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## Abstract

This study examines Paul's presentation of his gospel as a divine communication in the OT prophetic tradition. Despite the importance of the word of God to the OT prophetic vocation, Paul's use of the phrase rarely refers to his gospel as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. The phrase occurs once in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 and twice in 2 Corinthians (2:17 and 4:2). His reference to the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου is equally rare, occurring only in the Thessalonian Correspondence (1 Thessalonians 1:8, 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:1).

Chapter one of this study presents a contextual word study of Paul's gospel language, illustrating the functional distinction between Paul's primary gospel language terms. A survey of Paul's primary gospel language in LXX usage provides background to Paul's use of the prophetic topos 'word of the Lord'. This word study demonstrates the importance of the Thessalonian letters as a source for our understanding of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / κυρίου as categories of divine communication to which the εὐαγγέλιον belongs.

Chapters two through five of this project substantiate a reading of 1 Thessalonians as source for Paul's presentation of the gospel as a divine communication in continuity with the LXX prophetic tradition. Paul constructs a community narrative in 1 Thessalonians 1-3 central to which is the arrival of, resistance to and endurance of the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / κυρίου among the Thessalonian believers. The εὐαγγέλιον as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου proclaims and performs the eschatological hope of Gentile inclusion at the *parousia*. The gospel as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ emphasizes the divine origin and agency of the message, entrusted to and embodied by true apostles of the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. The prophetic tradition, in which a divine emissary embodies the word, is expressed in the cruciform embodiment of the gospel by Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. 1 Thessalonians provides a narrative source for Paul's genuinely shared mission during the foundation of Gentile congregations.

*DIVINE COMMUNICATION IN THE LETTERS OF PAUL:*

*1 THESSALONIANS AS SOURCE*

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*SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY*

*AT*

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DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION*

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## Abbreviations

ABS	Anchor (Yale) Bible Series
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament Series
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibArch</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary Series
BTN	Bibliotheca Theologica Norvegica
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CTQ</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
ÉBib.NS	Études Bibliques Nouvelle Série
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
FRLANT	Forshurgen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testament
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Interp</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
IVPNTC	IVP New Testament Commentary Series
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplemental Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series
JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEKNT	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LeDivCom	Lectio Divina Commentaires
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies Series (formerly JSNTS)
<i>LS</i>	<i>Louvain Studies</i>
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary Series
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament Series
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary Series
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library Series
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary Series
SacPag	Sacra Pagina Series
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien

SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary Series
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.



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For Mom, giving not only the gospel but herself as well,  
and Dad, exhorting and applauding progress worthy of God's call.

*1 Thessalonians 2*

## INTRODUCTION

Paul's apostolic self-presentation in OT prophetic terms occurs in several of the undisputed letters, meriting mention in nearly any discussion of Paul's apostolic identity.<sup>1</sup> Two passages at the forefront of this discussion are the polemic call narrative in Galatians 1 and Paul's salutation to the churches in Romans 1, each containing language that echoes the call narratives in Jeremiah 1 and Isaiah 49 (Gal. 1:15, Ro. 1:1).<sup>2</sup> The first letter to the Thessalonians is another centre of investigation into Paul's use of the prophetic in his self-presentation.<sup>3</sup> A seminal article by A.M. Denis argued that Paul's use of language from the LXX prophetic writings, in particular Jeremiah and Isaiah, is indicative of Paul's self-understanding as a messianic prophet among the Gentiles.<sup>4</sup> Bartholomäus

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<sup>1</sup> See Karl O. Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets?: A Contribution to the Apostle's Self-Understanding*, WUNT 2/43 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991). Earlier studies that suggested connections between Paul's self-understanding and the OT prophetic tradition include the article by Traugott Holtz, 'Zum Selbstverständnis des Apostel Paulus', *TLZ*, 91/5 (1966), 321-330. See also Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, (London: SCM Press, 1959).

<sup>2</sup> Paul's description in Galatians of having been set apart in the womb for the sake of the gospel (Gal. 1:15), repeated through use of ἀφορίζω in Romans 1:1, is widely regarded as an echo of the call narratives in Jeremiah 1 and Isaiah 49 (see especially the use of κοιλία in Jer. 1:5, Is. 49:5 and Gal. 1:15).

<sup>3</sup> Rudolph Hoppe states that, 'evidence for the prophetic perspective underlying 1 Thessalonians is convincing' and that, 'even more could be added to the evidence presented.' Rudolph Hoppe, 'The Epistolary and Rhetorical Context of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12: A Response to Karl P. Donfried', in *The Thessalonian Debate: Methodological Discord or Methodological Synthesis?*, ed. by Karl Donfried and Johannes Beutler (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 61-68 (p. 65). For an outline of the intertextual connections between 1 Th. 2:1-12 and OT prophetic literature see Johan S. Vos, 'On the Background of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12: A Response to Traugott Holtz', in *Thessalonian Debate*, ed. by Donfried and Beutler, pp. 81-88.

<sup>4</sup> A. M. Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul, prophète 'messianiques' des Gentiles. Etude thématique de 1 Thes., II, 1-6.' *ETL*, 33 (1957), 245-318.

Henneken's study of proclamation and prophecy in 1 Thessalonians also identifies the influence of the OT prophets on Paul's apostolic self-presentation.<sup>5</sup> Karl O. Sandnes discerns additional OT prophetic connections in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, demonstrating that Paul's language choices in the *apologia* in 1 Thessalonians 2 reflect the conduct and character of false prophets in LXX Jeremiah and other prophetic writings.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the broadly acknowledged use of OT prophetic tradition in Paul's apostolic self-presentation,<sup>7</sup> the relationship of the nature of the gospel as a divine communication (that is, a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου / λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ) and Paul's apostolic self-presentation in OT prophetic terms remains largely unexamined.<sup>8</sup> The primary question of this study is the extent to which Paul's reference to his gospel as a divine communication is congruent to the OT tradition of the word of the Lord. Since Paul's self-presentation is situated in continuity with the Scriptural prophetic tradition, it is reasonable to expect that the characterization of his gospel message should also align to the OT tradition of prophetic speech. A related question is the relationship between the gospel as prophetic speech act and Paul's apostolic self-presentation in 1 Thessalonians. Given the close

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<sup>5</sup> 'Hinter seinen Worten in 1 Thess 2,4 verbirgt sich das Erlebnis seiner Berufung, wie es in Gal 1,12-15f geschildert ist. Diese besondere Form der Berufung vom Mutterschoße [...] zeigt ihn in besonderer Nähe zu dem Selbstverständnis der großen Propheten des Alten Testaments. [...] Das alles gibt seiner gesamten apostolischen Verkündigung eine prophetische Grundlegung und Färbung.' Bartholomäus Henneken, *Verkündigung und Prophetie im Ersten Thessalonicherbrief: ein Beitrag zur Theologie des Wortes Gottes*, SBS 29 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969), p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets*, pp. 199-204. Sandnes draws attention to work done by F. Zimmer on this topic as early as 1897.

<sup>7</sup> This statement does not preclude readings of 1 Thessalonians that recognize the language of sophist philosophers alongside the OT prophetic echoes. See especially Abraham Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> An exception is the recent monograph by Michael Pahl, in which he states, but does not expand upon, the connection: 'A related reason for Paul's use of this 'word' language is found in his prophetic self-understanding, a crucial component in his thought.' *Discerning the Word of the Lord: The 'word of the Lord' in 1 Thessalonians 4:15*, LNTS 389 (London: T & T Clark, 2009), p. 132.

association of message and messenger in the prophetic tradition, an understanding of Paul's gospel as direct divine communication in the prophetic tradition is an important corollary to an understanding of his apostolic self-presentation.

The study that follows examines Paul's presentation of the gospel as a divine communication as designated in the phrases λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ and λόγος τοῦ κυρίου. The phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου appears only in the Thessalonian letters (1 Th. 1:8, 4:15; 2 Th. 3:1). The formula λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in Pauline usage designates three types of divine communication: ecstatic speech,<sup>9</sup> the Scriptures,<sup>10</sup> and the εὐαγγέλιον as a divine communication (1 Th. 2:13; 2 Cor. 2:17, 4:2). The present study is interested in this final usage, demonstrating that Paul employs the phrases λόγος τοῦ κυρίου and λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ as distinct categories of divine communication in continuity with OT prophetic tradition.

In order for this study to be successful, the practice among interpreters of reading Paul's use of λόγος phrases as identical in meaning and function to εὐαγγέλιον needs to be confronted. Chapter one of this study addresses this predilection with a contextual word study of Paul's gospel language demonstrating the functional distinction between Paul's primary gospel language terms. This word study demonstrates the importance of the Thessalonian letters as a source for our understanding of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / κυρίου as categories of divine communication to which the εὐαγγέλιον belongs. The remainder of this study substantiates a reading of 1 Thessalonians as a source for understanding Paul's presentation of the gospel as a divine communication.

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<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:36. The context of direct divine communication through ecstatic prophetic speech suggests that λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is a general category of divine communication rather than a specific reference to the εὐαγγέλιον.

<sup>10</sup> In Romans 9:6, Paul's assertion that the word of God has not failed is an echo from Isaiah 40:7-8. Paul makes use of λόγος to introduce direct citations from the LXX in 1 Corinthians 15:54, and to summarize the commandments in a λόγος (Gal. 5:14 and Ro.13:9).

## *Paul's Use of λόγος as Gospel Vocabulary*

The initial complication in approaching the passages that refer to the gospel as a word of God is that in many cases scholars interpret Pauline usage of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ and λόγος τοῦ κυρίου as synonyms for the noun εὐαγγέλιον, equivalent to the gospel in both content and dynamic quality.<sup>11</sup> If Paul's gospel language terms are interchangeable it becomes impossible to speak of the εὐαγγέλιον as λόγος τοῦ κυρίου, that is, to speak of the gospel as a divine speech act. Functionally, the word of the Lord becomes another way of saying 'the gospel' – a direct synonym for Paul's message rather than a category of divine communication to which Paul's gospel belongs. This synonymous reading obscures the interplay between human and divine agency relative to Paul's delivery of the gospel. For this reason any attempt to discern the relationship between Paul's gospel and OT prophetic speech must first demonstrate the distinction between Paul's εὐαγγελ– and λόγος terminology.

Evidence of this loss of differentiation between the two gospel language terms εὐαγγέλιον and λόγος is clearly discernible in early word studies presented in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT).<sup>12</sup> It is by any estimation a remarkable work,<sup>13</sup> with studies organized in the

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<sup>11</sup> Victor Furnish's comments on Paul's use of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in 2 Corinthians 2:17 demonstrate this practice. After noting that the phrase is used again in 4:3, where it is to be understood as another expression for the 'gospel', Furnish lists eleven of Paul's uses of λόγος as gospel language, concluding the litany with the statement that they are 'all virtual equivalents for the gospel'. Victor Furnish, *II Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ABS 32A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), p. 179.

<sup>12</sup> Originally published as *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart, 1933-79).

familiar form, tracing the origin of a word's meaning in the New Testament through its usage in both secular and sacred texts prior to providing a theological summary of the word's usage in the New Testament writings.<sup>14</sup> While the scope of the work is impressive, even more remarkable is its continuing influence in the half century since James Barr's critique of its methodology.<sup>15</sup> One is hard pressed to find a definition of Paul's gospel language in modern scholarship that does not cite an article from the TDNT among its secondary sources. The strength in this is that the majority of the observations and contributions of the TDNT remain highly valuable.<sup>16</sup> Yet two particular criticisms levelled by Barr remain relevant to its use, especially where the present study is concerned. The first is the method that Barr terms 'illegitimate totality transfer'. This mistake in methodology is enabled by a second error critiqued by Barr, namely, inattention to context and the use of words in phrases. A review of each of these critiques below, along with examples of the continuing practice in contemporary scholarship, demonstrates the need to re-establish the semantic range of meaning

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<sup>13</sup> Ernest Saunders' 1953 review begins with the enthusiastic statement, 'Of the plethora of biblical studies produced within this century only a few are destined for immortality. And few would dispute the legitimate candidacy of the famous Kittel *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* for such a position among the monumental literature of biblical scholarship of all time.' E. Saunders, 'Reviewed work(s): Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum neuen Testament* by J. R. Coates', *JBL* 73 (1954) 172-174 (p. 172). While Saunders' high praise is not universally echoed, the designation of the work as 'monumental' remains appropriate.

<sup>14</sup> N. T. Wright has critiqued the history of religions approach that distinguishes distinct categories of 'religious' and 'secular' meanings for the root word εὐαγγέλιον as projecting upon the first century world divisions that did not exist in common life and practice. N.T. Wright, 'Gospel and Theology in Galatians', in *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, ed. by Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson, JSNTSup, 108 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 222-239 (p. 228n12).

<sup>15</sup> James Barr, *The Semantics of the Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 206-262. Graham Stanton opens his own gospel study with reference to 'the onslaught James Barr launched in 1961 against the then fashionable word studies. Only a fool would try to turn the clock back and ignore Barr's strictures.' G. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Graham Stanton notes that despite its vulnerability to some of the criticisms raised by James Barr, Friedrich's *Euangelion* article 'includes mountains of invaluable background material.' Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, p. 2. Friedrich, 'εὐαγγέλιον', in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), ii (1964), pp. 707-737.

between Paul's gospel language terms prior to a particular investigation in the gospel as word of God / word of the Lord.

Barr's work critiques the methodology of the word studies in the TDNT for confusing semantics and dogmatics. He draws specific attention to the pitfalls of a dictionary as a 'history of concepts' that presents a complex concept created from the totality of the occurrences of the related word as fully present each time the word appears.<sup>17</sup> Barr's analysis charges the TDNT with 'illegitimate totality transfer', defined as creating a cumulative field of meaning comprised from every occurrence of words in a particular word family, and then reading this broad theological meaning back into each particular occurrence of the term.<sup>18</sup> This pattern of illegitimate totality transfer is readily apparent in the TDNT article on λέγω / λόγος, written primarily by Gerhard Kittel.<sup>19</sup> Kittel correctly notes early in the article that the word λόγος as used in the New Testament runs 'the whole gamut of usage from the most every day to the most pregnant.'<sup>20</sup> In the course of his analysis, however, Kittel later asserts a firmly established uniform dogmatic usage to the use of λόγος in the New Testament that carries the dynamic and eventful quality of the OT *davar* into the NT use of λόγος.<sup>21</sup> It is an example of the Illegitimate transfer of the totality of the theological concept of the 'word of God', derived primarily from a dogmatic reading of Old Testament usage into the occurrences of λόγος in Paul's writings.

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<sup>17</sup> Barr, *Semantics*, p. 209.

<sup>18</sup> Barr, *Semantics*, p.222.

<sup>19</sup> Gerhard Kittel, 'λέγω, λόγος', TDNT 4:69-143.

<sup>20</sup> Kittel, 'λέγω, λόγος', p. 101.

<sup>21</sup> Despite the early observation that in the LXX the words λόγος and ῥῆμα are used as full synonyms, Kittel states without irony that the same 'fixity of usage' where λόγος is concerned is not the case with ῥῆμα. Kittel, 'λέγω, λόγος', pp. 92 and 116.



This illegitimate totality transfer of the OT concept of *davar* to the NT usage of *λόγος* is supported by the second practice that Barr critiques, specifically, an inattention to words in context and phrases. Where divine speech is concerned, Kittel asserts in a section on the early Christian use of the word that ‘whether explicit or not, the τοῦ θεοῦ always controls *λόγος* statements.’<sup>22</sup> This theological assertion functionally obscures the necessity of contextual controls to determining the semantic range of meaning reasonable to any particular occurrence of *λόγος*. In Kittel’s dogmatic reading every occurrence of *λόγος* is interpreted as ‘word of God’ unless the context demands otherwise, when in fact the opposite dynamic should be true: that *λόγος* is simply speech or message unless the context or use of the word in phrases warrants a theological reading of the term. On the basis of Kittel’s cumulative dogmatic summary of *λόγος* language, the unqualified use of *λόγος* in the Pauline letters may be regarded as shorthand for ‘word of God’ without supporting context. Further, Kittel denies any discernible difference, apart from numerical incidents, to the use of *λόγος*, *λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ* or *λόγος τοῦ κυρίου*.<sup>23</sup> Barr’s critique of this methodology rightly argues, however, that meaning is communicated by words in the context of sentences and phrases.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Kittel, ‘λέγω, λόγος’, p. 117.

<sup>23</sup> Kittel, ‘λέγω, λόγος’, p. 114. Barr calls attention to the lack of consideration in Kittel to the fact that when words are modified or used in phrases, the semantic range of meaning is altered: ‘a simple syntactic relation like the adding of the definite article and the absence of other qualification can establish a different semantic field just as well as the transition to another word can.’ Barr, *Semantics*, p. 222. Compare Kittel’s note that: ‘once the usage is firmly established, there is nothing to prevent all kinds of looser definitions such as “word of truth” and the like. But the general picture is uniform, so that it makes little difference if in some of the expressions there is doubt whether the ref. is simply to the early Christian Word or there is perhaps some reminiscence of the OT word.’ Kittel, ‘λέγω, λόγος’, p. 117, n.194.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Theological thought of the type found in the NT has its characteristic linguistic expression not in the word individually but in the word-combination or sentence. [...] Under these conditions the attempt to relate the individual word directly to the theological thought leads to the distortion of the semantic contributions made by words in contexts.’ Barr, *Semantics*, p. 233.

The end result of Kittel's methodology is that the semantic range of meaning of distinct gospel language terms is subsumed into the εὐαγγέλιον word family. What one discovers in the TDNT is a functional hegemony of meaning in which occurrences of λόγος or κηρυγ- terminologies are treated as semantically equivalent to εὐαγγελ- terminology. For example, Kittel makes the claim in the article on λόγος that 'if the Word is identical with the message about Jesus, with the εὐαγγέλιον (Ac. 15:7; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5), it is natural that almost anything said about the Gospel can also be said about the Word.'<sup>25</sup> This statement disregards both the distinction between the specific words εὐαγγέλιον and λόγος, and the importance of context to the semantic range of meaning for distinct gospel language terms. The artificial extension of the semantic range of meaning for εὐαγγέλιον is the result of an inattention to the use of words in phrases and the lack of contextual analysis. This is evident in the way that λόγος usage is defined as the Christian Word about Jesus, which is in turn defined as the εὐαγγέλιον.<sup>26</sup> The gospel ceases to be a particular message that is also a word of God (divine communication) and a kerygma (human proclamation). The reverse becomes true: occurrences of 'word of God' or 'proclamation' within Paul's letters are regarded as virtual synonyms for the gospel. Instead of the εὐαγγέλιον being recognized as λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (as a category of divine speech), the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ received by the Thessalonians is identified as the εὐαγγέλιον. Similarly in 1 Corinthians, instead of the εὐαγγέλιον as a message communicated through the proclamation of human emissaries (κήρυγμα), the κήρυγμα is the εὐαγγέλιον. When differences in vocabulary become stylistic choices representative of a common dogmatic concept a robust understanding of divine and human modes of communication relative to the gospel is eliminated.

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<sup>25</sup> Kittel, 'λέγω, λόγος', p. 117.

<sup>26</sup> Kittel writes: 'The Word of God is the Word about Jesus. The same is true in Paul. For him the λόγος (τοῦ θεοῦ or κυρίου) is the message proclaimed by him and accepted by his churches. That is to say, it is simply the message about Christ.' Kittel, 'λέγω, λόγος', p. 116.

The persistence of these practices in current scholarship is illustrated in two examples from recent scholarship, each dealing with the phrase λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ from 1 Corinthians. Harm-Jan Inkelaar’s monograph, *Conflict on Wisdom: the Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 1-4*, is an intertextual investigation that includes a section on Paul’s use of the phrase ‘word of the cross.’<sup>27</sup> Inkelaar’s method reflects a nearly identical practice of illegitimate totality transfer of the ‘concept’ of the OT prophetic use of *davar* into the Pauline use of λόγος. Within the general overview of the thematic structure of 1 Corinthians 1, Inkelaar includes a section on the theme ‘The Word of the Cross’, in which he considers Paul’s use of the phrase λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ in 1 Corinthians 1:18.<sup>28</sup> The exegesis begins with a review of λόγος in Old Testament prophetic usage, supported throughout with citations from TDNT articles. The starting point for Inkelaar’s argument is the claim to a dynamic quality of *davar* in Old Testament usage in contrast to the conceptual quality of λόγος in Hellenistic usage.<sup>29</sup> In order to demonstrate that Paul’s use of λόγος is more in keeping with the Old Testament concept of divine speech, Inkelaar interprets 1 Corinthians 1:18 alongside 1 Corinthians 2:4 and 1 Thessalonians 1:5, concluding that ‘the apostolic λόγος [in 1 Thessalonians] seems to have the same event-quality as the prophetic word.’<sup>30</sup> Inkelaar applies this ‘eventful’ reading of λόγος from 1 Thessalonians to interpret the phrase λόγος μου in 1 Corinthians 2 as ‘my eventful speech’, and the phrase λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ in 1 Corinthians 1:18 as the dynamic and eventful ‘word of the cross’.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Harm-Jan Inkelaar, *Conflict on Wisdom: the Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 1-4* (Ridderkerk: Ridderprint BV, 2010) repr. *Conflict over Wisdom: The Theme of 1 Corinthians 1-4 rooted in Scripture*, CBET 63 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011). References in this study are from the 2010 edition.

<sup>28</sup> Inkelaar, *Conflict on Wisdom*, pp. 87–92.

<sup>29</sup> Inkelaar, *Conflict on Wisdom*, p. 90.

<sup>30</sup> Inkelaar, *Conflict on Wisdom*, p. 91.

<sup>31</sup> Inkelaar, *Conflict on Wisdom*, pp. 88, 92.

Inklaar's exegetical treatment of Paul's gospel vocabulary in 1 Corinthians illustrates the continuing relevance of Barr's warnings against the illegitimate totality transfer of Old Testament concepts to Paul's use of language. Inkelaar transfers an Old Testament 'concept' of *davar* to Paul's use of λόγος in the phrases λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ (1 Cor. 1:18) and λόγος μου (1 Cor. 2:4). The transfer is supported by three errors in Inkelaar's methodology. First, he misreads Paul's contextual association of λόγος alongside words denoting divine agency. For example, the context of 1 Thessalonians 1:5 describes the eventful arrival of 'our gospel' as λόγος with δύναμις and πνεῦμα ἅγιον. In 1 Corinthians 2:4, Paul references his own speech and proclamation as human agency empowered with divine presence and power (πνεῦμα and δύναμις, 1 Cor. 2:4). The presence of the words 'spirit' and 'power' demonstrate that the term λόγος requires contextual combinations in order to communicate the divine agency implicit in Inkelaar's 'eventful' speech. Second, Inkelaar's methodology blurs the distinction between gospel terms. For example, Inkelaar interprets λόγος and κήρυγμα as virtually identical, both as they relate to OT prophetic (e.g. 'eventful') speech and to Pauline proclamation.<sup>32</sup> Finally, Inkelaar's methodology is inattentive to the use of the words in phrases. For example, Inkelaar reads λόγος μου in 1 Corinthians 2:4 as 'my eventful speech', minimizing the semantic limit placed on λόγος in combination with the personal pronoun. As a result, Inkelaar's analysis eliminates the distinction between the human agency in Paul's speech and proclamation alongside the divine agency of Spirit and power in that same verse.<sup>33</sup> The net result of a methodology that replicates Kittel's practices of illegitimate totality transfer is an analysis that eliminates the very distinction between terms upon which Paul's arguments concerning human and divine agency in 1 Corinthians depend.

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<sup>32</sup> 'This message (λόγος) is in the first place a proclamation (κήρυγμα, 1:21, 2:4; i.e. "the word" of the prophets).' Inkelaar, *Conflict on Wisdom*, p. 131.

<sup>33</sup> καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις] ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως (1 Cor. 2:4).

A second example demonstrates the relevance of Barr's warning to the rhetorical interpretation of Scripture. Margaret Mitchell's article, 'Rhetorical Shorthand in Pauline Argumentation', is a rhetorical reading of Paul's gospel language in the Corinthian correspondence.<sup>34</sup> Where Inkelaar's treatment of 1 Corinthians illustrates these problems with regard to an intertextual methodology, Margaret Mitchell's article applying rhetorical criticism to Paul's use of gospel language in 1 Corinthians also employs methods to which Barr's critique may apply. Mitchell's thesis is that Paul's use of several different gospel language terms and phrases functions as 'rhetorical shorthand', allowing Paul to reference the gospel throughout his arguments without reciting the entire gospel content each time.<sup>35</sup> Mitchell observes that Paul frequently employs the unqualified form of εὐαγγέλιον as a rhetorical 'superabbreviation' of his entire gospel message, which she describes as 'a title which both characterizes its full contents and interprets its meaning for the hearer.'<sup>36</sup> The unqualified use of εὐαγγέλιον functions as a substantive representation of the entire proclaimed message.<sup>37</sup> Mitchell's observation concerning the rhetorical function of Paul's use of the unqualified form of εὐαγγέλιον as a 'superabbreviation' is undoubtedly correct.<sup>38</sup> She aptly concludes that ecclesial self-identity and social cohesion is formed

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<sup>34</sup> Margaret Mitchell, 'Rhetorical Shorthand in Pauline Argumentation: the Functions of 'the Gospel' in the Corinthian Correspondence', in *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, ed. by L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson, JSNTSup 108 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 63-88.

<sup>35</sup> Mitchell, 'Rhetorical Shorthand', p. 65.

<sup>36</sup> Mitchell, 'Rhetorical Shorthand', p. 64.

<sup>37</sup> Referring specifically to Paul's use of the noun in 1 Corinthians 15, Mitchell states that 'τὸ εὐαγγέλιον [...] serves as a 'superabbreviation' of the whole, functioning as a title which both characterizes its full contents and interprets its meaning for the hearer. [...] In usage the single phrase τὸ εὐαγγέλιον allows Paul, with great economy and elegance, to insert the entire long narrative of God's plan 'according to the Scriptures' into an argument without repeating the whole.' Mitchell, 'Rhetorical Shorthand', p. 64.

<sup>38</sup> Graham Stanton, for example, fully endorses Mitchell's main conclusion of Paul's abbreviated use of language as identity markers. He is less convinced by Mitchell's methodology in reaching this conclusion. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, p. 50.

as Paul and his listeners are consistently reconnected to their shared gospel narrative by means of these shorthand formulations of the gospel.<sup>39</sup>

The deficit in Mitchell's rhetorical approach resides in her assertion that this use of εὐαγγέλιον to summarize the whole gospel message in a rhetorically succinct formulation occurs alongside the rhetorical techniques of brevity, synecdoche and metaphor.<sup>40</sup> In illustrating these rhetorical techniques Mitchell refers to additional gospel language as 'functionally equivalent terms or phrases for the gospel.'<sup>41</sup> By arguing that *distinct* phrases and metaphors function as abbreviations for the *entire* gospel message, Mitchell's methodology depends on the rhetorical equivalent of an illegitimate totality transfer. The methodology of the TDNT connects words to theological concepts in a manner that results in an illegitimate transfer of the total theological concept into each occurrence of that particular word. Mitchell's methodology connects various gospel language terms to a unified gospel narrative in a manner that results in an illegitimate transfer of the totality of the previous rhetorical event of the εὐαγγέλιον into each occurrence of a particular gospel term. For example, in 1 Corinthians Paul employs the phrase λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ to describe the gospel as a message of the cross. Read in context, the modified form of λόγος as λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ functions to connect the listeners to a particular and essential element of the gospel message, (in this case its cruciform nature), as well as the cruciform nature of Paul's initial rhetorical event. Mitchell is correct to assert that the part, the λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ, derives its

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<sup>39</sup> Mitchell, 'Rhetorical Shorthand', p. 88.

<sup>40</sup> Mitchell's article argues for the use of three specific rhetorical strategies. The first is brevity (ἡ βραχύτης), in which an entire world of thought is communicated by means of a single word or phrase – a 'superabbreviation'. The second rhetorical trope suggested by Mitchell is synecdoche (συνεκδοχή), which is referring to the whole by means of a part. The third is metaphor (μεταφορά), defined as vivid mental pictures by means of which Paul is able to access the on-going history of the gospel through one characteristic feature. Mitchell, 'Rhetorical Shorthand', p. 65.

<sup>41</sup> Mitchell, 'Rhetorical Shorthand', p. 70.

meaning from the whole, that is, the εὐαγγέλιον. However, the rhetorical force of the passage is diminished through dilution if the phrase ‘word of the cross’ is, as Mitchell asserts, ‘functionally equivalent’ to the whole of the gospel. Where Barr criticizes a methodology that resulted in every instance of a word being given the same semantic value, Mitchell’s explanations of brevity, synecdoche and metaphor mistakenly attribute identical rhetorical value to Paul’s gospel language.<sup>42</sup>

These two studies that address Paul’s use of λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ as gospel language illustrate that the need for Barr’s suggested corrective to Kittel’s methodology remains as relevant today as it was over half a century ago. Specifically, Barr suggests that words in a related semantic field be grouped together, and then within that field one make the attempt to ‘mark off the semantic oppositions between one word and another as precisely as possible; and from this to proceed to special contexts and word-combinations in which each word occurred.’<sup>43</sup> The word study presented in chapter one follows the trajectory of Barr’s suggested corrective. First, it identifies Paul’s primary gospel language. Following a review of the εὐαγγελ-, κηρυγ- and λόγος word groups in the Pauline letters in section 1.1, the use of these three word families in LXX usage is presented in section 1.2. The rest of the chapter presents a contextual overview of the pattern of gospel language in Paul’s primary epistles that articulates the distinctions between primary terms in the εὐαγγελ-, κηρυγ- and λόγος word groups. The summary of Paul’s λόγος language demonstrates the importance of 1 Thessalonians to understanding Paul’s presentation of his gospel as λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / κυρίου.

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<sup>42</sup> Barr, *Semantics*, p. 218.

<sup>43</sup> Barr, *Semantics*, p. 235.

## 1 Thessalonians as Source

Having restored the distinctions between Paul's gospel language terms and established the importance of 1 Thessalonians to Paul's use of *λόγος* as gospel vocabulary, the remaining chapters of this study present a reading of 1 Thessalonians as source for our understanding of Paul's gospel as a divine communication, and especially the implications of this view to Paul's apostolic self-presentation in prophetic terms. The work of this analysis depends on the ground established in previous studies. There is general agreement that Paul's self-presentation as an apostle is connected to the OT prophetic tradition.<sup>44</sup> Johannes Munck drew connections between Paul's call narrative in Galatians and that of the Old Testament prophets, especially Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>45</sup> K.O. Sandnes has argued for Paul's ministry to be understood in prophetic terms: '[Paul] first provides a general definition of an Old Testament prophet consisting of three elements: a *call* by God to proclaim a *message* to the people of God, carried out with an awareness of being *sent* to speak in the Lord's name.'<sup>46</sup> A prevalent focus in previous studies has been on Paul's prophetic self-presentation as apostle to the nations with particular interest in echoes of Jeremiah. Alan Segal builds on the Jeremiatic echoes in Paul's letters: 'Like Jeremiah's predestined mission from the

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<sup>44</sup> This view is held among OT scholars as well. For example, B. Childs states, in support of his observation that Moses' call appears in the NT only as reflected through later prophetic tradition, that 'In Paul's own letters [...] the Old Testament does provide the background. [...] It is the prophetic call, especially of Jeremiah and the servant of II Isaiah, which provides the framework for the New Testament.' Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus: A Critical Theological Commentary*, OTL (London: S.C.M. Press, 1974), p. 83.

<sup>45</sup> 'When Paul applies these biblical expression to his own call, he must be thinking, not only that he thereby illustrates God's call to him personally, but that that call is the same as it was in the case of Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah, a renewal of God's will for the salvation of the Gentiles, giving him a place in the history of salvation in the line with those Old Testament figures.' Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, p. 26.

<sup>46</sup> Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets*, p.15.



womb of his mother (Jer. 1:5), Paul claims to have received his mission before birth.<sup>47</sup> Traugott Holtz identifies both Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah as direct influences on Paul's apostolic self-understanding, concluding that the apostle's primary model for his unique commission originates in Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>48</sup> This study does not need to establish the fact that Paul's individual, apostolic self-presentation draws upon the OT prophetic tradition.

Previous studies in 1 Thessalonians have demonstrated the use of the OT prophetic tradition in that letter as well.<sup>49</sup> The passage at the center of any study of Paul's prophetic self-understanding is 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12. In his influential article Albert-Marie Denis, commenting upon 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, emphasizes that the accumulation of terms taken from the OT prophetic tradition are an intentional indication on the part of the apostle of the association of his ministry with the eschatological expectations of the prophetic line.<sup>50</sup> Bartholomäus Henneken's monograph, written in response to Denis, is likewise interested in the eschatological content and implications of the message, extending the capacity for prophetic speech to Paul's co-workers and converts.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1990), p. 2. Segal notes 'one connotation of the prophetic commission that Paul clearly intended; namely, his understanding that he had received a new mission to convert the gentiles.' *Ibid.*, p. 6. Segal asserts that Paul views his conversion experience 'both in terms of the commission as a prophet and a radical reversal of his previous life. [...] Paul may cast his mission to the gentiles in terms of a prophetic commission, but his explicit use of prophetic forms of speech is restricted. He never explicitly calls himself a prophet either, preferring instead the term *apostle*. There is some relationship between the terms *apostle* and *prophet* in Christianity, but the two are not identical.' *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>48</sup> Holtz, 'Selbstverständnis', p. 330.

<sup>49</sup> Sandnes writes: 'Paul's way of presenting himself and his commission to preach the gospel to the Thessalonians actualized biblical traditions on prophecy.' Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets*, p. 223.

<sup>50</sup> 'Cette accumulation de termes, tous choisis dans l'Ancien Testament a dû être intentionnelle. Cette intention ne peut être que celle de se montrer exactement dans la ligne des prophètes. Paul est un prophète comme eux, mais un prophète des temps nouveaux, un prophète accomplissant avec le Messie ce que les autres avaient prédit.' Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', p. 316.

<sup>51</sup> Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p.98

Raymond Collins likewise confirms the associations in Paul's earliest letter between the prophetic tradition and apostolic identity, stating that 'Paul considered himself to belong to the line of Old Testament prophets. His mission was analogous to theirs.'<sup>52</sup> In each of these studies the focus is on the way in which Paul's self-presentation in 1 Thessalonians intersects with the eschatological expectations announced in the prophets.

The question in this study, however, is the extent to which Paul's presentation of the gospel as 'word of the Lord' and 'word of God' reflects OT prophetic categories of divine communication. Following from this question is the implication of the gospel as a divine communication for Paul's apostolic presentation in prophetic terms. This question is pursued in four chapters. Chapter two is an overview of three contextual features in 1 Thessalonians, arguing that the presentation of the gospel as a divine speech act is essential to the purpose of 1 Thessalonians as a foundational epistle.<sup>53</sup> This was a letter written in the wake of Paul's interrupted initial mission in Thessalonica,

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<sup>52</sup> Collins, *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1984), p. 377.

<sup>53</sup> There is broad agreement that 1 Thessalonians represents the earliest of Paul's epistles. See A. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32b (New York: Doubleday, 2000), pp. 71-74. A minority of scholars argue an earlier date for Galatians. See F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), p. 55, n. 56. The theory that 2 Thessalonians was written prior to 1 Thessalonians has gained few adherents. For this view, see Charles Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 17-44. For counter arguments see J. A. D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2014), p. 39n32. See also F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, WBC, 45 (Dallas: Word Books, 1982), pp. xli-xlii and Victor Paul Furnish, *1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), p. 137. Earl Richards is among the minority of contemporary interpreters that accept a division hypothesis for the letter. See E.J. Richards, *First and Second Thessalonians*, SP 11 (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1995), pp. 11-19. For a defence of the integrity of 1 Thessalonians see R.F. Collins' essay 'Apropos the Integrity of 1 Th.' in Collins, *Studies*, 96-135 (first publ. in *ETL*, 65 (1979), 67-106).

sent in order to strengthen the foundation of a Gentile congregation in that city.<sup>54</sup> A review of the situation of 1 Thessalonians in section 2.1 suggests that the unique apostolic presentation in 1 Thessalonians is not a reflection of an ‘early Paul’, but rather a reflection of a genuinely early Gentile congregation. Section 2.2 supports the reading of a shared apostolic mission in Thessalonica, supported both by the plural language of the epistle and the presentation of similar apostolic activities as shared in later letters as well. Section 2.3 presents a rationale for a narrative reading of 1 Thessalonians 1-3. The chapter concludes that Paul composes a community narrative for the nascent congregation in Thessalonica, essential to which is the identification of the gospel as a divine communication and apostolic messengers as divine emissaries.

Chapter three examines Paul’s use of the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in the initial apocalyptic thanksgiving of the letter. Section 3.1 considers 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10, in which Paul begins to construct a community narrative for the gospel as a word of the Lord among the believers in that city. The progression of the passage demonstrates that the OT topos λόγος τοῦ κυρίου is a category of divine speech communication to which the εὐαγγέλιον belongs. In section 3.2, an analysis of Paul’s use of the phrase ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 further affirms the continuity of the phrase with the OT prophetic tradition. The conclusion in section 3.3 is that Paul’s

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<sup>54</sup> Paul’s language of conversion in 1 Th. 1:9-10 strongly suggests that this is a predominantly if not exclusively Gentile congregation. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, p. 15. While the language of 1 Thessalonians is directed predominantly toward Gentile converts, there is no compelling textual reason to disregard the account in Acts that describes some initial Jewish believers within the congregation. See also Collins, *Studies*, p. 377; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 56; Howard Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983; repr. Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College Publishing, 2002), p. 5. Additionally, although there are no quotations from the LXX in 1 Thessalonians, the preponderance of OT language and themes may suggest that many of the converts had association with the synagogue. See Rainer Riesner, *Paul’s Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*, trans. by Doug Stott (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 342-349. For survey of research see Weima, *Thessalonians*, pp. 25-30.

reference to the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου is apocalyptic in content and revelatory in nature, arriving as an event and orienting believers toward the hope of salvation at the return of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Chapter four examines 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, the first of two apostolic biographies in the community narrative. Paul's use of the phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ is the second presentation of the gospel as a divine communication in the letter. The emphasis is on the divine origin and agency of this particular announcement. The initial apostolic visit in Thessalonica is narrated as a genuinely shared prophetic mission, consistent with the OT prophetic tradition of divine emissaries. Paul presents the co-senders as emboldened messengers (1 Th. 2:1-2, section 4.1), carrying an entrusted message (1 Th. 2:3-4, section 4.2), which they embody among the Thessalonians in imitation of Christ (1 Th. 2:5-12, section 4.3). The chapter concludes that the apostolic embodiment of the cruciform nature of Christ's mission in the world is essential to an effective mission among the Thessalonians.

Chapter five concludes the exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 1-3, beginning in section 5.1 with Paul's use of the phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in the apocalyptic thanksgiving (2:13-16). As a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ the gospel is identified as a message that originates with God and through which God actively works for the salvation of the faithful. The prophetic polemic in 2:14-16 establishes the Thessalonian believers in solidarity with the churches in Judea, and the apostles in solidarity with

the prophetic line.<sup>55</sup> In 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:8 Paul includes a second apostolic biography, this time of separation and anxiety. Consideration of this final portion of the the community narrative in section 5.2 demonstrates the implications of the gospel as a divine communication for Paul's shared and individual apostolic presentations in 1 Thessalonians. Section 5.3 concludes the consideration of Paul's gospel as a divine communication through comparison with Paul's use the phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in 2 Corinthians 1-9. This comparison demonstrates continuity between the shared apostolic presentation in 1 Thessalonians of apostles as emissaries of a divine communication (λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ) with Paul's apostolic presentations in 2 Corinthians 1-9 that employ the same category of divine speech.

The conclusion of the thesis is that Paul's use of the phrases λόγος τοῦ κυρίου and λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is as categories of divine communication to which the εὐαγγέλιον belongs. Paul employs the phrase in direct continuity with the OT prophetic tradition, with one distinct difference. Unlike the mediated nature of prophetic speech, the announcement of the gospel is a direct divine encounter, empowered by the Holy Spirit promised in the eschatological new age.

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<sup>55</sup> While the authenticity of 1 Th. 2:14-16 is not unanimously agreed upon, in current scholarship those holding to the interpolation theories generated in previous centuries are in the minority. In English language scholarship Birger Pearson's 1971 article, beginning with F. C. Baur's rejection of the passage, represents a cornerstone in the argument against authenticity. Birger A. Pearson, '1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation', *HTR*, 64/1 (Jan., 1971) 79-94. For a thorough review of and response to Birger Pearson see Markus Bockmuehl, '1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 and the Church in Jerusalem', in *Not in the Word Alone: the First Epistle to the Thessalonians*, ed. by Morna D. Hooker (Rome: Benedictina Publishing, 2003), pp.55-87 (pp.59-71). For a defence of the authenticity of 2:13-16 that includes full discussion of the issue see: Simon Légasse, *Les Épîtres de Paul aux Thessaloniens*, LeDivCom, 7 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999), pp. 141-163; Carol J. Schlueter, *Filling up the Measure: Polemical Hyperbole in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16*, JSNTSup, 98 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); Todd Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and Its Neighbours*, JSNTSup 183 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 24-45.

## CHAPTER ONE: GOSPEL LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT

While several word studies have been undertaken since the TDNT and Barr's critique of its methodology, the focus of inquiry has generally been on a particular word family rather than the relationships between gospel language terms.<sup>1</sup> Our project benefits from and builds upon these contributions of previous investigations. Where Paul's primary gospel word family is concerned, subsequent studies have investigated a range of questions concerning the origin of the εὐαγγέλιον word family in Pauline usage, such as: whether the origin of Pauline usage is found within the Jewish prophetic tradition or broader Hellenistic usage;<sup>2</sup> the development from the message of good news that Jesus announced to the announcement of Jesus as the message of good news; and

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive research survey of notable εὐαγγέλιον word studies, particularly in German scholarship, see Hubert Frankemölle, *Evangelium - Begriff und Gattung: ein Forschungsbericht*, 2nd edn (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1994). Discussing the content determination of εὐαγγέλιον Frankemölle notes the lack of a comprehensive, structural semantic work on the gospel word family. *Ibid.*, p. 62. Graham Stanton notes the paucity of word studies among English language scholars. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, p. 9n2. A noted exception is G.H.R. Horsley's article 'The "Good News" of a Wedding', in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, III (North Ryde, N.S.W.: Macquarie University: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1983), pp. 10-15. Two additional articles in English are Millar Burrows, 'The Origin of the Term "Gospel"', *JBL* 44/1-2 (1925), 21-33 and Andrew I. Spallek, 'The Origin and Meaning of εὐαγγέλιον in the Pauline Corpus', *CTQ*, 57/3 (July, 1993), 177-190.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Stuhlmacher's work supports the OT prophetic tradition as the source of Paul's language. See *Das paulinische Evangelium*, FRLANT, 95 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968). An opposing view, that the source of the use of εὐαγγέλιον is to be found in its use in the Emperor cult, was argued by Georg Strecker, 'Das Evangelium Jesu Christi' in *Jesus Christus in Historie und Theologie: Festschrift für Hans Conzelmann zum 60*, ed. by G. Strecker (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), pp. 503-548. Responding to the association of the word group with its use in the Emperor cult, Eduard Lohse states, 'we do not find any special allusion in pre-Pauline and Pauline use of the term εὐαγγέλιον which would refer undoubtedly to the Emperor cult.' 'NUNTII PERSONARUM ET RERUM: εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ, Paul's Interpretation of the Gospel in His Epistle to the Romans', *Bib*, 76/1 (1995), 127-41 (p. 129).

whether Paul's use of the word group originates from the Jesus tradition or, if instead the language of missionary preaching to the Gentiles influenced the appearance of the word group in the canonical accounts.<sup>3</sup> More recent studies include Graham Stanton's interest in the development in genre from oral to written form,<sup>4</sup> and John P. Dickson's arguments to restore the temporal aspect of 'news' to the εὐαγγελ- word group.<sup>5</sup> These studies have not, however, compared the pattern and usage of εὐαγγελ- language in the non-disputed Pauline letters with that of the κηρυγ- and λόγος word families with a view to articulating both boundaries and common territory between them.

