jewish monotheism. Both epithets, “the living God” and “the true God,” reflect the language of such monotheism in Israel’s long struggle against idolatry. Although the two terms appear together only in Jer 10:10 (“But Yahweh is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King”),²⁸ they appear separately in a variety of polemical contexts.²⁹ Whatever else is true of the God of the Jews, he is “the *living* God,” over against the *lifeless* idols of the pagan world; and precisely because he alone is the living God, he is therefore “the *true* God” over against the *false* gods of idolatry. Moreover, the living and true God is further identified, here for the first time in the corpus, as the God “who raised [his Son] from the dead.” This remarkable way of identifying the one God of Israel occurs just often enough in Paul’s writings for Hans Küng to remark that “‘he who raised Jesus from the dead’ becomes practically the designation of the Christian God.”³⁰

What is striking, therefore, on further reflection, is the designation of Christ as “*his Son* from heaven,³¹ whom he raised from the dead—*Jesus*, who

all such cases, one may assume that what Paul wrote (by dictation, presumably), he himself believed, whatever prior existence it may have had.

It should also be noted that some see this passage as the primary Christology of 1 Thessalonians. See the discussion in Collins, “Early Christology,” 254–55. But Collins, in keeping with a long tradition, does not pursue the possible messianism of the title “his Son.” In any case, here is an instance where the usage almost demands that Paul is picking up language with which the Thessalonians would have been familiar.

²⁸But see also *Jos. Asen.* 11:9–10.

²⁹For “the living God,” see, e.g., the oath formula in Num 14:21, 28 (“as [surely as] I live”); cf. Hos 2:1 (cited by Paul in Rom 9:26). It became a standard formula in the polemics of Second Temple Judaism (Dan 5:23 LXX; Bel 5 [Theodotion]; Sir 18:1; *Jub.* 21:3–4; *Jos. Asen.* 11:9–10). In the NT, see esp. Acts 14:15, where the wording of conversion is just as it appears here; cf. 1 Tim 4:10; Heb 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 1 Pet 1:23; Rev 7:2; 15:7. For “the true God,” see Wis 12:27; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.55; and in the NT, see esp. the Johannine literature (e.g., John 7:18; 8:26).

³⁰Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 361. Besides the present text, see 1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:4; Gal 1:1; Rom 4:24; (6:4); 8:11 (2x); 10:9; Col 2:12; Eph 1:20; cf. 1 Pet 1:21.

³¹A considerable literature has suggested that the “background” to this usage is Daniel’s “son of man” (Dan 7:13). Understandable as this might be, given (1) Paul’s

rescues us from the coming wrath.” That is, the “living and true God” has a Son, who is currently “in heaven” by virtue of the Father’s having raised him from the dead; and this Son is none other than the earthly Jesus, the one who also rescues³² us from the wrath of God that will be poured out on all who do not obey him (cf. 2 Thess 1:6–10).

Our present concern is to note that what is assumed in 1:1 now becomes explicit. And since it is easy for Christians who read their Bibles canonically to hear the title “Son of God” in Johannine terms, we note here that this is its first actual occurrence in the NT.³³ And since it is not a frequent term for Paul, something more needs to be said about its probable meaning in this first occurrence, especially as to how the Thessalonians may have understood it.

Although Paul is quite prepared to use “Son” for the risen Christ, as he will again in 1 Cor 15:28, it occurs most often in Paul’s letters with reference to the Son’s “giving his life” for us (2 Cor 1:19; Gal 2:20; 4:4–5; Rom 8:3, 32; Col 1:13). He also designates Christ as “Son” when he thinks of salvation as effecting the new creation, in which we are being transformed back into the divine image that is found perfectly in God’s Son (Rom 8:29–30). Nonetheless, several passages indicate that the presuppositional beginning point for this title is Jewish messianism: 1 Cor 15:23–28; Rom 1:3–4 (and 8:32 indirectly); Col 1:12–15³⁴ (on this matter, see the full discussion in ch. 14). For now, one needs to note that Paul’s reference here to the Son as *in heaven with the Father* most likely (presuppositionally) carries the double sense of the Son’s now reigning as *the Jewish Messiah*, who, through his resurrection and exaltation, has come to be understood as *the eternal Son*, who had been sent from the Father to redeem.³⁵

But would this double sense have been available to the Thessalonians? Most likely so. Both the internal evidence of the rest of these letters (Paul’s

language “await . . . from heaven” and (2) the fact that Jesus almost certainly used this Danielic “title” with reference to himself, there is nonetheless scarcely a hint of any kind in the Pauline corpus that Paul is influenced by this language. What can be demonstrated (see ch. 14) is that he associates “Son of God” with the Davidic kingship.

³²Gk. τὸν ῥυόμενον; the present tense here is probably not so much trying to say something about the “time” of the rescue, which in 5:9–10 is expressed in the past tense to refer to the saving event itself, as it is putting emphasis on the now exalted Son as the “Rescuer.”

³³This assumes, of course, that Galatians is not Paul’s earliest extant letter but was written between 2 Corinthians and Romans. See p. 6 n. 18 above.

³⁴One of the disappointing features of M. Hengel’s otherwise especially useful study of this title (*The Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976]) is his rather complete disregard of the use of this title for the Davidic king of Israel, which all the NT evidence together points to as the basic source of early Christian understanding.

³⁵See esp. the discussion of 1 Cor 15:23–28; Gal 4:4; Rom 8:3 below. See also D. Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 174–75.

intertextual use of the Septuagint) and the external evidence from Acts 17:1–6 suggest that many of these former idolators had already attached themselves to the Jewish synagogue and thus formed the nucleus of the neophyte Christian community.³⁶ One may therefore also assume that they themselves had already been instructed in the (now) double sense of Jesus as the Son of God.

For our present purposes, we should also note that this single (explicit) reference to “the Son” is in connection with his earthly name “Jesus,” where the emphasis is on his future “coming.” This seems especially to be in anticipation of 4:13–18.³⁷ The significance of this is that in the latter passage Paul shifts in v. 14, after explicit reference to Jesus’ resurrection, from the name “Jesus” to the title ὁ κύριος (*the Lord*). This combination indicates that the two most significant messianic “titles,” Lord and Son, which occur together a little later in 1 Cor 15:23–28, were already in place when Paul wrote this letter.

It is worth noting further that the combination κύριος Ἰησοῦς (*the Lord Jesus*), which occurs more often in 1 and 2 Thessalonians than anywhere else, appears most often in contexts where the reference is to Christ’s Parousia (1 Thess 2:11; 3:13; 2 Thess 1:7, 8, 12; 2:8). And this leads us to examine the use of κύριος in 1 Thessalonians.

Jesus as the Κύριος of Septuagint Yahweh Texts

The second messianic title, Jesus as the κύριος³⁸ of Ps 110:1,³⁹ plays by far the most important christological role in 1 Thessalonians, so much so that the rest of this discussion is given to an analysis of this usage.

³⁶It is worth noting here that Acts 17 records Paul as entering the synagogue and for three Sabbaths reasoning with them “*from the Scriptures*, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead, saying ‘This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah.’” The content of this “reasoning” had been presented earlier in Acts 13:16–47. There is no justifiable *historical* reason to doubt the essential accuracy of these pictures. Paul’s own letters, including this one, are full verification that these earliest converts are well acquainted with the arguments that the crucified and risen Jesus is indeed the promised Jewish Messiah, God’s exalted Son.

³⁷I say “especially” here because the emphasis on the “coming” is found throughout the letter (1:3; 2:12, 19–20; 3:13; 5:1–11, 23).

³⁸On Paul’s appropriation of Septuagintal κύριος = *Adonai* = YHWH passages to refer to Christ, see the initial study by L. Cerfaux, “‘Kyrios’ dans les citations pauliniennes de l’Ancien Testament,” *ETL* 20 (1943): 5–17; and more recently the published dissertation by D. B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul’s Christology* (WUNT 2/47; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).

³⁹For the evidence of this assertion, see the discussion in 1 Cor 15:23–28, where this psalm is first cited by Paul, in a clearly messianic context. One of the truly idiosyncratic moments in NT scholarship was W. Bousset’s attempt to tie this title in Paul to the pagan mystery cults (see *Kyrios Christos* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913; ET, trans. J. E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon, 1970]) and thus totally apart from any OT usage. See further the critique in Hengel, *Son of God*, 77–79 n. 135.

There is good reason to think that this predominance occurs in part because of the city of Thessalonica itself. Strategically situated astraddle the Egnatian Way and with a deep-sea port, the city was of special interest to the empire. More in its own interests than out of “love” for the Thessalonians, Rome had bestowed on them the status of a “free city.” The Thessalonians in turn gave back to the emperor the loyalty that this astute move was intended to secure. The significance of this emerges in Luke’s abbreviated report in Acts 17:1–10, where the explicit charge brought against Paul was *maiestas* (high treason)—that he was promoting “another king than Caesar.” Since devotion to Caesar meant proclaiming him as “Lord and Savior,” this is the most probable explanation for the frequency of κύριος in these letters. In the Thessalonians’ current situation of suffering for Christ, Paul is constantly reminding them of who the true “Lord” really is.⁴⁰

We begin by noting that the title ὁ κύριος is the special province of Christ in 1 Thessalonians (as throughout the corpus); it is never attributed to the Father,⁴¹ who is always referred to either as θεός (*God*) or ὁ πατήρ (*the Father*). This can be demonstrated in any number of ways, beginning with the very first mention of both in 1 Thess 1:1 (“the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ”), which is repeated in slightly different form in v. 3 (“your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord, Jesus Christ, in the presence of God the Father”). These designations are then singled out in vv. 4 and 6, where “loved by God” (v. 4) means “loved by God the Father,” and where “you became imitators . . . of the Lord” (v. 6) can only refer to Christ, since it mentions his earthly sufferings.

This usage in 1 Thessalonians can be conveniently packaged under two headings: (1) the intertextual use of the Septuagint’s κύριος, where the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) has been so translated⁴² but where the κύριος of those texts now refers specifically to Christ; (2) texts where Christ as κύριος shares in the divine purposes and activities with God the Father, especially where prayer is freely offered to Christ as it would be to God the Father. We begin with Paul’s attribution to Christ of the Septuagint’s κύριος = YHWH.

⁴⁰This is especially so, given that coins minted in Thessalonica from ca. 27 B.C.E. proclaim Julius Caesar as a god. See K. P. Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 34–37.

⁴¹For a discussion of the passages in these two letters where some think otherwise, see the discussion on 1 Thess 4:6 and 2 Thess 2:13; 3:3, 5 below. But to think otherwise, first, needs reasonable justification and, second, simply does not comport with the clear and certain evidence of 1–2 Thessalonians, not to mention 1 Cor 8:6 and elsewhere.

⁴²For the debate on this matter, see the discussion in ch. 1, pp. 20–25.

1 Thessalonians 3:13

The first instance in the corpus where Paul uses language from the Septuagint and applies the κύριος = YHWH directly to Christ appears in the context of the eschatological goal of Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians in 3:11–13. For the christological significance of the prayer itself, see the discussion below (pp. 53–55). Here our focus is on the final phrase, where, after Paul has prayed that ὁ κύριος (= Christ) will cause their love to increase and abound (in the present time), he offers as the goal of such love that “[the Lord] may strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father *at the coming of our Lord, Jesus, with all his holy ones.*”⁴³ Here Paul's intertextual appropriation of Zech 14:5 seems certain, since the language is too close to be merely accidental.⁴⁴ The two texts read:

1 Thess 3:13	ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ μετὰ πάντων	τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ
Zech 14:5	καὶ ἥξει καὶ πάντες	κύριος ὁ θεός μου οἱ ἅγιοι μετ' αὐτοῦ.
1 Thess 3:13	<i>at the coming</i> with all	of our Lord Jesus his holy ones
Zech 14:5	<i>And shall come</i> and all	the Lord my God the holy ones with him.

The christological import of this sentence lies with the fact that the κύριος of the Septuagint is “Yahweh *my* God,” who will himself come to the Mount of Olives and carry out his eschatological victory over the nations. In Paul's theology, the future coming of the *Lord* is always seen as the return of the present reigning Lord, Jesus Christ. What Paul has

⁴³The meaning of πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ is debated in the literature as to whether it means “angels” (as it surely does in Zechariah; so Best, 152–53; Marshall, 102–03; Wanamaker, 145; Richard, 177–78; Malherbe, 214; Green, 181), “his saints” (as it usually does for Paul; so Ellicott, 47; Findlay, 77), or both (Milligan, 46; Rigaux, 492; Bruce, 74; Morris, 111–12; Holmes, 116). The intertextuality of this sentence seems to make it tilt decisively in favor of “angels,” especially since the usage of οἱ ἅγιοι to refer to “God's people” does not occur in 1 Thessalonians at all (and in 2 Thessalonians only in 1:10). Moreover, in 2 Thess 1:7, where the present phrase seems to be spelled out in some detail, Paul says that “the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with the angels of his power [μετ' ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ].” In any case, Paul can very well expect many of them to hear the echo of Zech 14:5, since this would have been a well-used text among early Christians (on this matter, see the discussion in ch. 1, pp. 20–25).

⁴⁴The primary differences are the case and word order of “all” and “the holy ones.” But this is an echo, after all, not a citation; thus Paul has adapted it to his own sentence. The adaptation includes the article with κυρίου, in this case caused by his addition of the possessive pronoun “our.”

done seems clear enough: the future coming of Yahweh is now to be understood as the future coming of “our Lord Jesus,” who alone is κύριος in Paul’s new understanding, resulting from his own encounter with the risen Lord (see 1 Cor 9:1). One can scarcely miss the ease with which Paul now reads the κύριος (= YHWH) of Zechariah as referring to Christ, the Lord. So much is this so that in 2 Thess 1:7–10, the coming Lord Jesus Christ has altogether assumed the role of judging God’s enemies as well (see pp. 57–61 below).