Where κηρυγ- terminology is concerned there have been very few word studies. Friedrich's article 'κῆρυξ' in the TDNT is frequently cited for definitions of the κηρυγ- word family.<sup>6</sup> Victor Furnish's article on the Biblical concept of preaching, for example, identifies Friedrich's article as that upon which his comments largely depend.<sup>7</sup> Furnish does not consider the κηρυγ- word family in contextual relationship with other gospel language terms. Shorter articles by J.N. Sanders and R.H. Strachan critique the pattern observed among modern Biblical interpreters of regarding

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<sup>3</sup> See Peter Stuhlmacher, 'The Theme: The Gospel and the Gospels' in *The Gospel and the Gospels*, ed. by Peter Stuhlmacher (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 1-25.

<sup>4</sup> Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> See John P. Dickson, 'Gospel as News: εὐαγγελ- from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul', *NTS*, 51 (2005), 212-230. See also Dickson's monograph, *Mission Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission*, WUNT 159 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003). Dickson's work, which is focused on Paul's missionary movement, includes language patterns from Colossians and Ephesians in the analysis. *Ibid.*, p. 222. The survey of εὐαγγελ- language in chapter three of Dickson's monograph neither considers Paul's use of εὐαγγελ- language specific to individual epistles nor does it include gospel vocabulary other than that of the εὐαγγελ- word family. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-91.

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich, 'κῆρυξ', TDNT 3:683-718.

<sup>7</sup> Furnish's observations depend as well on a passage from one of Plato's dialogues, in which Socrates agrees that the preacher (*keryx*) is under command, giving to others the orders which he in turn has received. Victor Furnish, 'Prophets, Apostles and Preachers: A Study of the Biblical Concept of Preaching', *Interpretation*, 17 (1963), 48-60 (p. 55).

εὐαγγέλιον and κήρυγμα as virtual synonyms.<sup>8</sup> In each instance, however, the concern is with the theological categories of *kerygma* and *didache* as distinct within the *euangelion*, rather than a distinction in pattern and usage between εὐαγγελ– and κηρυγ– language in Paul.<sup>9</sup> Additional interest in the κηρυγ– word group has been generated from the application of the term *kerygma* to homiletic practice, as well as the prevalence of ‘kerygma’ as a technical designation of the gospel message within New Testament theology during the twentieth century.<sup>10</sup> The adoption and use of the term in each of these two theological disciplines have developed in a near independent fashion

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph N. Sanders, *The Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Study of the Teaching of the New Testament in the Light of Historical Criticism* (London: Black, 1950), pp. 30-37. and R.H. Strachan, ‘The Gospel in the New Testament’, in *The Interpreter’s Bible: The Holy Scriptures in the King James and Revised Standard Versions with General Articles and Introduction, Exegesis, Exposition for each Book of the Bible*, 12 vols (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951-57), VII (1951), pp. 3-31.

<sup>9</sup> J. N. Sanders semantically distinguishes between *didache* and *kerygma*, yet functionally blurs the distinction between the εὐαγγελ– and κηρυγ– word families in his statement that ‘the fundamental activity of Jesus and the Apostles can be described by the same words, as *euangelion* and *kerygma*.’ Sanders, *Foundations*, pp. 31-32. R. H. Strachan’s concern that *kerygma* and *euangelion* have become synonyms is that this separates preaching from teaching, which Strachan holds together as ‘constituent elements in the Christian gospel.’ Strachan, ‘Gospel in the New Testament’, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> The interest in κηρυγ– language in homiletics, specifically the preacher as ‘herald’, is widely associated with Karl Barth: ‘Proclamation is human speech in and by which God Himself speaks like a king through the mouth of his herald, and which is meant to be heard and accepted as speech in and by which God Himself speaks, and therefore heard and accepted in faith as divine decision concerning life and death, as divine judgment and pardon, eternal Law and eternal Gospel both together.’ K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. by G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. by G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956-1975), vol. 1/1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, p. 52. For Karl Barth as the nexus of the ‘herald’ metaphor in contemporary homiletic theory, see Thomas Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), pp. 19-28. The use of *kerygma* in twentieth century theology is readily associated with Rudolf Bultmann. See Bultmann’s chapter ‘Kerygma and Myth’ in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. by Hans Werner Bartsch (New York: Harper and row, 1961), pp. 1-44. See also: C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments: Three Lectures with an Appendix on Eschatology and History* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936); Gerhard Ebeling, ‘The Use of the Word ‘kerygma’ in Recent Theology’, in *Theology and Proclamation: A Discussion with Rudolf Bultmann*, trans. by John Riches (London: Collins, 1966), pp. 113-118; James McDonald, *Kerygma and Didache: The Articulation and Structure of the Earliest Christian Message*, SNTSMS 37 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 1-11.



to the use of the word family in the New Testament.<sup>11</sup> There is scant investigation into the particular Pauline use of the word family. For example, Craig Evans' article exploring lexical observations of the word group is not specific to Pauline usage. His particular interest is the use of the language in contemporary homiletic theory for proclamation to those who are already converted.<sup>12</sup> More recent rhetorical studies concerning Paul's use of the word family in 1 Corinthians 1-4 do not include specific investigations into the patterns of the word family in general Pauline usage.<sup>13</sup> As with the εὐαγγελ- word family there remains a need for a contextual study of Paul's κηρυγ- terminology as used in relationship to other primary gospel word families.

Finally, where Paul's λόγος language is concerned the lack of investigation since the TDNT is even more noticeable. Recent work by Michael Pahl on Paul's use of the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in 1 Thessalonians 4 addresses a situation to which Pahl refers as a 'lacuna' of scholarly

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<sup>11</sup> See also William Baird, who summarizes his own review of κηρυγ- terminology with the statement that 'this seems to indicate that the term *kerygma* is more a technical term of modern Biblical theology than of the Bible itself.' W. Baird, 'What is the Kerygma? A Study of 1 Co. 15:3-8 and Gal. 1:11-17', *JBL*, 76/3 (1957), 181-191 (p. 183).

<sup>12</sup> Evans writes a critique of contemporary application of the word family to preaching through a survey of κηρυγ- language in Classical usage and the Apostolic Fathers. His conclusion regarding the application of the term *kerygma* to preaching as practiced in the contemporary church echoes Baird's observation of the term in modern theology, with Evans suggesting that contemporary homiletic use of the word family seems to have its origin in tradition rather than scriptural pattern. Craig Evans, "'Preacher" and "Preaching": Some Lexical Observations', *JETS*, 24/4 (1981), 315-322 (p. 321).

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Duane Litfin's monograph, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric*, SNTSM 79 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Litfin gives extensive consideration to the use of λόγος in ancient rhetoric, and subsequently focuses on Paul's use of λόγος in 1 Corinthians 1-4. The use of κηρυγ- language, however, is considered on a handful of pages without reference to Pauline epistles beyond the Corinthian letters. *Ibid.*, pp. 195-196, 198-199, 205n79.

exploration in Paul's use of 'word' language as 'gospel' language.<sup>14</sup> Pahl's study of λόγος as gospel language is helpful to the extent that it correctly asserts the strong association between Paul's 'word of' phrases and his gospel proclamation.<sup>15</sup> Pahl's work relies heavily, however, on Kittel's TDNT article.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, Pahl's analysis of 'word of the Lord' language in chapter 4 of 1 Thessalonians does not include an exegetical study of 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10, the only passage in which the Apostle Paul makes a direct connection between εὐαγγέλιον and λόγος τοῦ κυρίου. Finally, the phrases λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ and λόγος τοῦ κυρίου are presented by Pahl as synonymous without accompanying exegetical or contextual support for this claim.<sup>17</sup> Pahl's study provides observations on the use of the phrase 'word of the Lord' in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 that are valuable to the exegetical consideration of that passage in this project. The word study that he offers does little, however, to address the need for a broader contextual analysis of Paul's use of λόγος as gospel vocabulary.

The word study in this chapter maps the pattern of gospel language used in the non-disputed Pauline epistles in order to identify the contextual relationships between εὐαγγελ- language and Paul's other primary gospel word groups. The focus is limited in scope by the question

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<sup>14</sup> Michael W. Pahl, *Discerning the Word of the Lord: The 'word of the Lord' in 1 Thessalonians 4:15*. (LNTS, 389. London: T & T Clark, 2009), p. 124. Arguments from this chapter in Pahl's book were previously published in the article 'The 'Gospel' and the 'Word': Exploring Some Early Christian Patterns', *JSNT* 29/2 (2006), 211-227.

<sup>15</sup> 'In fact, in the Pauline letters almost every instance of λόγος or ῥήμα with any sort of theologically significant qualifying genitive can be understood to refer to the salvific message about Jesus, including such expressions as 'word of the cross', 'word of reconciliation', 'word of truth' and 'word of life'.' Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 127.

<sup>16</sup> Kittel's λόγος word study is the secondary source most often cited in Pahl's notes in the chapter on 1 Thessalonians 4:15, alongside Graham Stanton's *Jesus and Gospel*. Pahl, *Discerning*, pp. 105-171.

<sup>17</sup> Pahl asserts 'a discernible 'word [of x]' pattern as synonymous with εὐαγγέλιον in the Pauline and other Christian writings through the middle of the second century.' Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 137.

of this project, specifically, Paul's presentation of his gospel as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / κυρίου. There is really no question that all of Paul's gospel language refers to Jesus Christ as the subject of preaching, announcing God's salvation in his life, death, resurrection and return. The distinction between εὐαγγελ-, κηρυγ- and λόγος vocabulary is primarily functional, distinguishing divine and human agency, and may be temporal. The questions that are of particular interest to this project concern: the semantic distinctions between Paul's primary gospel word groups; the relationship between human and divine agency relative to the announcement of the gospel; and language employed by Paul in his apostolic self-presentations.

This chapter progresses in three parts. The first, section 1.1, provides an overview of previously established definitions of the three primary word families, and their occurrences in Pauline usage. Section 1.2 is a survey of the use of Paul's primary gospel language terms in LXX usage, with particular attention to the use of 'word of the Lord / word of God' in the prophetic tradition. Having identified the OT prophetic background of the terms, section 1.3 identifies the sections under consideration in the Pauline letters, for which this study uses the term 'language clusters'. When Paul's language is mapped into language clusters, three letters emerge as essential texts for distinguishing patterns in and among Paul's word groups: Galatians (εὐαγγελ-); 1 Corinthians (κηρυγ-) and 1 Thessalonians (λόγος).

The word study progresses by word groups, beginning in section 1.4 with εὐαγγελ-, followed by κηρυγ- language in section 1.5, and concluding with a discussion of λόγος language patterns in 1.6. Each section begins with consideration of an essential text and continues with the remaining language clusters. For each language cluster, the analysis begins with distinctive features in the pattern of usage in that cluster, a review of all the gospel language occurrences within the text, and an articulation of pattern. The tables provided list the pattern of occurrences in each

language cluster. After having identified the pattern of gospel language use, there is a brief review of the passage in order to establish the context, concluding with observations concerning the use of Paul's gospel language in contextual relationship.

One final note, concerning chronological organization of the language clusters, is warranted before we begin. Each of Paul's letters in its situational relationship to recipients is of greater interest than its canonical or chronological context. The relative order in which Paul wrote his letters is not a contextual consideration in the analysis that follows. The temporal features that do enter the discussions of context concern the relationship of letter to foundational mission in each place. For example, where gospel language use is concerned, is there a difference in pattern when Paul is writing to a congregation recently established (1 Thessalonians) as opposed to one that he has not visited (Romans)? Is there a discernible pattern of differences in a letter written while Paul is freely traveling in his missionary labours (1 Corinthians) in contrast to a prison epistle (Philippians)? For ease of organization, however, chronological choices have been made. 1 Thessalonians is considered Paul's earliest epistle.<sup>18</sup> The handful of gospel language occurrences in 2 Thessalonians are considered as supplementary texts. One reason for this is the lack of a cluster of gospel terms. The second is the lack of consensus concerning Pauline authorship of 2

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<sup>18</sup> The traditional view that 1 Thessalonians is Paul's earliest letter is noted in the introduction above. Rainer Riesner's study focuses particular attention on Pauline chronology and 1 Thessalonians as Paul's earliest epistle, written in the nearest proximity to his initial visit. See Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*.

Thessalonians.<sup>19</sup> This project considers 2 Thessalonians as authentic to Paul and written shortly after the first letter. For the reasons listed, however, 1 Thessalonians rather than the canonical Thessalonian correspondence is the primary letter under consideration. Where Paul's remaining letters are concerned, Galatians is considered to have been written after 1 Thessalonians and prior to 1 Corinthians.<sup>20</sup> 2 Corinthians is divided into two letters, with 2 Corinthians 10-13 regarded as

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<sup>19</sup> The arguments against Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians are well known. See Todd Still's chapter, 'Is 2 Thessalonians Authentically Pauline?' for a thorough treatment of the debate. Still, *Conflict*, pp. 46-60. For a list of scholars that regard 2 Thessalonians as authentically Pauline see especially p. 46n2. This study aligns exactly with Still's conclusion that the contributions to the argument based on the limited data from 2 Thessalonians do not warrant the inclusion of primary evidence from that epistle that many scholars deem inadmissible. *Ibid.*, p. 60. To this end, observations offered in chapter three of the current study concerning Paul's use of the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in 2 Th. 3:1 are illustrative of the primary arguments advanced concerning Paul's use of the phrase in 1 Th. 1:8. The conclusions of this study do not stand or fall on the occurrence of the phrase in 2 Thessalonians.

<sup>20</sup> A minority of scholars identify Galatians as Paul's earliest letter. Douglas Moo's recent commentary on Galatians presents a thorough review of scholarship in support of his conclusion that the letter was written in AD48, prior to the Apostolic Conference of Acts 15. Douglas Moo, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), pp. 2-18. The earlier suggestion by F.F. Bruce, that the difference in evangelistic and eschatological thought between 1 Thessalonians and Galatians may be attributed to the influence of Silvanus as a co-author, has not gained wide acceptance. F.F. Bruce, *Galatians*, pp. 53-55. For the purposes of this study, the relative length of time between letter dispatch and congregational establishment is more important than the relative chronology of 1 Thessalonians and Galatians.

prior to 2 Corinthians 1-9.<sup>21</sup> The primary consideration with Philippians is Paul's imprisonment and his long relationship with the congregation.<sup>22</sup> The brief letter to Philemon only contains one use of εὐαγγέλιον. In Philemon v.13 Paul refers to his chains in the gospel (δεσμοῖς τοῦ εὐαγγελιοῦ), language similar to that found in Philippians. Given that this brief letter is sent to an individual rather than a congregation, and that this phrase is the only gospel language occurrence, the contextual analysis below focuses on the letter to the Philippians and not Philemon. Where there are significant disputes, chronological considerations are not included as an influencing factor in the investigation that follows.

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<sup>21</sup> Where the division of 2 Corinthians is concerned, the gospel language occurrences in 2 Corinthians support the view that the canonical form of the letter most likely represents two separate epistles. For the essential unity of 2 Corinthians 1-9 see V. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, pp. 35-41. He and C. K. Barrett each support the hypothesis of a deteriorated situation within twelve months of the dispatch of 2 Cor. 1-9 that led Paul to send 2 Cor. 10-13. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC (London: Black, 1973), pp.9-10. Some identify 2 Corinthians 10-13 with the 'sorrowful letter' based on exegetical features and the requirement for fewer arguments from silence in the form of additional letters or a rapid disintegration of the relationship after the restoration in 2 Corinthians 1-9. For a review of these debates see David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), pp. 296-312. See also Francis Watson, '2 Co. X-XIII and Paul's Painful letter to the Corinthians', *JTS*, 35/2 (Oct, 1984), 324-346, expanded upon by L.L. Welborn, 'The Identification of 2 Corinthians 10-13 with the 'Letter of Tears'', *NovT* 37/2 (April, 1995), 138-153. The order of composition is immaterial to the conclusions of this study. Proponents of canonical unity argue that the difference in language reflects varied rhetorical approaches. For a thorough review see Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), pp. 8-51. For a brief English-language summary of the argument for the five-letter partition theory see G. Bornkamm, 'The History of the Origin of the So-Called Second Letter to the Corinthians', *NTS* 8 (1962), 258-64. Arguments concerning chapters 8 and 9 as separate letters are found in H.D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: a Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 3-36.

<sup>22</sup> For a review of scholarship within an argument for Rome as the place of writing, see Markus Bockmuehl, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, BNTC (London: A & C. Black, 1997), pp. 25-32. For arguments in favour of an Ephesian imprisonment see Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*, rev. edn (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 137-143.

## 1.1 Paul's Primary Gospel Language

The word study in this chapter focuses on three primary gospel word groups: the εὐαγγελ- word family, the κηρυγ- word family, and the nominal occurrences drawn from the λόγος word field, which for the purposes of this study include the synonym ῥῆμα.<sup>23</sup> Establishing these three word groups as Paul's primary gospel vocabulary is fairly straightforward.<sup>24</sup> The first criterion for choosing these three word families is breadth of usage. Language from each of these three word groups occurs as gospel vocabulary across the Pauline epistles.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, the use of secondary gospel language terms such as μαρτύριον or καταγγέλλω is limited to one or two letters. The second criterion is focus. Where nominal gospel vocabulary is concerned, there are only two nouns among the Pauline epistles that occur exclusively as gospel vocabulary: εὐαγγέλιον and κήρυγμα. The frequency with which λόγος occurs as gospel vocabulary alongside these two word families establishes its importance as a third essential word field.<sup>26</sup> The cognate verbs εὐαγγελίζομαι and κηρύσσω are predominant language where the announcement of the gospel is concerned.

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<sup>23</sup> This is due to Paul's use of ῥῆμα as gospel vocabulary in Romans 10 (the only chapter in Paul's letters in which ῥῆμα is used as gospel language).

<sup>24</sup> The categories of 'word family' and 'word field' as applied to Paul's use of gospel language follow from Hubert Frankemölle's comprehensive discussion of earlier studies in the development of the gospel word group. Frankemölle, *Evangelium*, pp. 52-63. The linguistic category 'word family' applies to words developed from the same etymological root with coherent groups and divisions. (Ibid., p. 52) A 'word field' (alternatively, 'semantic field') is comprised of words which, by nature of their content, make sense together (Ibid., p. 54). English language studies frequently use the synonymous phrase 'word group' rather than 'word family'. See, for example, Graham Stanton's discussion in *Jesus and Gospel*, in which Stanton distinguishes between the gospel word group and 'the whole semantic field of words and phrases' related to gospel proclamation, including in that field λόγος and κήρυγμα. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> 2 Thessalonians and Philemon are the only letters that do not contain all three word families as gospel language.

<sup>26</sup> The next most frequently employed nominal gospel term, μαρτύριον, occurs only three times in Paul, two of which refer to the gospel yet occur in isolation from any other gospel language (2 Th. 1:10, 1 Cor. 1:6).

Although other verbs in the ἄγγελ- word family readily come to mind in combination with the gospel message, they are rarely used.<sup>27</sup> Since the cognate verb λέγω never occurs directly with εὐαγγέλιον or κήρυγμα, the verb is not included as primary gospel language.<sup>28</sup> Secondary gospel language is considered in the contextual analysis that follows where it occurs with these three primary word groups.

### 1.1.1 The εὐαγγελ- word family

In general usage the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is the activity of the εὐαγγέλος, a messenger of good news.<sup>29</sup> In Pauline usage, εὐαγγελίζομαι is the central activity of Paul's apostolic commission.<sup>30</sup> It is used twenty times by Paul in eighteen verses.<sup>31</sup> Every occurrence is contextually

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<sup>27</sup> The words that are contextually identified with the proclamation of the gospel from the εὐαγγελ- word family include: καταγγέλλω in 4 of 6 occurrences (1 Cor. 2:1, 9:14; Phil. 1:17, 1:18); ἄγγελος in one occurrence (Gal. 4:14) and ἀπαγγέλλω in 1 Thessalonians 1:9. Only four of six total occurrences of καταγγέλλω in Paul's letters are clear gospel vocabulary. Two of these occurrences are located in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 2:1, with μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, and 9:14, with εὐαγγέλιον) and two are in Philippians (Phil. 1:17 and 1:18, each with Χριστός).

<sup>28</sup> The general verb for speaking, λαλέω, is used in contextual relationship to the gospel by Paul and others in: 1 Th. 1:8, 2:2, 2:4; 1 Cor. 2:7, 2:13; 2 Cor. 2:17, 4:13 (2x); Phil. 1:14. Of these verses 1 Thessalonians 2:2 is the only verse in which the εὐαγγέλιον is the subject of Paul's speech. In Philippians 1:14 λαλέω occurs with λόγος. Each of these combinations is considered in the contextual word study.

<sup>29</sup> Dickson, 'Gospel as News', p. 212.

<sup>30</sup> John Howard Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, SNTSMS, 26 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 36-39. There is no disagreement that the oral proclamation of a message of good news is indispensable to the meaning of the verb. Dickson's work argues against the inclusion of activities in addition to gospel announcement. Dickson, 'Gospel as News', pp. 221-230. His conclusions contradict earlier studies by Paul Bowers, 'Studies in Paul's Understanding of his Mission', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cambridge University, 1976) and P. T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1995).



associated with Paul's apostolic ministry among the Gentiles.<sup>32</sup> Seventeen of the twenty occurrences of εὐαγγελίζομαι are unambiguous references to the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. The other three references are contextually associated with gospel announcement: Timothy's arrival with good news in 1 Thessalonians 3:6; the pre-evangelization of the justification of the Gentiles to Abraham in Galatians 3:8; and the citation from LXX Isaiah 52:7 of the evangelistic messengers in Romans 10:15.<sup>33</sup> Where pattern of occurrences are concerned, sixteen of the twenty total occurrences are located in Galatians, 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians (10-13). All twenty occurrences of the verb are listed in Table 1, arranged in descending order according to the total number of occurrences in each epistle. The delivery of the εὐαγγέλιον is so inherently established in the verb that Paul employs an absolute sense of the verb in thirteen of the twenty occurrences.<sup>34</sup> In table 1 the seven verses in which the verb is not absolute are marked with an asterisk (\*).

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<sup>31</sup> This count includes Paul's use of the compound verb προεὐαγγελίζομαι in Galatians 3:8. See also Dickson, *Mission Commitment*, p. 87n2. There are 35 occurrences of the verb in the rest of the New Testament: 11 in the gospels (Mt.11:5; Lk. 1:19, 2:10, 3:18, 4:18, 4:43, 7:22, 8:1, 9:6, 16:16, 20:1); 15 in Acts (Act. 5:42, 8:4, 8:12, 8:25, 8:35, 8:40, 10:36, 11:20, 13:32, 14:7, 14:15, 14:21, 15:35, 16:10, 17:18); two in the Deutero-Pauline epistles (Eph. 2:17, 3:8); two in Hebrews (Heb. 4:2, 4:6); three in 1 Peter (1 Pet. 1:12, 1:25, 4:6); and two in Revelation (Rev. 10:7, 14:6).

<sup>32</sup> 'Whenever the purpose of Paul's commission is explicitly mentioned εὐαγγελ- terminology appears almost without exception.' Dickson, *Mission Commitment*, p. 88.

<sup>33</sup> See Dieter Kemmler's argument that the faith of the Thessalonians reported by Timothy is part of the 'gospel'. Dieter Werner Kemmler, *Faith and Human Reason: A Study of Paul's Method of Preaching as Illustrated by 1-2 Thessalonians and Acts 17:2-4*, NovT Sup, 50 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), pp. 163-166, esp. p. 164n68.

<sup>34</sup> This is the case in the use of the verb to recall the initial evangelistic announcement in Galatia (Gal. 1:8 [2x], 1:9 and 4:13); the previous announcement of the gospel to Abraham in Galatians 3:8; the commission given to Paul by Christ to evangelize (1 Cor. 1:17); Paul's *apologia* for his refusal to receive financial compensation for his initial preaching (1 Cor. 9:16 [2x], 9:18); and the desire to evangelize in places beyond Corinth (2 Cor. 10:16). The letter to Rome frames this activity as a fulfilment of the prophecy from Isaiah (Rom. 10:15) – in places such as Rome (Rom. 1:15) and where Christ has not been named (Rom. 15:20).

Table 1

**Galatians : 8 Occurrences**

1:8 εὐαγγελίζεται [ὑμῖν] παρ' ὃ εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν

1:9 εὐαγγελίζεται παρ' ὃ παρελάβετε

1:11 τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ εὐηγγελισθὲν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ

\*1:16 ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν [υἱὸν αὐτοῦ]

\*1:23 εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν

3:8 προεηγγελίσατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ

4:13 εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον

**Romans : 3 Occurrences**

1:15 ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι

10:15 πῶς δὲ κηρύξωσιν ἐὰν μὴ ἀποσταλῶσιν; ... τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων (LXX Is. 52:7)

15:20 φιλοτιμούμενον εὐαγγελίζεσθαι οὐχ ὅπου ὠνομάσθη Χριστός

**1 Corinthians: 6 Occurrences**

1:17 ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστὸς ... εὐαγγελίζεσθαι

9:16 εὐαγγελίζωμαι... οὐαὶ γὰρ μοί ἐστιν ἐὰν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι

9:18 εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον θήσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

\*15:1 τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν

\*15:2 τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν

**2 Corinthians: 2 Occurrences**

10:16 εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι

\*11:7 δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν

**1 Thessalonians : 1 Occurrence**

\*3:6 εὐαγγελισαμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν

Considering Paul's use of the noun, in general usage εὐαγγέλιον designates a message announcing events that are good news.<sup>35</sup> In Pauline usage every occurrence of εὐαγγέλιον is

<sup>35</sup> Dickson, 'Gospel as News', p. 213.

particular to the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>36</sup> The word in isolation is a designation of the content of the announced message, not inherent agency in proclamation.<sup>37</sup> Where frequency of occurrences is concerned, the noun occurs 49 times.<sup>38</sup> One immediate difference in Paul's use of the noun in comparison to its cognate verb is the uniformity of distribution across his letters.

Since the use of εὐαγγελ— language does not inherently designate the message as a divine communication, or the messenger as a divine emissary, the pattern of qualified and unqualified occurrences of εὐαγγέλιον is important to our concerns. Of the 49 total occurrences of εὐαγγέλιον, 27 are unqualified occurrences and 22 are qualified. The use of the unqualified form on over half of the occasions where εὐαγγέλιον appears demonstrates the capacity of the noun to function in a substantive fashion to represent Paul's message of Jesus Christ.<sup>39</sup> Table 2 lists all of the occurrences of εὐαγγέλιον in Paul's letters, in descending order of frequency.

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<sup>36</sup> In his book *Jesus and Gospel*, Graham Stanton observes that despite its verbal connection to the language of the Imperial cult, 'In Paul's day [τὸ εὐαγγέλιον] referred to the *one* oral Gospel of God's provision of Jesus Christ, in contrast to Providence's repeatable 'gospels' of the provision of Roman emperors.' Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, p. 58 (emphasis original). The two indirect references to 'another gospel' (ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον) in Galatians 1:6 and 2 Corinthians 11:4, retain the primary meaning for εὐαγγέλιον as Paul's message concerning Christ. The question of whether Paul's gospel is narrative or apocalyptic is not a direct concern of this study, though it is approached obliquely in the course of investigating the way in which Paul's gospel functions as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / κυρίου.

<sup>37</sup> The designation of εὐαγγέλιον as a *nomen actionis* on certain occasions is based on context (cf. 1 Cor. 9:14b, in which the living 'from the gospel' is contextually identified by the presence of the verb καταγγέλλω). See also Dickson, *Mission Commitment*, p. 87.

<sup>38</sup> The occurrence of εὐαγγέλιον found in the textually suspect benediction in Romans 16:25 is not included in this study.

<sup>39</sup> Mitchell, 'Rhetorical Shorthand', p. 64. See also Dickson, *Mission Commitment*, p. 87n1.

Table 2

**Philippians: 9 occurrences**

1:5 τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

1:7 ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

1:12 εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν

1:16 εἰς ἀπολογίαὶν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

1:27 ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε ... τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

2:22 ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

4:3 ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ συνήθλησαν

4:15 ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

**Romans: 8 occurrences**

1:1 ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ

1:9 λατρεύω ... ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ

1:16 Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

2:16 κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον μου

10:16 οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ

11:28 ... κατὰ μὲν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐχθροὶ δι' ὑμᾶς

15:16 ἱεουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ...

15:19 πεπληρωκέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ

**1 Corinthians: 8 occurrences**

4:15 διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα

9:12 μή τινα ἐγκοπὴν δώμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ

9:14 τοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καταγγέλλουσιν ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν

9:18 εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον θήσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ... ἐξουσία μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ

9:23 πάντα δὲ ποιῶ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

15:1 τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν

**Galatians: 7 occurrences**

1:6 μετατίθεσθε ... εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον

1:7 μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ

1:11 τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ εὐαγγελισθέν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ

2:2 ἀνεθέμην αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν

2:5 διαμείνη πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

2:7 πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας

2:14 οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

### 1 Thessalonians: 6 occurrences

1:5 ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον

2:2 λαλήσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ

2:4 δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

2:8 μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ

2:9 ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ

3:2 συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ

### 2 Thessalonians: 2 occurrences

1:8 μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ

2:14 ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν

### 2 Corinthians: 7 occurrences

2:12 εἰς τὴν Τρωάδα εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ

4:3 εἰ καὶ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν

4:4 τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ

8:18 τὸν ἀδελφὸν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ

9:13 τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ

10:14 ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ

11:4 ἢ εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον ὃ οὐκ ἐδέξασθε

11:7 δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμεν ὑμῖν

Two observations about the pattern of occurrences are helpful prior to a review of κηρυγ– language. The first is to note the concentration of εὐαγγελ– usage in every letter apart from 2 Corinthians. Paul’s use of the noun occurs predominantly in clusters of language. Secondly, as the next two word families are discussed, note how little additional gospel language Paul uses in the letter to the Galatians. Galatians contains 15 occurrences of the εὐαγγελ– word family, which is the most of any Pauline epistle. Considering the length of Galatians in comparison to Romans or 1 Corinthians, this is a remarkable concentration of terms.

### 1.1.2 The κηρυγ– Word Family

The meaning of the κηρυγ–word family is derived from the activity of a herald, who shouts or proclaims news of an event.<sup>40</sup> The focus of the word family is on human agency proclaiming an event, rather than on the content of the message that one proclaims.<sup>41</sup> In contrast to the εὐαγγελ– word family, which has a specific boundary in that the announcement is designated as ‘good’, the announcement of a herald is general. While all evangelists are heralds, not all heralds are evangelists. A herald delivers a message that does not originate with him, and therefore his manner of delivery must be in keeping with the message entrusted to him. While the noun κήρυγμα occurs exclusively in reference to the εὐαγγέλιον, the verb κηρύσσω is not used exclusively by Paul in reference to his gospel proclamation (see Gal. 5:11 and Ro. 2:16). Romans 2:21 demonstrates that one may preach against stealing, while in Galatians 5:11 Paul defends himself against association with those who proclaim circumcision. So while oral proclamation, represented in the verb κηρύσσω, is an essential activity to the spread of the gospel, the activity of proclamation is not inherently evangelistic. The noun is modified twice with personal pronouns (κήρυγμα μου, 1 Cor. 2:4 and κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, 1 Cor. 15:14) and used once in the phrase μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος (1 Cor. 1:21).

The cognate verb κηρύσσω is employed nearly as often as εὐαγγελίζομαι: a total of sixteen times in Paul, fourteen of which are direct references to gospel proclamation.<sup>42</sup> Over half of the occurrences of κηρύσσω as gospel proclamation are in the Corinthian letters (1 Cor. 1:23; 9:27,

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<sup>40</sup> Friedrich, ‘κήρυξ’, TDNT 3:683-718

<sup>41</sup> Friedrich, ‘κήρυξ’, TDNT 3:683-718, (p. 703).

<sup>42</sup> The two exceptions each relate to the law and are found in the context of rhetorical questions (Gal. 5:11, Ro. 2:21).

15:11, 12; 2 Cor. 1:19; 4:5 and 11:4 [2x]). The noun κήρυγμα occurs exclusively in 1 Corinthians (1:21, 2:4 and 15:14).<sup>43</sup> The key occurrences are in Table 3, below.

**Table 3**

<u>1 Corinthians: 3 noun / 4 verb</u>	<u>2 Corinthians: 4 verb</u>
1:21 διὰ τῆς <b>μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος</b> σῶσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας	1:19 Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν δι' ἡμῶν <b>κηρυχθεῖς</b>
1:23 ἡμεῖς δὲ <b>κηρύσσομεν</b> Χριστὸν ἑσταυρωμένον	4:5 οὐ γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς <b>κηρύσσομεν</b> ἀλλὰ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον
2:4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ <b>κήρυγμά μου</b> οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις]	11:4 ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν <b>κηρύσσει</b> ὃν οὐκ <b>ἐκηρύξαμεν</b>
9:27 μή πως ἄλλοις <b>κηρύξας</b> αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι	<u>Romans: 3 verb</u>
15:11 οὕτως <b>κηρύσσομεν</b> καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε	10:8 τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὸ ρῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ <b>κηρύσσομεν</b>
15:12 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς <b>κηρύσσεται</b> ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται	10:14 πῶς δὲ ἀκούσωσιν χωρὶς <b>κηρύσσοντος</b> ;
15:14 κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ <b>κήρυγμα ἡμῶν</b> , κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν	10:15 πῶς δὲ <b>κηρύξωσιν</b> ἐὰν μὴ ἀποσταλῶσιν;
<u>1 Thessalonians: 1 verb</u>	<u>Galatians: 2 verb</u>
2:9 <b>ἐκηρύξαμεν</b> εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ	2:2 ἀνεθέμην αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ <b>κηρύσσω</b> ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν
<u>Philippians: 1 verb</u>	5:11 εἰ περιτομὴν ἔτι <b>κηρύσσω</b>
1:15 τινὲς [...] δι' εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν <b>κηρύσσοουσιν</b>	

<sup>43</sup> The textually suspect benediction in Romans 16:25-27 is not included in the study that follows, as the manuscript history suggests that it is a post-Pauline addition to the text. See Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, ed. and trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromily (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 421-28.

Compared to the frequent use of εὐαγγελ– vocabulary, Paul’s use of κηρυγ– vocabulary as gospel terminology is relatively infrequent across his letters. 1 Corinthians is the notable exception to this trend. The Corinthian correspondence contains eleven of the eighteen occurrences. This is a notable concentration of concern with human agency relative to gospel proclamation in the interactions between Paul and the Corinthian churches. As such the Corinthian correspondence is an important source for understanding Paul’s use of the word family in other epistles.

### 1.1.3 The λόγος Word Group

The λόγος word group has a broader lexical range of meaning than either εὐαγγελ- or κηρυγ- terminology. It is, simply defined, a spoken word or message.<sup>44</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that Paul’s use of λόγος language is a great deal more varied than that of other gospel vocabulary. One finds Paul associating λόγος with a word or message that originates from human wisdom (σοφία λογοῦ, 1 Cor. 2:4 and 2:14)<sup>45</sup> and divine folly (λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ, 1 Cor. 1:18); as empty flattery (ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας, 1 Th. 2:5) and absolute sincerity (ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν [...] οὐκ ἔστιν ναὶ καὶ οὐ, 1 Cor. 1:18); as human speech (λόγος ἀνθρώπων, 1 Th. 2:13) and divine communication (λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, 1 Th. 2:13).

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<sup>44</sup> See BDAG 598-601, Kittel ‘λέγω, λόγος’, TDNT 4:69-136. Michael Pahl offers a thorough review of lexical and grammatical matters in his study of the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου, *Discerning*, pp. 100-112, see especially pp. 100-101.

<sup>45</sup> Reading σοφία as an subjective genitive. An objective genitive renders the same result in the above argument. In either case, λόγος can be associated with speech that either originates entirely in human wisdom, or is composed entirely of human wisdom (i.e. rhetorical arts).



For the purposes of this study, the designation of λόγος language as gospel terminology is contextually dependent upon the presence of Paul's other primary gospel vocabulary.<sup>46</sup> Nearly half of the total occurrences of λόγος are found in passages in which Paul references the εὐαγγέλιον (25 of 54 occurrences).<sup>47</sup> The word ῥῆμα occurs only six times in Paul, four of which are in direct relationship to the preaching of the gospel message in Romans 10. Table 4, on the next page, lists the gospel language occurrences of both λόγος and ῥῆμα.

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<sup>46</sup> The majority of times that λόγος occurs as gospel language it is qualified. There are only six grammatically unqualified occurrences of the noun as gospel language.

<sup>47</sup> This number includes 5 phrases designating forms of speech that Paul rejects as appropriate for gospel proclamation (1 Th. 2:5; 1 Cor. 1:17; 21:1, 2:13; 2 Cor. 11:6). They function to support the veracity of true gospel messengers.

**Table 4**

**1 Thessalonians: 9 λόγος**

1:5 ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον

1:6 δεχάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει

1:8 ἐχήχηται ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου

2:5 οὔτε γὰρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν

2:13 ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ

4:15 ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου

4:18 παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις

**Romans: 4 ῥῆμα**

10:8 ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμά ἐστιν ... τοῦτ' ἐστὶν τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν (LXX Deut. 30:14, 10:8a)

10:17 ἄρα ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς ἢ δὲ ἀκοὴ διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ

10:18 εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῶν (LXX Ps. 18 :5)

**Philippians: 2 λόγος**

1:14 τῶν ἀδελφῶν... τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν

2:16 λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες

**1 Corinthians: 6 (7) λόγος**

1:17 οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου ...

1:18 ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ ... μωρία ἐστίν ... δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν.

2:1 οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ.

2:4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[s] σοφίας [λόγοις]

2:13 λαλοῦμεν οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις

15:2 τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμεν ὑμῖν

**2 Corinthians: 5 λόγος**

1:18 ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ὁ πρὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἔστιν ναὶ καὶ οὐ

2:17 οὐ γὰρ ἐσμεν ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ

4:2 μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ

5:19 θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς

11:6 εἰ δὲ καὶ ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ

**2 Thessalonians: 1 λόγος**

3:1 ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχη καὶ δοξάζεται

**Galatians: 1 λόγος**

6:6 ὁ κατηχούμενος τὸν λόγον

Prior to focusing on Paul's epistles, a survey of language use in the LXX is helpful. The conclusion of this thesis is that Paul's use of the phrases λόγος τοῦ κυρίου and λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ demonstrates continuity with, as well as development beyond, the OT prophetic tradition. With this in view, a brief overview of the use of Paul's primary gospel terms in the LXX, and the phrases 'word

of the Lord’ and ‘word of God’ in particular, is important in order that the review of language in the Pauline epistles occurs with the LXX usage in mind. Section 1.2 presents a survey of the LXX occurrences of the εὐαγγελ–, κηρυγ– and λόγος word families. Both the εὐαγγελ– and κηρυγ– word families are secondary, in the OT prophetic tradition, to the category of λόγος κυρίου / θεοῦ as prophetic speech acts..

## 1.2 Paul’s Primary Gospel Language in the LXX

All three of Paul’s primary language terms occur in the LXX.<sup>48</sup> In LXX usage, however, the occurrences of the phrases λόγος τοῦ κυρίου / θεοῦ far outnumber that of the εὐαγγελ– or κηρυγ– word families. The survey of Paul’s primary gospel language vocabulary in the LXX, presented in this section, follows the same order as the inquiry into Paul’s NT gospel language terms, beginning with the εὐαγγελ– and κηρυγ– word families and concluding with Paul’s use of λόγος and ῥῆμα vocabulary.<sup>49</sup> The phrase ‘OT prophetic tradition’ as it occurs in this study extends beyond the literary prophets to include narratives and sayings throughout the LXX that employ the term ‘word of the Lord’ or ‘word of God’.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> All passage references given in the course of the survey in section 1.2 are from the LXX. The MT location, where it differs from the LXX, is noted in brackets.

<sup>49</sup> The textual sources for the LXX in this study are the individual volumes in the Göttingen Septuagint series, when extant; otherwise the text of the LXX is quoted from the edition of Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*.

<sup>50</sup> Paul’s letters include a breadth of the LXX writings in passages that are included in the survey of gospel language in the Pauline epistles. A few examples of direct references to the LXX tradition in passages that discuss Paul’s gospel announcement to the Gentiles are: Galatians 3:8 (Abraham); Romans 10:5, 19 (Moses), 10:16, 20 (Isaiah), 10:18 (Psalms); 11:2 (Elijah).

### 1.2.1 εὐαγγελ— language in the LXX

In the LXX there is one occurrence of the noun εὐαγγέλιον, five of εὐαγγελίας, and 23 occurrences of the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι, over half of which (12 of 23) are in the participle form.<sup>51</sup>

The word family refers primarily to a message of good news related to a military victory that results in the deliverance of the recipients. Table 5 lists occurrences of the word family.

**Table 5**

<u>History</u>	<u>Wisdom</u>
1 εὐαγγέλιον	4 εὐαγγελίζομαι
2 Samuel 4:10	Psalms 39:10; *67:12; 95:2
	*Psalms of Solomon 11:1
5 εὐαγγελίας	
2 Samuel 18:20; 18:22; 18:25; 18:27	
1 Kings 7:9	
	<u>Prophets</u>
10 εὐαγγελίζομαι	9 εὐαγγελίζομαι
*1 Samuel 31:9	*Joel 2:32 [MT 3:5]
2 Samuel 1:20; *4:10; 18:19;	*Nahum 1:15 [MT 2:1]
18:20 (2x); *18:26; 18:31	Isaiah *40:9 (2x); *52:7 (2x);
1 Kings 1:42	60:6; 61:1
1 Chronicles 10:9 (cf. 1 Sam. 31:9)	*Jeremiah 20:15
	* indicates participle form of verb

<sup>51</sup> Both of the nouns εὐαγγέλιον and εὐαγγελίας occur for בְּשֵׁרָה. The verb εὐαγγελίζομαι translates בְּשַׁר. The participle form is singular in nine occurrences (2 Sam. 4:10; 18:26; Pss. Sol. 11:1; Nah. 1:15; Is. 40:9 (2x); Is. 52:7 (2x); Jer. 20:15) and plural in three verses (1 Sam. 31:9; Ps. 67:12; Joel 2:32). The same Hebrew noun in Isaiah 41:27 is translated in the LXX as παρακαλέω. Another alternate translation in 1 Chronicles 16:23 and Psalm 95:2 is ἀναγγέλλω, indicative that the tidings may be neutral rather than ‘good’ (cf. the use of טוב with בְּשֵׁרָה in 1 Ki. 1:42 to signify good tidings).