1 Thessalonians 4:16

Although this next instance of intertextual echo is seldom noticed in contemporary literature,⁴⁵ the linguistic tie between Ps 47:5 (46:6 LXX) and Christ’s ascension was well known in the early church,⁴⁶ which suggests that for the ancient reader these kinds of echoes were much more real than they are for us. But “ascent” is one thing; the present Pauline text has to do with Christ’s final “descent.” At issue is whether Paul is deliberately echoing the psalm and giving it a new twist with regard to Christ’s Parousia. The following display would seem to suggest so:

1 Thess 4:16 ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου
καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ,
καταβήσεται ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ

Ps 46:6 LXX ἀνέβη ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἀλαλαγμῷ
κύριος ἐν φωνῇ σάλπιγγος.

1 Thess 4:16 for **the Lord** himself with a shout, **with the voice**
of an archangel
and with **the trumpet** of God,
will **descend** from heaven

Ps 46:6 LXX **Ascended** God with a shout,
the Lord **with the voice of a trumpet.**

What Paul has done seems clear enough. In the central doublet of a psalm celebrating Yahweh as King over all the earth, the psalmist refers to Yahweh’s “ascent” to Mount Zion, after he had “subdued nations under us.” The two lines of the first stich celebrate the ascent as accompanied with “shouts of joy” and the “voice of the trumpet.” In Paul’s version of what

⁴⁵The notable exception is C. A. Evans, “Ascending and Descending with a Shout: Psalm 47.6 and 1 Thessalonians 4.16,” in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. C. A. Evans and J. A. Sanders; JSNTSup 83; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 238–53, to whom I am indebted for much of the detailed information of this discussion. Juel (*Messianic Exegesis*, 159) has suggested another allusion to Zech 14:5 here, but that seems doubtful.

⁴⁶See Evans, “Ascending and Descending,” 242–46.

seems an obvious use of the language of the psalm, the κύριος = Yahweh of the Psalter is now the already ascended Christ, whose *return* will be accompanied by “the voice” of an archangel and with “the trumpet” of God. The emphatic αὐτός ὁ κύριος (*the Lord himself*) makes the connection with “the Lord” of the psalm even stronger.⁴⁷ The Lord (Jesus) who had previously ascended on high is the Lord who himself will return at the sounding of the trumpet.

Other Κύριος Phrases That Echo Septuagint Usage

Once one recognizes Paul’s intertextual appropriation of the language of the Septuagint, whereby κύριος = Yahweh is now κύριος = Christ, one becomes aware of the many exclusively Yahweh-phrases from the Septuagint that are also applied to Christ. This happens throughout the Pauline corpus; one finds it already well in place in this earliest letter. They are listed here with minimal comment.

The Word of the Lord

1 Thess 1:8	ἀφ’ ὑμῶν γὰρ ἐξήχηται	ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου
1 Thess 4:15	τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν	ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου
1 Thess 1:8	<i>for from you has gone out</i>	<i>the word of the Lord</i>
1 Thess 4:15	<i>for we say this to you</i>	<i>by the word of the Lord</i>

The wooden translation of the Hebrew construct genitive as λόγος κυρίου occurs more than 50 times in the Septuagint of the Hebrew prophets, always as a translation of *d̄bar YHWH*. In most cases it is the prophet’s way of indicating that the “word” he is about to speak comes directly from Yahweh (see, e.g., Joel 1:1). For Paul, “the word of the Lord” is now that which is spoken by (or about) the Lord Jesus. Indeed, it seems most likely that in the first passage here, where the phrase is articular, Paul intends it to stand for the gospel; that is, it is the “word” *about* the Lord.

The second passage, however, is most likely a reflection of the usage in the Septuagint, and thus it refers to a word that Christ himself has spoken (either, most likely, in the Jesus tradition that has come down to Paul, or as a prophetic word that Paul has received from Christ).⁴⁸ In either case, this well-known Yahweh-phrase has now been appropriated to refer to Christ.

⁴⁷The addition of the αὐτός also accounts for the addition of the article with κύριος.

⁴⁸See Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 150–51; Donfried (*Shorter Pauline Letters*, 39–40) thinks it is the latter.

The Name of the Lord

1 Thess 5:27 **ἐνορκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν κύριον** ἀναγνωσθῆναι τὴν ἐπιστολὴν
πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς.

Gen 24:3 καὶ **ἐξορκιῶ σε κύριον** τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
[cf. Neh 13:25]

1 Thess 5:27 **I charge you by the Lord**⁴⁹ *that this letter be read
to all the brothers (and sisters).*

Gen 24:3 *and I charge you by the Lord the God of heaven*

In the OT, God's revelation of his name, "Yahweh" (ὁ κύριος in the Septuagint), lies at the very center of Israel's existence. They are to be a people who bear and call upon his name; Jerusalem is to be the place where Yahweh's name dwells, while the temple is to be the dwelling for that name. Although Israel was not to misuse or profane Yahweh's name (Exod 20:7; Lev 19:12), they were in fact commanded to take their oaths in his name (Deut 6:13). The appropriation of the Greek form of the Divine Name is what is reflected in the present usage; and "the Name," of course, is that which Paul in a later passage (Phil 2:10–11) will point out had been bestowed on Christ at his exaltation. So what was formerly done in/by the name of Yahweh is now for Paul, as the basis of his charge, done through Christ the Lord.

The Day of the Lord

1 Thess 5:2 ὅτι **ἡμέρα κυρίου** ὡς κλέπτῃς ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως ἔρχεται

cf. Joel 1:15 ὅτι ἐγγύς **ἡμέρα κυρίου**

Joel 2:1 διότι **πάρεστιν ἡμέρα κυρίου**

1 Thess 5:2 *that **the day of the Lord** as a thief in the night thus comes*

cf. Joel 1:15 *that near (is) **the day of the Lord***

Joel 2:1 *therefore present is **the day of the Lord***

This well-known phrase, which is found again in 2 Thess 2:2 as something being abused, occurs elsewhere in Paul's writings in 1 Cor 1:8 and 5:5; later it becomes "the day of Christ" (Phil 1:6, 10). The phrase belongs altogether to the prophetic tradition, referring to the great future day of Yahweh. As both the usage in this letter and the later substitution of "Christ" for "Lord" indicate, Paul is again appropriating and applying to Christ a well-known Yahweh-phrase.

⁴⁹The meaning of the accusative τὸν κύριον is clear enough, but it is not at all easy to put it into English. Most translations, including the KJV, have "by the Lord," but the NET BIBLE has "in the Lord," with a note offering the options "by the Lord" or "before the Lord" (the latter is found in the TNIV).

What is noteworthy is that the phrase continues to carry the eschatological freight that it did for the prophets. But in contrast to the primary usage in the prophets, where it points to future judgment, Paul's interest in this "day" is primarily as God's eschatological conclusion to the *salvation* that has been effected through Christ. Although it is true that in its first occurrence here in 1 Thessalonians it still carries the threat of judgment, in Pauline usage that threat is strictly for those outside Christ. Indeed, the whole argument of 1 Thess 5:1–11 is to reassure the Thessalonian believers that the Day of the Lord is *not* to be thought of as a threat for them.

The Lord as Avenger

1 Thess 4:6	διότι	ἔκδικος	κύριος	περὶ πάντων τούτων
Ps 93:1 LXX	ὁ θεὸς	ἐκδικήσεων	κύριος	
1 Thess 4:6	<i>because</i>	avenger (is)	the Lord	<i>concerning all these</i>
Ps 93:1 LXX	<i>the God</i>	of vengeance (is)	the Lord	

Here is a case where some are ready to make this occurrence of κύριος refer to God the Father.⁵⁰ However, this not only runs roughshod over Paul's clear distinctions, but also it fails to take seriously the ease with which Paul can substitute Christ as "Lord" in speaking of prerogatives that otherwise belong to God alone. After all, in Rom 14:10, referring to believers—and in a context where ὁ κύριος dominates the discussion—Paul speaks of "the judgment seat of God," while in a similar context in 2 Cor 5:10, again referring to believers, he says that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." In the present text, unique to the NT, the use of "avenger" occurs in a context of "taking advantage of a brother or sister" (TNIV), in which the Lord Jesus himself will take the side of the wronged person.

The Lord Our Hope

1 Thess 1:3	καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς	τῆς ἐλπίδος	τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
	<i>and endurance</i>	of hope	in our Lord Jesus Christ

⁵⁰See, e.g., Morris, 124; Richard, 204; Malherbe, 233—although the latter admits that Christ is also seen as "judge" by Paul (pp. 185–86, 212, on 1 Thess 2:19). Most others correctly see that Paul's (apparently) exclusive use of κύριος to refer to Christ should determine its meaning here, especially (as pointed out by Frame, 158; Best, 166; Marshall, 112) in light of the emphatic ὁ θεός that follows in v. 7. So also E. S. Steele, "The Use of Jewish Scriptures in 1 Thessalonians," *BTB* 14 (1984): 15. Marshall (112), Wanamaker (156), and Beale (122 [following Marshall]) are the few who note that Paul is here using the language of Ps 93:1 LXX (94:1 MT). Richard (204) makes the remarkable comment that it must refer to God because Paul is using OT language here—a comment that seems insensitive to Paul's regular application of OT (LXX) language to Christ.

This unusual genitive probably is the result of the repeated genitives in the present context. In any case, it is universally agreed that τοῦ κυρίου here is objective, that the Thessalonians are commended for their endurance that is predicated on their “hope *in* the Lord Jesus Christ.” This seems to be another case of appropriating κύριος language from the Septuagint and applying it to Christ. Whatever else was true of Yahweh for Israel’s faithful, he was “their hope” (e.g., Ps 31:24;⁵¹ 33:22). Again, in a quite off-handed way, language that is ordinarily reserved for God in the OT finds expression regarding Christ as Lord.

God and ὁ Κύριος Share in Divine Purposes and Activity

Another remarkable feature of Pauline Christology also finds its first expression in this earliest Pauline letter: the joining of Christ as Lord with God the Father in several key moments of divine purpose and activity on the Thessalonians’ behalf. This begins in the salutation.

The Church Exists in God and Christ (1 Thess 1:1 [cf. 2 Thess 1:1])

1:1 Παῦλος . . . τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ
Paul . . . to the church of the Thessalonians καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ
in God the Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ

Here only in the Pauline corpus does Paul designate the church as being simultaneously *in* God and Christ.⁵² Whatever else this phrase means, its first aim is to distinguish the Christian ἐκκλησία from the many other ἐκκλησίαι of Thessalonica—particularly the Jewish synagogue but also various civil or trade entities that would gather under this designation. Several options are possible as to the sense of ἐν⁵³ here: sphere of existence; constituted by; belonging to. The main objection to the first sense (sphere of existence) is that Paul does not speak so elsewhere of God the Father. On the other hand, this sense is so common for Paul when it is used of Christ that it seems most likely that he intended precisely that sense in its first appearance in his let-

⁵¹Ps 30:25 LXX, which reads: πάντες οἱ ἐλπίζοντες ἐπὶ κύριον (*all who hope in the LORD*).

⁵²N. Richardson (*Paul’s Language about God* [JSNTSup 99; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994], 260–62) correctly lumps this passage with others where God and Christ share the same preposition; unfortunately, he does not comment on it as such. The result is that it is subsumed under the discussion of 1 Cor 1:3, where Barrett suggests that the phrase probably means “the Father is the source, Christ the means or agent” of the grace and peace. But that interpretation simply will not work in this first occurrence of the phenomenon in the corpus.

⁵³What Richard (38) aptly dubs “the ‘maid-of-all-work’ preposition.”

ters.⁵⁴ After all, in a world whose philosophers could think in terms of “in him we live and move and have our being,”⁵⁵ why should one think it strange that the Christian Paul would think of the believers’ existence in such terms? God and Christ together are the sphere of all, and especially of Christian, existence.⁵⁶

If so (and even if not so), the compound object of the preposition is striking. The church exists simultaneously in relationship to the heavenly pair: God the Father and the (now exalted) Lord, who is none other than Jesus the Messiah. And when Paul thinks in these terms, he regularly joins them as one in purpose and activity by means of a single preposition.⁵⁷ Two further observations about this usage need to be made:

1. In this very first reference to God and Christ in the extant corpus, Paul is already using the basic designations that come from the Shema in Deut 6:4,⁵⁸ with θεός being used exclusively of God the Father⁵⁹ and κύριος being used equally exclusively to refer to Christ,⁶⁰ who had “the Name” bestowed on him at the exaltation.⁶¹ This has become so commonplace to later Christians that it simply goes by unnoticed. But this is a remarkable event indeed, and it has happened very early (before 50 C.E.) and sets the pattern for usage throughout Paul’s letters. Paul, of course, is not trying to make any such point in these salutations. My point here is that these common designations (“Father” and “Lord”), which meet us at the beginning of all his letters, are fixed—and now stereotypical—precisely because they had become so for Paul many years before he had written any of his extant letters.⁶²

2. This is the first of the several instances in the corpus where one prepositional phrase has as its twofold object θεός and κύριος.⁶³ It is easy to be

⁵⁴So also Donfried, *Shorter Pauline Letters*, 42.

⁵⁵Acts 17:18, where in the Areopagus speech Luke reports Paul as using this language from Epimenides.

⁵⁶On this matter, see esp. C. E. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), ch. 2, “The Corporate Christ” (pp. 47–96). The other side of this phenomenon occurs in Col 1:16, where Christ the Son is designated as the one “in whom all things in heaven and earth were created.” Thus, here believers exist “in God,” while in Colossians the universe was created “in the Son.”

⁵⁷Cf. Findlay (17): “Everything this ἐκκλησία Θεσσαλονικέων rests upon and exists for is centred in these two Names, which complement each other and are bound by the . . . single ἐν.”

⁵⁸See the discussion of 1 Cor 8:6 in ch. 3 (pp. 89–94).