The use of the word family in the Histories occurs exclusively in relation to the Davidic monarchy. The noun is used once and the verb four times in the story of Saul's death at the hand of the Philistines, in which the announcement is affirmed as good news among the Philistines (1 Sam. 31:19 /1 Chron. 10:9; 2 Sam. 1:20), and rejected as good news by David, who kills the messenger (2 Sam. 4:10). The verb appears again in the story of Absalom's death, news that is once again rejected by David as 'good' (2 Sam. 18:19, 20 [2x], 26 and 31). The good news, as described in the narrative, is that the Lord has vindicated the king from the hand of his enemies (2 Sam. 18:19). The final occurrence of the verb in the Histories is 1 Kings 1:42, referring to news that David has made Solomon king. In light of 2 Samuel 18:19, it is not strictly correct that use of the verb is 'secular'. The news of victory acknowledges the Lord's sovereignty over the events that secured David's throne. None of the occurrences, however, are entrusted divine communication.

The theological sense of the Lord intervening for the salvation or deliverance of Israel is present in the use of εὐαγγελίζομαι in the Wisdom literature. The verb occurs in the Psalms in praise of the Lord's deliverance. In Psalm 39:10 [MT 40:10] the king announces the good news of God's righteousness, 'received and experienced in God's acts of deliverance'.<sup>52</sup> Psalm 67:12 [MT 68:12] anticipates that a word of the Lord's victory will be given to be announced as good news.<sup>53</sup> Psalm 95:2 [MT 96:2] calls on those worshipping to announce glad tidings from day to day of the Lord's salvation, continuing in 95:3 as the announcement (ἀναγγέλλω) of the Lord's glory among

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<sup>52</sup> Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, WBC 19 (Dallas: Word Books, 2002), p. 315.

<sup>53</sup> The vocabulary for the message announced as good news is ῥῆμα in the LXX, אָמַר in the MT.

the Gentiles. The Psalms of Solomon anticipate the sound of the messenger announcing good news of deliverance (Pss. Sol. 11:1).<sup>54</sup> The word family is not prophetic speech.<sup>55</sup>

The use of εὐαγγελίζομαι in the Prophets occurs repeatedly in reference to a future deliverance for Israel, enacted by Yahweh, and announced by a messenger or messengers of good news (see Joel 2:32; Nahum 1:15; Isaiah 40:9; 52:7).<sup>56</sup> When the verb occurs in the participle form, the messengers of good news announce a particular message – good news of the Lord’s deliverance.<sup>57</sup> Where the timing of divine agency is concerned, the content of the message that is announced by the messenger(s) of good news is a report of a victory already achieved. While the presence of the verb in a prophetic context anticipates future divine action, εὐαγγελίζομαι does not function as a future oriented word. There are two verses in which divine agency is implied in the actual announcement of good news. In Isaiah 52:7, employed by Paul in Romans 10, the LXX

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<sup>54</sup> N. T. Wright notes that, ‘This psalm is regularly, and rightly, referred to as evidence that the theme of the Isaianic herald was alive and well in the first century. ... The psalm speaks of the *return of Israel from exile*. It is generally agreed that it dates from a time several centuries after what is normally thought of as the ‘return’; and yet it still appeals to YHWH to fulfil at last his ancient promises of “return” – specifically, the promises of Isaiah 40. It is evident that for this writer, as for many others in second-temple Judaism, the “return from exile”, predicted by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others, had not yet taken place.’ Wright, ‘Gospel and Theology’, p. 225 (emphasis original). For the historical background and dating of Psalms of Solomon, see also Robert B. Wright, *The Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), pp. 1-7. Wright dates the composition of the psalms in the last half of the first century BCE, with a translation into Greek around the turn of the era.

<sup>55</sup> Brad Embry argues that Psalms of Solomon, while written in the style of wisdom literature, features characteristics of biblical prophecy as well. See Brad Embry, ‘Some Thoughts on and Implications from Genre Categorization in the Psalms of Solomon’, in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, ed. by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), pp. 59-78, (pp. 59-60). Embry identifies a ‘biblical tradition of expectation, and in particular a prophetic one, in which human history would be altered by the activity of God on earth through the “anointed one of the Lord.”’ Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>56</sup> The LXX of Joel 2:32 [MT 3:5] changes the MT, which reads ‘survivor’, בשרִים, to the participle form of εὐαγγελίζομαι (בשרִידים).

<sup>57</sup> The use of εὐαγγελίζομαι in Jeremiah 20:15 is ironic, appearing in one of the confessions of Jeremiah as a curse on the one who delivered the message of good news to the prophet’s father that a son had been born.

changes the Hebrew text and presents the Lord as the one announcing the report of peace. In the LXX it is Yahweh, the one who speaks (52:6, ἐγὼ εἶμι αὐτὸς ὁ λαλῶν), who is present (πάρειμι) as the messenger of good news on the mountain. A second implication of divine agency through the message of good news occurs in Isaiah 61. The prophetic messenger in Isaiah 60:1-3 is anointed by the Spirit of the Lord to announce good news to the poor (cf. Is. 40:9; 41:27),<sup>58</sup> and sent (ἀποστέλλω), among other things, to proclaim (κηρύσσω) release to the captives, to comfort (παρακαλέω) those who mourn (cf. Is. 40:1). The use of εὐαγγελίζομαι in Isaiah 61 is unique, as it is the only occurrence of the verb in which the announcement of good news participates to accomplish that which it proclaims.<sup>59</sup> This description, in Isaiah 61, of a direct divine announcement of the good news and the anointing of the Spirit are the only implications of direct divine agency with the announcement of good news. The uses of the verb to announce the Lord's victory are reports of completed divine agency, acting to deliver Israel and Judah.

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<sup>58</sup> John Watts observes that the descriptions in these verses describe the dispirited post-exilic community in Jerusalem. John Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, WBC 25 (Dallas: Word Books, 1987), p. 302. See Isaiah 29:19, 41:17 for the Lord's direct intervention on behalf of the poor (ὁ πτωχός).

<sup>59</sup> John Watts' comments on these verses describe the announcement of good news as an enactment of the deliverance that they proclaim: 'The preacher ... does not come as a strong leader to do something, but as an anointed messenger announcing meaningful things. ... The new city ... needs a news spirit and a new attitude to be truly beautiful. This speaker accomplishes these with his blessed words.' Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, p. 305.

## 1.2.2 κηρυγ– language in the LXX

Turning attention to the κηρυγ– word family, the word κήρυγμα occurs 4 times and κηρύσσω occurs 32 times. In two of these verses a herald (κῆρυξ) makes the proclamation (Gen. 41:43; Dan. 3:4). The use of the word family in the LXX covers a range of vocabulary in the MT, all synonyms for a loud cry or call.<sup>60</sup> Of the four nominal occurrences, only one, Jonah 3:2, directly identifies the proclamation as a prophetic speech act. The consistent feature in all four verses is the nature of κήρυγμα as an oral proclamation. In 2 Chronicles 30:5, 1 Esdras 9:3 and Proverbs 9:3 the noun refers to the proclamation itself rather than the content of that proclamation. All four verses provide the content of the proclamation after its reference with κήρυγμα.<sup>61</sup> Of the 32 occurrences of the verb, 13 are in the Law and Histories, 3 are found in the Wisdom writings, and the remaining 16 occur in the Prophets. The verb occurs alongside εὐαγγελίζομαι in Isaiah 61:1 and Psalms of Solomon 11:1. Table 6, on the next page, lists the occurrences of the word family.

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<sup>60</sup> All of the words that occur as κηρύσσω in the LXX involve a loud cry. The Hebrew word for which κηρύσσω occurs most often is קָרָא (see Jonah 1:2; 3:2, 3:4, 3:5; Isaiah 61:1). In four verses the MT contains רָוַע, meaning ‘to raise a shout’: Hosea 5:8; Joel 2:1; Zephaniah 3:14 and Zechariah 9:9. Other words translated from the Hebrew are קָוַל in Exodus 36:6; 2 Chronicles 24:9, 36:22 (Cyrus’ proclamation); 1 Esdras 2:1; 1 Maccabees 5:49. In Jonah 3:7 the people’s cry for a fast (זַעַק) is distinct language from the proclamation made by Jonah and the king (קָרָא).

<sup>61</sup> The use of κήρυγμα in Jonah 3:2 occurs within the word of the Lord to Jonah to go to Nineveh and proclaim the same proclamation that the Lord had spoken prior to Jonah’s flight (Jon. 1:2). The combination of the noun with its nominal verb reflects the Hebrew use of קָרָא / קָרְיָאָה.



**Table 6**

<u>Law / History</u>	<u>Wisdom</u>
2 κήρυγμα	1 κήρυγμα
2 Chronicles 30:5	Proverbs 9:3
1 Esdras 9:3	
	3 κηρύσσω
13 κηρύσσω	Proverbs 1:21; 8:1
Genesis 41:43	Psalms of Solomon 11:1**
Exodus 32:5; 36:6	
2 Kings 10:20	<u>Prophets</u>
2 Chronicles 20:3; 24:9; 36:22	1 κήρυγμα
1 Esdras 2:1	Jonah 3:2
Esther 6:9, 6:11	
1 Maccabees 5:49; 10:63; 10:64	15 κηρύσσω
	Hosea 5:8
	Micah 3:5
	Joel 1:14; 2:1, 2:15; 3:9
	Jonah 1:2; 3:2, 3:4, 3:5, 3:7
	Zephaniah 3:14
	Zechariah 9:9
	Isaiah 61:1**
	Daniel 3:4

*\*\* indicates verses containing both κηρύσσω and εὐαγγελίζομαι*

The κηρυγ— word family signifies the human agency of crying out so that everyone hears the message loud and clear. Most often the occurrences emphasize the human agency involved in the act of proclaiming – that is, a message made by oral proclamation or call. In the Histories, those proclaiming are always an emissary for one in authority, usually a king, though in Exodus it is used

of proclamations from Aaron (Ex. 32:5) and Moses (Ex. 36:6).<sup>62</sup> Given the authority of the persons in all 13 of the verses in which κηρύσσω occurs in these narratives, the proclamation calls for an appropriate response on the part of those who hear the message proclaimed. In the Wisdom writings, this response is characterized among the understanding as obedience (ὑπακούω, Prov. 8:1). The use of κηρύσσω in the History and Wisdom books is not theological. However, as with εὐαγγελίζομαι, the activity represented by the verb participates in the Lord's purposes. For example, Cyrus is compelled by the Lord to make the proclamation allowing the Jews to return for the rebuilding of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 36:22 and 1 Es. 2:1). The theological framework for this event is provided by the literary prophets. Cyrus is identified as the Lord's anointed in Isaiah 45:1, and his proclamation described in the historical narratives as an event that fulfils the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 25:12).

The occurrences in the Prophets also emphasize the loud cry associated with the herald.<sup>63</sup> Prophetic speech is rarely described with κηρύσσω, an activity that is more readily associated with an agent for the royal court rather than prophets. The word family does not carry the very specific content that one finds with εὐαγγελίζομαι as an announcement of the Lord's salvation and shalom for God's people. In the prophet Joel the proclamation of a fast is directed at God's people (Joel 1:14), while in Joel 3:9 a loud cry calls the Gentiles to war. The strength of the cry is particularly

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<sup>62</sup> The royal figures associated with the use of κηρυγ— are Pharaoh, (Gen. 41:43); Jehu, (2 Kgs. 10:20); Jehoshaphat, (2 Chron. 20:3); Joash, (2 Chron. 24:9); Cyrus, (2 Chron. 36:22 and 1 Es. 2:1); Ahasuerus, (Est. 6:9, 11); Alexander, (1 Macc. 10:63, 64). The only other non-royal proclamation in the historical narratives originates from Judas Maccabees, calling for a fast (1 Macc. 5:49).

<sup>63</sup> The two occurrences of the verb, one in Daniel 3:4 and the second in Daniel 5:29 (Th) are each in reference to the king's herald, and should be considered with the general use of the verb in the historical narratives. Both the Old Greek and Theodotion versions of Daniel apply the κηρυγ— word family to royal proclamations. In Theodotion Daniel 3:4, the verb combined with κήρυξ is βοάω instead of κηρύσσω, emphasizing the loud cry: ὁ κήρυξ ἐβόα ἐν ἰσχύι. In Theodotion Daniel 5:29 Baltasar's elevation of Daniel to a position of authority is proclaimed: ἐκήρυξε περὶ αὐτοῦ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἄρχοντα τρίτον ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ.

emphasized in the combination of κηρύσσω with the sound of the trumpet that heralds the Day of the Lord, an announcement of judgment.<sup>64</sup> The cry is also applied to good news, which is how it occurs in Psalms of Solomon alongside εὐαγγελίζομαι (Pss. Sol. 11:1). The content of the proclamation in Jerusalem is ‘a voice of one announcing good news’ (φωνὴν εὐαγγελιζομένου).<sup>65</sup> The herald announces the presence of the messenger, not the good news itself. Together, the sound of the trumpet and sound of the voice of the messenger of good news are indication that God has shown mercy, visiting his people with salvation.<sup>66</sup> In Zephaniah 3:14 and Zechariah 9:9 the command to cry aloud is in response to God’s salvation. In all of these cases the sense is of shouting or a general cry.

In three of the literary prophets the word family is directly associated with prophetic activity. One of the occurrences specific to prophetic activity is in reference to the false prophets that proclaim peace (Micah 3:5). Another is the proclamation of deliverance in Isaiah 61:1, discussed above. The story of Jonah is the only application in a narrative of a prophet divinely commissioned and sent to proclaim a word of the Lord. The word family occurs numerous times in Jonah. As a result of believing (πιστεύω) God’s judgment as proclaimed by Jonah (1:2, 3:2, 4) the

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<sup>64</sup> The combination of κηρύσσω and σάλπιγξ occurs in Psalms of Solomon 11:1; Hosea 5:8; Joel 2:1 and 2:15. The phrase ἡμέρα κυρίου occurs in Amos 5:18; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2:11, 2:31; 3:14; Obadiah 1:15; Zephaniah 1:14 (2x); Malachi 4:4; Isaiah 13:6, 9; Jeremiah 32:19; Ezekiel 7:10; 13:5.

<sup>65</sup> The unique phrase is most likely in contrast to the voice previously heard in Jerusalem, that of war (φωνὴν πολέμου, Pss. Sol. 8:1). The repetition of πόλεμος indicates that 8:1 refers to the same sounds heard in the beginning verses Psalms of Solomon in 1:2: ἑξάπινα ἠκούσθη κραυγὴ πολέμου.

<sup>66</sup> Translating the phrase ὅτι ἠλέησεν ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ ἐν τῇ ἐπισκοπῇ αὐτῶν as ‘God has shown mercy in his visitation’. The noun ἐπισκοπή occurs three times in Psalms of Solomon, first immediately prior to 11:1 in the context of God’s mercy at his visitation, anticipating the Lord’s salvation (Pss. Sol. 10:4, 7-8) and following in 11:6 in reference to the visitation of God’s glory. Embry writes, ‘The historical conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey, filtered through this “prophetic paradigm”, produces a “future hope” (recorded throughout the document as the mercy of the Lord) and represents one of the primary theses of the document: the redemption of Israel.’ Embry, ‘The Psalms of Solomon’, p. 132.

Ninevites proclaim a fast (3:7). In Jonah's case, divine agency is involved in the arrival (γίνομαι) of the word of the Lord that provides both the command to proclaim to Nineveh and the message that is to be proclaimed. In Isaiah 61, this divine agency is identified as the Spirit of the Lord, both empowering the messenger and providing the substance of the message.

In summary, neither the εὐαγγελ– nor the κηρυγ– word families are used in the OT prophetic tradition as general categories of divine speech. The theological use of εὐαγγελίζομαι is a message of the Lord's victory, securing the deliverance of Israel. Divine agency is primarily located in the content of the announcement (an event already finished) or the entrusting of the message to the messenger. In Isaiah 61 the messenger of good news is anointed by the Spirit of the Lord. Outside of the debated identity of the figure in Isaiah 61, the word family is not prophetic activity in LXX usage. Where the κηρυγ– word family is concerned, the limited application to prophetic activity is that of Jonah sent to proclaim a word of the Lord – a message of judgment on Nineveh. This is in contrast to the message of deliverance proclaimed by the prophetic figure in Isaiah 61:1. Where εὐαγγελίζομαι and κηρύσσω occur together, the message is that of deliverance (Is. 61, Pss. Sol. 11:1).

### 1.2.3 λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / τοῦ κυρίου as Divine Communication

The words λόγος and ῥῆμα are used interchangeably in the LXX, each occurring as translations of the Hebrew *davar* (דָּבָר).<sup>67</sup> Table 7, on the next page, lists the number of occurrences for divine speech out of the total number of times that λόγος or ῥῆμα occur.<sup>68</sup> There is a general trajectory of usage in the LXX from that of ῥῆμα as the primary vocabulary in the Law and earlier Histories to that of λόγος in the Prophets.<sup>69</sup> In the Prophets λόγος is both predominant in general usage and predominantly occurs as divine communication. The book of Jeremiah is notable for the large number of λόγος occurrences compared to any other book in the LXX. The frequent occurrences in Ezekiel are almost exclusively due to the repeated use of the phrase λόγος κυρίου as a prophetic topos.

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<sup>67</sup> While *davar* is most well-known, λόγος also occurs as a translation for a variety of terms in the Hebrew that describe divine speech, including the Lord's mouth, פִּי; and a divine saying or oracle, אָמַר / אָמַרְתָּ. These variations in vocabulary within the Hebrew Bible for divine speech are addressed as relevant in the survey below.

<sup>68</sup> The following books in the LXX do not employ λόγος or ῥῆμα as language for divine communication: Leviticus, Ruth, Esther (including the additional chapters in the Greek), Judith, 1-4 Maccabees, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Letter of Jeremiah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon.

<sup>69</sup> The count in 1 Kings includes the interpolation in 12:24<sup>a-z</sup> rehearsing the events around Solomon's death and the events between Roboam and Jeroboam. The occurrence in Tobit reflects the longer version (GII, as represented in Sinaiticus and MS 319). In the shorter version (GI) there are no occurrences of either word as divine speech. It is generally accepted that the longer version is closest to the original. See also Stuart Weeks, 'Some Neglected Texts of Tobit: The Third Greek Version', in *Studies in the Book of Tobit: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. by Mark Bredin (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 12-42, (p. 24). Mark Bredin, 'The Significance of Jonah in Vaticanus (B) Tobit 14.4 and 8', *Ibid.*, pp. 43-58 (p. 43, n. 3).

**Table 7**

<u>Law and Histories</u>			<u>Prophets</u>		
Genesis	λόγος ῥήμα	1 of 3 2 of 47	Hosea	λόγος ῥήμα	3 of 5 1 of 2
Exodus	λόγος ῥήμα	1 of 12 14 of 31	Amos	λόγος ῥήμα	8 of 10 0
Numbers	λόγος ῥήμα	3 of 4 18 of 27	Micah	λόγος ῥήμα	5 of 6 0
Deut.	λόγος ῥήμα	12 of 35 17 of 55	Joel	λόγος ῥήμα	2 of 2 0
Joshua	λόγος ῥήμα	2 of 6 9 of 15	Jonah	λόγος ῥήμα	3 of 4 0
Judges	λόγος ῥήμα	4 of 17 1 of 8	Habakkuk	λόγος ῥήμα	0 of 1 0
1 Sam.	λόγος ῥήμα	6 of 21 10 of 47	Zephaniah	λόγος ῥήμα	2 of 2 0
2 Sam.	λόγος ῥήμα	7 of 40 3 of 30	Haggai	λόγος ῥήμα	5 of 5 0
1 Kings	λόγος ῥήμα	20 of 63 26 of 46	Zechariah	λόγος ῥήμα	18 of 19 1 of 1
2 Kings	λόγος ῥήμα	10 of 84 17 of 23	Malachi	λόγος ῥήμα	1 of 3 0
1 Chron.	λόγος ῥήμα	9 of 25 0 of 2	Isaiah	λόγος ῥήμα	17 of 44 11 of 14
2 Chron.	λόγος ῥήμα	20 of 74 2 of 3	Jeremiah	λόγος ῥήμα	147 of 168 7 of 11
1 Esdras	λόγος ῥήμα	2 of 8 4 of 6	Baruch	λόγος ῥήμα	2 of 5 2 of 2
2 Esdras	λόγος ῥήμα	5 of 28 0 of 16	Lamentations	λόγος ῥήμα	0 1 of 1
Tobit (GII)	λόγος ῥήμα	0 of 13 4 of 5	Ezekiel	λόγος ῥήμα	68 of 73 2 of 3
			Daniel [Th]	λόγος ῥήμα	5 of 26 0 of 16
			<u>Wisdom</u>	<u>Literature</u>	
	Psalms	λόγος ῥήμα 11 of 63 1 of 13		Wisdom	λόγος ῥήμα 3 of 15 1 of 2
	Proverbs	λόγος ῥήμα 4 of 55 0 of 4		Sirach	λόγος ῥήμα 6 of 71 3 of 8
	Job	λόγος ῥήμα 0 of 16 4 of 50		Pss Sol	λόγος ῥήμα 0 of 14 1 of 2

Our survey is specifically focused on the phrases ‘word of God’ and ‘word of the Lord’. Both phrases are indicative of divine communication, with λόγος κυρίου prevalent in the literary prophetic tradition. The entrusting and announcing of a divine communication, primarily as an oral communication, is essential to the prophetic vocation. Table 8 below charts the number of occurrences of the phrases. The two columns on the left indicate the number of occurrences of ‘word of the Lord’, and those on the right the number of occurrences of the phrase ‘word of God’. The bracketed total in Jeremiah includes 11 occurrences in which λόγος occurs in a prepositional phrase with παρὰ κυρίου.<sup>70</sup>

**Table 8**

Law & Histories		Wisdom & Prophets		Law & Histories		Wisdom & Prophets	
λόγος κυρίου	ῥῆμα κυρίου	λόγος κυρίου	ῥῆμα κυρίου	λόγος θεοῦ	ῥῆμα θεοῦ	λόγος θεοῦ	ῥῆμα θεοῦ
	Gen - 1	Psalms - 2					
Ex - 1	Ex - 4				Ex - 1	Prov - 2	
	Num - 7	Sirach - 2					Pss Sol - 1
	Deut - 5						
		Hosea - 3					
	Josh - 2	Amos - 4					
Judg - 1		Micah - 3		Judg - 1			
1 Sam - 1	1 Sam - 6	Joel - 1			1 Sam - 1		
2 Sam - 2	2 Sam - 2	Jonah - 2		2 Sam - 1			
1 Kgs - 13	1 Kgs - 20	Zeph - 2					
2 Kgs - 7	2 Kgs - 11	Haggai - 4					
1 Chron - 6		Zech - 13		1 Chron - 2			
2 Chron - 9	2 Chron - 1	Mal - 1					
1 Esdras - 1	1 Esdras - 3	Isaiah - 7	Isaiah - 2				Isaiah - 1
2 Esdras - 1		Jer - 52 [63]	Jer - 1	2 Esdras - 1		Jer - 2	Jer - 1
		Ezek - 60			Tobit - 1		

<sup>70</sup> The following verses in Jeremiah employ the phrase ὁ λόγος ὁ γινόμενος παρὰ κυρίου πρὸς Ἰερεμίαν: Jeremiah 11:1; 18:1; 22:1; 33:1; 37:1; 39:1; 41:1; 41:8; 42:1; 44:17; 47:1.

The phrase ‘word of God’ occurs 15 times, only 3 of which are in the Prophets. Nine of the occurrences of ‘word of God’ are λόγος θεοῦ<sup>71</sup> and 6 are ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>72</sup> Of the fifteen occurrences of the phrase ‘word of God’, 11 occurrences have a parallel occurrence in the MT. In every verse except one (Proverbs 30:5) both λόγος and ῥῆμα translate *davar*.<sup>73</sup> In occurrences that have corresponding texts in the Hebrew Bible,<sup>74</sup> God is identified once as אֱלֹהִים (Prov. 30:5), as אֱלֹהִים in 7 occurrences,<sup>75</sup> and as יְהוָה in 4 places.<sup>76</sup> There is no discernible theological distinction in these choices. First, in all except one of the 15 LXX texts, it is clear that the use of θεός refers to Israel’s God, יְהוָה.<sup>77</sup> Second, in passages that apply the phrase ‘word of God’ as prophetic speech, the immediate context employs the divine name as well. In 1 Samuel 9:27, for example, Samuel holds Saul back to hear a ῥῆμα θεοῦ. The message from God to which Samuel refers in 9:27, and speaks to Saul in the next verse (1 Sam. 10:1), begins exactly as the word revealed to Samuel by the Lord in 9:15-16.<sup>78</sup> The same direct association of θεός with κύριος occurs in the context surrounding the use of ‘word of God’ in Isaiah 40:8 (τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα).<sup>79</sup> In Isaiah 40:1 God announces comfort to his people, having received from the hand of

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<sup>71</sup> λόγος θεοῦ (*exceptions in brackets*): Judges 3:20; 2 Samuel 16:23; 1 Chronicles 15:15; 25:5 (pl.); 2 Esdras 9:4 (λόγος θεοῦ Ἰσραήλ); Proverbs 30:5 (pl.); 31:8; Jeremiah 1:2; 9:20.

<sup>72</sup> τὸ ῥῆμα θεοῦ (*exceptions in brackets*): Exodus 24:3 (pl.); 1 Samuel 9:27 (anarthrous); Tobit (GII) 14:4; Psalms of Solomon 9:2; Isaiah 40:8; Jeremiah 1:1.

<sup>73</sup> In Proverbs 30:5 the plural λόγοι θεοῦ occurs where the MT uses אֱמֶתֶת אֱלֹהִים.

<sup>74</sup> Proverbs 31:8 in the MT makes no reference to divine speech. Jeremiah 1:1 does not include the divine name with דְּבַר. There is no MT equivalent for Tobit 14:4 or Psalms of Solomon 9:2.

<sup>75</sup> אֱלֹהִים occurs with דְּבַר in Judges 3:20; 1 Samuel 9:27; 2 Samuel 16:23; 2 Esdras 9:4 [MT Ezra 9:4]; 1 Chronicles 25:5; and Isaiah 40:8.

<sup>76</sup> יְהוָה occurs with דְּבַר in Exodus 24:3; 1 Chronicles 15:15; Jeremiah 1:2; 9:20 (MT 9:19).

<sup>77</sup> Ehud’s false claim to a divine word in Judges does not necessitate the claim to a message from Israel’s God. The form of the narrative is, in Soggin’s description, ‘eminently secular’, unrelated to prophetic speech. J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges* (London: SCM Press, 1981), p. 53.

<sup>78</sup> The difference in divine names may simply reflect the complex tradition history behind the text. See Ralph Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC 10 (Dallas: Word Books, 2002), pp. 84-86.



the Lord double her sins. The voice of one crying in the wilderness in 40:3 prepares the way of the Lord and makes straight the paths of our God. In 40:5, it is announced that the glory of the Lord shall appear, and all flesh will see the salvation of God for the Lord has spoken it. In 40:7-8 it is the breath of the Lord that withers human glory like grass, while the word of God endures. There is no theological distinction to be drawn from the difference in modifiers.<sup>80</sup>

There is also no theological distinction to be discerned in the verses from the LXX in which θεός occurs where the MT modifies *davar* with the divine name. Each of the four occurrences is a message spoken by a prophet (Moses and Jeremiah). Two verses refer to instructions given to Moses from Israel's God, who is the Lord (τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ, Ex. 24:3; ἐν λόγῳ θεοῦ, 1 Chron. 15:15).<sup>81</sup> The verses in Jeremiah are also clearly a reference to Israel's God. In Jeremiah 1:1, the book of Jeremiah begins in the LXX with: τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ ὃ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ Ἰερεμیان (Jer. 1:1). In the MT *davar* is not modified, reading simply 'the words of Jeremiah' (דְּבַרְיִי יְרֵמְיָהוּ).<sup>82</sup> In Jeremiah 1:2, the 'word of YHWH' comes to Jeremiah (דְּבַר־יְהוָה). In the LXX, the phrase remains 'word of

<sup>79</sup> The LXX use of θεός and κύριος in these verses directly corresponds to the MT use of אֱלֹהִים and יְהוָה.

<sup>80</sup> The same interplay occurs in the Greek texts, such as Psalms of Solomon 9:1-3, verses in which references to God alternate between κύριος (9:1, 3) and θεός (9:2, 3). The phrase τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ occurs in 9:2.

<sup>81</sup> The use of θεός in Exodus 24:3 is the first of three times the LXX changes יְהוָה to θεός in this chapter, (cf. Ex. 24:5, 16). Note, however, that references to divine speech in Exodus 24:4 and 24:7 retain κύριος for יְהוָה. In 1 Chronicles 15:15, in addition to replacing the divine name with θεός, the instructions concerning the return of the Ark of the Covenant expand the MT to include κατὰ τὴν γραφὴν after ἐν λόγῳ θεοῦ. There is no question that Moses' instructions were given by the Lord.

<sup>82</sup> The form of the superscription in Jeremiah 1:1-2 is difficult in both the Hebrew text and the Greek, which may reflect either a division in textual tradition, or the late shaping of material that combines stories of the 'acts' of Jeremiah (*davar* in Jer. 1:1) with the prophetic 'oracles' (*davar*, Jer. 1:2). William Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), pp. 14-15. The change to LXX Jeremiah 1:1 brings the opening sentence into conformity with most other prophetic superscriptions, though this does not explain the use of θεοῦ rather than κυρίου.

God': ὃς ἐγενήθη λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>83</sup> These two verses, along with Jeremiah 1:3, form an editorial superscription for the final form of the book that follows.<sup>84</sup> They are distinct from the call narrative that begins in 1:4 with the words ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς αὐτόν.<sup>85</sup> There is no clear contextual imperative for the use of θεός rather than κύριος in Jeremiah 1:1-2. As the call in 1:4 makes clear, Jeremiah's words are from the Lord. In the rest of the book of Jeremiah the unqualified form of ὁ θεός occurs several times in clear reference to Yahweh.<sup>86</sup> The second occurrence of 'word of God' in Jeremiah is also a clear reference to the Lord as God. The song taught from God's mouth in Jeremiah 9:20 occurs in a passage that begins, in both the LXX and MT, with the prophetic speech formula τάδε λέγει κύριος (Jer. 9:17). In all four of the verses in which the LXX uses θεός for the divine name, there is no question that the God from whom these words originate is the Lord.

These occurrences exemplify a feature consistent with all fifteen uses of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ as a general category of divine speech. In each instance the modifier θεοῦ is a genitive of origin, indicating the source of the message with the God of Israel.<sup>87</sup> Theologically there is no difference

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<sup>83</sup> The use of ὃς indicates that the LXX translator did not regard Jeremiah as the antecedent for  $\text{אֲשֶׁר}$ . See also Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, p. 14.

<sup>84</sup> So also John Bright, *Jeremiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ABS 21 (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1965), p. 6. Robert Carroll's discussion of the dating problems with Jeremiah 1:2 emphasizes that the superscription is not a biography of the prophet, but a reflection of the 'Deuteronomistic presentation of prophecy and monarchy as twin institutions in the history of Israel.' Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1986), p. 92.

<sup>85</sup> The LXX changes the first person singular of the MT to the third person singular.

<sup>86</sup> See Jeremiah 8:14; 14:10; 27:40; 39:18-19.

<sup>87</sup> These genitive relationships may also be described as objective (content) and subjective (origin). The descriptions 'origin' and 'content' are preferable for our purposes since the noun governed by the genitive does not denote an activity (such as 'the faith of Christ' in contemporary theological discussions). See also N. T. Wright, *Gospel and Theology in Galatians*, p. 230 n.20, applied in Wright's discussion of the phrase 'gospel of God' representing God as both origin and content of the announcement.

between a word of the Lord and word of God. The same interchangeability holds true where function is concerned. In all five of these verses, the phrase ‘word of God’ communicates the divine origin of words spoken by human agents, whether instructions from Moses (Ex. 24:3; 1 Chron. 15:15), the collected words of Jeremiah introduced by the superscription (Jer. 1:1-2), or the dirge sung by the mourning women (Jer. 9:20). Functionally, the addition of τοῦ θεοῦ in Jeremiah 1:1, and its repetition in 1:2, emphasizes the divine source behind the words preserved in the final form of the book.<sup>88</sup> The emphasis on direct divine origin for a message is the same in Jeremiah 9:20. The word of God that the women are commanded to hear is followed by the imperative to let their ears receive (δέχομαι) words from his mouth. In these verses, as well as the references to Moses’ instructions, the use of the modifier affirms the divine authority of the messenger and message. This same function for the modifier is true in three other cases, applied to persons who are not prophetic figures. Ehud (LXX Aod, Jdgs. 3:20) is a judge who falsely claims to have a divine message for Eglon; Ahithophel (LXX Achitophel, 2 Sam. 16:23) is a royal advisor whose counsel is regarded with equitable authority to that of a divine communication (ὄν πρόπον ἐπερωτήση ἐν λόγῳ τοῦ θεοῦ); Heman (LXX Haiman, 1 Chron. 25:5) is a musician and one of the prophetic priests.<sup>89</sup> The authority of the divine source extends to its messengers. In other verses, the authority in the word of God is an extension of the divine character of the God from whom the word originates. In Isaiah 40:8 the word of God is enduring, as is the Lord’s glory; in Proverbs 30:5 the reliability of the word

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<sup>88</sup> Holladay concludes that the purpose of the superscription is ‘to set the material concerning Jrm in time and space; but theologically, it affirms that the words and deeds come from Yahweh to this particular man at a specific time in history.’ Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, p. 17.

<sup>89</sup> In 1 Chronicles 25:5 Heman is described in the list of Levitical singers as τῶ ἀνακρουομένῳ Βασιλεῖ ἐν λόγοις θεοῦ ὑψῶσαι κέρας, a description of divine authority behind Heman’s priestly prophetic function (cf. 2 Chron. 20:14; 29:5; 35:15). The verb ἀνακρούω describes sounding instruments in praise here and in 2 Samuel 6:14-16. The MT identifies Heman as the king’s seer. No specific ‘words of God’ are recorded, suggesting that the phrase is used to further emphasize the divine authority of Heman’s role. See also Roddy L. Braun, *1 Chronicles*, WBC 14 (Dallas: Word Books, 1986), pp. 245-46.

is from a God who gives shelter; and in Psalms of Solomon 9:2 both God and God's word are righteous. Finally, the authority of the word of God, spoken in the past, endures in the present. This applies to prophetic speech. The book of Tobit, which is not situated in the Biblical prophetic tradition, testifies to the constancy of this belief in the Diaspora. Tobit's instructions to his son reflect his belief in the certainty that a word of God spoken through the prophet Nahum remains fully in force against Ninevah (Tobit 14:4). A message that originates from God extends God's authority to the messenger. Since a message is from the God of Israel, the character of Israel's God extends to the nature of the message – a word that will endure until God has enacted that which the prophet has announced. These characteristics of prophetic divine communication are discussed further, below, in the survey of the phrase 'word of the Lord'.

These features of a divine communication that are exemplified in the handful of occurrences of the phrase 'word of God' in the LXX are consistent with the many occurrences of the phrase 'word of the Lord'. The majority of the occurrences in the OT, however, are *λόγος κυρίου*. Inclusive of all the occurrences in Jeremiah, there are 273 total occurrences of the phrase 'word of the Lord' in the LXX, of which 209 are *λόγος κυρίου* and 65 are *ῥῆμα κυρίου*. The phrase identifies the Lord, the God of Israel, as the source of the message. In both instances, the modifier is a genitive of origin. Functionally, both expressions 'word of God' and 'word of the Lord' in LXX usage emphasize the authority of the divine source, an authority that serves to authorize the messenger, and confirm the enduring efficacy of a divine communication. In the literary prophets, the identification of a direct divine communication from the Lord, Israel's God, is in contrast to the gods of the nations. The testimony in the literary prophets is that these strange gods are mere idols,

having neither breath nor words.<sup>90</sup> They are incapable of announcing those things that are to take place.<sup>91</sup> By contrast, the Lord both speaks in the mouth of his messengers, and acts in accordance with that which the Lord has revealed.<sup>92</sup> Thus, where prophetic speech is concerned the use of the phrase λόγος κυρίου is both a genitive of origin and content, since the content words spoken concern that which the Lord has done or intends to do. This feature of prophetic speech that is implicit in the use of λόγος θεοῦ in Isaiah 40:8 and Tobit 14:4, in expressions of confidence in an enduring word of God, is explicit in the use of λόγος κυρίου. A word of the Lord both originates from the Lord and announces that which the Lord will do in the future.

There is a third feature of divine communication in the OT prophetic tradition that applies to the phrase λόγος κυρίου as a fixed expression, that is, a topos of prophetic speech. The phrases ‘word of God / word of the Lord’ represent a category of divine communication that is, at times, described with an agency of its own.<sup>93</sup> In the OT narratives, however, this agency is not a feature of the λόγος (properly, of the Hebrew word *davar*). The agency attributed to a word of the Lord is divine agency effective in the word of the Lord as a divine communication. In many cases, this divine agency is described as the Spirit of the Lord together with the Lord’s word. This begins in the creation story from Genesis 1 – when the πνεῦμα θεοῦ hovered over the waters. The creation poem in Genesis 1:2 moves ahead with repeated variations on the phrase καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός

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<sup>90</sup> See Psalm 134:16-17; Habakkuk 2:19; Jeremiah 10:14; Epistle of Jeremiah 1:24.

<sup>91</sup> See Isaiah 41:22-23; cf. 44:7.

<sup>92</sup> See Isaiah 42:9; 48:16.

<sup>93</sup> At one point in the modern discussion of the Hebrew concept of *davar* as an active word, there was an overemphasis on the agency of the word itself. More recent scholarship has challenged this assumption. See Anthony Thiselton’s thorough review and well supported argument that the power of the prophetic word derives from the divine source, not the Hebrew concept of an active word. Anthony Thiselton, ‘The Supposed Power of Words in the Biblical Writings’, *JTS*, 25/2 (October, 1974), 283-299.

γενηθήτω ... καὶ ἐγένετο ... (Gen.1:3).<sup>94</sup> The divine agency of the Spirit and direct divine speech are together effective – that which the Lord speaks and the Spirit of God empowers comes into being.<sup>95</sup> References to the Spirit of the Lord acting in a manner that is disengaged from created things or human agents are very rare, occurring primarily in the poetic portions of the Wisdom writings.<sup>96</sup> The Spirit is referenced as empowering individuals to undertake the Lord’s work, to walk in God’s ways.<sup>97</sup> The Lord’s word and Spirit are identified with Persian kings as agents of the Lord’s will for Jerusalem.<sup>98</sup> In the prophetic tradition, the Spirit is identified as the source of visions and interpretations.<sup>99</sup> While the close identification of the Spirit and prophecy extends throughout the prophetic tradition,<sup>100</sup> it is especially conspicuous in accounts of the ecstatic speech of prophets in the earlier Histories.<sup>101</sup> There is frequent mention in the literary prophets of the Spirit of the Lord as the source of prophetic speech and actions. In Isaiah 61 the Lord’s messenger is anointed in the Spirit of the Lord. Zechariah identifies the Spirit with the sending of the prophets (Zech. 1:6), and Micah with strengthening the prophets in the face of opposition (Mic. 3:8).<sup>102</sup> In Ezekiel’s ministry

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<sup>94</sup> The verb λέγω occurs eleven times, twice as direct speech blessing creatures (Gen. 1:22) and humanity (Gen. 1:28). The verb γίνομαι occurs 23 times in Genesis 1.

<sup>95</sup> See Judith 16:14: ‘Let your entire creation be subject to you; for you spoke, and they came into being. You sent your spirit, and it built them up, and there is no one who will withstand your voice.’ Echoes of the Lord’s speech and Spirit effective in creation also occur in Isaiah 34:16.

<sup>96</sup> Psalm 103:30 [MT 104:30]; 138:7 [MT 139:7]; Job 33:4; Wisdom 1:7; 12:1.

<sup>97</sup> Judges 3:10; 11:29; Numbers 11:17, 25(2x), 26, 29; 2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Kings 9:15 (cf. Sirach 48:12); Psalm 142:10 [MT 143:10]; Wisdom 7:7; 9:17; Psalms of Solomon 17:37; 18:7; Haggai 1:14; 2:5; Isaiah 42:1; 44:3; 63:11, 14.

<sup>98</sup> 2 Chronicles 36:22 (Cyrus); Isaiah 59:21 Artaxerxes has the Lord’s Spirit upon him and the promise that the words the Lord has placed in his mouth will not depart.

<sup>99</sup> Genesis 41:38.

<sup>100</sup> 1 Kings 22:24 (2 Chron. 18:23); 2 Chronicles 15:1; 2 Chronicles 20:14 .

<sup>101</sup> In Numbers 23:7, 24:2 the LXX departs from the MT by describing the Spirit of God descending on Balaam with the parable spoken from God: ἐγενήθη πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπ’ αὐτῶ, (Num. 23:7). See also Numbers 23:5; 1 Samuel 10:6, 10; 19:20-23.

<sup>102</sup> Nehemiah 9:30: ‘you testified to them by your Spirit by the hand of the prophets.’

the Spirit and the word of the Lord are referenced repeatedly.<sup>103</sup> In Joel 2:28-32 [MT 3:1-5] the outpouring of the Spirit in the age to come will manifest in prophetic speech and visions. Word and Spirit together, therefore, enable the ministry of the prophets and the efficacy of divine speech.

The remainder of this section considers this relationship between divine and human agency in a divine communication in three parts. First, we will consider the question of divine agency in and through the word, with particular attention to the Wisdom literature. Second, we will turn attention to the reception and announcement of the word of the Lord in the stories of Abraham and Moses, prophetic figures who are precursors to the prophetic office in Israel. This second consideration surveys the use of the phrase in the books of the Law. Finally, the third part below considers the phrase ‘word of the Lord’ in the OT prophetic tradition in the Histories and Prophets.