⁵⁹For the two possible exceptions, see the exegesis of Rom 9:5 and Titus 2:13 (pp. 272–77, 440–46).

⁶⁰In this case the lone certain exceptions are in the twelve citations of the Septuagint where no point is being made about ὁ κύριος at all. See n. 7 in ch. 3 (p. 87).

⁶¹See the discussion of Phil 2:9–11 in ch. 9 (pp. 393–401).

⁶²It is easy to forget that here is a Jew who in his younger years would not have dared breathe the name YHWH but who now as a matter of course puts θεός and Jesus together as the compound object in a single prepositional phrase. Such a phenomenon is most easily explained on the basis of Paul’s encounter with the risen Lord Jesus.

⁶³See, e.g., 2 Thess 1:2 and all subsequent salutations in his letters.

dismissive of this phenomenon. Instead, it should be taken with full seriousness, since Paul regularly brings them together in other contexts in which the divine “working” of each is expressed separately.⁶⁴ The point is that Paul intends both Father and Son together to be both the means of their constitution as God’s people and the sphere of their new existence.⁶⁵ What is most remarkable about this present usage is that this is the first and only time such a preposition is used of God the Father. Hereafter it is used exclusively of Christ. It is difficult to get around the plain implications of this, yet another unself-conscious, way of speaking that puts Christ together with God the Father in the highest place.

God’s Will in Christ Jesus (1 Thess 5:18)

As Paul moves toward the conclusion of this letter, he exhorts the Thessalonian believers with a series of “staccato imperatives” that have the appearance of a kind of general parenthesis that could fit well in most of his letters. Nonetheless, they do fit especially well the present (for many, obviously difficult) circumstances of these believers. He begins with the well-known triadic exhortation that they should “rejoice always, pray constantly, and give thanks in all circumstances” (5:16–18a). Then, in order to keep these words from becoming simply nice but unrealistic platitudes, he insists that “this is God’s will for you.” But what is striking is the christological modification he makes regarding the divine will: “This is God’s will *in Christ Jesus* for you.”

This phrase serves as a sort of *inclusio* with the way the hortatory (“how you ought to live to please God” [4:1]) section of the letter begins.⁶⁶ After the opening reminder regarding these instructions (vv. 1–2), he begins, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification” (v. 3). Now that “will” is modified as being “in Christ Jesus.”⁶⁷ But what does that mean? And what are the christological implications?

As to what it means, this is probably best understood as a genuinely christological modification of God’s will rather than a locative regarding God’s people. That is, this is Paul’s way of modifying God’s will so that it

⁶⁴This can be found in any number of ways, beginning with 2 Thess 3:5: “into the love of God and the perseverance of Christ”; cf. 1 Cor 12:5–6; 2 Cor 13:13; and many others.

⁶⁵At least that is what the normal reading of the preposition suggests and therefore how the majority of interpreters understand it. Because this is the only occurrence of ἐν with “God” as the object, Richard and others suggest that the ἐν is instrumental here, but that is most unlikely.

⁶⁶An observation also made by Malherbe, 330.

⁶⁷At least the word order would seem to require such an understanding. Paul’s text reads θέλημα θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς. Had he intended that this is God’s will for those who themselves are in Christ Jesus, the word order would more naturally have been θέλημα θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Most English translations (the NRSV is a notable exception) have “this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus,” where “in Christ Jesus” probably is still intended to modify “the will of God.” But see Beale (171), who takes it in the former sense.

will not be perceived as a form of “law.” Rather, it should be understood as gift, as God’s will that finds expression in Christ himself, who makes possible such unlikely verbalizations by God’s people in the midst of present difficulties. If so, the “in Christ Jesus” functions as both a soteriological modifier (= as something made available to God’s people through Christ) and a christological one (= God’s will now finds expression in Christ). Thus, this association of Christ with God’s will has inherent christological ramifications. If not necessarily a “shared prerogative” as such, it is at least an expression of the christological focus of Paul’s understanding of God and his purposes.

The Divine Presence at the Parousia

The assumed close relationship between the Father and the Son also emerges in this letter when Paul thinks in terms of finally obtaining the divine Presence at the Parousia. Depending on the point of emphasis at a given moment, Paul can speak first of being in Christ’s presence at his coming:

1 Thess 2:19 τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπὶς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς – **ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ**

For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting—if not even you—in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

Not many sentences later, the same language is used to refer to being in God’s presence:

1 Thess 3:13 εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας . . . ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ

to strengthen your hearts in the presence of our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones

In the OT the divine Presence is closely associated with the divine Glory, as the interchange of these terms regarding tabernacle and temple makes certain.⁶⁸ For Paul the final goal of everything is to be at last in the divine Presence, now shared equally by Father and Son.

Christ the Lord Invoked in Prayer

Our final two texts in this letter are perhaps the most significant of all with regard to Paul’s assumed Christology. For here one is faced not simply

⁶⁸See further the discussion of 1 Cor 2:8 (p. 136) and 2 Cor 3:16–4:6 (pp. 180–84).

with shared divine activities and purpose but shared divine prerogatives. Whatever else is true of the early Christian communities as reflected in Paul's letters, this very early (probably earliest) document demonstrates that they prayed to both the Father and the Son, together and separately, and did so with obvious ease and spontaneity and without any sense of putting pressure on their monotheism.⁶⁹ There are two such passages in this letter, which we examine in their reverse order.

The Grace Benediction (1 Thess 5:28)

One of the noteworthy phenomena in Paul's letters is his attribution of χάρις to both God and the Lord. What is striking is how this attribution happens. In almost all of his letters, Paul concludes with some form of a prayer-wish/benediction like the one that concludes this letter:⁷⁰

5:28 ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (be) with you.

Although this is technically not prayer directed *toward* Christ, the assumption is that Christ himself would supply the "grace" that Paul wishes for them by way of benediction. Indeed, had Paul said, "the grace of God be with you," this would be universally recognized as the prayer-benediction directed toward God that it is. The remarkable thing is that Paul never puts God in this role in his benedictions; rather, it is always "the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ."⁷¹

What makes this further noteworthy is that in the body of his letters, Paul most often refers to χάρις as from God, either as the predicate of our existence in Christ (1 Cor 1:4; Gal 2:21; Rom 5:15; Col 1:6) or as the basis of Paul's apostolic gifting (1 Cor 3:10; 15:10; Eph 3:2, 7). Nonetheless, there are three notable exceptions: 2 Cor 8:9; 12:9; 1 Tim 1:14.

This simply demonstrates what is otherwise well known: when Paul thinks of God's saving work in our behalf, he can emphasize alternatively the role of the Father or the Son, depending on context. But at the end of all his letters, it is the "grace of Christ" that he desires to be present with God's

⁶⁹For a close look at these matters and their significance, see the various studies by L. Hurtado noted in the bibliography, most recently succinctly brought together in *Lord Jesus Christ*.

⁷⁰This includes Philemon, which is clearly a community document as much as it is intended to apply to one person. Not only is the church greeted in the salutation (vv. 2–3), but also the grace benediction (v. 25) ends μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν (*with your* [pl.] *spirit*). One must assume that both Philemon and Onesimus were present for the reading of both Colossians and Philemon, which also explains why a full one-half of the house code in Colossians (3:18–4:1) is addressed to slaves (a feature that puts unusual pressure on theories of pseudonymity).

⁷¹The one noticeable deviation from this pattern occurs at the conclusion of 2 Corinthians, where Paul adds, "the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit."

people. The point to be made here is that this interchangeability in mention of prayer seems both natural and presuppositional to Paul. On its own, one would make very little of it at all; but it is not on its own, as the following passage makes plain.

1 Thessalonians 3:11–13

Our final passage in this letter is christologically perhaps the most significant of all.⁷² For here in particular, it is the ease with which Paul makes these kinds of interchanges, especially in prayer, that catches our attention. Thus:

3:11–13 ¹¹Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς **κατευθῆναι** τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς· ¹²Ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ κύριος **πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι** τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς, ¹³**εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι** ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ **ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ.**

¹¹*May God, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you;*
¹²*and you may the Lord cause to increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as also ours for you.* ¹³*so as to strengthen your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones.*

With this prayer report, Paul concludes the narrative of his and the Thessalonians' past and present relationships on a note similar to, and thus forming a kind of *inclusio* with, the prayer of thanksgiving with which the letter began. Gratitude to God for their faith, love, and hope in 1:3 is now matched in 3:10–13 with a report of prayer regarding their faith (v. 10) and in vv. 12 and 13 the actual prayer regarding their love and hope. These latter concerns are apparently what cause the prayer in vv. 12 and 13 to be singularly addressed to “the Lord.”

The prayer itself is in two parts. The first (v. 11) puts the emphasis on God the Father by means of the *αὐτός* (*himself*), but the singular verb indicates that Paul understands God and the Lord to be jointly involved in “directing our way to you.” And here the compound subject with singular verb implies not so much that Paul was a Trinitarian in later terms but that

⁷²On this prayer, see G. P. Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St. Paul* (SNTSMS 24; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), which has the misfortune of limiting the “letters of Paul” to the seven accepted by all (and therefore excluding 2 Thessalonians). Wiles's term for these prayers is “wish-prayer,” which he defines as “the expression of a desire that God take action regarding the person(s) mentioned in the wish” (p. 22). Unfortunately, he downplays the role of Christ in the prayer altogether (see further n. 75 below).

since both are together in heaven (1:9–10) and he desires both to be involved in the action, his apparent instinct was to think of them as working together as one.

The second part of the prayer picks up what he wants *the Lord* (= Christ) to accomplish among the Thessalonians in the meantime (in part through the rest of his letter). So now the focus is on Christ alone, that (1) he would cause the love that Paul has thanked God for in 1:3 to increase and abound both among themselves (picked up in 4:9–12) and for everyone else (including those who are giving them grief); but (2) he also wants them to be “blameless with regard to holiness” at Christ’s Parousia (which is picked up in 4:3–8).⁷³

Two christological matters need to be noted. First, I make the observation that Paul can pray (1) to both God the Father and the Lord Jesus together as one (v. 11), (2) to both together but single out one as the object (grammatical subject) of the concerns of prayer at a given time (vv. 12–13), and (3) to either separately (for the Father, see 1 Thess 1:2–3; 5:23; for the Lord, see 2 Thess 3:5, 16 below).

Second, even though the first emphasis in this case is on God the Father, the final focus of the prayer is altogether on the Lord Jesus, which makes the singular verb and compound subject in v. 11 seem to be more than Paul’s simply taking over “conventional liturgical language to which [he] and his readers were accustomed.”⁷⁴ Indeed this same phenomenon happens in reverse in 2 Thess 2:16–17, where Christ is mentioned first (including with the *αὐτός*) while the pickup is, exactly as in the present case, with prayer addressed to the second divine person mentioned at the outset, namely, God the Father. So one simply cannot be dismissive about the role of Christ in the present prayer.⁷⁵

Together, these realities indicate the very high place that Christ has in Paul’s understanding of God’s identity. Here is a strict monotheist praying with ease to both the Father and the Son, focusing first on the one and then the other, and without a sense that his monotheism is being stretched or is in some kind of danger.

One can only conjecture as to why Paul directs the continuation of the prayer to Christ rather than the Father. Most likely it is related to an inherent

⁷³So that the prayer in 3:11–12 and the first two items in ch. 4, where he “supplies what is lacking,” end up in a chiasmic form (AB BA). The emphasis in both cases (coming last and then first) is on their holiness.

⁷⁴So Wiles, *Paul’s Intercessory Prayers*, 30. What is noteworthy is that this phenomenon exists only in 1–2 Thessalonians in the NT, although wish-prayers continue to be found in Paul’s letters.

⁷⁵As Wiles does by implication in his discussion of this prayer (*Paul’s Intercessory Prayers*, 54–55). Indeed, Wiles only begrudgingly allows a place for Christ in the prayer at all, despite the fact that he is explicitly called upon in vv. 12–13. Christ’s role in fact is limited to a single note, in which it is suggested that “perhaps Jesus was regarded as the divine agent of the requested action, as in the following verse [v. 12!]” (p. 55 n. 3). That hardly takes seriously what Paul himself says.

difference for him between the two loves. In the next prayer (2 Thess 2:16–17), the focus is on God’s love for them, which issued in their experiencing by his grace “eternal comfort and good hope.” Here the emphasis would tend toward the one whose love was expressed historically in his death “for us” (see on 2 Thess 2:13 below; cf. Gal 2:20). Paul wants the Lord who so loved them to cause their love for one another to abound.

Some final remarks are needed regarding the actual content of the prayer to Christ in v. 13, where Paul reports that he prays that the Lord (= Christ) will cause their love to increase (περισεύσαι) so as to “strengthen (εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι) your hearts [that you might be] blameless in holiness.” First, the same verb for “cause to increase” is used in a nearly identical way of God the Father in 2 Cor 9:8, thus illustrating one more time the ease with which Paul can make this kind of interchange between God and Christ the Lord. Second, and for our present purposes more significantly, Paul will refer to this need of the Thessalonians to be “strengthened” two further times in 2 Thessalonians, in the prayer in 2:17 and as word of encouragement in 3:3, the first directed toward God the Father, the second regarding Christ the Son.⁷⁶

Thus, not only does Paul here pray directly to Christ, as he does elsewhere to God, but also the express concern of the prayer is the equally shared prerogative of both Father and Son.

Taken together, all these various texts, with their equally varied emphases, point to a very high Christology for Paul that was shared between him and the Thessalonian believers. Rather than here offer a concluding word about the nature of those christological assumptions, I will reserve that to the end of the chapter itself, since these two letters, among many other things, also share a common Christology.