#### *Divine Agency and the Word of the Lord*

There are four occurrences of the phrase λόγος κυρίου in the Wisdom literature. In the Psalms, both occurrences of ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου are in the hymn to creation in Psalm 32:4 and 32:6 [MT 33:4, 6]. The word of the Lord in verse 4 is praised for being righteous (εὐθύς), and all the Lord’s works faithful. There is a close association in the psalm between the Lord’s word and creation as its work. In verse 6, the poem states that the heavens were established τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου, and the host by the breath of his mouth. The notable description in 32:9, that the Lord spoke and they came to be, (αὐτὸς εἶπεν, καὶ ἐγενήθησαν), echoes the language of the Genesis 1 account. Divine agency at work in creation by the words of the Lord is the theme of Sirach 42:15 as well: ἐν λόγοις κυρίου τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. The topos ‘word of the Lord’ is used in an ἐν phrase in

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<sup>103</sup> See Ezekiel 2:2; 3:12, 14, 24; 8:3; 11:1, 5, 24; 37:1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10; 43:5.

both occurrences in Sirach.<sup>104</sup> The second occurrence of the phrase is in Sirach 48:3 is a description of Elijah shutting the heavens in a word of the Lord: ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου ἀνέσχευ οὐρανόν.<sup>105</sup> These verses all emphasize the divine agency at work through a word of the Lord, sovereign over creation. Three of the verses describe the Lord's creative agency in the word, with poetry that attributes divine agency in the word itself.

Several other examples from the Psalms praise the agency of God's word as well. In Psalm 147:4 and 7 God's word sent to the earth runs swiftly to control creation [MT 147:15, 18].<sup>106</sup> The Lord's word that moves with an independent agency in verses 147:4 and 7 is the same word that

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<sup>104</sup> In the later Greek recension of Sirach (GKII), an added proverb in Sirach 1:5 poetically identifies wisdom's source (lit. 'spring') as the word of God in the highest: πηγὴ σοφίας λόγος θεοῦ ἐν ὑψίστοις.

<sup>105</sup> Two verses later, in Sirach 48:5, the poet describes Elijah raising the dead ἐν λόγῳ ὑψίστου. The use of ὁ ὑψιστος is a reference to the Lord (cf. ἐν νόμῳ ὑψίστου, Sir. 9:15, 23:23). In Sirach 47:5 David is reported to have called on κύριος ὁ ὑψιστος. Sirach 48:5 is instructive to an understanding of the divine authority in which Paul teaches concerning the resurrection of the dead in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 (in a word of the Lord).

<sup>106</sup> In Psalm 147:4 λόγος (for דְּבַר, MT Ps. 147:15) is used alongside τὸ λόγιον ( MT אִמְרָה). The majority of times that the MT employs אִמְרָה its equivalent in the LXX is τὸ λογίον, which, when used to represent divine speech, appears most often in the Wisdom literature and in the plural form ('oracles of the Lord'): Psalms 11:7 [MT 12:7]; 17:31 [MT 18:31]; 104:19 [MT 105:19]; 106:11 [MT 107:11, אִמְרָה]; 118:11, 25, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76, 82, 103, 116, 123, 133, 140, 148, 158, 162, 169, 170, 172 [MT 119:11, 25, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76, 82, 116, 123, 133, 140, 148, 158, 162, 169, 170, 172]; 137:2 [MT ]; 147:4 [MT ]; Wisdom 16:11). See also Numbers 24:4, 24:16; Deuteronomy 33:9; Isaiah 5:24; 28:13; 30:27(2x). Two verses in Psalm 118, 118:25 and 118:169, employ τὸ λογίον for דְּבַר [MT 119:25, 169]. This is unusual. The occurrences of λόγος in Psalm 147:7, 8 are also דְּבַר in MT 147:18,19. In four occurrences אִמְרָה is represented in the LXX with λόγος, once with ῥῆμα. Two are occurrences of 'word of God / Lord': Proverbs 30:5 (λόγοι θεοῦ) and 2 Samuel 22:31 (τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου). 2 Samuel 22:31 has τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου for the MT אִמְרָת יְהוָה. Both verses contain an almost identical description of divine speech tested in the fire. In Isaiah 28:23 and 32:9 the divine summons to 'hear my speech' (וְשִׁמְעוּ אִמְרָתִי) is found in the LXX as ἀκούετε τοὺς λόγους μου. In Lamentations 2:17 the LXX employs ῥήματα in the claim that the Lord has completed his sayings. Paul's reference to the τὰ λόγια κυρίου in Romans 3:2 is not gospel vocabulary. The phrase broadly refers to Moses and the prophets. So also James Dunn, *Romans: 9-16*, WBC 38b (Dallas: Word, 1988), p. 131.



has been announced to Israel in the Law (ἀπαγγέλλω, v. 8).<sup>107</sup> The Lord's sovereign rule in creation is effective in the word that he commands – a word of command entrusted to Israel as stewards of the oracles of God (cf. Rom. 3:2). In Psalm 106:20, those who were sick as a result of their sin were saved by the Lord out of their affliction (θλίβω, 106:19); he sent his word (ἀποστέλλω), healing and delivering them (ῥύομαι). The Lord's word is also described in deadly language. In Wisdom 18:15 the Lord's all powerful word is described leaping from heaven to kill the first born in Egypt. Metaphors of an active word of God communicate that the Lord, who created the heavens and the earth and remains sovereign over them, continues to actively engage and rule the earth and its inhabitants.

These attributions of divine agency to the word of the Lord, effective in a manner independent of human or angelic intermediaries, are only found in poetic speech, and especially in the language of worship in the Psalms. In Paul's letters, the metaphorical nature of the language in the Psalms does not diminish its credibility as a Scriptural witness to the manner in which God's word goes out into creation (see Ps. 18:5 in Rom. 10:18). Paul's metaphorical description of the word of the Lord running in 2 Thessalonians 3:1 uses identical language to Psalm 147:4. However, in Paul's letters these descriptions of the gospel as a divine word with its own agency occur in context alongside discussions of the human agency involved in announcing a word from the Lord (cf. Rom. 10:14-15, 18; 2 Th. 3:1-2). Likewise in the LXX, descriptions of the word of the Lord acting with an apparently independent agency are recorded, without any sense of irony or contradiction in the Scriptures, in reference to events in which the word of the Lord is narrated as having been entrusted to and worked through created agents – sometimes angels, most often human

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<sup>107</sup> 'The divine word ... functions independently of a messenger and is itself a kind of messenger and agent.' Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150 (Revised)*, WBC 21 (Dallas: Word Books, 2002), p. 387.

messengers.<sup>108</sup> Many of the most vivid descriptions of an active word of the Lord describe the Lord's power at work through human agents. In Psalm 105:9 the Lord's control over the waters of the Red Sea is a direct rebuke (ἐπιτιμῶ), while in the narrative from Exodus this powerful work was enacted by means of the rod that Yahweh ordered Moses to lift over the sea (Ex. 14:16, cf. Is. 63:12). The prophets of Israel are the implied messengers sent with words of healing in Psalm 106:20 [MT 107:20].<sup>109</sup> The word of the Lord described in active terms as fire and an axe in Jeremiah (Jer. 23:29, cf. 5:14) is spoken from the mouth of the prophet (5:14; cf. 1:9-10). There is no sense of conflict in the LXX between the independent agency of the Lord working through the word, and that word entrusted to the agency of created things.

The use of the topos 'word of the Lord' in Israel's poetry praises God's effective communication, through which the Lord created the heavens and the earth and continues to order and command the creation. In the prophetic tradition, the Lord, the God of Israel, closely and personally binds the divine agency working through the word with the human agency of messengers to whom it has been entrusted in order to be enacted and announced.<sup>110</sup> It is not the word or message itself that contains agency or power. As reviewed above, rather than working in a disembodied speech act, the Spirit of the Lord is the divine agent at work in and through the human agency of God's prophets. While the word of the Lord is praised as the means by which a sovereign

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<sup>108</sup> Angelic messengers from the Lord are a feature in Judges. See Judges 6:20; 13:6, 13:9, 13:11 (ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ); 2:1, 2:4; 4:8; 5:23; 6:11, 6:12, 6:14, 6:16, 6:21 (2x), 6:22; 13:3, 13:13, 13:15, 13:16 (2x), 13:17, 13:18, 13:20, 13:21 (2x) (ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου).

<sup>109</sup> Leslie Allen identifies Psalm 106 [MT 107] as a hymn of thanksgiving for the returning exiles, connecting the word of healing in these verses to Isaiah 40:1-2 and the assurance of forgiveness in Yahweh's 'liberating and healing word of prophecy.' Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, p. 90.

<sup>110</sup> Klaus Koch observes that in the OT prophetic tradition, 'no tension is felt between the announcement of a *divine* act and its implementation by means of a purely *human* one.' Klaus Koch, *The Prophets: The Assyrian Period*, trans. by Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress press, 1982), p. 31 (emphasis original).

God orders the creation he has made, the Spirit of the Lord is also active in and alongside human agents. To speak, therefore, of an ‘active’ word of the Lord is to say that the Lord remains actively engaged with creation, encountering the people that he has created by means of his word. At the heart of the OT prophetic tradition is the divine-human encounter in this word of the Lord. The next section reviews the use of the topos λόγος κυρίου in the Law, Histories and Prophets.

### *λόγος / ῥῆμα κυρίου in the Law, Histories and Prophets*

In the books of the Law, the use of ῥῆμα is primary in the phrase ‘word of the Lord’, which occurs 17 of 18 times as ῥῆμα κυρίου, and once as ‘words of God’. Every occurrence is communicated directly to, or by means of, one of three prophetic figures: Abraham, Moses and Balaam.<sup>111</sup> In the books of the Law, the phrases ‘word of the Lord / God’ are primarily definite, a pattern that reflects the use of the phrase in these narratives for specific communications. In Genesis, the message is the promise of direct descendants to Abraham (Gen. 15:1-6). The two occurrences in the Balaam cycle are divine oracles that bless the children of Israel (Num. 22:18, 24:13). All of the occurrences of the phrase ῥῆμα κυρίου in the Moses narratives apply to commands or instructions from the Lord through Moses: the instructions to shelter cattle from the plague of hail (Ex. 9:20, 21); instructions from the Lord to Moses directing the journey (Ex. 17:1; Num. 33:2); Moses’ recollection of the Theophany at Horeb (Deut. 5:5); instructions for the sealing of the covenant (Ex. 24:4); instructions at Kibroth-hattaavah to gather the 70 elders (Num. 11:24);

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<sup>111</sup> In this list of the 19 occurrences of the phrases ‘word of God / word of the Lord’, every reference without clarification is an occurrence of τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου: **Abraham**: Genesis 15:1 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι); **Moses**: Exodus 4:28 (οἱ λόγοι κυρίου); 9:20, 9:21; 17:1 (anarthrous, with διά); 24:3 (pl., τοῦ θεοῦ), 24:4 (pl.); Numbers 11:24 (pl.); 14:41; 15:31; 31:16; 33:2 (anarthrous, with διά); Deuteronomy 1:26 (τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν), 1:43; 5:5 (pl.); 9:23 (τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν); 34:5 (anarthrous, with διά); **Balaam**: Numbers 22:18 (τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ); 24:13.

commands concerning the conquest of Canaan (Num. 14:41; 15:31; 31:36; Deut. 1:26; 1:43; 9:23); and the death of Moses (Deut. 34:5).<sup>112</sup>

As the prophetic tradition develops during the monarchy, the phrase ‘word of the Lord’ occurs more often as a general designation.<sup>113</sup> In the Histories the phrases ῥῆμα κυρίου and λόγος κυρίου occur with almost equal frequency.<sup>114</sup> The phrase ῥῆμα κυρίου occurs 42 times. The phrase λόγος κυρίου is employed 41 times. There is no discernible difference between λόγος and ῥῆμα

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<sup>112</sup> The three anarthrous occurrences of the phrase occur in prepositional phrases in reference to the movements of the people (διὰ ῥήματος κυρίου, Ex. 17:1, Num. 33:2) and the death of Moses (διὰ ῥήματος κυρίου, Dt. 34:5). The MT text in all three cases reads ‘by the mouth of the Lord’: **עַל־פִּי יְהוָה**. Other occurrences of this phrase in the MT are translated διὰ φωνῆς κυρίου (see Num. 3:16, 3:39, 3:51).

<sup>113</sup> Whether the phrase applies to a specific message from the Lord, or as a general designation of divine speech, is only determined by context. See, for example, the use of ὁ λόγος κυρίου as a general designation of divine speech in Amos’ prediction of a famine of the word of the Lord (Am. 8:12), or Jeremiah’s description of the wise men having rejected ὁ λόγος κυρίου.

<sup>114</sup> **1 Samuel:** ὁ λόγος κυρίου [1x]: 15:24 // τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου [6x]: 3:1 (anarthrous, with vision ὄρασις); 3:7; 8:10; 9:27 (anarthrous, with ἀκούω); 15:10 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι); 15:26; **2 Samuel:** ὁ λόγος κυρίου [2x]: 12:9; 24:11 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι) // τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου [2x]: 7:4 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι); 22:31. **1 Kings :** ὁ λόγος κυρίου [13x]: 12:22 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι), 12:24 (3x, 1 anarthrous with γίνομαι); 13:20 (anarthrous with γίνομαι); 16:1 (anarthrous with γίνομαι),\* 6 times in the phrase ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου – 13:1, 13:2, 13:5, 13:32; 21:35; 2 times as ἐν λόγῳ κύριος λέγων – 13:9, 13:17 // τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου [20x]: 2:27; 12:24 (4x, 1 anarthrous with γίνομαι); 13:21, 13:26; 15:29; 16:12, 16:34; 17:2 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι), 17:5, 17:8 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι), 17:16, 17:24 (anarthrous, Elijah); 18:1 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι); 19:9 (anarthrous, πρὸς Elijah); 20:28 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι); 22:19 (anarthrous, with ἀκούω); 22:38. **2 Kings:** ὁ λόγος κυρίου [7x]: 7:1 (anarthrous, with ἀκούω); 9:36; 15:12; 19:21; 20:16 (anarthrous, with ἀκούω); 20:19; 24:2 // τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου [11x]: 1:17; 3:12 (anarthrous, Elisha); 4:44; 7:16; 9:26; 10:10, 10:17; 14:25; 20:4 (anarthrous with γίνομαι); 23:16; 24:13; **1 Chronicles:** ὁ λόγος κυρίου [6x]: 10:13; 11:3; 11:10; 12:24; 17:3 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι); 22:8 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι). **2 Chronicles:** ὁ λόγος κυρίου [9x]: 11:2 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι), 11:4; 12:7 (anarthrous, with γίνομαι); 18:18 (anarthrous with ἀκούω); 30:12; 34:21 (pl.); 35:6; 36:5; 36:21 (anarthrous, with πληρόω) // τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου [1x]: 36:22 (anarthrous, with πληρόω) (cf. Jer. 25:12); **1 Esdras:** ὁ λόγος κυρίου [1x]: 1:22 (pl.) // τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου [3x]: 1:54 (τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ κυρίου ἐν στόματι Ἰερεμίου); 2:1 (τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου ἐν στόματι Ἰερεμίου); 8:69; **2 Esdras:** ὁ λόγος κυρίου [1x]: 1:1 (anarthrous, with τέλεω, Jeremiah’s prophecy).

in these occurrences.<sup>115</sup> As in the books of the Law, the use of the phrase is connected to prophetic figures in the tradition of the prophetic office that emerges alongside the monarchy. Some of the most well-known prophets in the narratives are Samuel, (identified as a ‘seer’),<sup>116</sup> Nathan and Elijah. There are, however, many prophetic figures, identified as such because they speak the word of the Lord to king and people.<sup>117</sup>

In the Prophets, λόγος occurs almost exclusively in the phrase ‘word of the Lord’. In the Twelve Prophets the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου occurs 33 times.<sup>118</sup> All but three of these occurrences are anarthrous.<sup>119</sup> There are no occurrences of ῥῆμα as divine speech in the Twelve

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<sup>115</sup> For example, compare the description of the Lord revealing the Davidic covenant to Nathan: καὶ ἐγένετο ῥῆμα κυρίου πρὸς Ναθαν, (2 Sam. 7:4); καὶ ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς Ναθαν, (1 Chron. 17:3). See also the report of the fulfillment of the word of the Lord to Jeremiah concerning the return from exile after 70 years (2 Chron. 36:21, λόγος κυρίου and 36:22, ῥῆμα κυρίου, each with πληρώω). Finally, compare 1 Samuel 15:24 of Saul’s transgression (παραβαίνω) of ὁ λόγος κυρίου. The same verb occurs with τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου in Numbers 14:41; 24:13 and Deuteronomy 1:43. All four occurrences concern transgression of a particular directive sent by the Lord through a prophet.

<sup>116</sup> Samuel’s identification as a seer (הַאֵלֵר, cf. 1 Sam. 9:18; Sir. 46:15), is explained in 1 Samuel 9:9 as an early name for a prophet (נְבִיאָה).

<sup>117</sup> This ‘messenger formula’ is distinct from a herald’s message. Koch, *The Prophets: Assyrian Period*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>118</sup> All but 3 occurrences are anarthrous (Amos 5:1; 8:12 and Zechariah 4:6). λόγος κυρίου in the Twelve Prophets: **Hosea** 1:1 (γίνομαι), 1:2; 4:1 (ἀκούω); **Amos** 1:1 (γίνομαι); 5:1 (ἀκούω); 7:16 (ἀκούω); 8:11 (ἀκούω), 8:12; **Micah** 1:1 (γίνομαι); 4:2 (ἐξέρχομαι); 6:1 (ἀκούω); **Joel** 1:1 (γίνομαι); **Jonah** 1:1 (γίνομαι); 3:1 (γίνομαι); **Zephaniah** 1:1 (γίνομαι), 2:5; **Haggai** 1:1 (γίνομαι), 1:3 (γίνομαι); 2:10 (γίνομαι); 2:20 (γίνομαι); **Zechariah** 1:1 (γίνομαι), 1:7 (γίνομαι); 4:6, 4:8 (γίνομαι); 6:9 (γίνομαι); 7:1 (γίνομαι), 7:4 (γίνομαι), 7:8 (γίνομαι); 8:1 (γίνομαι), 8:18 (γίνομαι); 9:1; 11:11; 12:1; **Malachi** 1:1.

<sup>119</sup> Amos 5:1; 8:12; Zechariah 4:6.

Prophets. In Isaiah, both λόγος and ῥῆμα occur as divine speech.<sup>120</sup> The phrase λόγος κυρίου occurs seven times in 17 instances of λόγος as divine speech, with no particular difference in pattern between Isaiah 1-39 and 40-66.<sup>121</sup> In Isaiah 1-39 the use of ῥῆμα as divine speech primarily occurs in specific oracles against the nations: (Is. 14:28; 15:1; 16:13; 17:1);<sup>122</sup> and the word to Hezekiah (Is. 38:7). Of the six occurrences of ῥῆμα as divine speech in Isaiah 40-66, one is τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ in 40:8, and another is τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου in Is. 66:5 (referred to in the same sentence as ‘his word’, ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ). References to the enduring and effective nature of the word of God serve as bookends to Deutero-Isaiah (Is. 40:8-9 and 55:11, unmodified). The book of Jeremiah is distinctly focused on the word of the Lord. Of the 168 occurrences of λόγος in this book, 147 are

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<sup>120</sup> In Isaiah, 25 of the 30 total occurrences of either λόγος or ῥῆμα as divine speech are definite. In this list, the use of ῥῆμα is indicated in brackets, and those occurrences that are modified with θεοῦ / κυρίου are indicated in bold: **2:1**; 11:4; 14:28 (τὸ ῥῆμα); 15:1(τὸ ῥῆμα); 16:13 (τὸ ῥῆμα); 17:1 (τὸ ῥῆμα); 30:12; 31:2; 32:9; 37:22; 38:7 (τὸ ῥῆμα); **39:5, 39:8; 40:8** (τὸ ῥῆμα); 41:26; 42:16 (τὸ ῥῆμα); 44:26 (ῥήματα); 45:23; 51:16; 55:11 (τὸ ῥῆμα); 59:21 (τὰ ῥήματα); 66:2, 66:5, **66:5** (τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου). It is not always the case that a definite occurrence is a particular message, however, nor that an anarthrous occurrence is a general category. See, for example, Isaiah 66:5, in which τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου refers to the word of the Lord without reference in the context to a particular message. At many times throughout the book an anarthrous occurrence is followed by the content of the word of the Lord revealed or proclaimed.

<sup>121</sup> The phrases ‘word of the Lord / word of God’ occur 9 times in Isaiah. There are 7 occurrences of ὁ λόγος κυρίου in Isaiah: 1:10 (anarthrous, with ἀκούω); 2:1 (ὁ λόγος ὁ γινόμενος παρὰ κυρίου); 2:3 (anarthrous, with ἐξέρχομαι); 28:14 (anarthrous, ἀκούω); 38:4 (anarthrous, γίνομαι); 39:5, 39:8; 1 occurrence of τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ in Is. 40:8; and one of τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου in 66:5.

<sup>122</sup> In Isaiah 14:28, 15:1 and 17:1 ῥῆμα occurs for נִשְׁבַּע. There are five verses in the Twelve Prophets in which the LXX has λῆμμα for נִשְׁבַּע. (Nah. 1:1; Hab. 1:1; Zech. 9:1; 12:1; Mal. 1:1). In Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and Malachi 1:1 both the LXX and MT modify ‘burden’ with ‘word of the Lord’: λῆμμα λόγου κυρίου. In Isaiah 16:13 (the oracle against Moab) ῥῆμα aligns with רַבֵּךְ.

divine communication. 63 occurrences are in the phrase word of the Lord,<sup>123</sup> and two word of God.<sup>124</sup> The word ῥῆμα occurs 11 times, seven of which signify divine speech. One of the seven occurrences of ῥῆμα for divine speech is in the phrase word of God (τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ with γίνομαι, Jer. 1:1), and another in the phrase word of the Lord (τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου with γίνομαι, Jer. 6:10).<sup>125</sup> Finally, in the book of Ezekiel there are 73 λόγος occurrences,<sup>126</sup> 68 of which are divine speech, and of these 60 are λόγος κυρίου.<sup>127</sup> Two of the three occurrences of ῥῆμα in Ezekiel are references to prophetic divine speech, neither of which use the phrase ‘word of the Lord’.<sup>128</sup> There is a clear trajectory toward the fixed usage of the phrase λόγος κυρίου as a topos for prophetic

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<sup>123</sup> The anarthrous λόγος κυρίου occurs 46 times in Jeremiah. 23 of these 46 occurrences are paired with γίνομαι, and 17 of 46 are with the verb ἀκούω (also 9:20, below, ‘word of God’): 1:4 (γίνομαι), 1:11 (γίνομαι), 1:13 (γίνομαι); 2:4\_ (ἀκούω), 2:31\_ (ἀκούω); 5:13; 7:2\_ (ἀκούω); 9:20 (ἀκούσατε λόγον θεοῦ); 10:1\_ (ἀκούω); 11:1 (γίνομαι); 13:3 (γίνομαι), 13:8 (γίνομαι); 14:1 (γίνομαι); 17:20 (ἀκούω); 18:5 (γίνομαι); 19:3\_ (ἀκούω); 20:8 (γίνομαι); 21:11\_ (ἀκούω); 22:2 (ἀκούω), 22:29\_ (ἀκούω); 23:17; 24:4 (γίνομαι); 27:1; 34:15; 35:7\_ (ἀκούω), 35:12 (γίνομαι); 36:30 (γίνομαι); 38:10\_ (ἀκούω); 39:6 (γίνομαι), 39:8, 39:26 (γίνομαι); 40:1 (γίνομαι); 41:4\_ (ἀκούω), 41:12 (γίνομαι); 42:12 (γίνομαι); 43:1 (γίνομαι), 43:11, 43:27 (γίνομαι); 44:6 (γίνομαι); 45:20 (ἀκούω), 45:27\_ (ἀκούω); 46:15 (γίνομαι); 49:7 (γίνομαι), 49:15\_ (ἀκούω); 50:8 (γίνομαι); 51:24 (ἀκούω), 51:26\_ (ἀκούω). In 3 verses the form ὁ λόγος κυρίου occurs: 8:9; 13:2; 17:15. The prepositional construction λόγος παρὰ κυρίου occurs 10 times, 9 of which are paired with γίνομαι: 18:1; 21:1; 33:1; 37:1; 39:1; 41:1, 41:8; 42:1; 44:17 (εἰμί); 47:1. Finally, 4 occurrences of the phrase are (οἱ) λόγοι κυρίου, one of which is anarthrous: 43:4, 43:8 (anarthrous); 44:2; 50:1.

<sup>124</sup> The two occurrences of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ are both anarthrous (Jer. 1:2 and 9:20).

<sup>125</sup> In Jeremiah 5:14, the Lord answers the ῥῆμα that the people spoke against his prophets with a declaration that he has made his λόγος in Jeremiah’s mouth fire that will devour the people. In the MT, both the word of the people and the word of the Lord occur as רַבְרַב־. In Jeremiah 6:10 the MT also reads הַרְבֵּה־רַבְרַב־.

<sup>126</sup> Two of the five occurrences that do not represent divine speech refer to the words of false prophets (Ez. 13:6, 8).

<sup>127</sup> λόγος κυρίου in Ezekiel is primarily anarthrous with γίνομαι [50x]: 1:2; 3:16; 6:1; 7:1; 11:14; 12:1,12:8, 12:17, 12:21, 12:26; 13:1; 14:2, 14:12; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1, 17:11; 18:1; 20:2, 20:45; 21:1, 21:8, 21:18; 22:1, 22:17; 22:23; 23:1; 24:1, 24:15, 24:20; 25:1; 26:1; 27:1; 28:1, 28:11, 28:20; 29:1, 29:17; 30:1, 30:20; 31:1; 32:1, 32:17; 33:1, 33:23; 34:1; 35:1; 36:16; 37:15; 38:1. The phrase is anarthrous with ἀκούω in 6:3; 13:2; 16:35; 20:47; 25:3; 34:7; 36:1, 36:4; 37:4. In one verse the phrase occurs with λαλέω as οἱ λόγοι κυρίου, 11:25.

<sup>128</sup> In Ezekiel, ῥῆμα occurs twice of the prophetic words that the people will ignore (Ez. 33:31, 32) and once of matters rising in the hearts (Ez. 38:10).

divine communication, as evident in the pattern of occurrences in the Twelve Prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

### *The Early Prophetic Tradition: Encounter and Response*

The first use of ‘word of the Lord’ in the OT combines an anarthrous occurrence of ῥῆμα κυρίου with the verb γίνομαι. In Genesis 15:1, a ῥῆμα κυρίου encounters Abraham in a vision.<sup>129</sup> The narrative context is a reaffirmation of covenant with Abraham in two scenes: the promise of descendants (15:1-6) and the promise of land.<sup>130</sup> Genesis 15:1 is the only time in the five books of the Law that γίνομαι occurs to describe the communication of the word of the Lord to a prophetic figure.<sup>131</sup> In this narrative, the message for Abraham is both from the Lord (genitive of origin) and concerns that which the Lord will do for Abraham in the future (genitive of content). Abraham’s response to the word of the Lord that promises direct descendants is faith, credited to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). The apostle Paul’s use of Genesis 15:6 in Galatians 3:6 is a direct quote,

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<sup>129</sup> The phrase φωνὴ θεοῦ is used in the LXX in Genesis 15:4 where the MT repeats *davar Yahweh*. In this later verse there is a greater emphasis on the immediate, visual nature in the communication between Abraham and the Lord. In 15:4, the Lord’s response to Abraham’s complaint, that he remains childless, begins with the demonstrative הַהֵנָּה, frequently occurring in visual descriptions and visions, rather than the verb הִיָּה, the latter of which is most often present in the MT for the LXX γίνομαι. See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC 1 (Dallas : Word Books, 1987), p. 324. The immediacy of the ‘behold’ is communicated in the Greek by means of the adverb εὐθύς with γίνομαι.

<sup>130</sup> Abraham’s covenant renewal: ἐγενήθη ῥῆμα κυρίου πρὸς Ἀβραάμ ἐν ὄραματι (MT: הִיָּה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם בְּמַחְזָה). Concerning the vision in Genesis 15:1, Gordon Wenham notes that, “‘Vision,’ מַחְזָה, is rare in Hebrew and used only of Balaam (Num 24:4, 16) and contemporaries of Ezekiel (13:7). Second- and third-millennium Akkadian texts show that visions were a recognized and very ancient mode of revelation.’ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. 327.

<sup>131</sup> Abraham is called a prophet in Genesis 20:7. The use of the formula here identifies Abraham with the OT prophetic tradition.



arguing that all who believe are the descendants of Abraham (Gal. 3:7).<sup>132</sup> Abraham's faith in the word of the Lord that encounters him in Genesis 15:1 stands, in the words of Richard Longenecker, 'as the prototype of human response to God and his activity on behalf of humanity.'<sup>133</sup> The response of faith to an encounter with God in a word of the Lord is an important narrative to remember in the discussion of 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 later in this study.<sup>134</sup>

In Genesis 15:1, the use of the phrase 'word of the Lord' with γίνομαι is the first occurrence of a combination that occurs frequently in the later prophetic tradition. Every time that this combination occurs, the use of γίνομαι with 'word of the Lord' describes a divine encounter between the Lord and a prophet, central to which is the word of the Lord.<sup>135</sup> Often, but not always, the description of the encounter involves visionary experiences.<sup>136</sup> Israel's God is a God who speaks, so that the word of the Lord is given pride of place, even in revelations that involve visionary

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<sup>132</sup> The promise to Abraham in Galatians 3:8, 'that all the Gentiles shall be blessed in you' (cf. Gen. 22:8, ὑπακούω as participation in the promise of God), is characterized as the Scriptures preaching the gospel beforehand to Abraham (προεσαγγελίζομαι).

<sup>133</sup> Richard Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), p. 113.

<sup>134</sup> Wenham notes that, 'he believed ... occurs quite rarely in a positive context in the OT: much more often the texts speak of people not believing in God, ... faith is presupposed everywhere as the correct response of man to God's revelation.' Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. 329.

<sup>135</sup> In the Histories there are 17 verses in which the verb γίνομαι combines with the phrase 'word of the Lord'. The prophetic figures encountered by a word of the Lord are Samuel (1 Sam. 15:10); Nathan (2 Sam. 7:4 / 1 Chron. 17:3); Gad (2 Sam. 24:11); Samaia (1 Kgs. 12:22, 12:24 [2x] / 2 Chron. 11:2; 12:7); the prophet from Bethel (1 Kgs. 13:20); Ju (1 Kgs. 16:1); Eliou [Elijah] (1 Kgs. 17:2, 17:8; 18:1; 20:28); Esaias [Isaiah] (2 Kgs. 20:4); and David (1 Chron. 22:8). In 1 Chronicles 22:8, David recounts the divine prohibition against building the temple without referring to Nathan (cf. 2 Sam. 7:4; 1 Chron. 17:3). The 20 occurrences of the prophetic call formula in the Twelve Prophets are primarily found in the opening verses. See Hosea 1:1; Amos 1:1; Micah 1:1; Joel 1:1; Jonah 1:1; Zephaniah 1:1; Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 1:1. In Isaiah, the combination only occurs twice (Is. 2:1 and 38:4, see also 14:28 γίνομαι with τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο). The two prophetic books dominated by this combination are Jeremiah (23 occurrences) and Ezekiel (50 occurrences). The verb occurs most often with an anarthrous form of λόγος / ῥῆμα, but not always.

<sup>136</sup> The related Hebrew word יָדַע, which is more common in the prophetic tradition, is also translated with ὄρασις: 1 Samuel 3:1; 2 Chronicles 9:29; Hosea 12:10, Habakkuk 2:2-3; Zechariah 13:4. Isaiah 1:1 begins ὄρασις ἣν εἶδεν Ησαίας. The call formula in Obadiah 1:1 is ὄρασις Ἀβδίου, and Nahum 1:1 identifies the writing as βιβλίον ὄρασεως Ναουμ.

experiences (cf. Jer. 1:4-12).<sup>137</sup> The combination of γίνομαι with ‘word of the Lord’ indicates the objective reality of a divine revelation, as an event that comes to a prophet from outside of themselves.<sup>138</sup> It is a combination that communicates the arrival of the word of the Lord using the language of events. In Genesis 15:1 the initial use of γίνομαι refers to the ‘things’ having taken place in chapter 14 (the rescue of Lot), followed by a second occurrence of the verb in the divine encounter between the Lord and Abraham – identified as an occurrence of the word of the Lord in a vision. Isaiah’s call narrative is described as a vision in Isaiah 6:1, a verse in which the verb γίνομαι has two objects: the year in which the vision occurred and the vision itself. What is at times referred to as this ‘event like quality’ of the word of God is more accurately an encounter between two subjects: the Lord and the prophet. This meeting, this divine-human encounter, is described as a word of the Lord occurring (γίνομαι) to a prophet. These observations are important to the consideration of 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 later in this study, a passage in which the gospel is described as a word of the Lord. The phrase occurs in a narrative that employs the verb γίνομαι and the divine agency of the Spirit to describe the divine-human encounter that results in the Gentiles in Thessalonica placing their faith in the living God, and included among the beloved and elect – that is, included among the innumerable descendants promised to Abraham in the word of the Lord in Genesis 15:1.

Where the word of the Lord to Abraham was a visionary encounter with an individual, the words given to Moses are entrusted for announcement to God’s people. All but three of the

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<sup>137</sup> Gerhard von Rad notes that, ‘in the fairly large number of visions which occur in the Old Testament there is no instance where a vision is not immediately followed by an audition and where it does not culminate in God’s addressing the prophet.’ Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel’s Prophetic Traditions*, trans. by D. M. G. Stalker, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), II, p. 59.

<sup>138</sup> Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 59.

occurrences of ‘word of the Lord’ in the books of the Law are found in the stories of Moses.<sup>139</sup> As is the case with every occurrence in the books of the Law, ‘word of the Lord’ applies to a direct divine speech act from the Lord to a prophet. While λόγος and ῥῆμα occur frequently and interchangeably in the narratives about the Lord’s covenant with the children of Israel and the giving of the Law,<sup>140</sup> the phrase ‘word of the Lord’ applied to the Law only occurs once, in Deuteronomy 5:5. The phrase in a plural construction, (τὰ ῥήματα κυρίου), occurring in Moses’ description of his role as intermediary at Horeb, emphasizes the immediacy of divine communication received from the mouth of a prophet. In Deuteronomy 5:1-5, Moses’ words addressing the second generation in the wilderness place them at the establishment of the covenant at Horeb (Deut. 5:2-3), affirming in verse 5:4 that the Lord spoke with them face-to-face, then immediately qualifying that Moses stood between the Lord and you ‘to report to you the words of the Lord’ (ἀναγγέλλω, cf. Ex. 4:28). This is the only time that the phrase ‘word of the Lord’ occurs in reference to the Law. The plural occurrence and narrative context emphasize two things: first, the Lord as the source of the Decalogue (Deut. 5:6-21); and second, that a divine communication retains its authority and immediacy in the transmission from prophet to people,

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<sup>139</sup> There are two occurrences in the Balak / Balaam cycle, each translating ‘the mouth of the Lord’: Numbers 22:18 (τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ for the mouth of the Lord God, פֶּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי); 24:13 (פֶּה יְהוָה). The ‘mouth of the Lord’ is a designation in this story cycle of the Lord’s will. Martin Noth, *Numbers* (London, SCM Press Ltd., 1968, p. 177. Philip Budd suggests concern on the part of the Yahwist’s adaption of the story to emphasize, ‘that it is *Yahweh* who controls events, and that Balaam is aware of this and sensitive to the divine word.’ Phillip J. Budd, *Numbers*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word books, 1984), p. 263. Balaam’s prophetic ministry is fundamentally distinct from Moses. Balaam is described as one to whom oracles are revealed in visions (Num. 24:4.). By contrast, Moses is described as one with whom God speaks mouth to mouth rather than in dreams as other prophets (Num. 12:6b-8a).

<sup>140</sup> See Exodus 34:27-28 for the alternating use of λόγος and ῥῆμα in the account of the Lord giving the Law to Moses. The MT employs דְּבַר־יְיָ throughout.

whether in person or in writing (cf. Deut. 5:22), enduring across generations.<sup>141</sup> Throughout the narratives to follow in the books of the Law, receiving or rejecting the words of the Lord spoken through Moses is the same as receiving or rejecting words directly from the Lord.

The word of the Lord retains its authority and efficacy in transmission from the original emissary to others that receive and announce it as well. The narrative in Exodus 4 is another example of the efficacy of the word from the Lord in the mouth of the prophet. While Moses' prophetic ministry is primarily associated with the Law, there is one occurrence of the word of the Lord announcing deliverance to God's people. The only use of *λόγος κυρίου* in the books of the Law is a plural construction in Exodus 4:28, when Moses reports to Aaron (*ἀναγγέλλω*) all of the words of the Lord that he had sent, and all the signs which he had commanded: *πάντας τοὺς λόγους κυρίου, οὓς ἀπέστειλεν, καὶ πάντα τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐντείλατο αὐτῷ*. The first time in the story of God's people that a prophet is sent with a message of deliverance, that message is reported, (in the language of the *ἀγγέλλω* word family) with accompanying signs. The words of the Lord reported by Moses retain their divine authority and efficacy in the transmission to Aaron (Ex. 4:10-16). When Moses and Aaron gather the people in Exodus 4:30-31, Aaron speaks (*λαλέω*) all the words that God spoke to Moses (*λαλέω* with *τὰ ῥήματα*), and performs the signs, and the people believe (*πιστεύω*) and rejoice (*χαίρω*) because God has seen the affliction (*θλίψις*) of the

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<sup>141</sup> The fact that the Decalogue is only referred to as a 'word of the Lord' in Deuteronomy is significant. Where the Exodus narrative emphasizes the directness of the encounter with the Lord at Horeb, Deuteronomy 5:5ff emphasizes Moses as a mediator. Von Rad describes this as a theological rather than historical report, crafted by the Deuteronomistic preachers to legitimize the divine authority for mediatorial proclamation. Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, trans. by Dorothea Barton (London: SCM Press LTD, 1966), p. 60.

children of Israel.<sup>142</sup> Similar to Abraham's response of faith to the promise of descendants in Genesis 15:1, the children of Israel respond to the message of deliverance with faith and joy, recognizing in the combination of words and signs that God has visited them in their affliction.<sup>143</sup> As in Genesis 15:1-6, this is the nature of a word of the Lord as a message that both originates from the Lord, and declares that which the Lord will do to rescue his people from slavery. In Exodus 4, divine agency at the announcement of a word of the Lord is visible in the signs that accompany, and verify, the words given to Moses and communicated by Aaron, so that the children of Israel will believe that he is a messenger from God (Ex. 4:2-9). Their response, however, is not veneration of Moses or Aaron, but belief that leads to worship of the Lord.<sup>144</sup>

Both Abraham and Moses, the progenitors of the OT prophetic tradition, are encountered by a word of the Lord originating from the God of Israel, and announcing a future dependent on divine agency: for Abraham, the promise of descendants and Moses, the intervention for deliverance. In Moses, a servant with whom the Lord spoke face to face, one sees the dynamic that is central to prophetic speech: that when the people hear the words from the mouth of the prophet, they receive a direct divine address. The divine agency concurrent to the word of the Lord in the stories of Moses is witnessed in sign and mighty acts that accompany the message and testify both to its source, and to its efficacy to perform that which it promises. These dynamics remain consistent in the prophetic tradition that arose with Israel's monarchy.

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<sup>142</sup> The vocabulary from these verses in Exodus, (emphasized in brackets), is also found in the narrative of the gospel's arrival in 1 Thessalonians, as the believers anticipate the deliverance of the Lord with joy and faith. The verb ῥύομαι, applied four places to the Lord's deliverance of the descendents of Abraham from the bondage in Egypt (Ex. 5:23; 6:6; 12:27; 14:30), is used to describe Jesus in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 (ὁ ῥύομαι).

<sup>143</sup> John Durham identifies these verses with a 'proof of presence' motif introduced in Exodus 3:19-20. John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1987), p. 59.

<sup>144</sup> Durham, *Exodus*, p. 60.

At the heart of the OT prophetic tradition is the human agency of prophets. The prophets are on the receiving end of a direct divine encounter with the Lord, primarily described in a combination of γίνομαι and ‘word of the Lord’, but also as visions and revelation. Through their words God’s people hear directly from the Lord.<sup>145</sup> The earliest prophets, Samuel and Nathan, are directly associated with the monarchy.<sup>146</sup> Before the division of the kingdom and the decline into idolatry, however, there are relatively few prophetic communications to which the Histories refer as a ‘word of the Lord’. In 1 Samuel, all of the references to a word of the Lord are connected to Samuel, and most concern the monarchy.<sup>147</sup> Nathan receives two communications referred to as a word of the Lord: the rebuke of David (2 Sam. 12:9), and the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:17). As the kingdom divides, with kings and the people of Israel continually led astray to idolatry, the ministry of the prophets extends beyond direct divine instruction to the king, as it was with Samuel and Nathan, to announcing the Lord’s word to the people to return to fidelity in worship and obedience to the Lord. Within this context, the revelatory nature of prophetic speech announces judgement for Israel’s transgression of the covenant, and in the later literary prophets, anticipated salvation for the exiled and enslaved people of God. Three characteristics of the word of the Lord extend

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<sup>145</sup> Note in 1 Samuel 15:24 that in the LXX, Saul reports that he has transgressed the word of the Lord and Samuel’s word. In the Hebrew, the statement is expressed, ‘the mouth of YHWH and your words’, (פִּי־יְהוָה וְאֶת־דְּבָרָיִךְ). Words spoken by a prophet proceed directly from the mouth of the Lord. Rejecting the prophetic word of the Lord is rejecting a message given from the very mouth of God.

<sup>146</sup> Claus Westermann asserts that prophecy belongs to a definite time period, beginning with the formation of the state and ending with the loss of the statehood of Israel. He notes that, ‘The revelation of God *before* the prophetic era is characterized by directness’, citing God’s speech to Abraham and Moses. Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, trans. by Hugh Clayton White (London: Lutterworth Press, 1967), pp. 98-99. Our concern is not limited to the prophetic office per se, but with the broad scope of use of the phrase ‘word of the Lord’ in the LXX.

<sup>147</sup> See 1 Samuel 3:1, 3:7; 8:10; 9:27; 15:10; 15:25; 15:26.

through the historical and literary prophetic tradition: that the word of the Lord is revelatory, effective and enduring.

The word of the Lord given through the prophets is revelatory, meaning that the Lord reveals his sovereign intentions for Israel to the prophets. The word of the Lord both originates from God and announces that which God will do. The story of Samuel's boyhood call explains Samuel's confusion by noting that this happened before the word of the Lord had been revealed to him (ἀποκαλύπτω with ῥῆμα κυρίου, 1 Sam. 3:7). The Lord's revelation to Samuel that Saul would be king is described as uncovering the ear of the prophet: κύριος ἀπεκάλυψεν τὸ ὠτίον Σαμουηλ, 1 Sam. 9:15.<sup>148</sup> The prophet Amos also asserts that the Lord does nothing without revealing (ἀποκαλύπτω) his intentions to his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7). As discussed above, the word of the Lord is often revealed in a vision. The story in 1 Kings 22 of Michaias the prophet summoned by Ahab, the king of Israel, provides a narrative context for these dynamics. Surrounded by prophets of peace, the king of Israel summons Michaias who states that what the Lord says he will speak (1 Kgs. 22:14). The message from the Lord is initially reported as a vision (ὄραω, 22:17). When challenged, Michaias counters that he hears the word of the Lord (ἀκούω, 22:19), followed immediately by 'I saw ...' and a description of the counsel of the Lord – the court of heaven. The counsel of Yahweh is the narrative setting that presents the word of the Lord as a divine communication entrusted from the Lord as its source, and revealing to the prophet that which the sovereign God has purposed on earth. Michaias' 'reward' for having received and spoken the word of the Lord is to be imprisoned and fed with the bread and water of affliction (θλιψις, 2x in 22:27). The story concludes with a report of the circumstances of Ahab's death in battle, an event

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<sup>148</sup> The language of vision and revelation applies to Nathan as well. In 1 Chronicles 17:15 Nathan speaks to David κατὰ πάντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν ὄρασιν ταύτην.

that occurred according to the word of the Lord as revealed to Michaias (22:38). The word revealed to the prophet from the Lord, and announced to king and people, uncovers the Lord's sovereign intention in future events. It is also an effective and enduring word, engaging the king of Israel and certain to be fulfilled.