II. Christology in 2 Thessalonians

When turning to 2 Thessalonians, and keeping the focus on Christology only, three matters call for attention by way of introduction. First, and most obviously, the Christology of this letter simply picks up where things left off in the first one. So much is this so that one could rightly have combined the two letters in one discussion, except that that would run cross-purposes to one of the concerns of this study, namely, to treat each letter on its own terms as to the christological emphases that emerge. Second, even though it is one of the shorter letters in the corpus,⁷⁷ it has a surprisingly large, and significant, amount of christological data. Third, this is the one letter in the church corpus with very little variety in its christological affirmations and

⁷⁶On this matter see the discussion below (pp. 72–73).

⁷⁷Only Philemon and Titus are shorter.

presuppositions. From the opening greeting to the final grace-benediction, and everywhere in between, the letter is dominated by an unyielding κύριος Christology, especially by way of applying to Christ a significant number of κύριος = *Adonai* = Yahweh texts and phrases. The nature of this dominance can be seen first by a brief look at the data.

A Preliminary Look at the Data

The predominance of κύριος as the primary referent to Christ is borne out by the simple observation that of the 23 references to Christ, 22 contain the title κύριος. Ten of these stand alone, while the other twelve appear either in the threefold combination “Lord Jesus Christ” (9x) or the twofold “Lord Jesus” (3x). Thus in every mention of Christ except for the singular use of Χριστός in 3:5, the title κύριος either stands alone or fronts the mention of “Jesus” or “Jesus Christ.” As with the first letter, but even more so here, this probably is related to the fact that there has been a steady increase of persecution, which most likely stems from the Thessalonians’ affirmation of Christ as κύριος in a city where such allegiance was reserved for the Roman emperor. The other significant thing about this usage is that just over half of these occurrences of κύριος occur in moments of OT intertextuality of some kind.

We should also note that this is the first of the letters in the church corpus where Christ is specifically mentioned more often than God the Father (23x versus 18x)—a feature that will continue in the majority of the letters in the church corpus.⁷⁸ There is nothing especially significant here, except to note how thoroughly Pauline this usage is.

A Case of Messianic Intertextuality—2 Thessalonians 2:8

In a moment of rare intertextuality in the corpus, Paul in 2 Thess 2:8 uses κύριος to refer to Christ in a passage whose primary language carries overtones of Jewish messianism. As with 1 Thessalonians, we begin here so that this singular moment does not get lost at the end of the chapter. And just as in 1 Thess 1:10, this single allusion to Christ as Messiah speaks of him as presently in heaven awaiting his role in the final judgment of the wicked.

The primary purpose of 2 Thess 2:1–12 is to reassure these believers that “the day of the Lord” has not yet come (2:2). To do so, Paul reminds them of some things that he had previously communicated to them regarding an antecedent appearance of “the mystery of lawlessness” and of “the lawless one.” With the “coming” of the latter, “the Lord Jesus” himself will return in order to destroy him. In making this point, Paul picks up the language of Isa 11:4:

⁷⁸Romans being the major exception.

- 2 Thess 2:8 ὃν ὁ κύριος⁷⁹ ἀνελεῖ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ καταργήσει τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ
- Isa 11:4 καὶ πατάξει γῆν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν πνεύματι διὰ χειλέων ἀνελεῖ ἀσεβῆ
- 2 Thess 2:8 whom **the Lord will slay with the breath of his mouth** and will abolish at the manifestation of his coming
- Isa 11:4 and he will strike the land with the word **of his mouth,** and with the **breath** of his lips **will slay** the ungodly

Here Isaiah has prophesied that the coming “shoot from the stump of Jesse” will be characterized by righteousness and justice that will include his slaying the wicked with “the breath of his mouth.” With help from Ps 32:6 (for the form of the phrase τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ), Paul combines the two lines of Isaiah’s poetry into one and attributes this messianic future judgment to “the Lord = Jesus.”

Thus Paul ends up having it both ways. As we will see in the next section, he regularly appropriates Yahweh passages and applies them to Christ by means of the Greek translation κύριος; here he appropriates a messianic passage and does the same. The net result, therefore, is that Paul never loses sight of the fact that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. But by way of the Septuagint’s use of κύριος to represent YHWH, to which we turn next, Paul can also appropriate all kinds of Yahweh texts and apply them to the risen Lord, Jesus.

Jesus as the Κύριος of Septuagint Yahweh Texts

Although some of these passages are of more import than others, for convenience they are discussed here in their canonical order.

2 Thessalonians 1:6–10

Paul’s first thanksgiving in 2 Thessalonians evolves into the first of three major concerns in this letter: to encourage the Thessalonian believers in the face of increased “persecutions and trials” (1:4).⁸⁰ The major part of this

⁷⁹A difficult textual choice occurs here. Very good evidence has “the Lord *Jesus*” (Ⲙ A D F G P Ψ 0278 33 *pc* latt sy co Or Did), but equally good evidence (B 1739 1881 Ⲛ) lacks the Ἰησοῦς found in the rest. Since there can be little question that “the Lord” here is indeed Jesus, did some early scribes add “Jesus” in keeping with the frequency of this combination in these letters, or was the “Jesus” omitted because of parablepsis? Since the divine names were abbreviated very early in the copying tradition of the Greek NT, these two nouns would have sat side by side as ΚΣΙΣ. It is easy to see how scribes could have left the second word out. But since this combination occurs so often in these letters (see pp. 34 and 56 above) and since the omission of one or the other occurs so rarely, it seems more likely in this case that the addition is secondary.

⁸⁰The other two are found in 2:1–12 (a misguided prophetic word that the Day of the Lord is already at hand) and 3:6–15 (the continuing problem of the disruptive idle).

very long and convoluted “thanksgiving” (vv. 3–10) is intended to demonstrate the justice of God in the face of the Thessalonians’ present persecution. Beginning at v. 6, where he picks up the thrice-repeated verb ἀνταποδίδομι (*pay back*), which encloses the oracle in Isa 66:4–6,⁸¹ Paul spells out the just judgment of God that their present enemies will experience at the final revelation of Christ (vv. 6–7a). But it is Christ himself who will carry out the judgment at his coming (vv. 7b–10), most of which clause is couched in language from several OT judgment texts, where the Septuagint has κύριος = Yahweh as the administrator of judgment.⁸² Thus Christ is now the κύριος of these intertextual echoes.

1. Paul begins his depiction of Christ’s coming in vv. 7b–8 with three prepositional descriptors. The first two echo what he had earlier affirmed in his first letter: “the Lord Jesus” will be revealed “from heaven” (1 Thess 4:16; cf. 1:10) with “the angels of his power,” thus interpreting Zechariah’s “all his holy ones” (see 1 Thess 3:13) with concepts from Jewish apocalyptic. The third one, ἐν φλογὶ πυρός⁸³ (*in blazing fire*), is an echo of Isa 66:15, while the end of the clause includes language from Isa 66:4. Thus:

⁸¹I do not mean that Paul is necessarily *consciously* picking up this verb. But the fact that language from Isa 66 plays a significant role in vv. 8 and 12 suggests that this passage is in his head, as it were. See how the verb sits in the display that follows. On the possible influence of Isa 66 on this whole passage, see R. Aus, “The Relevance of Isaiah 66:7 to Revelation 12 and 2 Thessalonians 2,” *ZNW* 67 (1976): 252–68. This view is picked up especially by Beale (186–91), who sees it as Paul’s deliberately setting the believing Thessalonians in sharp contrast to their persecutors, who do not obey the gospel—just as in Isa 66 the “humble and contrite” stand in equally sharp contrast to those “who have chosen their own ways” (66:3).

⁸²Although seldom noted by earlier commentators (e.g., Ellicott), this phenomenon has long been recognized by English commentators, beginning with Findlay (1904), and more extensively by Frame (1912), who notes (correctly) that although “the description abounds in reminiscences from the Septuagint, there is but one approximately exact citation [v. 9 citing Isa 2:10].” Since Best (1972), this has been more or less standard fare in the commentaries, some more cautiously than others. The christological implications have also often been noted, starting with Findlay, 148 (on v. 8: “Ἀιδόντος transfers to the Lord Jesus the dread prerogative reserved in the O.T. for God alone”); cf. Marshall, 179–80 (on v. 9: “It is significant that language originally used of Yahweh is here applied to Jesus”), and Wanamaker, 229 (“The appropriation of texts originally written about God to describe Jesus as Lord was one of the most important developments of early christology and eventually led to the near-total identification of Christ with the nature and activities of God”).

⁸³My text here differs from the preferred reading in NA²⁷. The textual evidence is divided between ἐν φλογὶ πυρός (*in flame of fire*) (B D F G Ψ 2464 pc a vg sy co Ir^{lat} Tert), which would ordinarily be considered the stronger MS evidence, and ἐν πυρὶ φλογός [*in fire of flame*] (⊗ A 0111 0278 33 1739 1881 ℞ d m sy^{hmg} Ambst). The same variation is found in Exod 3:2 (the former in A; the latter in B). At issue is whether Paul is here echoing Isa 66:15, as I believe, and scribes changed it to the reading of the more familiar text (for them) of Exod 3:2, or whether Paul himself was influenced by the B text of Exod 3:2. There can be no question that the latter is the more difficult reading from our perspective. But if some early scribes knew only the B text of Exod 3:2, they could easily have changed Paul here to conform to that more familiar phrasing. So in the end the better textual evidence should probably prevail.

2 Thess 1:7–8	⁷ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ . . . ⁸ ἐν φλογὶ πυρός, διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν τοῖς μὴ εἰδόσιν θεὸν καὶ τοῖς μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ
Isa 66:15	κύριος ὡς πῦρ ἴξει καὶ ὡς καταγίγῃς τὰ ἄρματα αὐτοῦ ἀποδοῦναι ἐν θυμῷ ἐκδίκησιν καὶ ἀποσκορακισμόν ἐν φλογὶ πυρός
Isa 66:4	λέγει κύριος [v. 2] . . . ἀνταποδώσω αὐτοῖς ὅτι ἐκάλεσα αὐτοὺς καὶ οὐχ ὑπήκουσάν μου
2 Thess 1:7–8	⁷ of <i>the Lord Jesus</i> . . . ⁸ <i>in flaming fire, giving punishment to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ</i>
Isa 66:15	<i>the Lord as fire will come, and as a storm his chariots, to recompense with wrath, punishment and repudiation in flaming fire</i>
Isa 66:4	Says <i>the Lord</i> (v. 2) . . . <i>I will repay them because I called them and they did not obey me</i>

Three matters are significant for our present purposes. First, the κύριος (*Lord*) in both Isaiah passages is Yahweh, while the κύριος in Paul's use of this language is specified as "the Lord, Jesus." This means, second, that the Lord who will come "in blazing fire" to mete out this judgment is "the Lord, Jesus Christ," who will thus assume Yahweh's role. Third, the reason for judgment in Isaiah is that "they do not obey me," where Isaiah's "me = Yahweh" is now expressed in terms of "the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In this case, therefore, not only does Paul identify the Lord Jesus with the "Lord = Yahweh" of Isaiah's oracle, but also the gospel of the Lord Jesus is what the wicked have not obeyed, and therefore they will be judged by him. One can hardly escape the christological implications of such an intertextual interchange.

2. The description of their judgment occurs in v. 9: they "will pay the penalty of everlasting destruction *from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.*" Although there are some inherent difficulties in understanding what precisely is meant by "destruction from the face of the Lord," there can be little question that the italicized part of this sentence is a direct, deliberate use of Isa 2:10.⁸⁴

⁸⁴Noted as early as Tertullian (*Marc.* 3.16). The Septuagint translator in this case took some liberties with Isaiah's wording, probably in order to make clear what he assumed Isaiah had in mind. Thus "the fear of YHWH" has to do with seeing "his face." Paul, in turn, has kept the "face = presence" language and has omitted φόβου because that is precisely where his interests lie: the coming of the Lord, and the persecutors having to deal with being in the Lord's *presence*.

2 Thess 1:9	οἵτινες . . .	ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου
	καὶ	ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ
Isa 2:10	κρύπτεσθε . . .	ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ φόβου κυρίου
	καὶ	ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ
2 Thess 1:9	<i>who . . .</i>	<i>from the face of the Lord</i>
	and	<i>from the glory of his might</i>
Isa 2:10	<i>hide . . .</i>	<i>from the face of the fear of the Lord</i>
	and	<i>from the glory of his might</i>

Here is a case where Paul not only has brought language straight across from the Septuagint but also has kept the sense of Isaiah's text, which appears in a "Day of the Lord" oracle of judgment against Judah. That judgment is their being cut off from the divine Presence, which is now assumed to be that of Christ the Lord. Again Paul has transferred language from "the Lord = Yahweh" to "the Lord = Jesus Christ." As such, it is a certain instance where a unique, unshared prerogative of Yahweh has now been appropriated to refer to Christ.⁸⁵

3. In v. 10, at the conclusion of his long sentence, Paul continues what he has said about Christ in v. 9 with further appropriation of language from the Septuagint—a collage of language from Ps 89:7 (88:8 LXX)⁸⁶ and Ps 68:35 (67:36 LXX).⁸⁷ In this case the word κύριος appears neither in the immediate sentences of the Psalter nor in Paul's sentence at this point. Nonetheless, the intertextual appropriation of the language of the Psalter seems certain in a passage where Yahweh is referred to as ὁ θεός:

2 Thess 1:10	ὅταν	ἔλθῃ ἐνδοξασθῆναι	ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ
Ps 88:8 LXX	ὁ θεός	ἐνδοξαζόμενος	ἐν βουλῇ ἁγίων
2 Thess 1:10	<i>when</i>	<i>he comes to be glorified</i>	<i>among his saints</i>
Ps 88:8 LXX	<i>God</i>	<i>being gloried</i>	<i>in the council of the saints</i>
2 Thess 1:10	καὶ	θαυμασθῆναι	ἐν πάσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν
Ps 67:36 LXX		θαυμαστός ὁ θεός	ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ
2 Thess 1:10	<i>and</i>	<i>to be marveled at</i>	<i>among all who believe</i>
Ps 67:36 LXX		<i>marvelous is God</i>	<i>among his holy ones</i>

⁸⁵On the use of "glory" with reference to Christ, see pp. 70–71 (on 2 Thess 2:14) and pp. 180–84 (on 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4).