Two features of this story are important to the word of the Lord as a revelatory announcement that originates from God. First, the true prophet of the Lord is sent from the Lord's presence with an effective word. Second, in the interim between the reception and announcement of the word of the Lord, and its fulfilment, the prophet receiving a divine communication is often identified by suffering. These dynamics are both in force in the book of Jeremiah. Several passages in Jeremiah are concerned with false prophets (Jer. 6:27; 11:20; 12:3; 23:9-40).<sup>149</sup> Jeremiah 23:18 repeats the language in the Michaias narrative in his questions concerning the false prophets, asking, 'Who has stood in the counsel of the Lord and seen his word?'<sup>150</sup> Who has listened and heard?' In Jeremiah 23:21 the Lord describes false prophets running though they have not been sent (ἀποστέλλω), prophesying even though God did not speak to them.<sup>151</sup> True prophets not only receive a divine word, but they also bear that word in the world in suffering (Jer. 12:3; 15:16). The

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<sup>149</sup> In Jeremiah, 7 of the 21 occurrences of λόγος for human speech refer to prophetic speech by false prophets.

<sup>150</sup> 'Jeremiah himself makes it clear in 23:16-18 that in contrast to the visions of the human imagination which the false prophets recount, he stood in the heavenly council (*sod*), and heard (*shamah*) the word (*debar*). This *debar* in Jer. 23:18 is virtually a synonym for the *qol*/ voice which summons the other prophets within the heavenly council (Ez 1:28, Is 40:3, 6, 6:4, 8). If this is true, then the opening line of Jeremiah's call may be the summons of Yahweh from the heavenly council in which Yahweh Himself is present to address the prophet (1:7,9) ... Above all, however, Jeremiah is confronted by the word. This reality of the word as an overwhelming force of God's self-revelation is attested throughout the book.' Norm Habel, 'The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives', *ZAW* 77 (1965), 297-423, (p. 307).

<sup>151</sup> The prophet Micah, like Jeremiah, confronts the prophets that lead the Lord's people astray (πλανάω Jer. 23:32; Micah 3:5). In contrast to the prophets of false peace, preaching for personal gain, Micah's prophetic announcement is empowered by the Lord's Spirit (Micah 3:5-8).



anticipatory embodiment of the word of the Lord in the life of the prophet Jeremiah becomes, in the OT tradition, a sign that Jeremiah's prophecy is from the Lord.<sup>152</sup> The dynamics of true and false prophets, and the suffering of the prophet, are characteristics evident in 1 Thessalonians of those who receive and bear the gospel as a divine communication.

Once the message is revealed from the Lord to a prophet, and announced by that prophet to the people, the word of the Lord is described as both effective and enduring. A word from the Lord both announces (reveals) that which the Lord will do, and is able to perform that which it proclaims.<sup>153</sup> This is the effective word of the Lord. The Lord rules all things at his command, and the word of the Lord in the mouth of a prophet rules all things – this is the authority of the word of the God. It is an effective authority because the word of the Lord is the effective means by which the Lord orders creation. So Elijah may, in a word of the Lord, close up the heavens (Sirach 48:3).<sup>154</sup> The word of the Lord is not only the effective means through which the Lord governs creation, but also an enduring word. That is, a word spoken by the Lord will remain, endure, and be fulfilled in events. The fulfilment of the words revealed to Samuel is expressed metaphorically, that not one of the Lord's words fell to the ground (1 Sam. 3:19). The verb that occurs here, πίπτω, is used again generations later in reference to Elijah's prophetic ministry as well. Jehu declares that no part of the word of the Lord that the Lord spoke against Ahab would fall to the ground (2 Kgs. 10:10).

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<sup>152</sup> '[Jeremiah] submits the record of his own struggle as both a contrast to the easy lies spoken by the prophets of hope and an aid to the community's interpretation. Jeremiah offers the prophetic process itself as the validation of his message. His experience provides the hermeneutic clue by which his audience may read and test that message.' Ellen David Lewin, 'Arguing for Authority: A Rhetorical Study of Jeremiah 1:4-19 and 20:7-18', *JSOT* 32 (1985) 105-119, (p. 117).

<sup>153</sup> 'God stands not only with the prophet [Jer. 1:8] but behind the word to guarantee its performative power.' Lewin, 'Arguing for Authority', p. 109.

<sup>154</sup> There are two times that the phrase 'word of God' occurs in an ἐν phrase: ἐν λόγῳ τοῦ θεοῦ in 2 Samuel 16:23 (Ahitophel); ἐν λόγῳ θεοῦ in 1 Chronicles 15:15 (Moses' instructions for carrying the ark). In each of these occurrences the phrase communicates authority. Neither of these, however, is a reference to prophetic speech.

Jehu's words, declaring that the Lord had done what he said by the hand of his servant Elijah, are spoken as explanation for Jehu's deeds. The word spoken by a prophet will be fulfilled, that is, embodied and enacted in the history of Israel. At times this is expressed as the Lord confirming (ἀνίστημι) the spoken word. For example, in 1 Kings 8:20, Solomon declares that the Lord has confirmed the words that he spoke, referring to the word of the Lord from Nathan to David that Solomon would sit on the throne and build a house to the name of the Lord God of Israel (cf. 2 Sam. 7:4).<sup>155</sup> There is a certainty that the words the Lord speaks through the prophets will occur. Notice that in 1 Kings 8:20 and 2 Kings 10:10, the persons announcing the establishment of the word of God are the human agents that have enacted these words (Solomon and Jehu, respectively). When events unfold as predicted by a prophet this is often expressed by use of 'word of the Lord' in a κατά phrase. The events that unfold in 1 Kings 15:29, for example, begin with the familiar phrase καὶ ἐγένετο that introduces the narration of historical events, and ends the narration of these events with κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου ὃ ἐλάλησεν ἐν χειρὶ δούλου αὐτοῦ Αχια τοῦ Σηλωνίτου. This repetition of the phrase 'according to the word of the Lord which he spoke' occurs throughout the Histories, and exemplifies the theological conviction that the word of the Lord not only commands all of creation, but is also sovereign over human affairs.<sup>156</sup> The word of the Lord is effective, that is, the means through which the Lord engages human affairs. It is also enduring, so that, having been revealed and announced, it will be enacted in the events in Israel's story.

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<sup>155</sup> See also the use of ἴσθημι in 1 Kings 12:15 of the Lord confirming the word that he spoke by Ajjah (LXX Achia) concerning Jeroboam; 2 Esdras 19:8 of the Lord confirming his words to Abraham. In 1 Esdras 1:22 the words of the Lord are confirmed, that is, 'rose up' (ἀνίστημι) against Israel for their idolatry.

<sup>156</sup> See also 1 Kings 15:29; 16:12; 16:34; 17:16; 22:38; 2 Kings 1:17; 4:44; 7:16; 9:26; 14:25; 24:13. In 1 Kings 13:5, the rupture of the altar occurs according to the sign (τὸ τέρας) spoken by the man of Judah in a word of the Lord (ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, repeated in 1 Kgs. 13:1, 2, 5, 32; 21:35). See Paul's use of τέρας for the wonders that accompany his apostolic proclamation (Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12).

The prophetic writings in Deutero-Isaiah emphasize the effective and enduring nature of God's word. Commenting on the importance of the word of God in Deutero-Isaiah, Claus Westermann observed, "The two of them, the word of God which abides [Is. 40:8], and the word of God, which does not return to him void, but accomplishes the purpose for which he sends it [Is. 55:10-11], form the frame within which Deutero-Isaiah's proclamation is set and mounted."<sup>157</sup> There is the conviction that the Lord will do that which the Lord has spoken.<sup>158</sup> The performative power of the word is not inherent to the speech but to the speaker.<sup>159</sup> In Isaiah 44:24-28, it is the Lord who is watchful to perform the word; the Lord who declares in Isaiah 45:22-25 that, 'my words will not be frustrated, and in Isaiah 55:10-11 that the word will not turn back until it has accomplished its purpose (συντελέω). This is the dynamic interplay of divine sovereignty and agency, working by the word of a messenger, to establish that which God wills on the earth. The confidence in the word in Isaiah is a confidence in the God who speaks the word. The enduring character of the word of God is extension of the enduring nature of the eternal God (Is. 40:28), so that those who entrust themselves, in endurance, to this God will be renewed (Is. 40:31).

Yet in the midst of this confidence, the servant of the Lord anxiously states that he has laboured to no effect: ἐγὼ εἶπα κενῶς ἐκοπίασα, (Is. 49:4). The prophetic word may be accepted or rejected by those who hear. This is the tension in the prophetic tradition: a divine communication is effective and enduring, revealing the sovereign agency of the Lord; yet those who hear this word may reject it, and choose not to participate in its promise or its power. Paul's letter to the Thessalonians echoes this tension between the gospel as a word of God that will not fail to

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<sup>157</sup> Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, trans. by David M.G. Stalker (London, SCM Press: 1969), p. 43.

<sup>158</sup> In Isaiah, two occurrences of ῥῆμα combine ποιέω with ῥῆμα in an assurance from the Lord that the thing spoken will be done (Is. 38:7 and 42:16).

<sup>159</sup> Thiselton, 'The Supposed Power of Words', p. 291.

perform that which it proclaims, and the human capacity to reject the word of God, and therefore render fruitless the labour of a prophetic messenger.

In these verses from Isaiah, the servant lamenting over the apparent failure of the word among Israel, is given a new task among the Gentiles: 'therefore, I make you a light to the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth,' (Is. 49:6).<sup>160</sup> The extension of the scope of the word of the Lord to the nations is also testified to in Tobit 14:4-7. Tobit's expression of confidence in Nahum's prophetic words against Nineveh describes the Biblical prophets as those whom God sent (ἀποστέλλω), and affirms his belief that everything that God has spoken will be fulfilled (συντελέω, cf. Is. 55:11) and none of his words shall fail (διαπίπτω).<sup>161</sup> In both the longer and shorter Greek versions of Tobit 14:6-7 all nations abandon their idols and praise God.<sup>162</sup> Tobit anticipates that the nations will turn (ἐπιστρέφω) to the true God. This is also similar language to that of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, describing Gentile conversion to the living and true God as an embodiment of their faith in response to the gospel.<sup>163</sup> The revelatory announcement of the word of the Lord is the eschatological vision of the new age of the Lord's salvation to the nations. The word of the Lord as a topos for divine communication in Scriptural prophetic tradition is a category of divine speech that is a revelatory, effective and enduring word. All three of these features are characteristics that Paul assigns to the gospel in 1 Thessalonians.

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<sup>160</sup> Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, pp. 210-12.

<sup>161</sup> Bredin argues that the change in GI from Nahum to Jonah was intentional, 'because the theology of the book of Jonah reflected that of Tobit's, particularly its eschatological hope for all nations expressed concisely in 13.11 and 14.6'. Bredin, 'The Significance of Jonah', p. 51.

<sup>162</sup> In GII, Tobit 14:6 uses the words *πλανάω* and *πλάνησις* to describe the error of idolatry, a word family from which Paul draws in 1 Thessalonians 2:3.

<sup>163</sup> 'Tobit, like some other texts in the Old Testament, believes that Israel's election is intimately connected with its role as being a blessing and witness to all nations.' Bredin, 'The Significance of Jonah', p. 53.

#### 1.2.4 Summary – LXX and Pauline Usage

The word of the Lord / God in the LXX is a communication that originates from the Lord, the God of Israel. Use of the phrase communicates the authority of the message, and by association, that of the messenger. The divine agency at work through the word of the Lord at creation is praised in the poems of the Wisdom literature. The power of the word of the Lord, however, is not resident in the message but in the divine agency of the Lord at work through the word. This is often communicated as the Spirit of the Lord empowering the human agents to whom the word is entrusted for speech. To speak about the divine agency of the word of the Lord is actually to speak about a God who acts, by means of his word entrusted to a messenger, the prophet, who received this word through a direct divine encounter (γίνομαι). A word of the Lord / God is also an act of divine self-revelation to the prophet. In the literary prophets, the phrase λόγος κυρίου functions as a topos for prophetic divine communication. The word of the Lord reveals the effective and enduring purposes of the Lord, which in the later prophets, announces an eschatological vision of salvation that extends from Israel and Jerusalem to the nations. The εὐαγγελ– word family occurs within this prophetic tradition in anticipation of a future deliverance, enacted by the Lord on behalf of Israel. It is a particular message of the Lord’s salvation, announced by messengers of good news. The κηρυγ– word family also occurs within the prophetic tradition to signify the loud cry of a herald. In prophetic usage, the human agency of the herald announces divine intervention, either for judgment (Jonah and Ninevah) or deliverance (Psalms of Solomon, Isaiah 61). Paul’s use of divine communication reflects a similar distinction in terms. Returning attention to the use of these word families in Paul’s letters, section 1.3 identifies the pattern of occurrences.

### 1.3 Concentrated Language Clusters

The majority of Paul's gospel language is concentrated in particular texts in which several terms are clustered together. In total, there are 11 sections within Paul's letters that are characterized by extensive use of gospel terminology. For example, all of the gospel vocabulary in 1 Thessalonians occurs in the first three chapters of the letter – in a context of an extensive thanksgiving narrative. Furthermore, all but two of these occurrences are concentrated, that is, 'clustered' in the first two chapters – the story of the initial gospel mission in Thessalonica that ends with the expulsion of the missionaries in 2:16. The primary gospel vocabulary in six of these eleven clusters is εὐαγγελ– language. The κηρυγ– word family is the distinct gospel vocabulary in three clusters (1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5, 15:1-15 and Romans 10:5-21). The final two clusters with clear primary language, found in 1 Thessalonians 1:5-2:13 and the constellation of verses in 2 Corinthians 1-5, are predominantly λόγος vocabulary. These are also the only clusters that contain the phrases λόγος τοῦ κυρίου or λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. On the left side of Table 9, the distinction between λόγος and κηρυγ– clusters is indicated by the word family in bold (i.e. **λόγος** in 1 Thessalonians).

**Table 9**

κηρυγ- / λόγος predominant	εὐαγγελ- predominant
<p><b>1 Thessalonians 1:5-2:13</b>  <b>λόγος (7)</b>            εὐαγγέλιον (5)            κηρύσσω (1)</p> <p><b>1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5</b>  <b>κήρυγμα (2) – κηρύσσω (1)</b>            λόγος (2)            εὐαγγελίζομαι (1)</p> <p><b>1 Corinthians 15:1-15</b>  <b>κήρυγμα (1) – κηρύσσω (2)</b>            εὐαγγέλιον (1) – εὐαγγελίζομαι (2)            λόγος (1)</p> <p><b>2 Corinthians 1:18-19, 2:17, 4:2-5, 5:19</b>  <b>λόγος (4)</b>            εὐαγγέλιον (2)            κηρύσσω (2)</p> <p><b>Romans 10:5-21</b>  <b>κηρύσσω (2)</b>            εὐαγγέλιον (1) – εὐαγγελίζομαι (1)            ῥῆμα (4, 2 within LXX quotations)</p>	<p><b>Galatians 1:6-2:14</b>            εὐαγγέλιον (7) – εὐαγγελίζομαι (7)            κηρύσσω (1)</p> <p><b>1 Corinthians 9:12-23</b>            εὐαγγέλιον (6) – εὐαγγελίζομαι (3)            κηρύσσω (1)</p> <p><b>2 Corinthians 10:14-16 and 11:4-7</b>            εὐαγγέλιον (3) – εὐαγγελίζομαι (2)            κηρύσσω (2)</p> <p><b>Philippians 1:3-30</b>            εὐαγγέλιον (6)            κηρύσσω (1)            λόγος (1)</p> <p><b>Romans 1:1-16</b>            εὐαγγέλιον (3) – εὐαγγελίζομαι (1)</p> <p><b>Romans 15:14-21</b>            εὐαγγέλιον (2) – εὐαγγελίζομαι (1)</p>

Among the gospel language clusters presented in Table 5, three letters emerge as exemplary texts with which to begin the contextual analysis of the primary gospel word groups. These are Galatians for the εὐαγγελ– word family, 1 Corinthians for the κηρυγ– word family and 1 Thessalonians for λόγος vocabulary. The context of each of these letters not only employs the identified word groups as primary gospel language, but also includes gospel presentations in which Paul discusses his apostolic ministry in terms of that word group. The distinctions observed in the contextual and exegetical observations of Paul’s use of εὐαγγελ–, κηρυγ– and λόγος language in each of these three letters are demonstrably consistent among his other writings. Since εὐαγγελ– vocabulary is Paul’s primary gospel vocabulary, we begin our discussion with the clusters in section 1.4.

#### **1.4 εὐαγγελ– Language in Context**

The six εὐαγγελ– language clusters include: the opening narratives in Galatians (Gal. 1:6-2:14); Paul’s *apologia* in 1 Corinthians 9 (1 Cor. 9:12-23); Paul’s defence of his initial visit to Corinth and the decision not to accept money (2 Cor. 10:14-16, 11:4-7); the opening reflections in Philippians (Phil. 1:3-30); and the introduction and conclusion of Romans (Ro. 1:1-16 and 15:14-21). All six of these passages are also comprised nearly exclusively of εὐαγγελ– vocabulary.



### 1.4.1 – Galatians

The letter to the Galatians is distinguished by a near exclusive use of εὐαγγελ– vocabulary in the epistle. Paul employs the noun εὐαγγέλιον seven times, and eight of the twenty total occurrences of the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι within Paul’s letters are found in Galatians. The greatest concentration of use is in the first chapter of this epistle. Additionally, Galatians 1:6-23 is the only opening chapter in Paul’s epistles that makes exclusive use of εὐαγγελ– language to represent the gospel message. Galatians 1:5-2:14 contains all of the occurrences of εὐαγγέλιον and six of the eight occurrences of εὐαγγελίζομαι in the letter. There are only two occurrences of εὐαγγελ– language after Galatians 2:14: the use of the verb προεὐαγγελίζομαι in Galatians 3:8 in reference to the gospel announced beforehand to Abraham,<sup>164</sup> and the use of εὐαγγελίζομαι in 4:13 concerning Paul’s initial evangelization in Galatia. Where other primary gospel language is concerned, the verb κηρύσσω is used once in Galatians 2:2 as gospel vocabulary, and a second time in Paul’s denial that he proclaims circumcision (Gal. 5:11).<sup>165</sup> Paul’s use of λόγος in 6:6 is included as a reference to the message of the gospel for reasons articulated below (1.5.3).<sup>166</sup> Table 10 illustrates the occurrences and pattern of the gospel language in Galatians.

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<sup>164</sup> ‘The gospel as ‘good news for the Gentiles’ was already in view when God promised his blessing to Abraham at the very beginning.’ Fee, *Galatians: Pentecostal Commentary* (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2007), p. 116.

<sup>165</sup> This is the only epistle in which περιτομήν is the object of κηρύσσω (Gal. 5:11).

<sup>166</sup> In Galatians 5:14 λόγος refers to the summary saying of the law.

**Table 10**

**Galatians**

- 1:6 μετατίθεσθε ... εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον  
1:7 μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
1:8 εὐαγγελίζεται [ὑμῖν] παρ' ὃ εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν  
1:9 εὐαγγελίζεται παρ' ὃ παρελάβετε  
1:11 τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ  
1:16 ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν (υἱὸν αὐτοῦ)  
1:23 εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν  
2:2 ἀνεθέμην αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν  
2:5 διαμείνη πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου  
2:7 πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας  
2:14 οὐκ ὀρθοδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου  
  
3:8 προευηγγέλισατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ  
4:13 εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον  
5:11 εἰ περιτομὴν ἔτι κηρύσσω  
6:6 ὁ κατηχούμενος τὸν λόγον

Paul expresses shock at the believers' desertion for another εὐαγγέλιον, only to immediately deny the existence of any such announcement (Gal. 1:6-7).<sup>167</sup> Paul identifies the message initially evangelized among the Galatians as the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:7).<sup>168</sup> The

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<sup>167</sup> Schütz correctly identifies Paul's use of εὐαγγελ— language in these verses as functional, that is, concerned with the powerful announcement of the gospel in Galatia rather than a conflict concerning the content of that gospel. Schütz, *Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, pp. 118-20.

<sup>168</sup> The genitive relationship in this verse designates content, with Christ as the person spoken of in the announcement. See also Ronald Y. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), pp. 45-6. See also Martyn's comment, 'The Gospel of Christ and Its Counterfeit' in J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ABS 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), pp. 127-134.

gospel of Christ is the message through which the Galatians heard God's call (καλέω, 1:6), with the verses to follow making it clear that to abandon that message as the starting point of their faith is to turn away from God, the one calling them.<sup>169</sup> Paul employs εὐαγγελίζομαι three times in the declaration of an anathema on any announcement of good news other than that initially announced in Galatia (1:8-9). The exclusive use of the verb to defend against the reception (παραλαμβάνω, 1:9) of another gospel demonstrates that the functional emphasis to Paul's use of εὐαγγελ— language in this passage is on its *nature* as an *announcement* rather than on its *content* as a *message*.<sup>170</sup> Paul's emphasis on the announcement of the message moves immediately into an assertion of its source.<sup>171</sup> In a verse in which Paul pairs εὐαγγέλιον and εὐαγγελίζομαι for the first of only three times in his letters, the apostle denies human origin for the message of good news that he initially announced (1:11).<sup>172</sup> Paul supports this assertion with an apostolic self-presentation patterned after the call narratives in Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>173</sup> By identifying God as the agent behind the revelation of the risen Jesus to Paul, the apostle asserts the divine origin of his

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<sup>169</sup> 'Implicitly, then, the gospel is God's act of calling in the gift of Christ [...]. The gospel is not simply a good report of one sort of another but the *specific action* of God in Jesus Christ to rescue humanity.' Beverly Gaventa, in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel and Ethics in Paul's Letter*, ed. by Mark W. Elliott, Scott J. Hafemann, N.T. Wright, and John Frederick (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2014), pp. 187-99, (p. 188), (emphasis original).

<sup>170</sup> 'Strictly speaking, God's gospel is not an it; the gospel is the good event that God is causing to happen now.' Martyn, *Galatians*, p. 131.

<sup>171</sup> 'Paul establishes a link between the gospel he preaches and his apostleship. Both have their origin with God, neither can be accounted for by a human commission.' Matera, *Galatians*, SacPag 9 (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 55.

<sup>172</sup> The two other combined uses of noun and verb are found in 1 Cor. 15:1 and 2 Cor. 11:7.

<sup>173</sup> Moisés Silva, 'Galatians', in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. by G. K. Beal and D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2007) , pp. 785-812 (pp. 786-87).

announcement with a narrative of the divine origin of his call (1:16).<sup>174</sup> Paul's apostolic activity, captured in the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι, is undertaken as one commissioned to announce the good news of Christ to the nations.<sup>175</sup> The final use of εὐαγγελίζομαι in the opening cluster occurs in reports that having formerly persecuted the church, Paul is now evangelizing the faith (1:23). The final two occurrences of εὐαγγελίζομαι in the epistle each concern initial announcements: of Scripture to Abraham (3:8) and that of Paul to the Galatians (4:13).<sup>176</sup>

The Jerusalem and Antioch narratives in chapter two of Galatians narrate Paul's efforts to remove obstacles to the eschatological effectiveness of his apostolic labours among the Gentiles. Paul states that he presented the gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) in Jerusalem in order to ensure that his

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<sup>174</sup> Matera reads ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Gal. 1:12 as an objective genitive: 'Paul received a revelation from God, the content and object of which was Jesus Christ.' Matera, *Galatians*, p. 56. This is *contra* Fee's assertion of a genitive of source: 'Paul's apostleship had come directly from the risen Lord, the Lord whom God the Father had raised from the dead.' Fee, *Galatians*, p. 15.

<sup>175</sup> Our concern in this passage is not with the relationship of Paul's description to the Damascus road experience, or with the debates over the content of the gospel as revelation vs. tradition. Where the function of εὐαγγελίζομαι is concerned, Paul's call narrative clearly connects the activity represented in the verb to his divine commission. Paul's use of the verb in the present tense after a series of aorist verbs in the passage 'lays stress on Paul's continued preaching of Christ [...] among the Gentiles, as based on God's ordination, call and revelation.' Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 32.

<sup>176</sup> J. Louis Martyn writes concerning Gal. 3:8 that 'the promise spoken to Abraham by scripture (in God's behalf) was the word of this same God, indeed the gospel of Christ.' Martyn, *Galatians*, p. 301.

proclamation (κηρύσσω) among the nations was not in vain (κενός, 2:2).<sup>177</sup> The only other use of κηρύσσω in Galatians occurs in the denial that Paul continues to proclaim circumcision – a proclamation that would, according to the argument in the epistle, be vain, that is to say, useless toward the goal of salvation (5:11).<sup>178</sup> In the conflict narratives that follow Paul presents himself as the defender of the truth of the gospel (ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, 2:5, 2:14).<sup>179</sup> Paul narrates recognition on the part of the Jerusalem leadership that his gospel to the uncircumcised

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<sup>177</sup> For Paul's use of κενός language see C. Bjerkelund, "Vergeblich' als Missionsergebnis bei Paulus' in *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl*, eds. Jacob Jervell and Wayne Meeks (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), pp. 175-191. Bjerkelund emphasizes that κενός refers to the preaching activity among the Gentiles, not the content of Paul's gospel. Ibid., pp. 186-88. Compare τρέχω in 2 Th. 3:1 and Gal. 2:2 for Paul's forward progress with the message among the nations. Barrett argues for an eschatological understanding of the identification of the so-called 'pillars' in Jerusalem as the 'indispensable connecting links between the historical Jesus and the community of the New Age.' C. K. Barrett, 'Paul and the "Pillar" Apostles' in *Studia Paulina in Honorem Johannis De Zwaan Septuagenarii*, ed. by J. N. Sevenster and W.C. Van Unnik (Haarlem: Bohn, 1953), pp. 1-19 (p. 18). A break with Jerusalem would, in this sense, undermine the eschatological effectiveness of Paul's preaching among the Gentiles.

<sup>178</sup> Paul employs the synonym εἰκῆ in Galatians 3:4 and 4:11.

<sup>179</sup> Longenecker reads a genitive of content in these phrases. Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 52. Martyn emphasizes the care that Paul takes in construction of the phrase, so that 'the truth of the gospel is [...] the end-time event of God's redemption in Jesus Christ.' Martyn, *Galatians*, p. 198. Schütz emphasizes the phrase as indicative of authority. The actions of apostles are intended to illustrate the singular truth of the gospel. Schütz, *Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, pp. 158.

(εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ ἀκροβυστίας)<sup>180</sup> has been directly entrusted by God (πιστεύω, 2:7).<sup>181</sup> Paul correlates divine authority and God as the source of an entrusted communication.<sup>182</sup>

The context for Paul's gospel language usage in Galatians presents a situation in which the gospel in Galatia is endangered.<sup>183</sup> The verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is used repeatedly of the initial, foundational announcement of the gospel. Paul writes to defend this initial gospel announcement among the Gentiles from the influence of outside Teachers.<sup>184</sup> Within this context, Paul's usage asserts the particularity of the εὐαγγέλιον, denying any gospel other than that of Jesus. The εὐαγγέλιον as announcement is central to Paul's purposes. Paul's concern is the desertion of a direct, divine call through the gospel as initially announced and received in Galatia. The language used is not 'another Jesus' (such as will be seen in 2 Corinthians). This is 'another gospel'.

One distinction in the narratives in Galatians 1-2 is Paul's apostolic self-presentation that describes the revelation of Jesus Christ and Paul's divine commission to announce the good news of

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<sup>180</sup> Both of the phrases ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου and εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ ἀκροβυστίας are unique to Galatians.

<sup>181</sup> Having translated the phrase as 'the gospel as it is directed to those who are not circumcised' Martyn applies Paul's use of the objective genitive to Paul's entrusted mission to preach to the Gentiles: 'Paul in no way suggests that there are two gospels. There are, rather, two missions in which the one gospel is making its way into the whole of the cosmos.' Martyn, *Galatians*, p. 202.

<sup>182</sup> "It was this *divine authority* for his ministry and gospel, and its *acknowledgement* by the Jerusalem leadership that Paul regarded as of *first* importance. That is clearly the main point of his defence in Gal. 1-2." James D. G. Dunn, 'The Relationship Between Paul and Jerusalem According to Galatians 1 and 2', *NTS*, 28 (Oct. 1982), 461-478 (p. 471), (emphasis original). Paul employs the passive form of πιστεύω in reference to the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ to Christ's apostles in 1 Thessalonians 2:4; Paul's commission (οἰκονομία) in 1 Cor. 9:17; and the oracles of God (τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ) to the Jews in Ro. 3:2.

<sup>183</sup> 'We can easily imagine the depth of Paul's consternation and anger on the day when – extremely busy in the early part of his work in Macedonia and Achaia – he looked up to see the sad faces of his Galatian catechetical instructors, as they arrived with bad news.' Martyn, *Galatians*, p. 19. This context is the exact opposite of the good news report from Timothy to which Paul replies with his letter to the Thessalonians (1 Th. 3:6).

<sup>184</sup> Fung, *Epistle to the Galatians*, pp. 43f.

Jesus to the Gentiles.<sup>185</sup> Paul's self-presentation is so striking that it can be tricky to keep the narrative of his own call and commission distinct from his gospel language use where the Galatian believers are concerned, (a strategy that may be intentional on the part of the apostle). Paul demonstrates the divine origin of the message by presenting the divine origin of his own call and commission to announce the good news of God's Son (εὐαγγελίζομαι with ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ, 1:16). Paul's use of OT prophetic echoes in his call narrative is repeated in other self-presentations as well.<sup>186</sup> The exclusive provenance of the εὐαγγέλιον announced by Paul is its origin from God (1:11). Despite his claim of divine rather than human origin of his gospel, in Galatians Paul does not use any vocabulary that typically identifies a message as a divine communication. There is no use of εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ or λόγος τοῦ κυρίου. The phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ in Gal. 1:7 is a reference to the risen son of God, Jesus Christ, as the content of Paul's message (cf. Gal. 1:16). Where the nature and function of the εὐαγγέλιον is concerned, therefore, Paul's call narrative presents his message as he does his own call: as a direct revelatory encounter with the risen Son of God, Jesus Christ.

A final observation emerges from the stories in Galatians two, narrating the confrontations in Jerusalem and Antioch. A distinction from Paul's use of other gospel terms is Paul's use of κηρύσσω to represent his proclamatory activities among the Gentiles. Paul's explicit concern in Jerusalem was that his proclamation among the nations not prove ineffective (κενός), a concern

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<sup>185</sup> For the choice of self-presentation rather than apology, see Beverly Gaventa, 'Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography as Paradigm', *Novum Testamentum*, 28/4 (1986), 309-326; Schütz, *Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, pp. 114-58.

<sup>186</sup> It is widely accepted that the language in Galatians 1:15 reflects that of OT call narratives, particularly Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah. Bruce, *Galatians*, p. 92. See also Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, pp. 26-27.

that in Pauline usage is eschatological in scope.<sup>187</sup> The letter to the Galatians explicitly associates κενός language and Paul's particular commission among the Gentiles in Galatians 2:7. The combination with κηρύσσω suggests that it is Paul's human agency as a herald of the gospel, rather than the content of his gospel message, that may be rendered ineffective if the meeting in Jerusalem were to go the wrong way. The two applications of the phrase 'truth of the gospel' apply to encounters with human agents, whose actions threatened to obscure or distort the gospel.

#### 1.4.2 - 1 Corinthians 9

While 1 Corinthians as a whole is notable for use of κηρύσσω and κήρυγμα, this passage is distinguished by the near exclusive use of εὐαγγελ— language. 1 Corinthians 9 employs εὐαγγέλιον six times (9:12, 14 [2x], 18 [2x], and 23) and εὐαγγελίζομαι on three occasions (9:16 [2x], 18). The verbs κηρύσσω and καταγγέλλω each occur once. This cluster of terms occurs in the middle of 1 Corinthians. The arrangement of words is entirely composed of εὐαγγελ— with two exceptions. The verb καταγγέλλω occurs with εὐαγγέλιον in 9:14. The aorist participle form of κηρύσσω closes the cluster.

The occurrences and pattern of verbs used for the announcement of the gospel are the interesting features in this cluster. In the course of the *apologia*, when Paul shifts from a mutual to individual defence, his language for announcing the gospel also shifts. The verb καταγγέλλω (9:14) is in the first person plural, but the use of εὐαγγελίζομαι (9:16, 18) only applies to Paul. In table 11 Paul's claim in 1 Corinthians 4 is included as a reference point.

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<sup>187</sup> See Judith Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1990), pp. 263-66.



**Table 11**

**1 Corinthians 9:12-23**

- 4:15 ... διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα
- 9:12 μή τινα ἐγκοπὴν δώμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
- 9:14 τοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καταγγέλλουσιν ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ζῆν
- 9:16 εὐαγγελίζωμαι ... οὐαὶ γάρ μοί ἐστιν ἐὰν μὴ εὐαγγελίσωμαι
- 9:18 εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον θήσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ... ἐξουσία μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ
- 9:23 πάντα δὲ ποιῶ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
- 9:27 μή πως ἄλλοις κηρύξας αὐτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι

The *apologia* in 1 Corinthians 9 was written by Paul to Corinth during Paul's active missionary journeys, following a long relationship with the congregation he had founded. Having asserted his patronage in the gospel (4:15), Paul defends his financial practices at the initial preaching in Corinth as exemplary of apostolic freedom. The first reference to Paul's rights in the gospel includes other apostles, (9:12).<sup>188</sup> This is supported by the statement that those who announce the gospel (καταγγέλλω with εὐαγγέλιον, 9:14) may also derive their living from the gospel.<sup>189</sup> At the point in the defence when Paul shifts into the first person singular his vocabulary changes from καταγγέλλω to εὐαγγελίζομαι. He asserts his compulsion to evangelize (εὐαγγελίζομαι, 9:16 [2x]), and to do so free of charge (εὐαγγελίζομαι with εὐαγγέλιον [2x], 9:18). The remainder of the defence focuses exclusively on Paul as a faithful gospel emissary. After

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<sup>188</sup> Fitzmyer identifies the first person plural either as a literary usage or inclusive of Barnabas. Joseph Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ABS, 32 (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 364. Thiselton reads the reference as the initial mission in Corinth. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 690.

<sup>189</sup> καταγγέλλω occurs twice more in 1 Corinthians 2:1 (the mysteries of God) and 11:26 (bread and cup announce Christ's death until he comes again).

describing his own stewardship of his apostolic freedom in 9:19-22, Paul asserts that the totality of his ministry is undertaken on account of the gospel (διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, 9:23).<sup>190</sup> The section concludes with the use of the verb κηρύσσω as Paul states his desire that after having proclaimed to others he not become unworthy (ἄδόκιμος, 9:27).<sup>191</sup>

The context clearly associates Paul's use of εὐαγγελ– vocabulary with his initial announcement in a place. There is a striking demarcation in this passage between Paul's use of εὐαγγελ– language for himself and καταγγέλλω for his co-workers. Note as well that Paul shifts to κηρύσσω at the point when his focus shifts to his human agency as a preacher (κηρυγ– terminology), conducted as a faithful steward of the divine commission to announce the gospel (εὐαγγελ– language). As in Galatians, Paul's self-presentation in 9:16 describing the compulsion to preach, the agony for him if he doesn't, and the language of boasting, all echo the confessions of Jeremiah.<sup>192</sup> There is no interaction with λόγος language, or indication of the entrusting of a divine word in the compulsion to evangelize. The *apologia* is focused on Paul's faithful human agency in the administration of his divine commission to evangelize.

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<sup>190</sup> Thiselton reads Paul's use of συγκοινωνός as standing in solidarity with others in the gospel. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, p. 707.

<sup>191</sup> Paul's intention in using ἄδόκιμος in this passage creates confusion among interpreters. Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, pp. 716-7.

<sup>192</sup> 'The 'Confessions' of Jeremiah [...] provide a type of material for assessing the prophet's character.'" Walther Zimmerli, 'The Fruit of the Tribulation of the Prophet', in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies*, ed. by Leo G. Perdue and Brian W. Kovacs (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1984), pp. 349-365 (p. 355). For 1 Corinthians as an echo of Jeremiah see Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, p. 695; Munck, *Salvation of Mankind*, pp. 20-23; Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets*, pp. 125-29.

### 1.4.3 - 2 Corinthians 10-13

There are two small clusters of gospel vocabulary in 2 Corinthians 10-13. In these verses, every occurrence of εὐαγγέλιον is qualified. The language in 10:14-16 is spatial, that is, referencing the territory in which Paul evangelizes. There are two uses of εὐαγγελίζομαι and three of εὐαγγέλιον in these verses. Paul employs κηρύσσω twice, and λόγος as a manner of human speech. Table 12 contains the language in these two clusters.

**Table 12**

#### **2 Corinthians 10:14-16 and 11:4-7**

10:14 ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ

10:16 εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι

11:4 ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν κηρύσσει ὃν οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν ... ἢ  
εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον ὃ οὐκ ἐδέξασθε

11:6 εἰ δὲ καὶ ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ

11:7 δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμεν ὑμῖν

In these two small clusters, as in 1 Corinthians 9, Paul's primary use of εὐαγγελ- vocabulary occurs in an apologetic context. The first of these brief clusters is a verse in which Paul combines the verb φθάνω with εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ to defend the reach of the initial visit to Corinth (2 Cor. 10:14). The apostle employs εὐαγγελίζομαι a few verses later in anticipation of future evangelistic activity beyond Corinth (10:16).<sup>193</sup> The second cluster of gospel language in 2 Corinthians 11 is a polemic targeted against accepting the proclamation (κηρύσσω) of another

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<sup>193</sup> See Harris for the range of interpretations of these verbs, in the context of an interpretation that Paul is accusing his rivals of encroaching on his domain. Harris, *Second Corinthians*, p. 717.

Jesus, or another gospel (εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον, 2 Cor. 11:4).<sup>194</sup> In this verse δέχομαι is combined with the noun εὐαγγέλιον.<sup>195</sup> Paul uses λόγος once in a clear indication of a manner of human speech, likely rhetoric (11:6). The last pair of gospel terms is in 11:7, where Paul combines εὐαγγέλιον and εὐαγγελίζομαι in one of three occurrences (11:7). In this instance the modifier τοῦ θεοῦ precedes εὐαγγέλιον, emphasizing the divine origin of the message of good news that Paul announced free of charge.<sup>196</sup>

As in previous occurrences, the use of εὐαγγελίζομαι in both clusters refers to an initial gospel announcement. The territorial sense of these verses is an interesting addition to previous observations from Galatians and 1 Corinthians 9, that Paul's use of the word family is associated with his foundational announcement in a place.<sup>197</sup> There is the indication that Paul conceives of his divine commission in a geographic sense, alongside the clear call to the nations as a people. The predominant use of εὐαγγελ- and κηρυγ- gospel vocabulary in 2 Corinthians 11 reflects the contextual concerns with Paul's apostolic authority relative to that of other so-called apostles. Paul's use of the phrase 'gospel of God' is unique for the placement of θεός prior to the noun, an order that emphasizes the genitive of origin. There is no indication of divine agency or power from

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<sup>194</sup> Galatians has made it clear that Paul regards 'other gospels' as no gospel at all. Bultmann correctly denies that the issue is that of content or dogma, asserting that the denial of Paul's apostolic authority 'already spells a falsification of the gospel.' Rudolf Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, trans. by Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), p. 203.

<sup>195</sup> The two occurrences in 1 Thessalonians are each with λόγος: 1:6 with λόγος and 2:13 with λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.

<sup>196</sup> Harris, *Second Corinthians*, p. 756.

<sup>197</sup> For a territorial sense in the translation of the word κανών see James F. Strange, 'Enigmatic Bible Passages: 2 Corinthians 10:13 – 16 Illuminated by a Recently Published Inscription.' *BibArch* 46 n.3 (Summer, 1983), 167 – 168. Based on inscriptions that delineate the *kanon* as the territorial limits of service within which officials of the empire could requisition aid for transportation, Strange concludes: 'Paul was evidently referring to his understanding of his calling as including a territorial commitment. ... In other words, Paul means his schedule of service (preaching the gospel) and his territory.' p. 168.

the modified phrase, however. Instead the phrase supports Paul's assertions of apostolic integrity. Consistent with the previous εὐαγγελ- clusters, Paul presents his apostolic ministry modelled after the prophet Jeremiah.

#### 1.4.4 - Philippians

The letter to the Philippians contains the highest number of occurrences of εὐαγγέλιον within the primary Pauline epistles. The noun occurs nine times, mostly in the first chapter (Phil. 1:5, 7, 12, 16, 27 [2x]; 2:22; 4:3, 15). There are two occurrences of λόγος as gospel language (1:14 and 2:16). The only nominal gospel vocabulary derives from the εὐαγγελ- and λόγος word families. Where gospel verbs are concerned, this is the only epistle in which the use of καταγγέλλω as gospel language is predominant. The verb καταγγέλλω occurs twice with Χριστός in 1:17 and 1:18. The verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is not used in Philippians, and κηρύσσω occurs once (1:15). Two other verbs occur with λόγος: λαλέω in 1:14 and ἐπέχω in 2:16.<sup>198</sup> None of the speaking verbs are associated with Paul as the acting subject announcing or speaking the gospel. Where the pattern of occurrences is concerned, six of the nine εὐαγγέλιον occurrences are located in chapter one. As evident in table 13, the initial cluster of gospel terms in chapter one is followed by four isolated gospel language occurrences in chapters two and four.

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<sup>198</sup> This is the only occurrence of ἐπέχω in the Pauline epistles. The verb is used with a similar sense of holding fast in 1 Timothy 4:16 in the command that Timothy pay close attention to both himself and his teaching (ἔπεχε σεαυτῷ καὶ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, 1 Tim. 4:16).