⁸⁶For Paul's further christological appropriation of the psalm, see the discussion of Col 1:15–17 in ch. 7 (p. 301).

⁸⁷These echoes may seem a bit more tenuous than the others in this series. Indeed, were they the only echoes of the Septuagint in this passage, they would scarcely be noted in this study, especially since they lack the word κύριος. They are included here precisely because they belong to a larger complex of such usage of the OT. Cf. Best, 264–65; Marshall, 180; Bruce, 153; Wanamaker, 231; Malherbe, 404; Green, 294–95; Beale (190), however, prefers to see it as still reflecting Isa 2 and 66.

As before, it is the collocation and amount of such unusual language (for Paul) that makes the intertextuality seem certain. Paul apparently modified the prepositional phrase from “in the *council* of the holy ones” in Ps 89:7 (88:8 LXX) to “in his holy ones” from Ps 68—and that most likely because of his addition of “to be marveled at” (from Ps 68:35, which the NRSV and TNIV render as “awesome” [67:36 LXX]) at the end of his sentence. Indeed, it is precisely the intertextuality that has made the prepositional phrase such a difficult one for interpreters and translators.⁸⁸ What is striking in this case is Paul’s deliberate use of this language from two places in the Psalter where the psalmists are extolling the unparalleled grandeur and greatness of Yahweh. For Paul, that language perfectly fits the eschatological coming of Christ.

Thus, with a series of echoes of “judgment” texts from the OT, where Yahweh will “come” and mete out judgment, Paul, by way of the Septuagint’s use of κύριος, now places Christ in God’s role as judge.

4. We should also note that Paul concludes with the prepositional phrase “on that day” (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ), which sits especially awkwardly at the end of this now very long sentence. On Paul’s appropriation of this OT language, see discussion on 1 Thess 5:2 above (pp. 46–47). For our present purposes, two matters are noteworthy. First, the very awkwardness of the phrase calls the reader’s attention to it.⁸⁹ Very likely it serves with its companion ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ (*at the revelation of the Lord Jesus*) in v. 7b as a deliberate framing device, thus making the whole of vv. 7b–10 a kind of “Day of the Lord” oracle in its own right. Second, at the same time, its emphatic position at the end is almost certainly a deliberate response to the issue to be raised next: someone in Paul’s name has declared among them that “the day of the Lord has already come.”

2 Thessalonians 1:12

When Paul turns from “thanksgiving” to prayer for the Thessalonians, he focuses not so much on their sure future as on their living in the present so as to bring glory to the name of the Lord. In so doing, he appropriates language from Isa 66:5, thus concluding with an echo from the same Isaianic oracle with which he began in v. 7:

⁸⁸Both the preposition and the word ἅγιοις present a measure of difficulty. The latter is almost certainly to be understood as referring to God’s people (traditionally, “the saints”). Most likely the ἐν is a deliberate “in your face” word against the Thessalonians’ persecutors. At the same eschatological event when the latter will be “punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord [Jesus],” the people of God in Thessalonica will be among those who will bring eternal glory to Christ by being present among the redeemed. Thus Christ the Lord is “glorified in them” on that day.

⁸⁹Indeed, so awkward is it that even the KJV translators, in choosing to keep Paul’s word order (as was their style), inserted a parenthesis around “because our testimony among you was believed,” so that “in that day” could be seen by the reader (properly so) to modify the first part of v. 10.

2 Thess 1:12	ὅπως ἐνδοξασθῆ ἐν ὑμῖν	τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ	κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ
Isa 66:5	ἵνα δοξασθῆ	τὸ ὄνομα	κυρίου
2 Thess 1:12	so that	might be glorified the name	of our Lord Jesus <i>among you</i>
Isa 66:5	so that	the name	of the Lord might be glorified

Although at first sight this usage may seem more tenuous as a case of genuine “intertextuality,”⁹⁰ there are especially good reasons for viewing it as such. First, Paul’s language is that of the Septuagint Isaiah, a book with which Paul shows thoroughgoing acquaintance.⁹¹ His wording therefore differs considerably from the Hebrew, since the Septuagint translator here was trying to make sense of some difficult lines in the Hebrew text. Original words of taunt by the postexilic “aristocratic religious” to Yahweh’s faithful ones (“Let the LORD be glorified that we may see your joy!”) had been turned into a promise to the latter that “the name of the LORD will be glorified” and their persecutors thus will be brought to shame.

One should not miss the similarity of this context with that of the Thessalonians. Toward the end of his “thanksgiving” Paul had set forth the demonstration of God’s justice (vv. 7–10) with echoes from this same Isaianic oracle. At the same time, he also picked up language from Isa 2 and from the Psalter to emphasize the contrasting eschatological future between the Thessalonian believers and their tormentors. Indeed, God intends for Christ “to be glorified in his saints.” Now Paul prays for the fulfillment of that promise by returning to Isa 66, with language spoken into a context similar to theirs. And again “the Name = YHWH” now belongs to Christ Jesus through the Septuagint’s ὁ κύριος, thus continuing Paul’s substitution of Christ Jesus for Yahweh, with his (not argued for) attribution to Christ of clearly divine prerogatives.

We should also note, finally, that Paul’s concluding phrase, κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (*according to the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ*), stands ambiguously in the Greek. Did Paul intend “the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ” or, as almost all English translations have it, “the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”? If Paul intended the former, of course, he not only substitutes Christ the Lord for Yahweh when citing the Septuagint but also even calls the Lord Jesus θεός (*God*). Although Greek grammar ordinarily would favor this option,⁹² Pauline

⁹⁰Although not mentioned in earlier commentaries (e.g., Ellicott, Findlay, Milligan), from Frame (1912) on, it is generally noted—but see the slight hesitation in Best (271) because of the word order.

⁹¹For evidence of this, see appendix IV in NA²⁷, 789–93.

⁹²That is, there is only one Greek article (τοῦ) controlling both nouns (θεοῦ and κυρίου), thus coming under Granville Sharp’s Rule. This view is espoused by Findlay,

usage must prevail here. That is, Paul regularly associates God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ together in single prepositional phrases⁹³ like this one; and even though he does so with a bit more grammatical precision elsewhere, it is difficult to imagine that this “inclusio” with v. 2 is now intended to identify Christ with God the Father.⁹⁴

2 Thessalonians 2:13–14

2:13–14 ¹³ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοὶ ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ κυρίου,⁹⁵ ὅτι εἴλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀπαρχὴν⁹⁶ εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας,¹⁴ εἰς ὃ καὶ⁹⁷ ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν εἰς περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

¹³We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers (and sisters) **beloved by the Lord**, because God has chosen you as firstfruits for salvation through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and your faith in the truth,¹⁴ unto which (salvation) he (God) also called you through our gospel, so that you might share **in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

Here is the first of the many proto-Trinitarian⁹⁸ soteriological moments in Paul’s letters,⁹⁹ which ordinarily have the following “grammar” of salvation (see, e.g., Rom 5:1–8):

157; Green, 299–300; it is rejected by Ellicott, 105; Milligan, 94; Frame, 242; Rigaux, 643; Best, 272–73; Bruce, 156–57; Wanamaker, 236; Morris, 211; Richard, 311; Malherbe, 412; Beale, 196–97; D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 271.

⁹³See, e.g., 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1, 2; and throughout the corpus.

⁹⁴Furthermore, as Milligan (94) points out, an anarthrous κύριος is a regular feature of Pauline usage—a usage first of all related to the larger issue at hand, where Paul cites an anarthrous usage from the Septuagint, but also because very likely by now the title “the Lord” is moving very close to being an actual name.

⁹⁵The wording here has been conformed to the θεοῦ of 1 Thess 1:4 in D* b m vg.

⁹⁶For this textual choice (NRSV, TNIV [contra NIV]), see Fee, *To What End Exegesis?* 75–76.

⁹⁷The textual choice of add/omit the (ascensive?) καὶ has proved to be a difficult one for interpreters. I think that the burden of probability rests with inclusion as original here (supported by Ɑ G P 81 365 2464 *al* vg sy^h), since it is difficult to see why anyone would have added it, and its very difficulty is reason enough for some scribes to let it go.

⁹⁸In light of some (legitimate) objections to my use of “Trinitarian” in *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994) as proper nomenclature for Pauline theology—mostly because the word carries too much of the baggage of later discussions that are concerned with how the three divine “persons” cohere in unity of being—I have chosen to use “proto-Trinitarian” throughout this study. It is borrowed from Stanley Porter (in I. H. Marshall, *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* [ASBT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004], 122 n. 59) as a way of designating those texts where Paul himself, rigorous monotheist though he was, joins Father, Son, and Spirit in ways that indicate the full identity of the Son and Spirit with the Father without losing that monotheism.

⁹⁹For a full listing of these passages, see Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 48 n. 39.

Salvation is *predicated* on the love of God;
 it is *effected* by Christ through his death and resurrection;
 and *made effective* through the work of the Holy Spirit.

But here it takes an unusual form:

The Thessalonians have been *chosen and called by God* as firstfruits for salvation;
 evidenced by the fact that they are *loved by the Lord*
 [ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ κυρίου];
 and are thus *saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit*.

What is striking here is not what is said about God—indeed, throughout the Pauline corpus both “election” and “calling” are regularly attributed to God the Father—but rather that language usually reserved for God the Father is here freely attributed to “the Lord”¹⁰⁰ and that language usually attributed to Christ is here the special province of the Holy Spirit. Our interest lies with the middle line.¹⁰¹

In the five other instances where Paul speaks of Christ’s love (Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 5:14; Rom 8:35; Eph 3:19; 5:2), it is usually tied explicitly to the love expressed in his redemptive death¹⁰² (e.g., Gal 2:20: “the Son of God, . . . who loved me and gave himself for me”). More commonly, Paul speaks of the love of God (θεός), which serves for him as the predicate for salvation. Indeed, two (Greek) sentences later (2:16) this is precisely what is said: “God our Father who loved us, and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope” (cf. 1 Thess 1:4). And even when one grants that the phrase “loved by the Lord” is probably in this case an allusion to his saving work on the cross,¹⁰³ rather than the predicate of their salvation as when it is said of the Father, it is nonetheless remarkable that this particular attribution takes place in one of Paul’s triadic ways of speaking about salvation.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰That this refers to Christ and not to God (contra Rigaux, 371; Malherbe, 436; Green, 325 [?]; Beale, 225) seems certain on the basis of both Pauline usage and the grammar of the present sentence. Had Paul intended ὑπὸ κυρίου to equal the preceding τῷ θεῷ, then the simple, ordinary composition of such a sentence would have been: τῷ θεῷ . . . ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι εἴλατο ὑμᾶς ἀπαρχὴν (*to God, . . . loved by him, because he chose you as firstfruits*). Thus the awkward repetition of “God” as the subject of Paul’s sentence occurs precisely because in the meantime he has mentioned a second subject (“the Lord”), thus necessitating his return to the first noun (cf. Lightfoot, 119; Best, 311; Marshall, 206). This grammatical reality, plus the fact that Paul makes a considerable point in these two letters of identifying Jesus Christ as ὁ κύριος, would seem to far outweigh the contextual considerations that Malherbe brings forward to suggest otherwise.

¹⁰¹For a full discussion of the third line, see Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 77–79.

¹⁰²The notable exception is Eph 3:19.

¹⁰³Cf. Frame, 279; contra Morris (238), who suggests that “there is probably no significance in the change.”

¹⁰⁴Both Morris (238) and Marshall (206) suggest that the reason for it might be to stand in contrast to what the Lord Jesus does to the wicked in the preceding passage.

At the same time, this is another moment where Paul echoes distinct language from the Septuagint, where κύριος had served to translate the Tetragrammaton (YHWH). In this case the language is precisely that of Deut 33:12, where of Benjamin it is said: ἡγαπημένος ὑπὸ κυρίου. If this were the only one of these in 1–2 Thessalonians, then one perhaps could dismiss it as coincidental (although not easily!¹⁰⁵). But it is the sheer volume of them, plus the OT context for this one, that makes it quite certain as well. Thus in its second appearance in the corpus, God’s love for his elect people is expressed in terms of their being loved by Christ the κύριος, an attribute that in Paul’s thinking is thus equally shared by Father and Son—by presupposition and without argumentation.¹⁰⁶

2 Thessalonians 3:5

The next instance of intertextuality appears at the end of a brief transitional appeal in 2 Thess 3:1–5. Here Paul has first urged that they pray for him (vv. 1–2; as he has just done for them [2:16–17]); but then he turns once more toward the Thessalonians with a threefold expression of confidence: that the “faithful Lord” (Jesus [see pp. 71–72 below]) will also strengthen them and protect them from evil (v. 3); that they will also carry out what Paul is about to command them in 3:6–14 (v. 4); and finally with a prayer (v. 5) that the Lord will direct their hearts in both of these matters (love, anticipating vv. 6–14 [cf. 1 Thess 4:9–12], and perseverance, picking up the urgencies of the two preceding chapters). The latter is yet one more prayer in these letters (see below), and it has ὁ κύριος as the one prayed to and thus as the subject of the actions prayed for.

Some think that ὁ κύριος in this case refers to God the Father,¹⁰⁷ but that would stand in considerable tension with Paul’s usage elsewhere in these letters, where “God” is always identified as ὁ θεός and Christ as

¹⁰⁵After all, Paul himself takes some measure of pride in his Benjaminite ancestry (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:6); is it even imaginable that this “blessing” of his ancestral tribe was not well known to the apostle? That Paul is echoing the Septuagint in this case seems to be made the more certain by the anarthrous use of κυρίου. It is therefore remarkable that the majority of commentators have missed this certain echo of the Septuagint, which was first noted by Westcott-Hort and has been in the Nestle(-Aland) margin at least since 1950 (but see Findlay, 188; others [Frame, 279; Best, 312; Malherbe, 436] reference the Septuagint but see little or no connection).