**Table 13**

**Philippians**

- 1:5 τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον  
1:7 ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου  
1:12 εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν  
1:14 τῶν ἀδελφῶν ... τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν  
1:15 τινὲς ... δι' εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν  
1:16 εἰς ἀπολογίαὶν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κείμαι  
1:17 οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν  
1:18 Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω  
1:27 ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε ...  
μιᾶ ψυχῇ συναθροῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου  
  
2:16 λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες  
2:22 ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον  
4:3 ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ συνήθλησαν  
4:15 ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

Philippians was written to congregations founded by Paul, and was sent when Paul's active evangelistic ministry was threatened by an imprisonment likely to end in death. There is a distinct emphasis on co-workers in the gospel, which, given Paul's imprisonment, is not surprising. In the opening section, the shared dedication to the gospel between Paul and the believers at Philippi is reflected in the language that Paul employs. In Philippians 1:5 Paul gives thanks for the Philippians' fellowship (κοινωνία) in the εὐαγγέλιον.<sup>199</sup> He refers in 1:7 to his own defence (ἀπολογία) and

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<sup>199</sup> Paul's use of κοινωνία with εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is clearly indicative of the financial support from the congregation, yet in the prayerful context of the opening, and Paul's discussion of the 'advance of the gospel', it likely includes all of the actions taken to work alongside Paul. See Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC, 43 (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1983), p. 19.

confirmation (βεβαίωσις) of the εὐαγγέλιον, a phrase that he partially repeats in 1:16.<sup>200</sup> In 1:12 Paul asserts that his imprisonment has served to advance (προκοπή) the εὐαγγέλιον. Paul offers three vehicles for this advancement. First, is the knowledge (φανερὸς) that his imprisonment is ἐν Χριστῷ (1:13). Second, it gives an infusion of confidence in the Lord (ἐν κυρίῳ) among those brothers who speak the word (λαλέω with λόγος, 1:14).<sup>201</sup> Third is the proclamation of Christ (κηρύσσω with Χριστός, 1:15) motivated by both loving and envious responses to Paul's situation (1:16-1:18, καταγγέλλω with Χριστός in 1:17 and 1:18).<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> 'Paul realizes that it is not only he who is on trial, but his ministry and the gospel for which he stands and whose servant he is.' Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, p. 64.

<sup>201</sup> The unqualified use of λόγος with λαλεῖν in Philippians 1:14 is the text found in  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$  D<sup>2</sup> K 630. 1505. 1739. 1881  $\mathfrak{M}$  r vg<sup>ms</sup> and Marcion<sup>T</sup>. However, the variant reading λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ occurs in many manuscripts, notably  $\aleph$  A B (D\*) P  $\Psi$  048<sup>vid</sup> 075 0278 33. 81. 104. 326. 365. 629. 1175. 1241. 2464 lat syr<sup>p.h.\*\*</sup> co; Cl. Additionally, F G and Cyprian contain λόγος τοῦ κυρίου. Given the occurrence of the unqualified form in  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ , considered alongside the higher likelihood of scribal expansion qualifying λόγος for the sake of clarity than that of scribes omitting the phrase τοῦ θεοῦ, the unqualified use of λόγος is the preferable reading. The presence of τοῦ κυρίου most likely represents a similar expansion, consistent to Paul's use of κύριος earlier in the verse, rather than a correction of the phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. Bruce Metzger's explanation for the shorter reading notes further that the placement of the modifier varies among witnesses. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/German Bible Society, 1994), pp. 544-545. See also Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, pg. 76; Gordon D. Fee, *Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), pg. 109, n.10. Contextually, Philippians 1:12 directly associates the advance of the εὐαγγέλιον with the knowledge that Paul's imprisonment is in Christ (1:13). Philippians 1:15-18 repeatedly identifies Christ as the subject of proclamation, suggesting that the unqualified use of λόγος is shorthand for Christ as the message of the gospel (1:15-18), and the one for whose sake Paul is imprisoned (1:13). The modifier τοῦ θεοῦ in the manuscripts noted above may have been included in order to clarify that the message proclaimed is Christ (1:15-18) rather than the matter of Paul's imprisonment for Christ (1:14). Later in the letter, the unqualified form of λόγος refers to financial gifts from the believers to Paul (Phil. 4:15 and 17). Paul employs an unqualified use of λόγος as general reference to the message of the gospel in 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6, Galatians 6:6, and 1 Corinthians 15:2.

<sup>202</sup> This lack of concern on Paul's part with negative motivations toward the apostle demonstrates that in other letters Paul defends himself and his apostleship *in order* to defend the gospel. Where Christ is being announced, the motivations do not matter. See the discussion in Fee, *Philippians*, pp. 120-24.

In Philippians 1:27 Paul turns his attention to the Philippian believers, exhorting them to organize their common life in a manner worthy of τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ, struggling together (συναθλέω) for the faith of the gospel (τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου).<sup>203</sup> The only other use of συναθλέω in Paul's letters occurs later in 4:3, referring to Euodia and Syntyche as those who have struggled alongside Paul in the εὐαγγέλιον. A second use of λόγος as shorthand for the gospel occurs in the admonishment to hold on to the λόγος ζωῆς in 2:16. In 2:22 Timothy is praised for his service (δουλεύω) with Paul in the εὐαγγέλιον. Finally, in 4:15, Paul employs the unusual phrase ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in his recollection of the Philippians' financial support that has continued since the beginning of his evangelistic ministry in Macedonia and Achaia.<sup>204</sup>

Paul's use of εὐαγγελ— language in Philippians is an excellent example of Margaret Mitchell's rhetorical category of gospel as 'superabbreviation'. Paul references the εὐαγγέλιον without an explanation either of its origin among the Philippians, or of its content. While Paul's imprisonment clearly advances the gospel, any active proclamation of the message is undertaken by others. Every gospel language occurrence subsequent to the report of the gospel's advance due to Paul's imprisonment is concerned with co-workers and participants with Paul in the εὐαγγέλιον. Philippians also contains the highest number of occurrences of εὐαγγέλιον without a single one of those occurrences in combination with a speaking verb. It is Christ who is announced (καταγγέλλω, 1:17, 18) and proclaimed (κηρύσσω, 1:15) and the word (λόγος) that is spoken (λαλέω, 1:14) – all by persons other than Paul.

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<sup>203</sup> Markus Bockmuehl reads the genitive construction in Phil. 1:27 as the faith whose content is the gospel. M. Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, p. 99. Reading this in comparison to Paul's combination of πίστις and εὐαγγελίζομαι in Galatians and 1 Thessalonians, however, demonstrates that in all three passages Paul more likely refers to the faith that arises from the gospel.

<sup>204</sup> A comparison to Philippians 1:5 sets the financial support of the Philippians in the context of their 'partnership in the gospel from the first day until now'. Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, p. 263.



Paul's confident assertion that the one who began a good work in the believers at Philippi will bring it to completion (1:6) is an implication of divine agency by means of the gospel among the believers. Otherwise, the primary use of εὐαγγελ— language concerns human agency relative to the message. This situation, of a well established congregation with whom Paul remains in excellent fellowship, results in reflections on the faithful embodiment of the gospel, that is, of Christ. Human agency participating in Christ to the day of the Lord is the substance of Paul's confidence in final commendation that he has not run or laboured in vain (Phil. 2:16). Each use of λόγος in the epistle represents the message of the gospel, without indication of divine origin or agency.

#### 1.4.5 - Romans 1 and 15

The situation of Romans is the inverse of the letter to the Philippians: Paul is free to travel in his evangelistic mission, yet writing to congregations that he has not established. The gospel language in Romans derives primarily from the εὐαγγελ- word family. The noun occurs eight times (Ro. 1:1, 9, 16; 2:16; 10:16 [LXX citation]; 11:28; 15:16, and 19) and the verb is used three times (Ro. 1:15, 10:15, and 15:20). Where secondary gospel language is concerned the verbs that one finds combined with εὐαγγέλιον in chapters 1 and 15 are entirely unique to this letter. Paul employs two verbs with cultic associations: λατρεύω in 1:9 and ἱερουργέω in 15:16. He also employs ἐπαισχύνομαι (1:15) and πληρόω (15:19). Only the verb ὑπακούω, combined with εὐαγγέλιον in Romans 10:16, has been used previously in Paul's letters (see 2 Th. 1:8). There is no κηρυγ— or λόγος vocabulary in chapters 1 and 15. Two of the three gospel language clusters in the letter employ εὐαγγελ— as primary gospel vocabulary. Notice the similarities between Romans 1 and 15 in table 14.

**Table 14**

**Romans 1:1-16 and 15 :14-21**

- 1:1 ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ  
1:9 λατρεύω [...] ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ  
1:15 ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι  
1:16 Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον  
  
15:16 ἱεουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ  
15:19 πεπληρωκέναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
15:20 φιλοτιμούμενον εὐαγγελίζεσθαι οὐχ ὅπου ὠνομάσθη Χριστός

In these opening and closing clusters Paul's concern is a self-introduction to the Roman congregations, and their participation in his mission to Spain.<sup>205</sup> Romans 1:1 contains the fifth occurrence of the phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>206</sup> The phrase is used alongside the verb ἀφορίζω, used previously in Galatians concerning God's choice of Paul from his mother's womb (cf. Gal. 1:15, echoing Isaiah and Jeremiah). Following the salutation, Paul's thanksgiving statement in 1:8 employs the verb καταγγέλλω in reference to the announcement of the faith (πίστις, cf. Gal. 1:23) of the Roman believers in the entire world. Paul follows this thanksgiving statement in 1:9 with a reference to his own apostolic service, combining the cultic verb λατρεύω with εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ. Finally, in 1:15, Paul anticipates extending his apostolic announcement of the gospel to Rome, following this with what is arguably his best known gospel statement in 1:16.

The use of εὐαγγελ- language in Romans 15 is nearly identical to that of the first chapter, including a similar emphasis on Paul's divine mandate as apostle to the Gentiles. This second cluster

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<sup>205</sup> 'Romans is not a "substitute for Paul's presence," but rather a prerequisite for his presence' announcing his visit and presenting mission theology to support the mission for Spain. Margaret Mitchell, 'New Testament Envoys in the Context of Greco-Roman Diplomatic and Epistolary Conventions: The Example of Timothy and Titus', *JBL*, 111/4 (1992) 641-662, (p. 643n6).

<sup>206</sup> The previous four occurrences of the phrase are in 1 Th. 2:2, 8 and 9; and 2 Cor. 11:7.

of gospel language vocabulary begins in Romans 15:16. Paul repeats the phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ for the sixth and final time in his letters, combining it with the cultic verb ἱερούργεω to describe his apostolic service among the nations. In Romans 15:19 he employs the combination of πληρόω and εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ to describe the completion of his evangelistic ministry in the east, explaining his journey to Rome and Spain with the motivation to evangelize where Christ has not been named (15:20).

Romans is the only letter in which Paul's salutation identifies him immediately with the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, a phrase that indicates God as the source of the gospel. As in previous epistles the εὐαγγελ- family is Paul's primary gospel vocabulary when his apostolic commission is in view. As in the letter to the Philippians none of the εὐαγγέλιον occurrences in Romans are combined with a speaking verb, though the noun is implied in Paul's use of the infinitive form of εὐαγγελίζομαι in anticipation of announcing the good news in Rome and Spain. The evangelistic announcement to Spain is clearly foundational. The occurrence of εὐαγγελίζομαι in Romans 1 is the only occasion in Paul when the verb is used without a clear association with both an initial and a foundational gospel announcement in a place. In both Romans 1 and 15, Paul's essential gospel language is taken from the εὐαγγελ- word family and supports the emphasis on Paul's particular apostolic mandate to announce God's message of good news among the Gentiles. As observed in earlier letters, the prevalent use of εὐαγγελ- terminology supports this focus on Paul's particular apostolic commission.<sup>207</sup> Where divine agency and the gospel is concerned, the assertion that the εὐαγγέλιον is the power of God unto salvation is a clear indication of the essential role of the

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<sup>207</sup> The two solitary references to the gospel within the body of the letter are situated within κατά phrases. In the discussion of the day of the Lord in Romans 2:16 Paul's references to judgment are made according to 'my gospel' (κατὰ εὐαγγέλιον μου), while in 11:28 he refers to the enmity according to the gospel between believing Gentiles and unbelieving Jews (κατὰ μὲν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐχθροὶ δι' ὑμᾶς).

gospel as a vehicle for grace. It also provides a contextual definition of the phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, suggesting that the genitive denotes the origin of both the content and efficacy of the message. As in many of the εὐαγγελ— passages Paul’s language echoes Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah, describing himself as set apart for the gospel of God.

#### 1.4.6 εὐαγγελ- Language: The Messenger and the Message

There are three distinctions to Paul’s use of εὐαγγελίζομαι that are indicated in the contextual studies above. The first distinction is the use of the verb for initial and most often foundational gospel announcement. John Dickson’s work investigating Paul’s missionary strategies gives sustained attention to this temporal aspect of the εὐαγγελ— word family.<sup>208</sup> He argues for the importance of retaining the initial announcement aspect of εὐαγγελ— language, with the word family representing a message that is ‘news’ to those who receive it.<sup>209</sup> The predominant use of the verb portrays initial, and normally foundational, evangelistic activity (18 of 20 total occurrences).<sup>210</sup> Paul’s presentation of his divine commission is not simply to announce the good news among the

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<sup>208</sup> Dickson, ‘Gospel as News’, pp. 212-230.

<sup>209</sup> ‘Nevertheless, the evidence does suggest that the proclamatory activity marked out by εὐαγγέλι— was a foundational one. Once a community of believers exists, the terminology of εὐαγγέλι— becomes inappropriate as a designation for the activity and/or content of religious instruction within the church. “Gospel” thus becomes retrospective language, recalling the message once delivered, a message that is now to be “remembered”, “held-fast” and “lived-by” but never “evangelized” (εὐαγγελιζέσθαι) within the church itself.’ Dickson, *Mission Commitment*, p. 89.

<sup>210</sup> Gal. 1:8 [2x], 1:9, 1:11, 1:23, 4:13; 1 Cor. 15:1-2; 2 Cor. 10:16, 11:7; Ro. 1:15, 10:15, 15:20. The final five of eighteen occurrences of the verb are retrospective descriptions of Paul’s divine commission to evangelize. Based on Ro.15:20 it may also be asserted that these refer to an initial proclamation of Christ, predominantly in places where he has not been named: Gal. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:17, 9:16 [2x], 9:18. The two occurrences of the verb that do not feature Paul as evangelist are offered in support of Paul’s initial evangelistic announcement among the Gentiles: 1 Th. 3:16; Gal. 3:8.

nations, but specifically to evangelize to the Gentiles in those places in which no other foundation has been established (Ro. 15:20).<sup>211</sup> However, Paul does not ‘evangelize’ the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / κυρίου. This is a feature that supports the view that in Pauline usage, the phrases represent a category of divine communication rather than a distinct message.

The second distinction is the observation that the verb occurs in contexts that defend or promote Paul’s particular apostolic commission among the Gentiles. While the semantic range of the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is general to the announcement of good news, Paul’s use of the verb primarily occurs in texts that focus on the defence or expansion of his foundational evangelistic work among the Gentiles. The verb is not used of the general announcement of the gospel by evangelists. In every occurrence of the verb Paul is either defending or promoting the divine commission that compels his initial announcement in these places.<sup>212</sup> Given this pattern of a concentration of usage in apologetic contexts it is difficult to defend the assertion that the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is normative vocabulary for Paul’s proclamation in a place. In 1 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians (1-9) and Philippians Paul presents retrospective discussions of his foundational evangelistic ministry, yet none of these narratives contain occurrences of εὐαγγελίζομαι. 1 Thessalonians 1:4-2:13 offers the most complete narrative of an initial evangelistic mission found in Paul’s letters. Yet he does not employ εὐαγγελίζομαι to represent his announcement of the gospel in Thessalonica – a fact all the more remarkable given the proximity of this epistle to the founding of the churches, and Paul’s hasty departure from the area.

This characteristic occurs alongside a third distinction of the verb in Pauline usage, which is the nearly exclusive application of the verb to Paul’s activities as the divinely commissioned apostle

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<sup>211</sup> For application of an initial, and usually foundational, activity to Paul’s use of the verb in Romans 1:15 see the discussion in Dickson, *Gospel as News*, pp. 223-230.

<sup>212</sup> Paul’s self-designation as apostle rather than evangelist is one indication that his use of εὐαγγελίζομαι is predicated on his identity as apostle to the Gentiles. See 1 Cor. 1:17.

among the nations.<sup>213</sup> It is widely agreed that the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is inseparable from Paul's apostolic office.<sup>214</sup> Every occurrence of εὐαγγελίζομαι associates the activity of the verb with Paul's divine commission, represented variably as originating with God, Christ or the Lord. The application of the verb is focused to Paul's own activity, occasionally widened to include his immediate companions. Apart from the citation from Isaiah in Romans 10:15, the verb is never positively attributed to anyone preaching the gospel outside of Paul's circle of co-workers and companions.<sup>215</sup> The frequent occurrence of the verb in apologetic contexts likely explains the near exclusive application of its activities to Paul and his immediate circle. Except that there are occasions, such as that observed in 1 Corinthians 9, when Paul shifts from a verb such as καταγγέλλω, used of Paul's announcing the gospel alongside others, to εὐαγγελίζομαι, used of his particular divine commission. The pattern of usage in Paul's letters suggests that in so far as the activity represented in εὐαγγελίζομαι represents the foundational announcement of the gospel among the Gentiles, the observations made by Dickson concerning the temporal aspect of the gospel as 'news' may offer an insight into Paul's individual self-presentation. Specifically, that Paul presents himself as a sort of forerunner in the announcement of the gospel among the Gentiles – a trailblazer, perhaps. An exploration of the reasons for his patterns, however, is beyond the scope of our present study.

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<sup>213</sup> So also Schütz, *Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, p. 38.

<sup>214</sup> Schütz, *Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, p. 36.

<sup>215</sup> The inclusion of broader category of messengers is most likely due to the placement of the verb in a LXX reference. The agency of heralds in the surrounding text of Romans employs κηρύσσω rather than εὐαγγελίζομαι.

Paul's usage of εὐαγγέλιον represents a particular announcement of events that are good news to the listeners.<sup>216</sup> Paul explicitly denies the possibility that any εὐαγγέλιον apart from that which announces Jesus as the crucified, risen and returning Son of God even exists (Gal. 1:7). The oral announcement of Jesus Christ is the event through which Paul's Gentile churches were established, and Paul's description of the εὐαγγέλιον clearly associate the gospel with the power of God (Ro. 1:16). Most often the qualified forms distinguish the divine origin (εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ) or Christological content (εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ) of the message.<sup>217</sup> In a handful of instances the modified form indicates either the human emissaries (εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν / μου) or intended recipients (εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ ἀκροβυστίας) of the gospel. Where these qualified occurrences are concerned, the phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ is of particular interest. Paul employs the phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ in Romans 1 and 15 to indicate the origin of the gospel from God.

In summary, the εὐαγγελ- word family is associated with a particular event not only as regards its content (God's saving activity in Jesus Christ) but also its temporal scope (an initial event in the lives of the recipients). The limitations of a particular word group, however, emerge in contexts that call for general meaning – whether the general activity of human heralds (κηρυγ-) or the general categories of speech (λόγος, whether human or divine). To communicate general categories of human agency or speech relative to the particular activities and announcement of εὐαγγελ- language Paul's writing employs additional gospel terms.

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<sup>216</sup> 'The cognate use of the noun εὐαγγέλιον and the verb εὐαγγελίζεσθαι conveys a similar sense of definition and precision.' Schütz, *Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, p. 53.

<sup>217</sup> There are six occurrences of εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Th. 2:2, 2:8, 2:9; 2 Cor. 11:7; Ro. 1:1, 15:16), 6 of εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal. 1:7, 1 Cor. 9:12, 2 Cor. 2:2, 10:14, Phil. 1:27, Ro. 15:19) with three additional phrases indicating Jesus as the content of the gospel (2 Th. 1:8, 2 Cor. 4:4 and Ro. 1:9).

## 1.5 κηρυγ— Language in 1 Corinthians and Romans

In the two clusters in which the primary gospel vocabulary draws from the κηρυγ— word family, Paul presents himself in the company of other heralds and apostles of the gospel. In 1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5 Paul presents the cruciform character of his own preaching alongside that of Apollos and other gospel heralds. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 Paul presents himself in the company with other heralds and eyewitnesses to the resurrection. There is a distinct focus in the Corinthian letters to various manners of gospel language speech: in language that includes initial announcement (εὐαγγελίζομαι), human proclamation (κηρύσσω), further announcement (καταγγέλλω), and testimony (μαρτυρέω). The most noteworthy feature pertains to the emphasis in these letters on human agency relative to gospel proclamation. This emphasis on human agency relative to gospel announcement in 1 Corinthians is reflected in the distinct use of κηρυγ— terminology.

### 1.5.1 - 1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5

The noun κήρυγμα occurs exclusively in 1 Corinthians, twice in this opening cluster (1:21, 2:4) while κηρύσσω is used once (1 Cor. 1:23). The verb εὐαγγελίζομαι introduces the cluster (1 Cor. 1:17), yet the noun does not occur. Where λόγος language is concerned, the noun is employed twice as gospel language (1 Cor. 1:18, 2:4), and four times in phrases that describe rhetorical forms of human speech acts relative to the delivery of the gospel, all of which are negative comparisons (ἐν σοφίας λόγοις in 1 Cor. 1:17, [2:4], 2:13; καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου in 1 Cor.



2:1). Included in table 15 is the phrase μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ with the verb βεβαιόω (1 Cor. 1:6), which is the first reference to gospel testimony in the letter.

**Table 15**

**1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5**

- 1:6 τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν
- 1:17 ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστὸς ... εὐαγγελίζεσθαι ... οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου
- 1:18 ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ ... μωρία ἐστίν ... δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν.
- 1:21 διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος σῶσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας
- 1:23 ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον
- 2:1 οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ.
- 2:4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις]
- 2:13 λαλοῦμεν οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις

The cluster opens with Paul's assertion that Christ did not send Paul to baptize but to evangelize (ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστὸς ... εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, 1 Cor. 1:17).<sup>218</sup> This solitary occurrence of εὐαγγελ- language in the cluster frames the discussion that follows as a demonstration of Paul's manner of proclamation at the initial announcement of the gospel in Corinth.<sup>219</sup> After referring to the gospel as ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ in 1:18 Paul's gospel vocabulary focuses around the κηρυγ-

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<sup>218</sup> In reference to Paul's use of the verb in 1 Corinthians 1:17, Litfin asserts that, 'this preaching constitutes his apostolic calling'. Litfin, *Theology of Proclamation*, p. 188.

<sup>219</sup> Later references to Paul having laid the foundation (1 Cor. 3:10) and done the planting (3:6) demonstrate that Paul is discussing his manner of proclamation during his foundational visit in Corinth.

word family.<sup>220</sup> The noun κήρυγμα is used as Paul asserts God's purpose through proclamation (1:21), followed by the use of the cognate verb in the first person plural form to refer to the act of proclaiming Christ crucified (1:23). In 1 Corinthians 1:21 Paul refers to the 'foolishness of proclamation' through which God is pleased to save those who believe.<sup>221</sup> The use of κηρύσσω in the first person plural in the next sentence (1:23) clarifies that Paul is referring in verse 1:21 to the general proclamation of the gospel, not simply his own. In chapter two, Paul employs the nouns λόγος and κήρυγμα a second time in reference to his initial gospel ministry in Corinth (2:4). Four of the six occurrences of λόγος are antithetical comparisons between human speech and Paul's faithful evangelistic speech (1:17, [2:4], 2:1, 2:13). Paul rejects the delivery of the gospel in cultured speech (ἐν σοφίας λόγοις in 1:17, [2:4], 2:13), and denies having announced the mystery of God in exalted language (οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, 2:1).<sup>222</sup> Each of these four antithetical phrases presents human speech acts (rhetoric) that are inappropriate as gospel delivery. This is in contrast to the two λόγος occurrences in phrases (λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ in 1:18 and λόγος μου in 2:4), representing the content of the gospel message as delivered by Paul.

None of the λόγος occurrences in 1 Corinthians 1-2 participate in the gospel as a divine speech act (that is, a word of God or word of the Lord). As noted in the introduction, Paul's use of

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<sup>220</sup> The genitive relationship establishes the cross as the content of Paul's message. Raymond Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth: The Social Significance of the Death of Jesus*, JSNTSS, 143 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 61.

<sup>221</sup> 'Foolishness' is a designation of content, in this case, the cross. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, p. 152.

<sup>222</sup> 'This meaning of σοφία λόγου as cultured speech fits the immediate context best, since Paul is referring to his manner of proclamation.' Stephen M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians*, SBLDS, 134 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), p. 111. Pogoloff demonstrates that Christ crucified (1 Cor. 2:3) is the subject of the μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ that Paul proclaimed in his initial visit (1 Cor. 2:1). Ibid., p. 130.

λόγος and κηρυγ— vocabulary in these verses allows him to establish a clear demarcation between human agency ('my speech' and 'my proclamation') and divine agency ('Spirit and power'). There is no presentation of λόγος as divine communication, although the combination of word and Spirit is indicative of divine agency active in the human announcement of the gospel (1:18, 2:4).

The primary gospel language employed in 1 Corinthians 1:17-2:13 is κήρυγμα and κηρύσσω. The use of λόγος in genitive phrases is supplementary to the κηρυγ- family. This primary use of κηρυγ— language is a clear delineation of the human agency of those who herald the gospel. The next cluster in 1 Corinthians makes clear that the human agency in proclamation relies on divine agency at the point of proclamation. 1 Corinthians 15 employs both word groups with the announcement of the resurrection in the gospel.

### 1.5.2 - 1 Corinthians 15

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul introduces a defence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as originally announced in Corinth with a passage that starts with εὐαγγελ— terminology and moves to κηρυγ— language. The cognate verb μαρτυρέω is used in reference to God having raised Christ from the dead (15: 15).<sup>223</sup> As evident in table 16, Paul also uses the term ψευδόμαρτυς in 15:15 in contrast to the truthful testimony by Paul and his fellow witnesses that God has raised Jesus from the dead.

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<sup>223</sup> The verb μαρτυρέω is used 5 times in Paul.

Table 16

**1 Corinthians 15:1-15**

- 15:1 τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν  
15:2 τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν
- 15:11 οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε  
15:12 εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς κηρύσσεται ὅτι ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγήγερται  
15:14 κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν  
15:15 εὐρισκόμεθα δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι...

The compact reminder of the initial preaching and reception of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 employs εὐαγγελίζομαι twice, the first time with εὐαγγέλιον and the second with λόγος, inserting between the two occurrences a reminder of the believers' reception of the gospel (παραλαμβάνω, 15:1). This is the third repetition of nominal gospel language with παραλαμβάνω (cf. Gal. 1:9, 1 Th. 2:13). The combination signals the authority of Paul's initial announcement of the gospel as initially received by the the believers. As in Galatians εὐαγγέλιον and εὐαγγελίζομαι are combined (Gal. 1:11, 1 Cor. 15:1). The combination of λόγος and εὐαγγελίζομαι in 15:2 is unique. In this context it represents the message or substance of the gospel.<sup>224</sup> In 1 Corinthians 15:2 Paul exhorts the believers to hold firmly to the λόγος that he evangelized (εὐαγγελίζομαι) among them, placing the word, or 'message', in parallel construction to the εὐαγγέλιον that was evangelized (also εὐαγγελίζομαι) in the preceding verse (1 Cor. 15:1). The structure suggests that λόγος represents a particular message of the gospel, in this case, that of the resurrection which follows. Following the recapitulation of witnesses to the resurrection, the

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<sup>224</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p. 1185. The construction τίνι λόγῳ is also unusual, perhaps reflecting the fact that the Corinthian believers have a choice between messages with which they are now confronted concerning the resurrection of the dead.

closing verses of this section shift to κηρυγ-vocabulary. Paul repeats the verb κηρύσσω twice in his assertion concerning Christ's resurrection from the dead, as was proclaimed and believed in Corinth (15:11-12). The noun κήρυγμα occurs once in his reminder concerning the proclamation of and belief in Christ's resurrection (15:14). Paul asserts that if Christ is not raised then he and the others are false witnesses (ψευδόμαρτυς) since they testified concerning God that he raised Jesus from the dead (15:15).

Notice that when Paul's focus shifts to demonstrate his solidarity with fellow gospel heralds his language also changes to the κηρυγ- and μαρτυρ- word groups, each of which emphasizes the human agency of heralds and eye witnesses to the resurrection. The passage reflects the contextual concerns in previous clusters that defend an initial announcement that was proclaimed with integrity by divinely commissioned human emissaries. Additionally, Paul's use of gospel vocabulary in all three clusters within 1 Corinthians (inclusive of 1 Corinthians 9) serves to defend and align Paul's individual apostolic authority (εὐαγγελ- language) with that of other gospel heralds (κηρυγ- word group).

### 1.5.3 - Romans 10

Romans 10:5-21 opens and closes with Paul's repeated use of ῥῆμα as gospel terminology. This choice of ῥῆμα rather than λόγος is almost certainly governed by the introduction of ῥῆμα in the LXX passage from Deut.30:14 quoted by Paul in Romans 10:8.<sup>225</sup> Since Paul employs κηρύσσω three times (Ro. 10:8, 14, and 15), none of which is governed by the occurrence of the

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<sup>225</sup> J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 165.

word group in the LXX, this passage is included with the κηρυγ– word family. The repetition of ῥῆμα from the LXX is clear in table 17.

**Table 17**

**Romans 10**

- 10:8 ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμά ἐστιν [...] τοῦτ' ἐστιν τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν (LXX Deut. 30:14, 10:8a)
- 10:14 πῶς δὲ ἀκούσωσιν χωρὶς κηρύσσοντος;
- 10:15 πῶς δὲ κηρύξωσιν ἐὰν μὴ ἀποσταλώσιν; [...] τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων (LXX Is. 52:7)
- 10:16 οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ
- 10:17 ἄρα ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς ἢ δὲ ἀκοὴ διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ
- 10:18 εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῶν (LXX Ps. 18 :5)

In Romans 10 Paul focuses again on the agency of gospel heralds with a passage that draws heavily on LXX citations from Deuteronomy, Isaiah and the Psalms. The language and context of Romans 10 associates Paul alongside other gospel heralds. The only active references to the preaching of the gospel, situated in the cluster in Romans 10, combine κηρύσσω with ῥῆμα terminology. This is also the only chapter in this letter in which one finds multiple gospel terms in contextual relationship, and the only gospel language cluster in any of Paul's letters in which all three of Paul's essential gospel word families are used in nearly equal measure (although Paul's use of ῥῆμα is predominant in the progression of the passage).<sup>226</sup> Paul immediately identifies this word as 'the word of faith which we preach' (Ro. 10:8). This initial use of κηρύσσω is followed by two participle forms of the verb in Romans 10:14 and 15. The series of questions in these two

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<sup>226</sup> Given the prevalent use of the LXX in this chapter of Romans, and the clear choice of ῥῆμα in continuity with the language of these passages, this study regards Paul's use of ῥῆμα in Romans 10 as synonymous with λόγος.

verses are answered with the words of LXX Isaiah 52:7, in which the prophet employs the participle form of εὐαγγελίζομαι to describe the gospel messengers (Ro. 10:16).

In verse 10:17, following the immediate statement that not all have obeyed the gospel, Paul asserts that faith comes through hearing the word of Christ.<sup>227</sup> The argument is framed by a final appearance of ῥῆμα in a quotation from LXX Psalm 18:5, describing God's words going out to the end of the world (Rom. 10:18).<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> The phrase ῥῆμα Χριστοῦ in Romans 10:17 is supported by  $\mathfrak{P}^{46\text{vid}} \aleph^* \text{BCD}^* 6. 81. 629. 1506. 1739. 1852 \text{ lat co Origen}^{\text{lat}} \text{ Augustine. The variant reading } \rho\eta\mu\alpha \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon \text{ is found in } \aleph^1 \text{ A D}^1 \text{ K L P } \Psi 33. 104. 365. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1881. 2464 \text{ } \mathfrak{M} \text{ sy Clement Chrysostom Theodore Jerome. The omission of any modifier in some Western witnesses is generally agreed to be scribal omission (F G; Ambrosiaster). The diversity of manuscript support and the earliest witnesses, notably } \mathfrak{P}^{46\text{vid}} \aleph^* \text{ D}^*, \text{ recommend } \rho\eta\mu\alpha \text{ Χριστοῦ. See also Metzger, } \textit{Textual Commentary}, \text{ pp. 463-464. The use of the phrase } \rho\eta\mu\alpha \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon \text{ most likely resulted from the familiarity of the phrase 'word of God' in the New Testament. See also James D. G. } \textit{Romans: 9-16}, \text{ WCS 38b (Dallas: Word, 1988), p. 619. Contextually, considering the unique usage of the phrase } \rho\eta\mu\alpha \text{ Χριστοῦ alongside several equally unique features of Paul's gospel vocabulary in Romans 10 qualifies any argument based on the rarity of the phrase 'word of Christ'. The phrase } \rho\eta\mu\alpha \text{ τῆς πίστεως in Romans 10:8 is equally unique, as is Paul's use of the verb } \acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\omega \text{ specific to gospel announcement. (In 19 occurrences, the verb } \acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\omega \text{ is used of gospel proclamation only three times, in Romans 10:14 and 18. In addition to Romans 10:16-17 the nominal form occurs in Galatians 3:2, 5 and 1 Thessalonians 2:13). A common feature of Romans 10 to other letters, however, is Paul's focus on proclamation (κηρύσσω). Within the argument there is a consideration of gospel announcement taken from both the perspective of the heralds and those who hear them. Note the progression of pairs in 10:14 and 10:17: the use, in identical order, of both } \pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma \text{ (10:17) and } \pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega \text{ (10:14); } \acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\eta \text{ (10:17) and } \acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\omega \text{ (10:14); } \rho\eta\mu\alpha \text{ (10:17) and } \kappa\eta\rho\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\sigma\omega \text{ (10:14). The } \rho\eta\mu\alpha \text{ τοῦ Χριστοῦ is that which the evangelists proclaim (κηρύσσω). While the phrase } \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma \text{ τοῦ θεοῦ does not occur with } \kappa\eta\rho\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\sigma\omega, \text{ in the undisputed Pauline epistles, Christ (sometimes Jesus Christ or Jesus) is the identified message of Paul's proclamation in the majority of non-absolute occurrences of the verb (7 times). The remaining 4 non-absolute nouns with } \kappa\eta\rho\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\sigma\omega \text{ are } \rho\eta\mu\alpha \text{ τῆς πίστεως (Rom. 10:8), } \rho\eta\mu\alpha \text{ Χριστοῦ (10:17) and } \epsilon\upsilon\acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\iota\omicron\nu \text{ (1 Th. 2:9, Gal. 2:2). The phrase } \rho\eta\mu\alpha \text{ τοῦ Χριστοῦ demonstrates greater consistency both with the development of the argument concerning proclamation in Romans 10, and with the pattern of Paul's use of } \kappa\eta\rho\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\sigma\omega \text{ throughout the undisputed epistles. When individuals hear the message entrusted to the messengers (} \acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\eta \text{ 10:16), which is the gospel, they hear the message or word of Christ.}$

<sup>228</sup> So also Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 127; Wagner, *Heralds*, pages 165, 184.

As in previous epistles, Paul employs κηρύσσω when presenting himself in the company of gospel heralds (Ro. 1:15, 15:20). The use of LXX Isaiah is preceded by repeated use of the verb κηρύσσω rather than εὐαγγελίζομαι in Paul's series of rhetorical questions asking how messengers will proclaim unless they are sent. Paul allows the LXX use of ῥῆμα to govern his choice of this term over λόγος in the rest of the argument in chapter 10, yet the appearance of εὐαγγελίζομαι in LXX Isaiah does not result in the use of εὐαγγελίζομαι rather than κηρύσσω in Romans 10:14-15. It may be observed that proclamation (κηρύσσω) is a particular activity of those who, alongside Paul, announce the good news (εὐαγγελίζομαι). J. Ross Wagner has demonstrated that Paul's use of LXX Isaiah 52:7 contains a variant that Wagner concludes, 'is almost certainly Pauline.'<sup>229</sup> He writes: 'Paul transforms the lone herald of the LXX [...] into multiple preachers of the good news.'<sup>230</sup> Wagner further asserts that Paul's use of εὐαγγέλιον in 10:16 for the first time in Romans 10 is an intentional parallel between the message of the heralds and Paul's own gospel.<sup>231</sup> The pattern in these verses is consistent with Paul's use of εὐαγγέλιον, εὐαγγελίζομαι and κηρύσσω in other epistles. In the first place, where εὐαγγέλιον is concerned, this context in Romans confirms the centrality of the message of Christ as the announcement of salvation. To quote Wagner again, '... the good news proclaimed by Isaiah's heralds – that God has acted to deliver his people from captivity – is shown to be none other than the gospel of Christ.'<sup>232</sup> Secondly, concerning εὐαγγελίζομαι as a plural participle, changing the lone evangelist to a group of messengers associates Paul with others sent by divine appointment to announce gospel. This aligns with the narrative in Galatians 2:7-9, in which the 'pillars' recognize that God has entrusted and sent both Paul and Peter with the gospel. Finally, Paul's use

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<sup>229</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 173.

<sup>230</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 173.

<sup>231</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 174.

<sup>232</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 176.



of κηρύσσω rather than εὐαγγελίζομαι for the shared activity of proclaiming the gospel is a choice that replicates the pattern evident in earlier epistles, in which Paul employs κηρύσσω for his preaching activities alongside fellow gospel heralds.

The passage concludes with two final occurrences of ῥῆμα. The use of εὐαγγελίζομαι in the Isaiah passage is the most explicit connection in any of Paul's letters between his vocation as apostle to the Gentiles and the OT prophetic tradition, just as the connection between the ῥῆμα of Deuteronomy and the word of faith proclaimed in 10:8 establishes a rather explicit continuity between OT prophetic speech and the message of Christ (Ro. 10:17, cf. Gal. 1:23). Paul's use of ῥῆμα in Romans 10 is clearly governed by his commentary on the LXX passages: ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως defines the 'saying' in Moses' words from Deuteronomy 30:14. Likewise in Romans 10:17 and 18, the ῥῆμα Χριστοῦ in 10:17, which in 10:16 is clarified as the εὐαγγέλιον, is the message of the ῥῆμα going out to all the earth in LXX Psalm 18:5.

#### 1.5.4 κηρυγ- Language: Human Agency and Heralds

Three distinctions of Paul's use of κηρύσσω are important to this study. First, that Paul primarily employs the verb in a plural form, representing an activity that he shared with other gospel heralds. Secondly, that the verb is never used in combination with the phrases λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / κυρίου. Finally, that Paul employs the verb most often in passages that are concerned with the integrity between the character of the heralds and the gospel that they proclaim. These features support the conclusions of this study that Paul participates in a genuinely shared prophetic ministry of proclamation, preaching a message that is a word of God, and applying the OT criteria of integrity between message and messenger in his test of fellow gospel heralds. The focus at present

is on the shared use of the verb, its nominal combinations, and its application to the integrity of the messenger.

Although similar to εὐαγγελίζομαι where number of occurrences is concerned, the pattern of usage with the verb κηρύσσω is very different.<sup>233</sup> Where the use of εὐαγγελίζομαι is concentrated in three epistles, κηρύσσω is found in every letter apart from 2 Thessalonians and Philemon – epistles that contain too little gospel vocabulary to figure prominently in the observations offered here. Paul's primary application of the verb is to himself in the company of others, including those whose activities are not directly connected to his own mission endeavours (1 Cor. 15:11, 12; 2 Cor. 11:4; Ro. 10:8, 14, 15), and to those whose proclamation springs from a jealous rivalry with himself (Phil. 1:15). Even the two singular occurrences are in a context in which Paul argues for his full inclusion alongside other gospel emissaries (Gal. 2:2 and 1 Cor. 9:27). This pattern suggests that κηρύσσω rather than εὐαγγελίζομαι is Paul's standard vocabulary for the general proclamation of the gospel, representing an activity that is shared with other emissaries.

The nominal combinations with the verb are also distinct in comparison to εὐαγγελίζομαι. Where εὐαγγελίζομαι has Christ as its object only once, and this obliquely in Paul's declaration that God revealed his Son ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (Gal. 2:16),<sup>234</sup> Christ is the subject of κηρύσσω over half the time. In eight of the fourteen occurrences of κηρύσσω as gospel proclamation the message proclaimed is Christ, or Jesus Christ.<sup>235</sup> The phrases λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ

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<sup>233</sup> There are fourteen direct occurrences of κηρύσσω as gospel language and nineteen of εὐαγγελίζομαι.

<sup>234</sup> In Philippians 1:17-18, Χριστός is the subject of the verb καταγγέλλω. In Romans 15:20 Paul states his ambition to evangelize (εὐαγγελίζομαι) where Christ has not already been named.

<sup>235</sup> Noting this frequency Victor Furnish concludes that insofar as the content of the Apostle's preaching can be summarized, it can be summarized in one word: Jesus Christ.' Furnish, *Prophets*, p. 53. See 1 Cor. 1:23, 15:11, 15:12; 2 Cor. 1:19, 4:5, 11:4 (2x); Phil. 1:15. The verb is absolute in three verses: 1 Cor. 9:27, Ro. 10:14, 10:15.

and λόγος τοῦ κυρίου are never found in combination with κηρύσσω.<sup>236</sup> As with εὐαγγελίζομαι, one does not proclaim a word of God / word of the Lord. In Pauline usage, one proclaims Christ or the message of the gospel rather than a word of God. This further supports the view the Paul's primary usage of the phrases λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / κυρίου is as a category of divine speech rather than a particular message.

In κηρύσσω, Paul has chosen gospel vocabulary that allows him to emphasize in sharp relief the distinction between divine agency in and through the gospel as a divine communication, and human agency in proclamation of that gospel. Every occurrence of the verb κηρύσσω is directly connected to the human activity involved in the proclamation of the gospel. Suggesting that Paul's use of κηρύσσω focuses attention on the human activity inherent in the preaching of the gospel neither diminishes nor denies the essential role of divine agency to the advance of the gospel. A text such as Romans 10 shows Paul's recognition of divine agency in the sending of heralds (Ro. 10:14-15). While Romans 10 may suggest such a connection, the narrative in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 makes this connection between Christ's apostles and the test of true prophets explicit.

The use of κήρυγμα occurs when Paul is contrasting human speech acts with the divine power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 1:21 and 2:4) or divine agency in the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:14). The word family allows Paul to distinguish inherently 'foolish' human rhetorical acts (represented in the κηρυγ— word family) from divine power of the gospel. Paul's use of the noun exploits the limited nature of κήρυγμα. That is, his use of κήρυγμα distinguishes human activity in proclaiming the gospel from divine initiative enacted by the power of the Spirit through human proclamation.

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<sup>236</sup> Romans 10:8 is the only combination of λόγος language with κηρύσσω (τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν, Ro. 10:8). The ῥῆμα in LXX Dt. 30:14 (the word that is near, quoted in Ro.10:8) is the law (ἐντολή in Dt. 30:11) which Paul immediately redefines as a 'word of faith'.

The use of λόγος, on the other hand, participates in the sphere of divine agency relative to the gospel.

## 1.6 λόγος Language as Gospel Vocabulary

In Pauline usage, the verb κηρύσσω represents a general category of human proclamation, to which the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι relates as the announcement of a particular message. As demonstrated in this word study, Paul's use of the modified phrases λόγος τοῦ κυρίου / θεοῦ represent a general category of divine communication to which the εὐαγγέλιον relates as the particular message of Jesus Christ. Paul's 'word of' language is used in this general categorical manner in the remaining two language clusters from 1 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians 1-9.