¹⁰⁶Thus reflecting what L. J. Kreitzer calls a “functional and conceptual overlap between Christ and God” (*Jesus and God in Paul’s Eschatology* [JSNTSup 19; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987], e.g., 165, 170).

¹⁰⁷See Malherbe, 447, and (apparently) Beale, 243–48. Most (correctly) see it as picking up from 2:16–17, where Christ has been specifically identified once more as ὁ κύριος. There was, after all, no chapter or verse break in Paul’s text, so how could the Thessalonians possibly think that in the very next sentences (vv. 3, 5) ὁ κύριος suddenly changes identity? Most of the early Greek fathers argued that this is a reference to the Holy Spirit, since God and Christ are mentioned in what follows. But that is an interpretation driven by Trinitarian theology, not by Pauline usage.

ὁ κύριος. Indeed, it would make little sense of Pauline usage to make this ὁ κύριος refer to God when in the preceding prayer report in 2:16–17 Paul has chosen to place Christ first as the one addressed in prayer and identified him as ὁ κύριος—and used the intensive pronoun in so doing—and then followed with ὁ θεός, who is identified as ὁ πατήρ. Only our own familiarity with referring to God as “the Lord” and a resistance to Paul’s own language patterns and deliberate designations would make this ὁ κύριος refer to God the Father.

Our immediate interest in this prayer is with its (apparently) deliberate intertextual use of 1 Chr 29:18.¹⁰⁸ In David’s prayer in conjunction with the gifts brought for the construction of the temple, he prays, “Lord, God of our Fathers, . . . direct their hearts to you.”

2 Thess 3:5	ὁ δὲ κύριος εἰς τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ	κατευθῆναι	ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας
1 Chr 29:18	κύριε ὁ θεὸς . . . καὶ	κατεύθυνον	τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν πρὸς σέ
2 Thess 3:5	May the Lord <i>into the love of God</i>	direct	<i>your hearts</i>
1 Chr 29:18	Lord God . . . <i>toward you</i>	<i>also direct</i>	<i>their hearts</i>

Three items make one think that this is deliberate intertextuality. (1) The locution is both striking and unusual—in fact, the verb is found elsewhere in Paul’s writings only in the prayer in 1 Thess 3:11. Moreover, (2) the phrase “the Lord direct their/your hearts” toward God is *unique to these two passages* in the Bible.¹⁰⁹ And (3) the phrase is found in the mouth of the great king of Israel, David himself—and in prayer!—so that it is not a merely passing phrase used by a more obscure figure. Again Paul attributes the Septuagint’s translation of the Tetragrammaton to Christ.¹¹⁰

2 Thessalonians 3:16

The final moment of (seldom noted)¹¹¹ intertextuality in these letters occurs after the “peace” and before the final “grace” at the end of 2 Thessalonians. In a singular moment in his letters, Paul dips into his Jewish heritage

¹⁰⁸So most commentators (e.g., Findlay, 202; Rigaux, 699; Best, 329–30; Marshall, 217; Bruce, 202; Richard, 372; Malherbe, 447; Green, 339).

¹⁰⁹That is, these are the only two places where “the Lord” is the subject of this verb with “the heart” as the object. Hereafter, in 2 Chronicles, the king himself does or does not “direct his own heart” to follow Yahweh (e.g., 12:14; 19:3).

¹¹⁰What is further noteworthy in this case is that both 1 Thess 3:11 and this passage are expressed as *prayer*; and Paul’s prayer is directed toward Christ as Lord (see further on the “prayer” texts below).

¹¹¹Exceptions are Marshall (230) and Richard (385).

with the blessing “The Lord be with you”; only in this case, given the nature of the letter, it becomes, “The Lord be with *all* of you.” In so doing, he appropriates language that in the OT was seen as evidence of faithfulness to Yahweh, as the author of Ruth is keen to point out. Thus Boaz greets his workers, “The LORD be with you,” to which they respond, “The LORD bless you!” (Ruth 2:4).¹¹² Paul’s greeting once again reflects the (in this case verbless) text of the Septuagint:

2 Thess 3:16	ὁ κύριος	μετὰ	πάντων	ὑμῶν.
Ruth 2:4	κύριος	μεθ’		ὑμῶν.
2 Thess 3:16	The Lord (be)	with	<i>all of</i>	you.
Ruth 2:4	The Lord (be)	with		you.

Thus once more, again in an especially significant way, Paul has appropriated what strictly belonged to Yahweh in an OT passage and applied it directly to Christ.

Kύριος Phrases That Echo Septuagint Usage

Along with these several (what appear to be) certain intertextual moments in this letter, where Paul has appropriated κύριος passages from the Septuagint and applied them to Christ, there are also a few instances where he has done the same with significant Yahweh phrases, some of which are repeated from 1 Thessalonians.

The Name of the Lord

2 Thess 3:6 παραγγέλλομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί,
ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
We command you, brothers (and sisters),
in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ

On the significance of this use of “the Name of the Lord,” see above on 1 Thess 5:27 (p. 46). While in this case one could perhaps get around Paul’s co-opting of “the Name” as referring to Christ, by suggesting that the name in this case is not “the Lord” but “Jesus Christ,” which stands in apposition to “the Lord,” that simply will not do in Rom 10:9–13 (q.v.), where the whole point is that Christ is “the Lord” upon whom people now call for salvation. Thus the text from Joel 2:32 (3:5 LXX) cited there probably functions for Paul as the basis for this terminology throughout the corpus.

That is surely the case here, where “Jesus Christ” simply defines the name of the Lord. Although this is not an oath as such, it functions very much like

¹¹²For this phenomenon, see also Judg 6:12 and Luke 1:28, both of which are preceded (as here) with the wish of peace.

one. Paul is going to command the disruptive idle to work with their own hands. The authority behind this command is “the name of the Lord,” the same name that he prayed would be glorified among them as they live in a manner worthy of their calling (1:11–12). This understanding is further supported by a similar phenomenon that occurs later in this same passage:

2 Thess 3:12 παραγγέλλομεν καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ
We command and urge (them) in the Lord Jesus Christ

Here, “in the Lord Jesus Christ” functions in the same way as “the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” in v. 6. As before, the christological significance of this phrase lies with the fact that this use of “the Name” is an appropriation to Christ of what belonged exclusively to Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible.

The Word of the Lord

2 Thess 3:1 ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχη
in order that the word of the Lord might run

For this usage, see above on 1 Thess 1:8 and 4:15 (p. 45). It could be argued that this is another intertextual moment, this time echoing Ps 147:15 [147:4 LXX], “his word runs swiftly.” But in this case the Septuagint has translated the verb as future, δραμεῖται ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ, so this one remains doubtful as true intertextuality. That is, Paul may be reflecting this passage, but the language is now his own.

The Day of the Lord

2 Thess 2:2 ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου
that has come the day of the Lord

For this usage, see the discussion of 1 Thess 5:2 above (pp. 46–47).

We might note, finally, that this extraordinary number of intertextual moments in both of the Thessalonian letters suggests at least two things. First, the evidence from Acts 17:1–6 seems to be a basically reliable account of the beginnings of this congregation. Whether Paul expected the church to catch all these echoes from the Bible is a moot point; that they could have done so, Gentiles though most of them were, seems highly likely if in fact the nucleus of the origins of the church in this city was composed partly of God-fearing Gentiles who would have regularly attended the synagogue and heard these texts read over and over again.

Second, very early on, and long before he wrote these first extant letters, Paul had already begun to connect the risen Lord, Jesus Christ, whom he had encountered on the Damascus Road, with the κύριος of the Septuagint. How much he intended by that christologically may also be a moot point,

but what is not debatable, it seems, is that he regularly did so without impinging on his strict monotheism. The “Lord” of these texts, whom he surely knew to refer to God the Father, was now seen to refer to Christ. This can best be explained, I will argue in later chapters, in light of (1) his own reworking of the Shema—as he does in 1 Cor 8:6 (see pp. 89–94 below), so that the one Lord God now embraces both the Father (as θεός) and the Son (as κύριος)—and (2) his understanding that God, in exalting Christ to his “right hand,” also bestowed on him “the Name” = ὁ κύριος, as Paul asserts in Phil 2:9–11. By any reasonable reckoning this reflects a very high Christology indeed.

God and ὁ Κύριος Share in Divine Purposes and Activity

Another christological feature of 2 Thessalonians that carries on what began in the first letter is the joining of Christ as Lord with God the Father in several key moments of divine purpose and activity on the Thessalonians’ behalf. In this letter it begins with the salutation.

The Peace of the Lord (2 Thess 1:2; 1:12)

2 Thess 1:2	χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ¹¹³ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
2 Thess 1:12	κατὰ τὴν χάριν <u>τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν</u> καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
2 Thess 1:2	<i>Grace to you and peace</i> <u>from God the Father</u> and the Lord Jesus Christ.
2 Thess 1:12	<i>according to the grace</i> <u>of our God</u> and the Lord Jesus Christ

The elaborated greeting in the second letter (1:2) begins a practice that becomes generally consistent in Paul’s subsequent letters. As with the salutation proper (see pp. 48–50 above), here again we have one preposition controlling both nouns, so that “grace” and “peace” are understood to come from Father and Son together. That this understanding lies behind what Paul says is demonstrated by his further use of “grace” and “peace” in these

¹¹³The usual ἡμῶν has been added in B D P 33 1739 1881 *pc*; but here is a case where the rules of transcriptional probability override the “better evidence.” First, there is no analogy to the “omission” of this pronoun in the other Pauline salutations, so why here only, one wonders; second, the regular usage would be so well known to scribes that they would quite independently add it, and do so without thinking. It should also be noted that the absence of the pronoun puts considerable pressure on the theory of pseudepigraphy. Would a pseudepigrapher have thus botched the borrowing of this phrase from the rest of the corpus?

two letters. We have already noted¹¹⁴ how he freely attributes “grace” as coming from both Father and Son. Here we note that the same is true with “peace,” where the evidence from the two letters together indicates the easy interchangeability between God and Christ on this matter. Note especially how the two letters conclude:

- 1 Thess 5:23 αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς
 2 Thess 3:16 **αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος** **τῆς εἰρήνης δόη** ὑμῖν τὴν εἰρήνην
 1 Thess 5:23 *May the God* *of peace himself sanctify you entirely;*
 2 Thess 3:16 **May the Lord** **of peace himself give** *you peace*

The intensive pronoun in both cases, which is a common feature in the prayers of these two letters, makes it certain that the 2 Thessalonians passage can refer only to Christ.¹¹⁵ Indeed, only if one were predisposed to think otherwise, and only with some difficulty, could one get around the strong implications of these texts: God the Father and Christ the Son share equally in these divine attributes as benefits for God’s people.

The Divine Glory (2 Thess 2:14)

At the end of his second thanksgiving in this letter (2:13–14 [see pp. 63–65 above]), Paul speaks of the goal of salvation in terms of “obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is true that on two other occasions Paul speaks of Christ in terms of “glory,”¹¹⁶ but when this word is used as the eschatological goal of Christian redemption, it ordinarily refers to “the glory of God the Father,” as in 1 Thess 2:12 (cf. Phil 1:11; 2:11). Thus:

- 1 Thess 2:12 εἰς τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς
εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν
 2 Thess 2:14 εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν εἰς
περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
 [1 Thess 2:12 *that you walk* *worthy of the God who calls you*
into his own kingdom and glory
 2 Thess 2:14 *unto which also he called you through our gospel*
unto obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ]

¹¹⁴See pp. 52–53 above.

¹¹⁵So most interpreters. Malherbe (461), who is disposed to think that κύριος in 2 Thess 3 has “God” as its referent, allows that “Christ” is “a possible, but not necessary” understanding of this phrase. But the burden of proof rests with him, since Paul explicitly identifies Christ as κύριος and nowhere uses this title unambiguously to refer to God.

¹¹⁶1 Cor 2:8: “crucified the Lord of glory”; 2 Cor 3:18/4:4: “we all with unveiled faces behold the glory of the Lord” / “the glory of Christ, who is the image of God”; see the discussions in chs. 3 and 4 below (pp. 136, 180–84).

This common OT word gives expression to the sheer majesty of the eternal God, unshared by any other, and to the wonder evoked by that majesty. It is Yahweh's "glory" that Moses desired to see (Exod 33:18), and that then filled the tabernacle (Exod 40:35) and the temple (1 Kgs 8:11). Indeed, Yahweh expressly says that he will *not* share his glory with another (Isa 42:8; 48:11 [here referring to other "gods"]). But precisely because the divine Son already shares that glory, Paul can easily speak in such terms. In this instance, to be sure, the phrase most likely has to do with Christ's own present exaltation to glory, following his humiliation in death, an exaltation in which the Thessalonians will have a share. But even so, this attribution to Christ of language usually reserved for God is a remarkable way of speaking of the final goal of the Thessalonians' redemption.

Perhaps even more striking is the language of the thanksgiving in 2 Thess 1:3–10, with its strong affirmation of God's justice noted above (pp. 57–61). In that case, through his intertextual use of Isa 2:10, Paul has straight across attributed God's unshared glory—"the glory of his might"—to the Lord Jesus.¹¹⁷

The Divine Faithfulness (2 Thess 3:3)

One of the hallmarks of Yahweh is that he is a faithful God, true to himself and his own character. And because he is so—always—God's people can count on him and trust him at all times and in all circumstances. Yahweh is so revealed in Deut 7:9 ("the faithful [πιστός] God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him"), whose faithfulness means he can do no wrong (Deut 32:4). And it is Yahweh's faithfulness to which psalmists (Ps 145:13) and prophets (Isa 49:7) appeal. And so, too, does Paul.