### 1.6.1 - The Thessalonian Correspondance

The opening chapters of 1 Thessalonians contain the most extensive reflection available concerning the dynamic relationship of the gospel proclaimed by Paul and his co-workers as λόγος τοῦ κυρίου (1 Th. 1:8) and λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Th. 2:13). It is also the only letter in which Paul makes a direct claim to his gospel as λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Th. 2:13) and a direct reference to the εὐαγγέλιον as λόγος τοῦ κυρίου. Finally, 1 Thessalonians is the only letter in which every use of λόγος occurs in the context of an initial announcement of the gospel.

Paul's nominal gospel vocabulary in 1 Thessalonians draws almost entirely from the λόγος and εὐαγγέλιον word fields. Where overall occurrences are concerned, λόγος occurs nine times

(1:5,1:6, 1:8; 2:5, 2:13 [3x]; 4:15, 4:18);<sup>237</sup> εὐαγγέλιον occurs six times (1:5; 2:2, 2:4, 2:8, 2:9; 3:2); εὐαγγελίζομαι and κηρύσσω each occur once.

All of the εὐαγγελ- language in the epistle is located in the extensive retrospective narrative from 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3:13, representing roughly half of the length of the entire epistle. Within these opening chapters all but four of the gospel language terms in the epistle are located in the narrative of Paul's initial visit in 1 Thessalonians 1:4-2:13. Paul employs the noun λόγος seven times and εὐαγγέλιον five times in this narrative. Given that the contextual concerns in these opening chapters are with the initial mission in Thessalonica, the primacy of λόγος language is striking. Paul demonstrates a distinct concern during the narrative of the founding of the congregation in Thessalonica with the gospel as a divine communication. Table 18, on the next page, lists the verses with gospel language occurrences, highlighting Paul's primary gospel vocabulary in bold.

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<sup>237</sup> This tally includes the use of λόγος in an antithetical comparison to the speech of true messengers (ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας, 1 Th. 2:5).

Table 18

**1 Thessalonians**

- 1:5 ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον
- 1:6 δεχάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει
- 1:8 ἐχήχηται ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου
- 2:2 λαλήσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ
- 2:4 δεδοκιμάσμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
- 2:5 οὔτε γάρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν
- 2:8 μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ
- 2:9 ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ
- 2:13 ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἔστιν ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ
- 3:2 συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
- 3:6 εὐαγγελισαμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν
- 4:15 ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου
- 4:18 παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις

Notice the concentration of λόγος language in 1 Thessalonians 1 and the repeated use of τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 Thessalonians 2. Having begun with εὐαγγελ- language in 1:5 (εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν) Paul employs λόγος language throughout the remaining narrative (1:5, 6 and 8). Paul's use of gospel language focuses on the movement of the message of the gospel from apostles, to converts, out into the surrounding areas. In 1:5 Paul describes the gospel as arriving not only in word (λόγος) but also in power, the Holy Spirit and fullness. There is a distinct emphasis on the divine agency at work in and with the λόγος of the εὐαγγέλιον. This emphasis continues in verse 1:6, as the converts are described as having received the word (λόγος with δέχομαι) in the midst of affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit. This turn of events results in the word of the Lord (λόγος τοῦ

κυρίου, 1:8) sounding forth (ἐξηχέομαι) throughout the surrounding area. The only message actively announced by human agents is the report (ἀπαγγέλλω, 1:9) of the entrance that the missionaries had among the Thessalonians. This first part of the retrospective focuses on divine agency relative to the gospel message.

In contrast, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16 is written with a distinct emphasis on the human agency of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy in relationship to the gospel. The narrative is written with a sustained emphasis on the message as εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, culminating with its identification as λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ twice in 2:13. The solitary unqualified occurrence of the noun εὐαγγέλιον in the epistle is found in 2:4: Paul's description of the evangelists as those whose hearts were tested by God, who entrusted them with the gospel. The only occurrence of λόγος language in 2:1-12 is Paul's denial of superficial speech (ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας, 2:5). This use of λόγος to distinguish divine from human speech is repeated in 2:13 in the denial of the gospel as a word of men (λόγος ἀνθρώπων), accompanied by its twofold affirmation as λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (2:13). No other passage in Paul's writings directly asserts the εὐαγγέλιον as "word of God." Leading up to this conclusion is the threefold use of the phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. The three occurrences comprise half of the total occurrences of the phrase in the Pauline letters.<sup>238</sup> The εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ is spoken (λαλέω in 2:2), intimately imparted (μεταδίδωμι in 2:8) and proclaimed (κηρύσσω in 2:9). There is no particular emphasis on κηρύσσω as gospel vocabulary over and above other speaking verbs. The conclusion to this narrative is an assertion of the gospel as divine speech in which God energetically works through God's word (ἐνεργέω with λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in 2:13), a description that is reminiscent of the OT prophetic tradition of prophetic speech. The retrospective narratives in the

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<sup>238</sup> The phrase occurs twice in Romans (Rom. 1:1 and 15:16) and once in 2 Corinthians with an inverted word order (τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον in 2 Cor. 11:7).

first two chapters are the only texts in the Pauline letters in which the categories of ‘word of the Lord’ and ‘word of God’ are associated with Paul’s gospel in a direct and positive narrative. The two references to the gospel as λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in 2 Corinthians are each negative accusations of those who peddle (2 Cor. 2:17) or pervert the word of God (2 Cor. 4:2).

The context of the four remaining gospel language occurrences refer to Timothy’s return visit to Thessalonica (εὐαγγέλ— language in chapter three) and Paul’s teaching on the resurrection of the dead at the *Parousia* (λόγος τοῦ κυρίου language in chapter four). The two εὐαγγέλ- language occurrences relating to Timothy’s ministry are unique among Paul’s epistles. The final two λόγος language occurrences extend the eschatological expectations of the initial visit to the situation of those who have died in Thessalonica (1 Th. 4:15-18). Paul repeats the unique phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in chapter 4. Addressing the resurrection of the dead at the *parousia*, Paul states that he is speaking “ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου” (1 Th. 4:15). The concluding verse of this section commands the believers to encourage one another with these words (4:18). As in chapter 1, the temporal focus of the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου is eschatological, directly associated with the return of the resurrected Lord Jesus (1 Th. 1:10, 4:14-17).

Turning attention to 2 Thessalonians, as evident in table 19 the gospel language nouns in this second epistle are drawn from three different word families (λόγος, εὐαγγέλιον and μαρτύριον). Paul employs εὐαγγέλιον twice (2 Th. 1:8, 2:14) and λόγος once (2 Th. 3:1). The only other nominal gospel vocabulary is τὸ μαρτύριον in 2 Th. 1:10.



## Table 19

### 2 Thessalonians

- 1:8 μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ  
1:10 ὅτι ἐπιστεύθη τὸ μαρτύριον ἡμῶν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς  
2:14 ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν  
3:1 ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχη καὶ δοξάζεται

The essential similarity between the two letters is Paul's reference to the gospel as ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in 2 Thessalonians 3:1. The apostle requests prayers for himself, Silvanus and Timothy in order that the word of the Lord may run (τρέχω) and be glorified (δοξάζω).

### 1.6.2 - 2 Corinthians 1-9

The pattern of gospel language usage in the opening chapters of canonical 2 Corinthians is unusual among Paul's letters. In the other letters Paul's language is located in clusters of interrelated words. The gospel vocabulary in 2 Corinthians 1-9, however, occurs in an extended constellation of terms in a chain link pattern. This constellation is composed of verses 1:18-19, 2:17, 4:2-5 and 5:19.<sup>239</sup> The λόγος word family forms the primary links in this chain of verses, occurring in 1:18 (λόγος ἡμῶν), 2:17 (λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ), 4:2 (λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ) and 5:19 (λόγος τῆς καταλλαγῆς). The two εὐαγγελ- occurrences in 2 Corinthians 8:18 and 9:13 that relate to Paul's collection for the saints each emphasize the εὐαγγέλιον as the common ground between Paul, his co-workers and the Corinthian believers. The first refers to the brother renowned in the gospel, and

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<sup>239</sup> The isolated εὐαγγελ- occurrence in 2:12 that refers to Paul's travel is not contextually connected to other gospel language, nor does it refer to the announcement of the gospel in Corinth, (as is the case in the other passages included in this constellation of verses).

the second to the shared confession in the gospel of Christ. These two verses and 2 Corinthians 2:12 are indented on Table 20 as isolated gospel language occurrences.

**Table 20**

**2 Corinthians 1:18-19, 2:17, 4:2-5, 5:19**

- 1:18 ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ὁ πρὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἔστιν ναὶ καὶ οὐ  
1:19 Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν δι' ἡμῶν κηρυχθεὶς
- 2:12 εἰς τὴν Τρωάδα εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ
- 2:17 οὐ γὰρ ἔσμεν ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ
- 4:2 μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ  
4:3 εἰ καὶ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν  
4:4 τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ  
4:5 οὐ γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν ἀλλὰ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον  
5:19 θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς
- 8:18 τὸν ἀδελφὸν οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ  
9:13 τῆς ὁμολογίας ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ

While the chain link pattern of occurrences that employ λόγος as gospel vocabulary is predominant, notice that there is a small cluster of gospel language terms extending from 4:2-5. This section from 4:2-5 is the only gospel language cluster in the primary Pauline epistles in which Paul initiates a discussion of the gospel with a reference to his message as λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.

The use of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is a key consideration of this epistle. The first use of any gospel language in the letter is in the retrospective description in 1:18-19 of the original gospel ministry in Corinth, a statement aligning the integrity of Paul's word concerning his travel plans with the

λόγος of the initial proclamation of Jesus Christ in Corinth.<sup>240</sup> Later in the epistle the phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (2 Cor. 2:17 and 4:2) occurs in statements that claim the mishandling of the word of God.<sup>241</sup> In verse 2:17 the apostle rejects the practice of profiteering (καπηλεύω) from the word of God, emphasizing the sincerity with which he and his co-workers speak in Christ before God.<sup>242</sup> The claim to sincerity recapitulates Paul's initial claim to unequivocal speech (λόγος) asserted in 1:18. In chapter three of the letter Paul parallels Moses' veiled glory and the unveiled countenance of the new covenant. Following this, in 2 Corinthians 4:2 Paul refutes any charge of distortion (δολόω) of the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. He then employs εὐαγγέλιον twice in his description of an unveiled gospel (4:3-4) before concluding that the apostles proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ rather than themselves (κηρύσσω, 2 Cor. 4:5). The final use of λόγος as gospel language in 2 Corinthians is the phrase λόγος τῆς καταλλαγῆς in 2 Corinthians 5:19.<sup>243</sup> In verse 5:20 Paul presents himself and his co-workers as ambassadors through whom God directly appeals (παρακαλέω, cf. 1 Th. 2:3). The claim of direct divine appeal through the apostolic message of reconciliation is in contrast to those who twist or profit from the word of God.

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<sup>240</sup> Several interpreters consider Paul's use of λόγος in this verse to represent both his message concerning travel plans and the message that he and his co-workers preach. See Margaret Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The International Critical Commentary Series, 2 vols. (Edinburgh : T&T Clark, 1994-2000), I (1994), p. 145. 2 Cor. 1:18-19 reads: πιστός δὲ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ὁ πρὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ ἔστιν ναὶ καὶ οὐ. ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ γὰρ υἱὸς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν δι' ἡμῶν κηρυχθεὶς ...

<sup>241</sup> 2 Corinthians 2:17 denies peddling the word of God (οὐ γὰρ ἔσμεν ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ) while verse 4:2 denies distortion (μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ).

<sup>242</sup> For a thorough discussion of the primary meaning of καπηλεύω as a reference to profit see Scott Hafemann, *Suffering & Ministry in the Spirit: Paul's Defense of His Ministry in 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:3* (Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 101-125.

<sup>243</sup> In 2 Corinthians 5:19 the majority of witnesses read λόγος. However, in  $\Phi$ <sup>46</sup> τὸ εὐαγγέλιον rather than λόγος is combined with καταλλαγῆς. A handful of witnesses read εὐαγγελίου τὸν λόγον D\*(+ τοῦ preceding εὐαγγέλιον) F G (d). The inconsistency among the minority of other witnesses recommends for λόγος. See Harris, *Second Corinthians*, p. 426; Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p.435, n,1711. Paul elsewhere refers to the gospel with modified λόγος phrases (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18, Phil. 2:16).

Similar to 1 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians 1-5 is concerned with the integrity of human emissaries relative to the nature of the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. Each letter also makes unique use of παρακαλέω as gospel vocabulary, asserting divine exhortation through the gospel message (1 Th. 2:3, 2 Cor. 5:19) while denying profit or deceit on the part of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy as apostles of Christ (1 Th. 2:3-6, 2 Cor. 2:17, 4:2).

### 1.6.3 λόγος Language: Human and Divine Speech

In all three of the λόγος clusters discussed above, Paul makes use of the word family to present his gospel as a divine communication. The question in this section is whether the pattern of usage in these and previous clusters delineates λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ / κυρίου as a category of speech to which the εὐαγγέλιον belongs, or as synonym to εὐαγγέλιον in both content and function. A brief review of Paul's use of the qualified and unqualified forms of λόγος demonstrates that the word family occurs in reference to the message of the gospel, rather than as a substantive equivalent to εὐαγγέλιον.

#### *Unqualified Uses of λόγος*

If the noun εὐαγγέλιον acts as a 'superabbreviation', the same cannot be said of the unqualified use of λόγος. On the six occasions that Paul does use an unqualified form of the noun, five clearly employ the term in a subordinate rather than synonymous manner to Paul's primary gospel term, εὐαγγέλιον. In 1 Thessalonians 1:5 Paul states that our gospel (εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν) did not arrive among the believers ἐν λόγῳ μόνον (1 Th. 1:6). The next sentence builds on the description in 1:6 with a report on how the believers received the word (δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον)

with joy in the midst of affliction. Both of these unqualified occurrences is contextually connected to πνεῦμα so that both together represent the εὐαγγέλιον. Later in the letter, the phrase ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις in 4:18 refers to instruction given in a λόγῳ κυρίου that Paul relates from verse 4:15. These instructions concern the return of Jesus, which is a portion, rather than the whole, of the εὐαγγέλιον (cf. 1 Th. 4:14). In 1 Corinthians 15:2 Paul exhorts the believers to hold firmly to the λόγος that he evangelized (εὐαγγελίζομαι) among them, placing the word, or “message”, in parallel construction to the εὐαγγέλιον that was evangelized (also εὐαγγελίζομαι) in the preceding verse (1 Cor. 15:1). Finally, in Philippians 1:14 Paul relates how, as a direct results of Paul’s imprisonment, the brothers are fearlessly speaking the word (ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν, Phil. 1:14), identified in 1:12 as the εὐαγγέλιον, and in 1:15-18 as the proclamation of Christ (Phil. 1:15, 17, 18).<sup>244</sup>

The sixth and last general use of λόγος is in Galatians 6:6, a passage in which Paul reminds the believers to share all things with those who provide instruction (κατηχέω) in the λόγος. Galatians is the only epistle in which Paul refers to catachesis in the word or message.<sup>245</sup> In Romans 2:18 Paul refers to instruction in the law, while in 1 Corinthians 14:19 the apostle argues that five clear words of instruction are preferable in the context of worship to ten thousand words in a tongue. Rather than regarding λόγος as a direct synonym for εὐαγγέλιον, several factors recommend reading λόγος in Galatians 6:6 as shorthand for the message of the gospel in continuity with the message of the Scriptures. Nowhere in Galatians does Paul make a direct connection between εὐαγγέλιον language and λόγος terminology. There is a lack of any

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<sup>244</sup> In Acts 4:29, the believers pray that Peter and John be given great boldness to speak the word (μετὰ παρρησίας πασης λαλεῖν τὸν λογὸν σου). The occurrence in Philippians 1:14, describing the activity of the brothers as ‘speaking the word’, may be a fixed expressions that describes gospel announcement.

<sup>245</sup> The verb is used twice more by Paul (1 Cor. 14:19, Ro. 2:18).

surrounding εὐαγγέλιον language in Galatians 6. Additionally, as noted above the verb κατηχέω is never used by Paul to represent instruction specific to the εὐαγγέλιον. However, in Galatians 5 Paul employs λόγος in reference to the Scriptural command to love one's neighbour as one's self. It is introduced as the summation of the law (ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται, Gal. 5:14). This use of λόγος as a saying that summarizes the law is the only other occurrence of λόγος in the epistle. In addition to this positive presentation of the word or message of the law in 5:14, in Galatians 3 Paul presents the OT writings as capable of giving witness to the gospel (cf. προεὐαγγελίζομαι in Gal. 3:8). The best choice in Galatians 6, therefore, is to read the ambiguous use of λόγος as shorthand for the message of the εὐαγγέλιον, which most likely includes the Scriptures as indicated by Paul's reference to the Scriptures in Galatians 3:8 and use of λόγος in Galatians 5:14.<sup>246</sup>

#### *Qualified Occurrences of λόγος as Gospel Language*

The nineteen remaining occurrences of λόγος as gospel language are qualified. Nine represent human speech acts, three refer to the message of the gospel, and seven of these phrases represent divine communication.

Seven of nine occurrences of human speech are negative examples of human speech as compared to authorized or true gospel speech. The majority of these negative occurrences are in the Corinthian correspondence, referring to forms of human speech that are inappropriate to the delivery of the gospel (cf. 'wisdom of speech' in 1 Cor. 1:17, 2:4, 2:13; 'superiority of speech' in 2:1; and the accusation of 'unskilled in words' in 2 Cor. 11:6). All of the phrases in the Corinthian

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<sup>246</sup> Gordon Fee reads λόγος as a general message of the gospel as preached by Paul, in *Galatians*, p. 236.

correspondence represent either rhetorical choices or expectations of Paul's detractors. The final two negative occurrences are located in 1 Thessalonians ('words of flattery' in 1 Th. 2:5 and 'a human word' in 2:13). The second, 'a human word', is a reference to human origin in contrast to the demonstrable divine origin of the gospel (λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ). In each of these instances Paul is confronting a message that originates from a human rather than divine source. This is explicit in the contrast between a word of God and human word in 1 Thessalonians 2:13. It is implicit in speech acts that originate from human wisdom, superiority, skill or greed. In the verses reviewed above, a message with a human origin may be characterized by sophistry, rhetoric or flattery.

Two of nine references to human speech relative to gospel proclamation have positive associations. Each are qualified with personal pronouns, and in both cases λόγος represents the message of the εὐαγγέλιον rather than a human speech act on the part of the apostle and his companions. Both verses contain λόγος and κηρυγ— vocabulary. Paul refers to 'my word' and 'my proclamation' in 1 Corinthians 2:4. The distinction between the two word families in positive relationship to the εὐαγγέλιον is highlighted in 1 Corinthians 2:4 by pairing λόγος and κηρύγμα. Paul's message and his speech were delivered with a demonstration of the Spirit and power, in direct contrast to plausible wisdom of words (οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις]). The second occurrence in 2 Corinthians 1:18 refers to "our word" in an assertion of the sincerity with which Paul, Silvanus and Timothy interacted with the Corinthian believers during the initial visit to that city.<sup>247</sup> In this verse the λόγος in 1:18 is the message of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom the apostles proclaimed (κηρύσσω). In both of these verses, Paul exploits the distinct semantic

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<sup>247</sup> Both times that Paul qualifies a gospel language use of λόγος with a personal pronoun the contextual focus is on the integrity of the apostolic messenger. When εὐαγγέλιον is qualified with a personal pronoun, the contextual focus is on the message itself.

boundaries of the respective words groups, with λόγος representing the message of the gospel, and κηρύγμα / κηρύσσω the human agency in delivering the message.

Where the determination of the phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ as a category of divine speech to which the εὐαγγέλιον belongs is concerned, Paul's comparison in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 is important. The phrase 'words of men' is clearly a general category of speech with a human origin, of the type referenced in the verses reviewed above. Therefore, the use of 'word of God' should also be read as a category of speech with a divine origin, to which the gospel as a particular message from God belongs (εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 Th. 2:2, 8, 9).

A further three qualified occurrences are direct references to the message of the gospel. In each of these three occurrences the qualified form specifies a particular content relative to the gospel: ὁ σταυρός in 1 Cor. 1:18; ἡ καταλλαγή in 2 Cor. 5:19; and ζωή in Phil. 2:16.<sup>248</sup> In each passage, the qualification functions to focus discussion on one striking characteristic of gospel content. Contextually, these focused considerations support an exhortation to the listeners. In 1 Corinthians, Paul contrasts the divine foolishness on display in the cross (ὁ λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ, 1 Cor. 1:18) with human wisdom on display in the rhetorical arts (ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, 1 Cor. 1:17). The believers are exhorted to reject human boasting, letting themselves become fools in order to be wise (1 Cor. 3:18). Similarly, in 2 Corinthians the description of the gospel as ὁ λόγος τῆς καταλλαγῆς (2 Cor. 5:19) precedes the exhortation to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20). Finally, in Philippians the reference to the gospel as a λόγος ζωῆς (Phil. 2:16) follows an extensive exhortation to respond to the threat of Paul's death with lives conducted in a manner worthy of the gospel (Phil. 1:27). In each case Paul grounds his pastoral exhortations in the message of the gospel,

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<sup>248</sup> Philippians 2:16 is the only anarthrous occurrence of λόγος as gospel language.



employing λόγος to focus in on a specific aspect of the message in support of its implication in exhortation. None of these occurrences are full and direct synonyms for εὐαγγέλιον. In sum, Paul does not employ the λόγος word family as a synonym for εὐαγγέλιον in the eighteen other qualified and unqualified occurrences of λόγος as gospel language.

This brings us to the seven qualified occurrences of λόγος as gospel language indicative of divine communication. Six of these seven are in the Thessalonian correspondence: λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in 1 Thessalonians 1:8 and 2 Thessalonians 3:1; ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου in 1 Thessalonians 4:15; and λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 [2x]. The remaining two occurrences of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ as gospel language are in 2 Corinthians 2:17 and 4:2.

The two occurrences of the phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ that are not in reference to the gospel further support a technical reading as a category of divine speech. In 1 Corinthians 14:36 the phrase occurs within a rhetorical question posed in the midst of a discussion concerning the proper transmission of prophecy in worship, and more specifically, the silence of women in the churches of the saints. Paul asks if the word of God originated (ἐξέρχομαι) with the believers in Corinth, or if they were the only ones that it had reached (καταντάω). The phrase is a general category of prophetic speech. It is worth noting in verse 34 Paul's reference to the law 'speaking' on this matter (καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει). The phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is a category of prophetic speech that originates from God. The last of the six occurrences of ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in Paul's writing is located in Romans 9:6 at the beginning of an extended discussion of election. There, Paul asserts that the word of God has not failed, literally, fallen away (ἐκπίπτω, cf. LXX Is. 40:7-8). Once again, the phrase is a technical indication of prophetic speech, in this instance, God speaking through Isaiah's witness in the LXX Scriptures.

## 1.7 Summary: Distinction in Paul's Gospel Language

Attention to the contextual relationships of Paul's gospel language demonstrates that the use of εὐαγγέλιον / εὐαγγελίζομαι communicates the particular message of good news of Jesus Christ. The use of κήρυγμα / κηρύσσω communicates the human agency of gospel heralds, most often proclaiming the message of Christ. The λόγος word family is the most general to speech, either human or divine.

Paul's primary gospel vocabulary is εὐαγγελ— language, occurring in every gospel language cluster. The verb, however, is not evenly distributed among Paul's gospel language clusters. Paul's use of εὐαγγελίζομαι refers to his initial, and most often, foundational gospel announcement in a place; is used on every occasion in contexts that emphasize his particular divine commission among the Gentiles; and is not applied to the evangelistic announcement of others outside of his immediate team. The last trait is likely owing to the predominance of the verb in defensive contexts. The verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is the central activity of Paul's divine commission (1 Cor. 1:18, Gal. 1:16). Where Paul's apostolic self-presentation is concerned, the verb is inseparable not only from the gospel as a particular message, but also from Paul's foundational apostolic activity as a particular commission among the Gentiles.

The pattern in the εὐαγγελ— clusters consistently reflects Paul's individual commission. Galatians 1-2, 1 Corinthians 9, and 2 Corinthians 10-13 all present Paul's individual apostolic calling. The self-presentation in Galatians is especially striking for its use of both the verb and the noun. In Philippians, there is a great deal of gospel embodiment and work happening among his co-workers, (and detractors), yet every occurrence of the noun relates to Paul. In Romans 1 and 15, of course,

Paul's apostolic presentation is singular. Each of the passages that are distinguished by the primary use of εὐαγγελ— vocabulary are also distinguished by a contextual focus on Paul's particular apostolic commission. When Paul is presenting his particular, apostolic identity in OT prophetic terms the echoes primarily originate from the writings of Jeremiah, with echoes from Deutero-Isaiah as well (Rom 1, Gal. 1, 1 Cor. 1-2, 9; 2 Cor. 13). In either case, his prophetic echoes identify with particular prophetic emissaries (Jeremiah or the Servant of Yahweh) rather than heralds in general. However, as evidenced by the context of LXX Is. 52:7 in Romans 10:15, Paul associates his commission as apostle to the nations alongside other heralds who also announce the gospel in fulfilment of OT expectation.

The only phrase that designates the εὐαγγέλιον as a divinely entrusted communication is εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. In Romans 1:1 and 15:16 the phrase is a designation of Paul's apostolic commission and does not occur with a speaking verb. In 2 Corinthians 11:7 it occurs with the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι in Paul's question whether he sinned by announcing God's gospel free of charge. Again, this is a context that emphasizes apostolic commission. Finally, all three occurrences of the phrase in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 likewise occur within an apostolic presentation. Paul's narrative in that passage clearly associates the entrusting of the εὐαγγέλιον from God as central to apostolic identity. The phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ is a particular message from God, not a general category of divine communication.

The κηρυγ— and λόγος word groups provide Paul with the general categories of speech act and message relative to his gospel announcement. Two characteristics are notable in summary of Paul's use of κηρυγ— and λόγος. First, in each of the five clusters in which Paul makes primary use of gospel language other than εὐαγγελ— Paul presents himself alongside other coworkers, apostles, preachers or believers. For example, in the passages of particular interest to this study in 1

Thessalonians nearly the entire letter is written in the first person plural. In 1 Corinthians 1 and 15, and 2 Corinthians 1-9, Paul's discussion of proclamation is shared with other apostles. In Romans 10 the activity of gospel heralds in fulfillment of LXX Is. 52:7 is plural. The language patterns in Paul's letters demonstrate a far greater degree of shared gospel preaching between Paul and other gospel heralds than is reflected in many contemporary discussions of Paul's apostleship.

Second, specific to both κηρυγ– and λόγος vocabulary, Paul exploits the semantic distinctions between word families in his discussion of human and divine agency. This is especially apparent in 1 Corinthians 1-2, as Paul draws contrasts between human speech acts (κηρυγ– and λόγος language) and divine agency. None of Paul's primary gospel language word families are inherently divine. Each depends on modification or context to designate divine origin or agency for the message. The κηρυγ– word family, however, is always an indication of human agency. The verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is never used in a context that presents the mutuality of divine and human agency in the announcement of the gospel. Additionally, the communication of divine agency in the actual *transmission* of the gospel occurs in contexts with λόγος or κηρυγ– language.

As demonstrated in this word study, in Pauline usage, the verb κηρύσσω represents a general category of human proclamation, to which the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι relates as the announcement of a particular message. It is also true that Paul's use of the modified phrases λόγος τοῦ κυρίου / θεοῦ represent a general category of divine communication to which the εὐαγγέλιον relates as the particular message of Jesus Christ. The Thessalonian correspondence, and 1 Thessalonians in particular, is our best source for understanding Paul's use of λόγος to designate the εὐαγγέλιον as a divine communication.

The organizing question for this study is the way in which Paul employs gospel language to portray his εὐαγγέλιον as a divine communication, that is, as a word of God or word of the Lord. The Thessalonian correspondence is the source for this exploration for several reasons. In the first place, Paul only uses the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Secondly, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16 not only contains half of the total occurrences of εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ in Paul's letters, but it is also a passage that concludes with the only positive assertion of the εὐαγγέλιον as λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Th. 2:13). In addition to these unique elements, 1 Thessalonians presents a high concentration of gospel language in its extensive retrospective account of the initial gospel ministry in that place (1 Th. 1:4-3:14). This extensive description gives particular attention not only to the gospel as 'word of the Lord' and its messengers as entrusted with and directly speaking the gospel as 'word of God', but also to divine agency energetically at work both through the initial arrival of the message (1 Th. 1:5-10) and its continuing character as word of God (1 Th. 2:13). Finally, 1 Thessalonians is the only Pauline epistle in which the εὐαγγελ- word family is secondary to λόγος as Paul's primary gospel vocabulary.

Contextually, Paul's apostolic self-presentation is a central concern in all six of the εὐαγγελ- language clusters. In each case, any shared activity presented by Paul, such as the initial visit in Galatians, or financial support in 1 Corinthians 9, becomes secondary to Paul's individual apostolic concerns in the passage. One may safely assert that investigations into Paul's apostolic self-understanding are heavily dependent on the self-presentations in the εὐαγγελ- clusters.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> John Schütz's observation reflects the influence held by these texts when he writes that, 'The letters must be seen as an extension of Paul's missionary preaching. The more polemical they are, the more obvious this is.' Schütz, *Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, p. 282. It should be noted, however, that while 1 Thessalonians is not a primary text in Schütz's influential work, 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10 and 2:13-16 are referenced frequently by Schütz in discussion of the power of the gospel as eschatological event. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-50, 71-78, 112-13, 226-32.

Most studies that consider Paul's apostolic identity in relationship to other recognized apostles are based in observations from the κηρυγ– clusters. The technical definition of an apostle as an eye-witness to the resurrected Lord Jesus, for example, is one feature of Paul's shared apostolic presentation based on these κηρυγ– clusters.<sup>250</sup> Where 2 Corinthians has been a fruitful source for discussion of suffering and the apostolic vocation, the passages in 1 Thessalonians are rarely engaged as a primary source for understanding Paul's apostolic self-presentation.<sup>251</sup> It may be that the letter's reputation as an example of the apocalyptic content of Paul's gospel, as presented in his earliest extant correspondence, has eclipsed an equally significant contribution to our understanding of Paul's initial apostolic ministry in that place. The word studies of these gospel language clusters demonstrate the unique contribution of 1 Thessalonians to Paul's presentation of the εὐαγγέλιον as a divine communication, and a source of insight into apostles as emissaries entrusted with a divine word.

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<sup>250</sup> See Francis H. Agnew's article 'The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept: A Review of Research', *JBL*, 105/1 (1986), 75-96. Raymond Brown identifies a vision of the risen Lord Jesus and a commission to preach as the 'two major constituents' to identification as an apostle of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the continuity between this and the OT prophetic tradition. Raymond Brown, 'The Twelve and the Apostolate', in *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer and Roland E. Murphy, 2 vols. (Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968), II, pp. 795-799, (p. 798).

<sup>251</sup> See Scott Hafemann, *Suffering & Ministry in the Spirit: Paul's Defense of His Ministry in 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:3* (Eerdmans, 1990).

## CHAPTER TWO: THE GOSPEL IN THESSALONICA

1 Thessalonians begins with an unusually long narrative, often referred to as the letter's extensive thanksgiving. Over half of the letter is taken up with the retrospective narrative of the initial ministry in Thessalonica, framed by three expressions of thanksgiving (1 Th. 1:2, 2:13 and 3:9-13). Two features of this narrative are directly pertinent to this study. The first is that the presentation of the gospel as a divine communication occurs within these opening chapters (1 Th. 1:8, 2:13). The second is Paul's presentation of the initial mission in Thessalonica as a genuinely shared apostolic ministry. 1 Thessalonians is the only one of Paul's letters that is co-sent by an apostolic team continuing in active ministry together (2 Cor. 1:19). From the opening lines of this earliest epistle, the three members of the founding team in Thessalonica are named with an unusual parity in regard to individual role or calling. Additionally, Paul's language throughout the letter remains communal, departing from the first person plural on only three occasions (1 Th. 2:18, 3:5 and 5:27).

Some have suggested that Paul's unusual apostolic presentation reflects an early stage in the development of his apostolic self-understanding.<sup>1</sup> Where the unusual form of the letter is concerned, Helmut Koester famously characterized the epistle as an experiment in Christian writing.<sup>2</sup> One can hardly deny that Paul's understanding of his apostolic mission developed over time, or disregard the beginning and growth of the remarkable phenomenon of Christian letter writing. However, as explanations for the distinct features of the epistle, variations on the theme of '1 Thessalonians represents Paul before he grew to full stature and produced the *Hauptbriefe*' are fairly dissatisfying. Development in Paul's self-understanding or theology is notoriously difficult to demonstrate and vigorously debated.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Koester's astute observations do not explain why the 'experimental' nature of 1 Thessalonians is not replicated more closely in later epistles. No

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Donfried is one proponent of a Pauline mission to Thessalonica in the early 40's, allowing time for development of his theology and ethics prior to writing Galatians and Romans. See his essays '1 Thessalonians, Acts and the Early Paul', in *Paul, Thessalonica and Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 60-98, and 'Chronology: The Apostolic and Pauline Period', *Ibid.*, pp. 99-117. Specific to the topic of Paul's apostolic self-presentation in 1 Thessalonians Donfried writes: 'We would argue that it is Paul's understanding of his prophetic role which informs his developing understanding of apostolate, an understanding which is still in its infancy in 1 Thessalonians.' Donfried, 'The Theology of 1 Thessalonians as a Reflection of Its Purpose', *Ibid.*, pp. 119-138 (p. 136). Earl Richards is representative of scholars who, like Donfried, read 1 Thessalonians as representative of the developing thought of an early Paul. Richards, *Thessalonians*, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> See Helmut Koester, '1 Thessalonians – Experiment in Christian Writing', in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History – Essays in Honor of G. H. Williams*, ed. by F. F. Church and T. George, *Studies in the History of Christian Thought*, 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1979), pp. 33-44.

<sup>3</sup> For a review of the debate concerning chronology as it pertains to Paul's developing theology, offered in the context of a rebuttal, see Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology*, trans. by Doug Stott (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 394-415. Rainer Riesner concludes his study with the assertion that, 'although chronology was indeed one important factor in the *development* of Pauline theology, it cannot bear the burden of demonstrating radical, fundamental *transformation*.' *Ibid.*, p. 415.



one suggests that Paul's experiment failed, resulting in epistolary forms that are more readily comparable to canonical and extrabiblical letters.<sup>4</sup>

What may be demonstrated, however, is the early stage of the congregation at Thessalonica. Rather than attributing the differences in self-presentation and epistolary form to a genuinely early stage in Paul's apostolic career, it is more fruitful to consider these features of 1 Thessalonians within the context of the genuinely early stage in the life of the predominantly Gentile congregation to whom Paul is writing.<sup>5</sup> This, then, is where our discussion will begin. Beginning with the situation of the letter, section 2.1 below presents the characteristics of 1 Thessalonians that demonstrate Paul is writing to a church in its earliest stages. Section 2.2 considers Paul's apostolic self-presentation in light of this situation, arguing for the shared nature of the initial mission in Thessalonica as the source of Paul's apostolic presentation. Following this, section 2.3 below directs attention to the form of the epistle, presenting a narrative reading of the grateful retrospective that extends from 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3:13. Central to this retrospective narrative is Paul's presentation of the gospel as a divine communication.

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<sup>4</sup> So also Malherbe begins his Anchor Bible Commentary with the reminder that Paul is a seasoned preacher, who had likely written letters prior to 1 Thessalonians that are unavailable to us, and with a decade and a half of missionary work under his belt was not in the rudimentary stages of his theological development: 'The Paul we meet in 1 Thessalonians is already a mature thinker who brings to bear his theological convictions and pastoral experience on the problems and challenges of a newly founded church.' Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> 'The first letter to the Thessalonians is truly a situationally determined piece of writing whose peculiarities can be explained on the basis of the historical circumstances.' Riesner, *Early Paul*, p. 414.

## 2.1 A Genuinely Early Gentile Congregation

Among Paul's letters 1 Thessalonians offers unparalleled unique insight into Paul's foundational ministry in a city. There is no serious disagreement that 1 Thessalonians was written during the early days of the Thessalonian congregation.<sup>6</sup> Paul's team is relatively close to Thessalonica, writing either from Athens or, most likely, from Corinth.<sup>7</sup> The account in 1 Thessalonians 3:6 of Timothy's return does not name a location for the reunion.<sup>8</sup> However, in Paul's letters Silvanus is only elsewhere associated with Philippi (1 Th. 2:2) and Corinth (2 Cor. 1:9).<sup>9</sup> Since 2 Corinthians 1:19 confirms the participation of all three co-senders at the founding of the church in Corinth, it is preferable to place the missionaries together in that city.<sup>10</sup>

Whether the letter is dispatched from Athens or Corinth, however, the salient point is that Paul is near enough to return in person yet hindered from doing so (1 Th. 2:18), sending the letter in a situation of forced separation. The early stage of the congregation at the time of the team's departure is demonstrable in Paul's language in 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20, verses that indicate an untimely separation that presented a very real threat to the endurance of the newly established

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Wanamaker, an advocate for the priority of 2 Thessalonians, is agnostic on the lapse of time between visit and epistle. See Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, p. 58.

<sup>7</sup> Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, BNTC (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1972), p. 7. Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> Paul's silence allows for Athens as the location of Timothy's return as well as the city in which 1 Thessalonians is composed. The reference to Achaia in 1 Thessalonians 1:7-8 could support either Athens or Corinth as the city from which the epistle was written. See Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, pp. 364-366. Most interpreters identify Corinth as the place of writing. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, pp. 71-74.

<sup>9</sup> This accords with Acts, in which Silvanus fades from the narrative after his arrival in Corinth (Acts 18:5).

<sup>10</sup> Based on the absence of greetings from others in the conclusion to the letter Traugott Holtz suggests there was not a recognizable extant church in the location from which the letter was composed. T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (Zürich: Benzinger, 1986), p.11. This may suggest a date early in the Corinthian mission.

congregation (1 Th. 3:5).<sup>11</sup> While the apostolic visit to the city was certainly longer than that portrayed in Acts, it is clear from the content of the epistle that Paul and his co-senders experienced this dislocation from Thessalonica as premature.<sup>12</sup> No other letter expresses the same intensity of concern at an enforced absence, as Paul attributes the separation to Satan's attempts to hinder his return and dislodge the missionaries' initial work in the city (1 Th. 2:18, 3:5). The best explanation for this concern is that Paul's separation occurred early in the establishment of the congregation at Thessalonica.

The unusual intensity of concern at the circumstances of the team's departure from Thessalonica is all the more striking when compared to the description in 1 Thessalonians 2:2 of that which the team endured in Philippi. Although Paul acknowledges the experience of suffering and shameful mistreatment in Philippi (προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες ... ἐν Φιλίπποις, 1 Th. 2:2a), he presents the departure from that city in positive terms, resulting in an even bolder proclamation of the gospel of God among the Thessalonians (ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλῆσαι, 1 Th. 2:2b). By contrast, the separation from Thessalonica results in polemic warnings and heartfelt agony (1 Th. 2:16-20), despite the fact that the co-senders had predicted their current affliction (1 Th. 3:4) and, at the time of writing, Timothy's good report had set Paul's fears to rest

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<sup>11</sup> Despite disagreement between Acts 17 and Paul's narrative in 1 Thessalonians where the account of Timothy's dispatch and return is concerned, there is no disagreement that Paul at least was expelled from the city. A reconciliation of the account in Acts 17 to Paul's narrative in 1 Thessalonians 1-3 is beyond the scope of this study. See Karl Donfried, '1 Thessalonians, Acts and the Early Paul', in *Paul, Thessalonica*, pp. 69-98 for a representative argument of the incompatibility of Luke's account to Paul's epistle. Donfried does allow for theological continuity between Luke's account and Paul. A representative argument for historic continuity between Acts and 1 Thessalonians may be found in Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, pp. 366-67.

<sup>12</sup> Riesner dates the length of Paul's visit to no more than a month, breaking off his stay prematurely. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, p. 364. Fee suggests a stay for as long as six months. Gordon E. Fee, *The First and Second Letter to the Thessalonians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), p. 6. The actual length of stay in Thessalonica is less important than Paul's presentation of the team's departure as a premature separation.

(3:6). The reasonable explanation for the differing descriptions is that the initial evangelistic visit was cut short in a manner initially perceived by Paul as a significant threat to the permanence of the Thessalonians' faith (1 Th. 3:5). This lends further support to a departure during the nascent stage of congregational development. By virtue of this ill-timed separation 1 Thessalonians is uniquely situated to offer insight into Paul's practices in the initial phases of a newly established congregation.

Taken alone, however, a demonstration of spatial and temporal proximity to the initial mission is insufficient to support the assertion that 1 Thessalonians provides a clear insight into Paul's practices during a foundational mission. Two further features of the letter support the suggestion that the retrospective narrative provides remarkable clarity of insight into the foundational events in Thessalonica. The first is the absence of any significant intervening teachers or opponents exercising influence from within the congregation.<sup>13</sup> This absence leads to the second feature, which is the continuity of instruction between the foundational ministry and this epistle that is unimpeded by intervening teachers.<sup>14</sup> Paul's *apologia* in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 makes no specific reference to other teachers or apostles. The attempts to hinder the announcement of the gospel among the Gentiles represents an external pressure upon the apostolic team rather than internal influence (1 Th. 2:16). This external pressure is likely the experience of life in an

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<sup>13</sup> Raymond Collins argues that attempts to discern opponents in Thessalonica, such as those found in Dibelius and Schmithals, are examples of eisegesis. He asserts that 'a careful reading of 1 Thess by itself hardly suggests that Paul's apostolic authority had been challenged or that the Gospel which he had preached had been vilified or compromised.' Collins, *Studies*, p. 184. For a review of scholarship identifying opponents within the congregation see J. L. Sumney, 'Studying Paul's Opponents: Advances and Challenges', in *Paul and his Opponents*, ed. by Stanley E. Porter, *Pauline Studies*, 2 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), pp. 7-58 (pp. 33-35). Collins references the work of M. Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher I,II: An die Philipper*, HNT 11 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1937), pp. 7-11; Walter Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, trans. by John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 123-218.