Its first occurrence in Paul's letters is in 1 Thess 5:24, πιστὸς ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς, ὃς καὶ ποιήσει (*faithful is the one who called you, who will also do it*).¹¹⁸ Although not frequent thereafter, this expression does occur 3 times in his correspondence with (less than faithful) Corinth: 1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor 1:18. In each case, as in the OT, it is God (θεός) who is faithful. But in 2 Thess 3:3, Paul attributes such faithfulness to Christ: Πιστὸς δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ κύριος, ὃς στηρίξει ὑμᾶς καὶ φυλάξει ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ (*Faithful is the Lord, who will strengthen you and keep you from the evil one*).

To be sure, there are some who, on the basis of usage elsewhere, argue that Paul has God the Father in mind here as well.¹¹⁹ But two things seem to

¹¹⁷On the question of Christ as God's "glory," see the discussions of 2 Cor 4:4, 6 (ch. 4) and Titus 2:13 (ch. 10).

¹¹⁸That "the one who called" is a reference to God is not disputed by anyone; "calling," after all, is the special province of θεός, as is made plain in 1 Thess 2:12; 4:7.

¹¹⁹See, e.g., Malherbe, 445. However, his reasons seem less than weighty: that (in his reckoning) κύριος in this letter sometimes refers to God (see, e.g., n. 107 above); and that God is the one ordinarily so designated. But that scarcely stands up against the rather certain evidence going the other way. To be sure, if this were the

militate against such a view. First, just two sentences before this (2:16), Paul has once again, and this time with the intensive αὐτός, identified ὁ κύριος as Jesus Christ, which designation he then picks up 4 times in the sentences that follow (3:1–5). One would need extraordinary evidence to the contrary to overrule Paul's own identification. Second, in the other instances of this phrase in Paul's writings, God (θεός) is the express subject of faithfulness; one wonders why Paul would not have said the same if that is what he intended here. These data, plus the fact that Paul has so many of these kinds of interchanges in these two letters, seem to make certain that such is the case in this instance as well.

The One Who Strengthens Believers (2 Thess 3:3)

In the same passage (2 Thess 3:3), Paul goes on to describe the Lord's = Christ's faithfulness in terms of "who will strengthen [στηρίξει] you and protect [φυλάξει] you from the evil one." Earlier, in the prayer in 1 Thess 3:12–13, he likewise prayed that the Lord = Christ will cause their love to increase so as to "strengthen [εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι] your hearts (that they might be) blameless in holiness." Thus his two sentences read,

2 Thess 3:3 **πιστὸς δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ κύριος, ὃς στηρίξει ὑμᾶς καὶ φυλάξει ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.**

Faithful is the Lord, who will strengthen you and keep you from the evil one.

1 Thess 3:12–13 ¹²ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς,

¹³εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ

¹²And you **may the Lord cause to increase and abound** in love for one another and for all, just as also ours for you, ¹³**so as to strengthen** your hearts blameless in holiness

But in between these two uses of στηρίζω in prayer and affirmation regarding Christ, Paul uses the same verb with God the Father as the subject:¹²⁰

2 Thess 2:16–17 ¹⁶θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν ὁ ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰώνιαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι, ¹⁷παρακαλέσαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας καὶ στηρίξαι ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἀγαθῷ.

¹⁶May God our Father, who loved us and gave (us) eternal encouragement and good hope in grace, ¹⁷encourage and strengthen your hearts in every good deed and word.

only instance of this kind of thing in these two letters, one would have good reason to pause. But this interchange of attributes and activities between the Father and the Son is one of the striking features of the two letters.

¹²⁰These three instances of the verb στηρίζω (*strengthen*) account for half of the occurrences in the Pauline corpus; it occurs one other time in these letters (1 Thess 3:2) and twice in Romans (1:11; 16:25).

One should further note that the verb *περισσεύω* (*abound*) used of the Lord = Christ in 1 Thess 3:13 is attributed to God the Father in 2 Cor 9:8.

Again, it is the ease with which Paul makes these kinds of interchanges, and especially so in prayer, that catches our attention.

The Gospel of God and of Christ (2 Thess 1:8)

Finally, in the overview of these kinds of interchange between κύριος and θεός in these two letters, one should perhaps note a phenomenon that will occur frequently in later letters: the interchange between “the gospel of God” in 1 Thess 2:2, 8, 9 and “the gospel of Christ” in 1 Thess 3:2. As is often pointed out, this is most likely an interchange between God as the source of the gospel and Christ as its basic content.

However, in the long thanksgiving-turned-announcement of judgment against the Thessalonians’ persecutors in 2 Thess 1:3–10, Paul refers to the latter as “not knowing God and not obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (v. 8). This is a unique moment in the NT, and it seems obviously shaped to fit the immediate context. The final demonstration of God’s justice will be accomplished at the Parousia of the Lord Jesus, who will himself carry out the just judgment against those who are persecuting the Thessalonian believers. This phrase is but one more adaptation of common language to fit that setting. Even though the καί (*and*) in this case is probably not a straightforward hendiadys, where the second member elaborates the first, obeying “the gospel of our Lord Jesus” is almost certainly intended as an explanation of what “knowing God” means in the present era.

Christ the Lord Invoked in Prayer

Paul’s readiness to address prayer to Christ, noted in 1 Thessalonians, continues in this letter in an even more pronounced way. Besides the grace-benediction (3:18),¹²¹ there are three more such prayers in this letter. The first of these (2:16–17) calls for considerable discussion, since it has some striking similarities to, and equally striking differences from, the prayer in 1 Thess 3:11–13.

2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 (cf. 1 Thess 3:11–13)

Here are the two texts together:

¹²¹ Which is identical to 1 Thess 5:28 except for the addition of πάντων (“be with you *all*”).

- 2 Thess 2:16–17 ¹⁶Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ ὁ θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν ὁ ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰώνιαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι, ¹⁷παρκαλέσαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας καὶ στηρίξαι ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἀγαθῷ.
- 1 Thess 3:11–13 ¹¹Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς κατευθύναι τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς· ¹²ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς, ¹³εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ.
- 2 Thess 2:16–17 ¹⁶*And may our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal encouragement and good hope in grace,* ¹⁷*encourage your hearts and strengthen (you) in every good deed and word.*
- 1 Thess 3:11–13 ¹¹*May God, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you;* ¹²*and you may the Lord cause to increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as also ours for you,* ¹³*so as to strengthen your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones.*

First the similarities, since looking at them together will settle some of the grammatical questions that have been raised.

1. Both prayers are directed toward θεός and κύριος together.

2. Both have the compound subject (“God” and “Lord”) with a singular verb. Some have argued that one cannot make too much theologically of this phenomenon,¹²² but what must be noted here is that the same phenomenon occurs in both cases, even though the subjects are in reverse order in the present instance.¹²³

¹²²See, e.g., J. A. Hewett, “1 Thessalonians 3.13,” *ExpTim* 87 (1975–1976): 54–55; Lightfoot, 48 (cf. Wanamaker, 142); and Bruce (71), who suggests that “with two subjects the verb commonly agrees with the nearer of the two.” But the texts brought forward do not seem to be true illustrations. That is, “wind and sea” (Mark 4:41), “moth and rust” (Matt 6:19), and “silver and gold” (Jas 5:3) do not seem to make this point; rather, they are analogous to Paul’s use here, where the two are thought of not individually but collectively. Richard (167–68) solves this “problem” by postulating an early scribal corruption to Paul’s original text, which he reconstructs as “Now may God our Father himself, as also our Lord Jesus, direct.” Better, it would seem, to take Paul himself seriously, since he can pray to both together and to one or the other separately. Richard’s concern, it should be noted, is a legitimate one: not to read Paul in light of later Trinitarian formulations. On the other hand, it is the very kind of phenomenon that played a role in the later formulations.

¹²³Wiles (see n. 72) and Richard (see preceding note), as with many others, it should be noted, reject Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, which makes more difficult the task of accounting for this phenomenon in 1 Thessalonians.

3. Both begin with the intensive αὐτός, which in each case must be grammatically understood to go with the first subject,¹²⁴ although, given the singular verb, it may very well also be thought of as a collective singular.¹²⁵

4. In both cases the elaboration of the prayer is directed toward the second addressee of the prayer (but grammatical subject of the sentence): “the Lord” in 1 Thessalonians, “God” in 2 Thessalonians. This phenomenon in turn seems to stand in some tension with the previous one. That is, the αὐτός would seem to put the emphasis on the first member, yet the elaboration focuses only on the second.

5. Both prayers share as a basic concern that the Thessalonians will be “strengthened,” expressed with στηρίζαι, a verb that occurs 4 times in these letters and only 2 times elsewhere in the Pauline corpus (Rom 1:11; 16:25).¹²⁶

The singular significant difference, of course, is that the two grammatical subjects are reversed in 2 Thess 3:16, so that if there were no elaboration at all, the emphasis might seem to lie with the first member, especially since in both cases this member is accompanied by the intensive αὐτός (*himself*): “May our God and Father *himself* and the Lord Jesus Christ”; “May our Lord Jesus Christ *himself* and God our Father.” And so it does in a way. Indeed, had we only one of these prayers, one could argue¹²⁷ by extrapolation that the emphasis in prayer for Paul is on the first one being addressed. But having both prayers, with their reversal of order and with the continuation prayer addressed only to the *second* member, would seem to prevent that.

As to the prayer itself, one needs to note that it brings conclusion to all of 2:1–17, Paul’s concern for the grossly mistaken eschatology that someone among them has put forward and that is therefore more deeply unsettling an already unsettled community. At the same time it concludes vv. 13–15, where Paul exhorts the Thessalonian believers to stay with what they have already been taught (v. 15), after setting them (vv. 13–14) in stark contrast to those who believe the lie and will be condemned with the man of lawlessness (vv. 10–12).

Here we are confronted with prayer that is quite different from the former one. As noted, it still has the plural subject with singular verbs, but the

¹²⁴Wiles suggests that “this must have been taken over from the conventional liturgical language to which the apostle and his readers were accustomed” (*Paul’s Intercessory Prayers*, 30). But “must have been” falls far short of actual demonstration. What is noteworthy is that the phenomenon exists only in 1–2 Thessalonians in the NT, although wish-prayers continue to be found in Paul’s letters (Wiles lists Rev 21:3 as well, but this is affirmation, not prayer).

¹²⁵So, e.g., Frame, 136–37; Best, 147.

¹²⁶In Thessalonians three of the four have to do with divine strengthening, two of which have Christ as the subject (see above on 2 Thess 3:3), while the other (1 Thess 3:2) has to do with apostolic encouragement of God’s people. So also in Romans: 16:25 is divine; 1:11 is apostolic.

¹²⁷As Wiles does (see n. 72 above).

αὐτός now goes with the Lord Jesus Christ. The mention of God the Father is then elaborated as the one who “in grace has loved *us* and has given us eternal comfort and good hope.” But then the two verbs that make up the actual prayer are (grammatically) assumed to be the joint action of the Lord and God the Father. The result, whether intended or not, is that the first verb (παρακαλέσαι) picks up the second phrase about God that has just preceded (“eternal παράκλησις”), while the second verb (στηρίζαι) is used of Christ in 1 Thess 3:12 and is picked up again in 2 Thess 3:3 as affirmation about what Christ will do for them.

2 Thessalonians 3:5

3:5 Ὁ δὲ κύριος κατευθύναι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας εἰς τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ
καὶ εἰς τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

May the Lord direct *your hearts* *into the love of God*
and into the patience of Christ.

This prayer concludes the transitional passage (3:1–5), which began with Paul urging reciprocal prayer from the Thessalonians with regard to his own ministry (vv. 1–2).¹²⁸ But with that, Paul turns his attention to them once again, in this case by means of three brief sentences that look both backward and forward, especially now in anticipation of the strong warning to the ἄτακτοι (*disruptive idle*) in vv. 6–16. First (v. 3), picking up from the preceding prayer, he assures them that “the faithful Lord will both strengthen them and protect them from the evil one.” Second (v. 4), he expresses his “confidence in the Lord” that they are both doing and will do what he has commanded them (referring now especially to 1 Thess 4:9–12). Third (v. 5), he offers yet one more prayer, this time that “the Lord (Jesus) will direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s¹²⁹ perseverance,” both of which will be needed for what he has to say next.

As with the prayer in 1 Thess 3:12–13, this one is directed to the Lord alone; but at the same time Paul picks up the verb from 1 Thessalonians 3:11, which was addressed to God and Christ together.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

3:16 αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης δῶη ὑμῖν τὴν εἰρήνην

May the Lord of peace himself give *you peace*

¹²⁸For the intertextual use of 1 Chr 29:18 in the formulation of the prayer, see the discussion on pp. 65–66 above. Our concern here is with the fact that the prayer is directed toward Christ alone.

¹²⁹This is the only instance in 2 Thessalonians where the name “Christ” occurs by itself. Here it seems most likely the result, in part, of Paul’s not wanting to repeat the subject of the sentence in this statement of the goal of the prayer. The actual referent of “perseverance” is unclear, but most likely it is the perseverance that Christ showed in his suffering and that he can now give to the Thessalonians.

This passage was noted above (p. 65) in the discussion of shared activities. I bring it into focus again at the end of this chapter to point out that it functions as yet one more *prayer* addressed to Christ alone. It should be noted that this prayer concludes the long warning to the disruptive idle in the same way the preceding prayer concluded that transitional paragraph. I have already called attention to the interchange of “the Lord of peace” with “the God of peace” in the similar prayer at the end of 1 Thessalonians. Here we simply note that Paul continues his directing prayer to Christ alone found in v. 5. And what a conclusion it is: Christ, as “the Lord of peace,” is the Lord who can bring *shalom* into the Thessalonian community, disrupted by those who have refused to work and are living off the largesse of others. Paul’s focus on the need of the believing community itself is thus expressed in a prayer that focuses on the Lord of the community himself.

The data from these prayers together point to a considerably high understanding of the person and role of Christ. Paul is addressing prayer, a prerogative that Jews reserved for God alone, to the present reigning Lord, Jesus Christ. And he does so apparently unself-consciously, which suggests that this has long been a part of his life of devotion.¹³⁰

Conclusion

Since conclusions have been regularly drawn throughout this chapter, at the end of our look at 2 Thessalonians I simply bring together the two main points regarding the Christology that has emerged in the two letters.

First, clear distinctions are regularly made between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, beginning with the opening salutation. They are neither confused nor conjoined in such a way that they are not thought of individually. And in many respects their “spheres” of activity can be isolated. God is always seen as the prime mover, and therefore as the one whose love lies behind all that believers experience (1 Thess 1:4), including their election and calling. Christ, on the other hand, is seen as the one who has effected their salvation (1 Thess 1:10; 5:10–11) and who therefore is the one actively engaged in their ongoing life as a community of faith and the one to whom Paul prays that such activity in their behalf will continue. Christ Jesus therefore is the exalted Lord, whose “name” is taken directly from the Septuagint’s translation of Yahweh as κύριος and who thus assumes all kinds of roles that God alone has in the OT story.

Second, precisely because Christ as the messianic Son of God is also seen as the present reigning Lord in heaven, Paul can speak of either God or

¹³⁰One of the difficulties with F. Matera’s narrative approach to Christology is that it tends toward a minimalist view of the Christology of these letters. The difficulty lies not with what is said—“Jesus enjoys a godly status” (*New Testament Christology*, 91)—but with what is left unsaid, such as the data in these final two sections.

Christ in ways that reflect their shared purposes and activities. At the same time, however, he feels quite free to pray to both together or to one or the other, depending on the perceived need and situation. And Paul can do this as a thoroughly monotheistic Jew, for whom the living and true God is the one and only God over against all pagan idolatries.

If these two sets of realities bring tension for us in the later church, the way through that tension is not by denying or minimizing what Paul says and does; rather, it requires us to expand our own understanding of the identity of the one God, which can embrace both Father and Son while still being only one God. In N. T. Wright's language, what we are confronted with in these earliest letters is a "christological monotheism."¹³¹ Faithful to his own heritage, Paul remains a strict monotheist. The Jewish God is God alone, the "living and true God." Yet there is, at the same time, a plainly christological modification of this monotheism. The one God has a Son, who, as the exalted Lord, shares the divine identity and the divine prerogatives. God's will now finds its expression "in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess 5:18).

It is this set of tensions that turns our attention to the Christology of the next letter, 1 Corinthians, where Paul plainly asserts as much about the one God, who is now both θεός (God the Father) and κύριος (the Lord, Jesus Christ).

Appendix I: The Texts

(double brackets [[]] indicate texts with references to God alone)

1 Thessalonians

1:1 Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ,

[[1:2 Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν μνησίαν ποιοῦμενοι ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν,]]

1:3 . . . καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν,

[[1:4 εἰδότες, ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν,]]

1:6 καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου, δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου,

1:8 ἀφ' ὑμῶν γὰρ ἐξήχηται ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μόνον ἐν . . . ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἢ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν,

¹³¹See *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 129.

1:9–10 ⁹. . . πώς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ ¹⁰ καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, **Ἰησοῦν τὸν ρυόμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης.**

[[2:2 . . . ἐν Φιλίπποις ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλῆσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἀγῶνι.]]

[[2:4 ἀλλὰ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, οὕτως λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν.]]

[[2:5 . . . οὔτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεὸς μάρτυς,]]

[[2:7 δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς **Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι**, ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν νήπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν.

[[2:8 . . . εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς,]]

[[2:9–10 ⁹. . . ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. ¹⁰ ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός, ὡς ὀσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν . . .]]

[[2:12 . . . μαρτυρόμενοι εἰς τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν.]]

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

2:14 ὑμεῖς γὰρ μιμηταὶ ἐγενήθητε, ἀδελφοί, τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν **Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ**, ὅτι τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπάθετε καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων . . .

2:14–15 ¹⁴. . . συμφυλετῶν καθὼς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ¹⁵ **καὶ τὸν κύριον ἀποκτεινάντων Ἰησοῦν** καὶ τοὺς προφήτας καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων καὶ θεῷ μὴ ἀρεσκόντων καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων,

2:19 τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπὶς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς **ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ;**

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

3:8 ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε **ἐν κυρίῳ.**

[[3:9 τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἢ χαίρομεν δι' ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν,]]

3:11–13 ¹¹ **Ἄυτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς** **κατευθῆναι** τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ¹² ὑμᾶς δὲ **ὁ κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ**

περισσεύσαι τη ἀγάπη εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς, ¹³εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνη ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγίων αὐτοῦ.

4:1 Λοιπὸν οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐρωτῶμεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν **ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ**, ἵνα καθὼς παρελάβετε παρ' ἡμῶν τὸ πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καὶ ἀρέσκειν θεῷ,

4:2 οἴδατε γὰρ τίνας παραγγελίας ἐδώκαμεν ὑμῖν **διὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ.**

[[4:3 τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶν θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἀγιασμός ὑμῶν,]]

[[4:5 . . . καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα τὸν θεόν,]]

4:6 τὸ μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν ἐν τῷ πράγματι τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, διότι **ἔκδικος κύριος** περὶ πάντων τούτων, καθὼς καὶ προείπαμεν ὑμῖν καὶ διεμαρτυράμεθα.

[[4:7–8 ⁷οὗ γὰρ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ ἀλλ' ἐν ἀγιασμῷ.

⁸τοιγαροῦν ὁ ἀθετῶν οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἀθετεῖ ἀλλὰ τὸν θεὸν τὸν καὶ διδόντα τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ . . .]]

[[4:9 . . . αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοὶ ἐστε εἰς τὸ ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους,]]

[[4:14–17 ¹⁴εἰ γὰρ πιστεύομεν ὅτι **Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν** καὶ ἀνέστη, οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας **διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτῷ.** ¹⁵Τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν **ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου**, ὅτι ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι **εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου** οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας· ¹⁶ὅτι **αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος** ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ, καταβήσεται ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον, ¹⁷ἔπειτα ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀρπαγησόμεθα ἐν νεφέλαις **εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου** εἰς ἀέρα· καὶ οὕτως **πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα.**

5:2 αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἴδατε ὅτι **ἡμέρα κυρίου** ὡς κλέπτης ἐν νυκτὶ οὕτως ἔρχεται.

5:9–10 ⁹ὅτι οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ὄργην ἀλλὰ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας **διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ** ¹⁰**τοῦ ἀποθανόντος** ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν **ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν.**

5:12 Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, εἰδέναι τοὺς κοπιῶντας ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ προΐσταμένους ὑμῶν **ἐν κυρίῳ** καὶ νουθετοῦντας ὑμᾶς

5:18 ἐν παντὶ εὐχαριστεῖτε· τοῦτο γὰρ θέλημα θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς.

5:23 Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς, καὶ ὀλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως **ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ** τηρηθείη.

[[5:24 πιστὸς ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς, ὃς καὶ ποιήσει.]]

5:27 **Ἐνορκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν κύριον ἀναγνωσθῆναι τὴν ἐπιστολὴν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς.**

5:28 Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν.

2 Thessalonians

1:1 Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ,

1:2 χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ^[v.l. + ἡμῶν] καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

[[1:3 Εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν,]]

[[1:4 ὥστε αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐγκανχᾶσθαι ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑπομονῆς ὑμῶν . . .]]

[[1:5–6 Ἐνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὸ καταξιοθῆναι ὑμᾶς τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, ὑπὲρ ἧς καὶ πάσχετε, ἕϊπερ δίκαιον παρὰ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι τοῖς θλίβουσιν ὑμᾶς θλίψιν]]

1:7–10 καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς θλιβομένοις ἄνεσιν μεθ' ἡμῶν, ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ μετ' ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ ἔν πυρὶ φλογός, διδόντος ἐκδίκησιν τοῖς μὴ εἰδόσιν θεὸν καὶ τοῖς μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, ὅτινες δίκην τίσουσιν ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ, ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ καὶ θαυμασθῆναι ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύσασιν, ὅτι ἐπιστεῦθη τὸ μαρτύριον ἡμῶν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.

1:11–12 ¹¹εἰς ὃ καὶ προσευχόμεθα πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως ὃ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ πληρώσῃ πᾶσαν εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθωσύνης καὶ ἔργον πίστεως ἐν δυνάμει, ¹²ὅπως ἐνδοξασθῇ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν αὐτῷ, κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

2:1–2 Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτὸν ²εἰς τὸ μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοδὸς μηδὲ θροεῖσθαι, μήτε διὰ πνεύματος μήτε διὰ λόγου μήτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι' ἡμῶν, ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου·

[[2:4 . . . ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσει ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός.]]

2:8–9 ⁸καὶ τότε ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ὁ ἄνομος, ὃν ὁ κύριος ^[v.l. + Ἰησοῦς] ἀνελεῖ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ καταργήσῃ τὴν ἐπιφανεῖα τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ, ὅ⁹ ἐστιν ἡ παρουσία . . .

[[2:11 καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πέμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτοὺς τῷ ψεύδει,]]

2:13–14 ¹³Ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοὶ ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ κυρίου, ὅτι εἶλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἀπαρχὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας, ¹⁴εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν εἰς περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

2:16–17 ¹⁶Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ [ὁ] θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν ὁ ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰώνιαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι, ¹⁷παρακαλέσαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας καὶ στηρίζαι ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ἀγαθῷ.

3:1–5 ¹Τὸ λοιπὸν προσεύχεσθε, ἀδελφοί, περὶ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχη καὶ δοξάζεται καθὼς καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ²καὶ ἵνα ῥυσθῶμεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀτόπων καὶ πονηρῶν ἀνθρώπων· οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἡ πίστις. ³Πιστὸς δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ κύριος, ὃς στηρίζει ὑμᾶς καὶ φυλάζει ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ. ⁴πεποιθᾶμεν δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, ὅτι ἂ παραγγέλλομεν [καὶ] ποιεῖτε καὶ ποιήσετε. ⁵Ὁ δὲ κύριος κατευθύναι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας εἰς τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εἰς τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

3:6 Παραγγέλλομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ στέλλεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφοῦ ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ἣν παρελάβοσαν . . .

3:12 τοῖς δὲ τοιούτοις παραγγέλλομεν καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, ἵνα μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργαζόμενοι τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἄρτον ἐσθίωσιν.

3:16 Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης δῶη ὑμῖν τὴν εἰρήνην διὰ παντὸς ἐν παντὶ τρόπῳ. ὁ κύριος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

3:18 ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' πάντων ὑμῶν.

Appendix II: An Analysis of Usage

(* = anarthrous; + = with possessive pronoun; [LXX] = Septuagint echo/citation)

1 Thessalonians

θεός 36
Christ 33

2 Thessalonians

θεός 18
Christ 23

The Data

1. κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (5 / 9)

1 Thess 1:1 D* (w/ θεός)
1 Thess 1:3 G+
1 Thess 5:9 G+ (διά)
1 Thess 5:23 G+
1 Thess 5:28 G+
2 Thess 1:1 D* (w/ θεός)
2 Thess 1:2 G* (w/ θεός)
2 Thess 1:12 G* (w/ θεός)
2 Thess 2:1 G+
2 Thess 2:14 G+
2 Thess 2:16 N (w/ θεός)
2 Thess 3:6 G+
2 Thess 3:12 D* (ἐν)
2 Thess 3:18 G+

2. κύριος Ἰησοῦς (6 / 3)

1 Thess 2:15 A
1 Thess 2:19 G+
1 Thess 3:11 N+ (w/ θεός)
1 Thess 3:13 G+
1 Thess 4:1 D* (ἐν)
1 Thess 4:2 G (διά)
2 Thess 1:7 G
2 Thess 1:8 G+
2 Thess 1:12 G+

3. Χριστός Ἰησοῦς (2 / 0)

1 Thess 2:14 D* (ἐν)
1 Thess 5:18 D* (ἐν)

4. κύριος (13 / 10)

1 Thess 1:6 G
1 Thess 1:8 G
1 Thess 3:8 D* (ἐν)
1 Thess 3:12 N
1 Thess 4:6 N* [LXX]
1 Thess 4:15 G* [LXX]
1 Thess 4:15 G
1 Thess 4:16 N
1 Thess 4:17 G
1 Thess 4:17 D* (σύν)
1 Thess 5:2 G* [LXX]
1 Thess 5:12 D* (ἐν)
1 Thess 5:27 A
2 Thess 1:9 G [LXX]
2 Thess 2:2 G [LXX]
2 Thess 2:8 N [tc + Ἰησοῦς]
[LXX]
2 Thess 2:13 G* (ὑπό) [LXX]
2 Thess 3:1 G
2 Thess 3:3 N
2 Thess 3:4 D* (ἐν) [LXX]
2 Thess 3:5 N
2 Thess 3:16 N
2 Thess 3:16 N [LXX]

5. Ἰησοῦς (3 / 0)

1 Thess 1:10 A* (appositive to
υἱός)
1 Thess 4:14 N*
1 Thess 4:14 G (διά)

6. Χριστός (3 / 1)

1 Thess 2:7 G*
1 Thess 3:2 G
1 Thess 4:16 D* (ἐν)
2 Thess 3:5 G

7. υἱός (1 / 0)

1 Thess 1:10 A (αὐτοῦ)