<sup>14</sup> So also Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, p. 398.

environment of sustained hostility toward the gospel from the social, religious and power structures of the city.<sup>15</sup> Whatever the exact nature of the affliction to which Paul refers, it was clearly present at the reception of the gospel (1 Th. 1:6) and anticipated by the apostolic team (3:4).<sup>16</sup> Paul's only reference to internal influence is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, verses in which he urges the believers to recognize those who labour among them and have authority to admonish.<sup>17</sup> There is no indication that this authority has interposed upon the initial apostolic proclamation or instruction. Unlike Paul's other epistles, the text of 1 Thessalonians presents no intervening internal influences between the initial mission and the dispatch of the letter.<sup>18</sup>

This feature is unparalleled among Paul's other epistles. In Galatians, the interval between establishment and epistle allows for the introduction of Teachers.<sup>19</sup> Paul's use of the imperfect tense in the statement that the Galatians were running well (ἐτρέχετε καλῶς, Gal. 5:7) suggests

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<sup>15</sup> Todd Still asserts the likelihood of a 'non-Christian opposition which took the forms of verbal harassment, social ostracism, political sanctions and perhaps even some sort of physical abuse, which on the rarest of occasions may have resulted in martyrdom.' Still, *Conflict*, p. 217. Malherbe famously resists any suggestion of persecution, asserting that 'it is reasonable to understand *thlipsis* in 1.6 as the distress and anguish of heart experienced by persons who broke with their past as they received the gospel.' Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, pg. 48.

<sup>16</sup> Where the intervening deaths are concerned Paul addresses this situation and the questions that it raises about the fate of the dead at the *parousia* with a recapitulation of that which both the co-senders and the believers accept about Christ's return (1 Th. 4:13-14). For the death of congregational members as related to the purpose of 1 Thessalonians see Colin R. Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica: Situating 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 126 (Cambridge: University Press, 2004). See also Angus Paddison, *Theological Hermeneutics and 1 Thessalonians*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 133 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> For a rebuttal of interpretations of over-realized eschatology in Thessalonica, see Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, p. 55.

<sup>18</sup> So also Malherbe, asserting that, 'Paul wrote only a matter of months after founding this church, and [...] it is unlikely that their circumstances would have changed enough to require Paul to change his emphasis. As Paul's frequent references to what they already knew and were doing indicate, he was concerned to underline the continuity between his association with them in the past and at the time he wrote the letter.' Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, p. 60.

<sup>19</sup> References in this study to Jewish-Christian evangelists in Galatia as 'Teachers' follows the nomenclature of J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, p.14.

that at the time of his departure, and as indicated by reports since that time, the Galatians were steadfast.<sup>20</sup> The content of the letter to the Galatians is therefore determined primarily in response to the hindrance (ἐγκόπτω, Gal. 5:7) introduced to the believers' continued progress in the gospel.<sup>21</sup> In 1 Corinthians, sufficient time has elapsed for Apollos' preaching ministry to build upon Paul's foundation (1 Cor. 3:10), for the presence of many teachers (1 Cor. 4:15), and exchange of previous letters (1 Cor. 5:9). Regardless of how one partitions 2 Corinthians, the correspondence occurs after a significant passage of time since Paul, Silvanus and Timothy established the church there, allowing for intervening visits, letters and additional apostles. Philippians is also written well after the founding of the congregation, with references to the beginning of the gospel and the long partnership enjoyed from Philippi (Phil. 1:5, 4:15). The letter contains references to other evangelists (Phil. 1:15-17) and warnings against those teaching circumcision (Phil. 3:2). Finally, the letter to the Romans is sent to congregations established by evangelists other than Paul. Therefore, among Paul's letters 1 Thessalonians is uniquely positioned to offer an insight into Paul's foundational practices.<sup>22</sup> No other epistle is written with such immediacy to the founding of a congregation and without the intervening influence of other Christian apostles and teachers.

In addition to the absence of intervening influence between initial mission and dispatched epistle, the text of 1 Thessalonians contains several intentional points of contact between the

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<sup>20</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, p. 475. See also Bruce, *Galatians*, p. 234.

<sup>21</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, p. 474. Martyn asserts that the Galatians would hear Paul's letter 'with the sermons of the Teachers still ringing in their ears', *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>22</sup> 'Written less than a year after [Paul] first entered Thessalonica, [1 Thessalonians] reflects more clearly than any other of Paul's letters his method of forming a Christian community among Greek manual laborers [...] 1 Thessalonians is valuable for what it tells us about the beginnings of a Greek church before external problems intruded.' Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, p. 108.

letter's contents and the recent mission.<sup>23</sup> First, Paul's use of two key terms in the letter, εὐχαριστέω and παρακαλέω, refers to shared activities, the practice of which continues from the foundational mission, through Timothy's return visit, and into the epistle. Secondly, a pattern of language related to previous knowledge (οἶδα) affirms continuity between the teaching imparted during the recent visit and the contents of the letter. Beginning with the first observation, two activities of particular significance to 1 Thessalonians, εὐχαριστέω and παρακαλέω, encourage the continuation of activities initiated during the initial mission. The opening statement in 1 Thessalonians 1:2 employs εὐχαριστέω in the first person present plural, describing the ongoing thankful prayer in which the co-senders are engaged at the time of writing.<sup>24</sup> An identical construction is repeated in 2:13, giving thanks to God for the believers' initial reception of the gospel as a word of God (εὐχαριστοῦμεν, 1 Th. 2:13). Following the account of Timothy's dispatch and return a third expression of thanks is offered for the believers' continuing faith and love toward the apostolic team (εὐχαριστία with δύναμαι, 1 Th. 3:9). The shared nature of this prayer between all three co-senders is notable. Paul's use of the verb underscores the entirely unique situation of co-senders, who are also co-founders of the recipient congregation, engaged in mission together as the letter is written. Silvanus and Timothy's presence and participation with Paul in prayer is further underscored by the fact that in every subsequent use of εὐχαριστέω in the

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<sup>23</sup> Timothy, of course, returned to Thessalonica. The nature of his good report, however, confirms the continuity of labour and relationship between the initial visit and Paul's epistle (1 Th. 3:6).

<sup>24</sup> Charles Wanamaker is among others agreeing with O'Brien's suggestion that the plural form 'gives a glimpse of the corporate daily prayer life of the three missionaries, meeting together and thanking God for His goodness to the Thessalonians.' O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul*, NovTSup 49 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), p. 146. See also Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, p. 74; Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 50.

opening thanksgiving sections of Paul's letters the verb is in the first person singular.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, Paul's use of εὐχαριστέω in the letter includes the recipients. The vocabulary from the opening sentence of the letter is repeated in the closing exhortation that the believers practise ceaseless prayer and thanksgiving in all things (εὐχαριστέω and ἀδιαλείπτως with προσεύχομαι, 1 Th. 5:17-18). Based on the description of the reception of the word of the gospel with joy in the midst of affliction (1:6), and the presence of an exhortation without instruction or preface, one may be certain that this practice was shared among the apostles and converts prior to their separation. Prayerful thanksgiving is identified as 'the will of God in Christ Jesus for you'. The believers are also exhorted to pray for the apostles (προσεύχομαι, 1 Th. 5:25). This use of εὐχαριστέω in the epistle creates a continuing fellowship of ongoing, mutual prayer that extends from the initial reception of the gospel (1:2, 6; 2:13) through Timothy's visit (3:9) and up to the present letter, uniting the hearts of the apostolic team and new believers in God's presence despite physical separation (1 Th. 5:17-18, 25).

This reciprocal activity of prayerful thanksgiving is presented alongside the various expressions of the verb παρακαλέω. The initial preaching ministry of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy is characterized by Paul as an appeal (παρακλήσις, 1 Th. 2:3) among the believers. Paul links the activity of the verb with the initial ministry again in a reminder of how the co-senders exhorted the new believers to walk worthily of God (παρακαλέω and περιπατέω, 1 Th. 2:12). This ministry

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<sup>25</sup> See Ro. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; and Phil. 1:3. A singular use of the verb is entirely in keeping with the situation of these epistles.



continues into Timothy's return, sent for the purpose of encouragement (1 Th. 3:2).<sup>26</sup> The first statement of the paraenetic section likewise repeats the language that Paul used in 1 Thessalonians 2:12. Paul employs παρακαλέω in the appeal to continue walking (περιπατέω) in the ways in which they were previously instructed (1 Th. 4:1). These repetitions of the word family demonstrate that first envoy, and then epistle, are extensions of the apostolic appeal and instruction of the initial mission. The verb παρακαλέω is repeated twice more in the paraenesis, each time in the first person plural (1 Th. 4:10 and 5:14). This progression follows a similar trajectory to that of Paul's language of prayerful thanksgiving: an apostolic activity associated with the initial ministry (2:2, 12), confirmed in Timothy's visit (3:2), and continuing by means of this epistle (4:1, 10; 5:14). As with εὐχαριστέω, Paul presents a reciprocity of comfort and encouragement between the co-senders and the congregation. Timothy's report of the continuing faith and love of the believers results in comfort for the apostolic team (παρακαλέω, 1 Th. 3:7).<sup>27</sup> Additionally, in light of the anticipated Day of the Lord, believers are urged to encourage and build one another up (παρακαλέω, 1 Th. 5:11). Paul's use of εὐχαριστέω and παρακαλέω in 1 Thessalonians thus represents an intentional continuity of apostolic and congregational activity from the initial mission, through Timothy's dispatch, and continuing into the epistle.

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<sup>26</sup> In the narrative describing the initial preaching ministry among the Thessalonians, the only verb that occurs in the imperfect is εὐδοκέω in 1 Th. 2:8, related to the character of the missionaries' preaching. They are portrayed as willingly giving their entire selves along with the gospel of God. In 1 Th. 3:1 εὐδοκέω occurs in the aorist tense, describing the willingness of Silvanus and Paul to be left alone in Athens in order to dispatch Timothy. The repetition suggests that this willingness to send Timothy represents a continuation of the deep willingness to impart the gospel as already experienced by the believers.

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of παρακαλέω and εὐχαριστέω as used in 2 Corinthians to form a tripartite economy of grace see David Briones, 'Mutual Brokers of Grace: A Study of 2 Corinthians 1:3-11', *NTS*, 56 (2010), 536-556.

The second indication that Paul's writing includes several intentional points of connection with the recent mission is that Paul's letter composition makes frequent reference to that which the Thessalonians know or remember from the initial mission.<sup>28</sup> These memories relate to the life story of this new congregation. The verb οἶδα occurs in the second person plural form nine times, each in direct recollection of the events and instruction of the initial mission.<sup>29</sup> The use of μνημονεύω in the second person plural calls to memory the conduct of the apostles during the founding mission as well (2:9). In addition to the references to shared knowledge and memory, there is Paul's use in the letter of the verb προλέγω, employed to recall previous sayings on the part of Paul and the team.<sup>30</sup> In 1 Thessalonians the context is clearly indicative of an initial warning, such as that recollected in 1 Thessalonians 3:4. Paul's reminder of the prediction of suffering (θλίψις) occurred 'when we were with you'. Similarly, the reminder in 1 Th. 4:6 of previous warnings that the Lord is an avenger in all things, repeats the language of solemn witness used of the initial visit in 1 Th. 2:12 (διαμαρτύρομαι in 4:6, μαρτύρομαι in 2:12). The frequent references

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<sup>28</sup> See also Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, p. 398. Joseph Plevnik, noting the frequent allusions as a characteristic feature of 1 Thessalonians, argues that the repetitions reflect 'the circumstances of [Paul's] mission in Thessalonica, a mission that had been interrupted by a persecution. His earlier instruction of the Thessalonians is still very fresh in his mind.' Joseph Plevnik, 'Pauline Presuppositions', in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. by Collins, pp. 50-61 (pp. 53).

<sup>29</sup> See 1 Th. 1:5; 2:1, 2, 5, 11; 3:3, 4; 4:2; and 5:2. Karl Donfried, referring to Nils Dahl's verbal remarks referring to the repetitions as 'superfluous rehearsals', asserts that the phrases are not simply a recollection of the initial visit but should be regarded as 'key elements in Paul's defence of the gospel he preached and presented to the Thessalonians during his initial visit. We should thus suggest that the overall defence of the gospel is intimately linked with the steady rehearsal of the gospel as valid.' Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>30</sup> On half a dozen occasions in letters subsequent to 1 Thessalonians Paul refers to a previous warning or saying in person by using προλέγω. 2 Corinthians 13:2 demonstrates this dynamic explicitly, as Paul refers to warnings given when present (προλέγω) and 'spoken' by epistle in his absence (λέγω). None of the occurrences outside of 1 Thessalonians, however, make an unambiguous reference to the initial visit. The only other occurrence in the first person plural is Paul's anathema in Galatians 1:9 that uses προλέγω in the first person plural, then reverts to λέγω in the first person singular for the warning communicated in the letter. See Martyn, *Galatians*, p. 114.

to words and actions during the initial visit are another example of Paul's intentional extension of the apostolic influence of that visit by means of a written epistle. The invocation of the memory of founding events places the reading of Paul's letter as an event in the trajectory of the unfolding story of the congregation at Thessalonica.

The final feature demonstrating that Paul's letter presents an intentional extension of the initial mission in Thessalonica is the repetition of language in the paraenetic portion of the letter that is used in descriptions of the initial mission. Many of the themes in Paul's instruction in the final two chapters are closely connected to the examples and themes of the first three chapters in the letter.<sup>31</sup> As already noted above in the discussion of the use of παρακαλέω, Paul begins chapters 4-5 of 1 Thessalonians with identical language to the interpersonal exhortation (παρακαλέω) that the co-senders personally extended. Also as noted immediately above, the solemn warning in 4:6 repeats the language of 2:12 (μαρτύρομαι). Two other verbs in the paraenetic section, each stated in the aorist as a recollection of initial instruction, are δίδωμι with παραγγελία (4.2), and παραγγέλλω (4.11). The invocation of that which the believers know, and the apostolic team previously said, also continues into the paraenesis. Interwoven with language of previous memory and exhortation, the present active form of other instruction verbs is indicative of ongoing apostolic instruction by means of the epistle: ἐρωτάω (4.1, 5.12); παρακαλέω (4.1, 4.10, 5.14); θέλω in a negative construction with ἀγνοέω (4.13) and λέγω (4.15). The continuation of language that describes the initial mission, together with a concentration of verbs introducing

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<sup>31</sup> See Johannes Munck, '1 Thess. 1:9-10 and the Missionary Preaching of Paul: Textual Exegesis and Hermeneutic Reflexions', *NTS*, 9 (1963), 95-110.

moral instruction and exhorting faithful action, support the assertion that Paul is writing this epistle as an intentional continuation of an initial ministry that was cut short.<sup>32</sup>

Clearly, all of Paul's letters are an attempt to overcome distance and exercise influence.<sup>33</sup>

The contours of the epistolary influence in 1 Thessalonians are significant, in that this is the only letter written in close proximity to a newly formed congregation. The absence of intervening teachers or leaders in Thessalonica, together with the presence of language that directly connects epistolary content to the foundational mission, supports the observation that 1 Thessalonians offers remarkable insight into Paul's initial mission practices in that city. This is a letter composed in response to the good news from Timothy to Paul, reporting that despite the trauma of an early separation, Timothy had found the congregation in as good a shape as when the team had left them (1 Th. 3:6-9). This early stage in the life of the Thessalonian congregation, together with the premature departure of the initial apostolic team, is the context for two of the most debated features of 1 Thessalonians: Paul's shared apostolic presentation, and the repeated expressions of thanksgiving within an extended narrative.

## 2.2 Shared Initial Ministry

Paul's first letter back to Thessalonica is written in language that presents a shared initial ministry between Silvanus, Timothy and himself. 1 and 2 Thessalonians are the only Pauline epistles

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<sup>32</sup> For an extensive list of vocabulary related to moral exhortation in 1 Thessalonians see Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 139.

<sup>33</sup> Thus Collins' assertion that 'Paul wrote letters to overcome the distance between the speaker and his audience.' R. F. Collins, 'I Command that this Letter be Read: Writing as a Manner of Speaking', in Donfried and Beutler, *Thessalonians Debate*, 319-339 (p. 332).

in which the co-senders are a founding evangelistic team that remains together in active labour for the gospel. In the salutation of both letters, Paul names Silvanus and Timothy alongside himself without differentiation of apostolic roles (1 Th. 1:1, 2 Th. 1:1-2).<sup>34</sup> In 1 Thessalonians the collegiality of the salutation is matched by references in the letter to all three men as ‘apostles of Christ’ (2:7), a phrase unique to this epistle.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, Timothy is described in 1 Thessalonians 3:2 as a ‘co-worker of God in the gospel of Christ’. The phrase *συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ* is equally rare in Paul.<sup>36</sup> Finally, there is the persistent use of the first person plural in 1 Thessalonians – an unusual feature among Paul’s letters.<sup>37</sup> All of the activities of the initial mission (1 Th. 1:2-2:13) and the exhortation in the paraenetic section of the epistle (1 Th. 4-5) are presented as shared between co-senders.

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<sup>34</sup> The fact that Silvanus is not mentioned in the salutation of 2 Corinthians, despite his identification in the body of the letter at the founding of the congregation, argues against Malherbe’s view that Paul includes Silvanus and Timothy as co-senders ‘to remind his readers of his association with them’, thus bringing them to mind for the history of Paul’s contact with the church. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 89. If Paul’s purpose was to include Silvanus and Timothy in the initial narrative and no further, one would expect a clarification in the body of the letter, such as that found in 2 Cor. 1:19.

<sup>35</sup> Given the narrative in 1 Th. 2:17-3:6 and the lack of reference to Timothy in apostolic terms in later letters, it may be that Paul and Silvanus are the only ones to whom Paul applies the phrase ‘Christ’s Apostles’. Where the circumstances behind the text are concerned Todd Still accurately observes the impossibility of knowing who assisted Paul in Thessalonica. See Still, *Conflict*, p. 127n2. If one does not read 1 Thessalonians ‘backward’ through other epistles, however, there is no good textual reason to exclude Timothy from inclusion alongside Silvanus.

<sup>36</sup> The phrase occurs elsewhere only in 1 Co. 3:9, where Paul describes he and Apollos as co-workers with God: *θεοῦ γὰρ ἔσμεν συνεργοί*.

<sup>37</sup> 2 Thessalonians shares a similar characteristic, moving from the first person plural to the singular on only two occasions. After warning against listening to a counterfeit letter in 2:3, Paul anchors the instruction concerning apocalyptic portents in his previous instruction (2 Th. 2:5) and at the end of the letter authenticates it by means of his personal signature (2 Th. 3:17).

While these characteristics have led some to argue for co-authorship, this minority view is unlikely.<sup>38</sup> There is no indication in the text that Paul has employed either Timothy or Silvanus as a secretary in the composition of the letter, nor is it probable that the epistle was composed by committee.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, the verses that do employ a first person singular make it evident that Paul is the identified leader among the co-senders (1 Th. 2:18, 3:5), with a particular authority to adjure the believers that this letter be read aloud (1 Th. 5:27). It is, therefore, preferable to regard Paul as the author of the epistle.<sup>40</sup>

There remains, however, the unusual feature of the persistent use of the first person plural throughout the letter. The majority of interpreters that regard Paul as the sole author of 1 Thessalonians also approach the use of the first person plural as instances of the epistolary or literary plural. However, identifying Paul as the author of the letter does not preclude his use of a genuine plural, that is, reflective of a genuinely shared initial ministry in Thessalonica. The view of this study is that Silvanus and Timothy, as co-senders and members of the initial evangelistic team in Thessalonica, are fully represented in the first person plural of the epistle.<sup>41</sup> In support of this

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<sup>38</sup> *Contra* Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), p. 19; Michael Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy*, JSNTSup, 23 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), pp. 37-45, esp. 43. For an early argument for Silvanus and Timothy as the sole authors of 1 Thessalonians, see Robert Scott, *The Pauline Epistles: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1909) pp. 215 – 233 (p. 221).

<sup>39</sup> The suggestion that the eschatology in 1 Thessalonians originates with Silvanus rather than Paul was argued by Hermann Binder in the late twentieth century. See Hermann Binder, 'Paulus und die Thessalonicherbriefe' in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. by Raymond F. Collins, BETL 87 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), pp. 87-93.

<sup>40</sup> So also Fee, *Thessalonians*, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> 'When other individuals or colleagues are named, the writer shares with these persons the authority and responsibility.' M. Luther Stirewalt Jr., *Paul, the Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 42. *Contra* Willi Marxsen, who rejects Silvanus and Timothy as co-senders, suggesting that they are named to represent the totality of the initial team of Paul and his co-workers. Beyond the salutation the letter is solely Paul. W. Marxsen, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1979), p. 33.

reading, section 2.2.1 argues for a genuine plural based on the pattern of usage within the epistle, while section 2.2.2 argues that Paul's shared presentation of the initial mission is consistent with patterns of Paul's apostolic presentation in other letters. The persistent use of the first person plural in 1 Thessalonians should be read as a genuine plural, reflecting the shared nature of the initial mission in Thessalonica.

### 2.2.1 'I' and 'We' in 1 Thessalonians

References in 1 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians confirm that Paul remains in an excellent working relationship with Silvanus and Timothy when 1 Thessalonians was written, entrusting the role of emissary to Timothy (1 Th. 3:1-6) and working alongside his co-senders to establish the congregation in Corinth (2 Cor. 1:19). This situation is the context for Paul's salutation in 1 Thessalonians. Rather than differentiating his particular apostolic authority, Paul's salutation presents himself in close alignment with his co-senders, an alignment that is reflected in the persistent use of the first person plural throughout the letter. The fact that all three of the initial missionaries to Thessalonica remain together in ministry at the time of the letter's writing and dispatch is a reasonable context for the generation of a letter written with a first person plural.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See also Ben Witherington's conclusion: 'I would suggest it has something to do with the fact that the founding of the church in Thessalonike was a team effort and, though Paul is doing the speaking, he is speaking for the leadership team, even though he is the head spokesperson, the one, for instance, who sends Timothy back to Thessalonike.' Ben Witherington, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), pp. 9-10n44.

Previous studies of Paul's letter writing in comparison to other Greco-Roman letters have demonstrated external support for a genuine plural in Paul's epistles.<sup>43</sup> Writing in defence of a genuine plural in Paul's epistles, Samuel Byrskog's article, 'Co-Senders, Co-Authors and Paul's Use of the First Person Plural', presents an analysis of Paul's epistles in the context of Greco-Roman letter writing.<sup>44</sup> He notes that the inclusion of co-senders was an unusual literary practice and is the exception among Greco-Roman letters.<sup>45</sup> In addition, 'the sample of letters with several senders [...] exhibit no instance of the literary plural.'<sup>46</sup> His subsequent analysis of Paul's letters proceeds on the basis of the general rule that, 'if other criteria of analysis allows an interpretation of either a real or a literary plural, the former is to be preferred.'<sup>47</sup> Where 1 Thessalonians is concerned, Byrskog concludes that, 'there are no instances [...] where the criteria speak against taking the plural as a real plural'.<sup>48</sup> The combination of a persistent first person plural with a salutation that is notably egalitarian among the three co-senders results in Byrskog's conclusion that 1 Thessalonians appears to be 'a collective letter reflecting Paul's close relation to and equal standing with his associates.'<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Contra* Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, pp. 86-89. Malherbe's review of external letter forms leads to his conclusion of a rhetorical purpose in an epistolary plural, intended to bolster close relation to the letter recipients rather than reflect actual relations with the named co-senders.

<sup>44</sup> Samuel Byrskog, 'Co-Senders, Co-Authors and Paul's Use of the First Person Plural', *ZNW*, 87 (1996), 230-250. See also Best, *Thessalonians*, pp. 26-29; Collins, *Studies*, p. 178-180; Fee, *Thessalonians*, p. 4.; W. F. Lofthouse, 'I' and 'We' in the Pauline Letters', *Expository Times*, 64 (Oct. 1952-Sept. 1953) 241-245.

<sup>45</sup> Byrskog, 'Co-Senders', p. 233.

<sup>46</sup> Byrskog, 'Co-Senders', p. 235.

<sup>47</sup> Byrskog, 'Co-Senders', p. 236. An example of this is Romans 1:5, which is almost certainly a literary plural: 'through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations'. See C. E. B. Cranfield, 'Changes of Person and Number in Paul's Epistles', in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, ed. by M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 280-289 (p. 286).

<sup>48</sup> Byrskog, 'Co-Senders', p. 238. Also Daniel Marguerat 'Imiter l'apôtre, mère et père de la communauté (1 Th. 2, 1-12)' in *Not in the Word Alone*, ed. by Hooker, pp. 25-54. (p. 27).

<sup>49</sup> Byrskog, 'Co-Senders', p. 238.



Although Byrskog's conclusion likely overstates the degree to which Paul's apostolic authority is shared among his companions, additional features support his conclusion of a genuine plural.<sup>50</sup> Where pattern of usage is concerned, the retrospective narrative of the initial mission in 1 Thessalonians 1:4-2:13 is in the first person plural, as are the paraenetic instructions given on the basis of this initial mission and teaching (1 Th. 4-5). The repeated use of an exclusive first person plural during the narrative in 1:4-2:13 includes activities and events clearly involving the participation of all three co-senders.<sup>51</sup> By contrast, the passages that introduce ambiguity into the reading of the first person plural as genuine occur as Paul relates an actual situation of separation among the co-senders in 2:17-3:5.<sup>52</sup> Where Acts 17 places Paul entirely alone in Athens, 1 Thessalonians 3:1 suggests that he and Silvanus sent Timothy from that city.<sup>53</sup> Of greater concern

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<sup>50</sup> The focused resistance to Paul's return (1 Th. 2:18) and Paul's individual anxiety concerning the eschatological fruitfulness of the labour in Thessalonica (1 Th. 3:5), taken together with the singular authority to command a reading of the letter (1 Th. 5:27), are demonstrations of a particular apostolic authority. Authority does not, however, preclude mutuality.

<sup>51</sup> 'Since a preference for unusual literary features is rarely accidental, Paul's inclusion of co-senders in the prescripts reflects in all likelihood more than merely a polite desire to mention certain associates.' Byrskog, 'Co-Senders', p. 235. The majority of occurrences of first person plurals in the first three chapters of the letter are exclusive (22 of 28 occurrences). During the description of the initial preaching mission in 1 Th. 1:2-2:13, ten of these occurrences are first person personal pronouns, six of which occur in verses that also contain a distinct second person plural (1:2; 1:5; 1:6; 1:8; 1:9; 2:8). The only inclusive first person plurals refer to a shared relationship to our God and Father and our Lord Jesus (1 Th. 1:3; 2:2; 3:9, 11, 13) and the eschatological hope in Jesus who 'rescues us' (1 Th. 1:10).

<sup>52</sup> Cranfield supports a genuine plural in 1 Thessalonians until 2:17-3:13 when, in his view, 'doubts arise' as to whether the first person singular in 2:18 and 3:5 interprets Paul's use of the plural in the same verses. Cranfield articulates the doubts without answering them, concluding the section with the observation that there is 'scope for further [...] investigation into occurrences of the first person plural in Paul's epistles'. Cranfield, 'Person and Number', pp. 285-87

<sup>53</sup> Most commentators favor a genuine plural. See Best, *Thessalonians*, p. 131; Marxsen, *Thessalonicher*, p. 54; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, p. 90. *Contra* Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica*, p. 218.

than harmonization with Luke's narrative is the grammatical ambiguity of the passages.<sup>54</sup> Paul employs the first person plural of πέμπω in 3:2, followed by a first person singular in 3:5. Since the rest of the narrative employs a genuine plural it seems best to include Silvanus with Paul in the first person plural in 3:2.<sup>55</sup> It is also the fact, however, that in the portion of the letter that narrates the dislocation of the apostolic team, Paul's language turns toward apostolic *self*-presentation. At the point of reunion (3:6), the language of the epistle resumes its shared quality.

Further supporting the argument that the first person plural in the letter following Timothy's return is also genuine is Paul's impulse toward inclusion of the co-senders in his own concerns. The two interjections of a first person singular in 2:17-3:5 each follow a pattern of 'we' to 'I', so that Paul's particular concerns are clearly communicated as a personal expression of shared concerns among the three men.<sup>56</sup> Paul's insistence in 2:18 that again and again he wanted to return is an emphatic derivative of a mutually held desire (ἠθέλησαμεν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἄταξ καὶ δῖς ...). A few verses later, in the same narrative of separation, his emphatic statement that he could no longer stand it and so sent Timothy (κἀγὼ μηκέτι στέγων, 1 Th. 3:5) repeats the language of mutual anxiety in 1 Thessalonians 3:1 (μηκέτι στέγοντες). In each instance Paul's use of singular language choice reverts immediately to a first person plural ('Satan hindered us' in 2:18 and 'our labour' 3:5b, Timothy has returned to us' in 3:6). In fact, the emphasis on 'our

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<sup>54</sup> The extent of the separation is debated. For a discussion of the differing theories and solutions concerning the movements of Paul, Timothy and Silvanus see B. Rigaux, *Saint Paul: Les épîtres aux Thessaloniens* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956), pp. 30-32; Riesner, *Early Paul*, pp. 361-62; Donfried, 'Was Timothy in Athens? Some Exegetical Reflections on 1 Thess. 3.1-3' in *Paul, Thessalonica*, pp. 209-219.

<sup>55</sup> So also Best, *Thessalonians*, p. 131.

<sup>56</sup> Contrast this to Paul's pattern in Galatians, in which the unusual appearances of the first person plural in a letter resolutely focused on Paul's individual apostolic authority also follow a pattern of 'we' to 'I' (we previously warned and I warn now, Gal. 1:9; asked us to remember the poor which I was eager to do, Gal. 2:10).

labour' in 3:5 requires a return midsentence to a first person exclusive plural: 'when I could bear it no longer I sent that I might know your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that *our* labor would be in vain.'<sup>57</sup> It is language that clearly aligns Paul's individual concerns with those of the entire team, and may be read as reflective of the actual dynamics of the situation. Even though the apostles could not *return* together, they *remain* together – both literally and metaphorically – for the writing of the letter. Paul's use of a first person plural reflects the genuinely shared ministry among the co-senders, both in person and in heart (2:17).

The patterns of usage in the text of 1 Thessalonians present no difficulty in reading the plural occurrences as a genuine reflection of a shared initial mission (1 Th. 1:2-2:13), common concern during a fractured separation (2:14-3:5), and a resumption of foundational apostolic instruction (4-5). This pattern of usage as genuine to the situation is further supported when the shared activities that Paul presents in 1 Thessalonians are compared to the presentation of the same activities in other epistles.

### 2.2.2 Shared Foundational Ministry

A brief comparison of the language in 1 Thessalonians to Paul's other letters demonstrates that, while a persistent first person plural is unique to 1 Thessalonians, Paul's presentation of shared activities during the initial mission in Thessalonica is consistent with his apostolic self-presentation in later letters. Where patterns of occurrence are concerned several of the essential

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<sup>57</sup> E. H. Askwith notes the connection between a genuine first person plural and Paul's reference to those with whom he has worked to found a church. E. H. Askwith, "'I' and 'We' in the Thessalonian Epistles', *Expositor*, 8<sup>th</sup> series, 1 (1911), 149-159.

activities associated with the initial mission in Thessalonica are also genuine plurals in later letters. While the comparison below is not exhaustive, it is sufficient to refute the claim that Paul's use of the plural throughout 1 Thessalonians is literary rather than genuine.

At the heart of Paul's evangelistic mission in any city was his proclamation of the gospel. It is notable, therefore, that the active speaking verbs associated in 1 Thessalonians with the initial mission, λαλέω and κηρύσσω, are predominantly shared activities in later epistles. On six different occasions Paul uses the same present active, first person plural form of λαλέω that occurs in 1 Thessalonians 2:4 of apostolic speech.<sup>58</sup> In 1 Corinthians 2:6, 7 and 13 Paul employs λαλέω in a series of genuine plurals, each related to speaking God's wisdom, and each inclusive of other apostles.<sup>59</sup> The same person and form of λαλέω occurs again in 2 Corinthians 2:17 and 4:13, of true messengers in contrast to those who peddle or pervert the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. In 2 Corinthians 12:19, the exact person and form is used of the divinely witnessed sincerity with which Paul and Titus are speaking. Finally, in Philippians 1:14 an infinitive occurrence of λαλέω is associated by Paul with the advance of the gospel in a manner that aligns Paul and the activities of others. Paul supports his assurance that imprisonment is actually serving to advance the gospel with the observation that the brothers are speaking the word with greater boldness. The comparison alongside Paul's comments in 1 Thessalonians 2:1 is poignant: that despite the mistreatment in Philippi the apostolic team

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<sup>58</sup> In addition to use of the term as gospel language, Paul often uses λαλέω in the present active singular form in reference to that which he is speaking by means of the epistle (see Ro. 7:1, 15:18; 1 Cor. 9:8, 15:34; 2 Cor. 11:17, 23). In 1 Corinthians the singular form of the verb occurs three times unrelated to apostolic labours, twice in a general reference to speech in 1 Cor. 13:1 and 11, and several times of speaking in tongues (14:6, 18 and 19).

<sup>59</sup> Paul's use of an emphatic singular pronoun in 1 Cor. 3:1 to distinguish his own speaking among the Corinthians argues against a literary plural in the preceding verses: κἀγώ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἠδυνήθην λαλήσαι ὑμῖν ... (1 Cor. 3:1).

spoke the gospel in Thessalonica with a divinely inspired freedom. In every instance of the plural, and one of the infinitive, Paul associates himself with co-workers that speak the gospel.

This pattern is repeated with κηρύσσω, used by Paul of the initial proclamation in Thessalonica (1 Th. 2:9) and repeated in Paul's reference to the ministry of the co-senders during their time in Corinth (2 Cor. 1:19). An identical use of the aorist first person plural form of the verb to that in 1 Th. 2:9 is found in 2 Corinthians 11:4 of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy's initial proclamation in Corinth. Similar to λαλέω, Paul employs a present active first person plural form of κηρύσσω to represent the proclamation of his fellow gospel emissaries. This occurs in Romans 10:8, 1 Corinthians 1:23 and 15:11, and 2 Corinthians 4:5. Therefore, Paul's epistles consistently employ λαλέω and κηρύσσω in the first person plural when Paul presents himself alongside those whose speech and conduct exemplify sincere and reliable divine messengers.<sup>60</sup> When his reference is to a specific foundational event, as it is in 2 Corinthians 1:19 and 11:4, Paul's use of a genuine plural reflects the situation at the founding of a congregation. There should be no difficulty, therefore, in reading these same verbs in 1 Thessalonians 2:4 and 9 as genuine plurals, including Silvanus and Timothy in this central activity of an initial, foundational mission.<sup>61</sup>

The shared application is further supported by two other words that Paul applies to his fellow workers in 1 Thessalonians and in later epistles: ἐργάζομαι, used in reference to the co-senders' manual labour (1 Th. 2:9), and the nominal reference to labour (κόπος ἡμῶν, 1 Th. 3:5). The terms are both used in the Corinthian letters of Paul alongside fellow workers and apostles. In 1

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<sup>60</sup> This pattern is visible in Romans 10 as well, in which Paul presents κηρύσσω as a shared activity (Ro. 10:8, 14, 15).

<sup>61</sup> Henneken consistently refers to all three of the co-senders proclaiming the gospel in Thessalonica. For example, in a discussion of 1 Th. 2:13 he states: 'Die Thessalonicher haben den λόγος ἀκοῆς von Paulus und seinen Mitarbeitern, Timotheus und Silas, erhalten.' Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 49.

Corinthians 4:12 Paul employs ἐργάζομαι in reference to himself and his fellow apostles who ‘grow weary from the work of our own hands’, while in 9:6 ἐργάζομαι is used again in Paul’s protests that only he and Barnabas are required to work for a living.<sup>62</sup> There is no difficulty imagining that Silvanus and Timothy joined Paul in the same financial practices in Thessalonica.

Additionally, while Paul’s description of the initial mission in Thessalonica as ‘our labour’ is unique to this epistle (κόπος ἡμῶν, 3:5), the use of the κοπιᾶω word family as representative of labour in the gospel is shared across Paul’s letters.<sup>63</sup> The noun κόπος occurs in Paul’s metaphor of planting and watering that envisions a common, albeit sequential, labour with Apollos (τὸν ἴδιον κόπον, 1 Cor. 3:8). The nominal form is repeated in the list of hardships shared with other servants of God in 2 Corinthians 6:5. Paul’s letters frequently use the verb κοπιᾶω when acknowledging the labours of others, making reference to the ‘labour in in the Lord’ undertaken by other believers, with the implication of a shared work in the gospel (1 Cor. 15:58; Ro. 16:6, 12).<sup>64</sup> As with the vocabulary that Paul chooses for proclamation in Thessalonica, there is no difficulty including Silvanus and Timothy in the first person plural terms related both to manual labour and to the foundational apostolic labours in Thessalonica.

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<sup>62</sup> Timothy is associated with Paul through the use of ἐργάζομαι as ‘doing the work of the Lord just as I am’ (1 Cor. 16:10). This is, however, a different application of the verb than that shared in 1 Thessalonians. See also Paul’s use of the same word family to describe fellow workers: συνεργός in Ro. 16:3, 9, 21; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:5, 4:3; 1 Th. 3:2 (τοῦ θεοῦ).

<sup>63</sup> The usage is non-specific to apostolic labour but inclusive of the working out of the gospel in Christian community (an extension of Paul’s initial labours). In 1 Thessalonians Paul refers to the believers’ labour of love (1 Th. 1:3) and employs the verbal form in acknowledging those labouring among the believers (1 Th. 5: 12). A similar reference is made to those co-workers and labourers in the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. 16:15-16).

<sup>64</sup> The same verb is used with a different application for the manual labour of Paul and his fellow apostles (1 Cor. 4:12).

In summary, several features of 1 Thessalonians support the view that Paul's persistent use of the first person plural is a reflection of a genuinely shared initial mission among the believers. First, no other letter replicates the situation of an original apostolic team, recently separated from a new congregation, who remain actively engaged in evangelistic ministry at the time of the letter's composition. Second, as Byrskog's study of Greco-Roman letters concluded, the pattern of usage in the letter supports a genuine plural throughout. Third, the presentation of Silvanus and Timothy actively engaged alongside Paul in preaching and manual labour is consistent with activities that Paul presents as shared in other epistles.

It is entirely reasonable, therefore, that the shared apostolic presentation is reflective of a genuinely shared initial ministry. Additionally, the recognition of a genuine plural in Paul's presentation of similar apostolic activities in later letters argues against the view that a shared apostolic presentation in 1 Thessalonians reflects an early stage in Paul's apostolic self-understanding. The proximity of the co-senders to the initial, foundational mission in Thessalonica at the time the letter was written is a far more suitable explanation for Paul's shared apostolic presentation.

### **2.3 Composing a Community Narrative: 1 Thessalonians 1-3**

There is broad disagreement concerning the form and function of the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians, owing primarily to the presence of three distinct statements of thanksgiving in 1:2,

2:13 and 3:9-13.<sup>65</sup> Embedded within this debate is further disagreement about the relationship of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 to the purpose of the letter as a whole.<sup>66</sup> Rarely discussed in the debates, however, are the narrative accounts in these opening chapters: the arrival of the gospel and its messengers (1 Th. 1:2-2:13) followed by the attempted hindrance of the gospel's progress among the Gentiles (1 Th. 2:14-3:8).<sup>67</sup> Paul's first thanksgiving statement introduces the narrative of the initial mission in Thessalonica (1:4-2:13), his second the resistance to this gospel (2:14-3:8), while his third thanksgiving concludes the narrative of Timothy's return with an expression of joy and a wish prayer (3:9-13). Significant to this study is the presentation within these narratives of the gospel as a divine communication (1 Th. 1:8, 2:13). Section 2.3.1 reviews the contours of the debate over form and function, followed by the suggestion of a narrative reading of 1 Thessalonians 1-3 in section 2.3.2.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Reference to these chapters as an extensive thanksgiving acknowledges the narrative sections contained within the three statements of thanks found in 1:2, 2:13 and 3:9. Paul Schubert regarded the three-part thanksgiving as the body of the letter. See P. Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings*, BZNW, 20 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1939), p. 26. Further defence of the epistolary critical analysis of a unified three-part thanksgiving and a review of scholarship is offered by P. T. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, pp. 4-15, 141-66. Malherbe approaches the opening chapters as autobiographical thanksgiving. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, pp. 78-81. Rhetorical critical approaches vary on a theme found in Charles Wanamaker, whose work identifies the opening chapters as *Exodium* in 1:2-10 and *Narratio* from 2:1-3:10, in Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, pp.45-52.

<sup>66</sup> See the collection of essays on the debate over 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, *The Thessalonian Debate*, ed. by Donfried and Buetler, generated in meetings of the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* from 1995-98.

<sup>67</sup> For a summary and argument against various division hypotheses see Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, pp. 404-411.

<sup>68</sup> For a thorough review of approaches to the structure of 1 Thessalonians see Sean A. Adams, 'Evaluating 1 Thessalonians: An Outline of Holistic Approaches to 1 Thessalonians in the Last 25 Years', *CBR*, 8/1 (2009), 51-70.



### 2.3.1 Debating 1 Thessalonians 1-3

There is little disagreement that the first major section of 1 Thessalonians extends from 1:2-3:13.<sup>69</sup> While very few contemporary scholars embrace Paul Schubert's strict analysis of a normative form, the majority of current interpreters agree with his designation of the first three chapters as an extended thanksgiving.<sup>70</sup> Many proponents of an extended thanksgiving in these chapters align this form with a paraenetic function to this first part of the letter, and the letter as a whole.<sup>71</sup> It is not the case, however, that all proponents of a paraenetic or hortatory function to the opening of the epistle support an extended thanksgiving. Morna Hooker, for example, argues for an end to the formal thanksgiving at 1:10, noting that this opening section contains all of the major themes upon which Paul expands in the rest of the epistle, without arguing for an apologetic

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<sup>69</sup> The demarcation of a *letter-paraenesis* section that begins at 4:1 is the only feature of 1 Thessalonians on which the majority of interpreters agree. See David Luckensmeyer's broad-ranging review of scholarship in the context of an epistolary analysis of 1 Thessalonians. David Luckensmeyer, *The Eschatology of First Thessalonians*, NTOA 71 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), pp. 47-74. Gene Green is representative of a handful of interpreters who regard the paraenetic section as a part of the body of the epistle. Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 69-77, esp. p. 74.

<sup>70</sup> Morna Hooker agreeing with the minority view that the thanksgiving ends at 1:10, notes that this reading is in the minority among commentators: 'Here I part company with Schubert, and indeed from the majority of commentators, who think that the introductory thanksgiving extends to the end of chapter 3.' Hooker, 'Concluding Reflections: "Our Gospel Came to You not in Word Alone but in Power Also"', in *Not in the Word Alone*, ed. by Hooker, pp. 155-166 (p. 157). See the review of scholarship in Jan Lambrecht's article, 'Thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians 1-3', in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. by Collins, pp. 183-205.

<sup>71</sup> For the testimony of a self-professed convert from the apologetic to paraenetic purpose of 1 Thessalonians see Edgar Krentz, '1 Thessalonians: Rhetorical Flourishes and Formal Constraints', in *Thessalonians Debate*, ed. by Donfried and Beutler, pp. 287-318, esp. p. 303. For a review of epistolary, thematic and rhetorical approaches to the letter, in the context of his own argument that the epistle is an example of deliberative rhetoric, see Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, pp. 45-48.

purpose to 2:1-12.<sup>72</sup> Those employing a rhetorical critical methodology generally concur with the break at 1:10 while approaching the central section from 2:1-3:13 as *narratio*.<sup>73</sup> These solutions are in contrast to those vocal proponents of an epistolary break at 1:10, thus reading 1 Thessalonians 2:1 as the beginning of the body of the letter, and a traditional function of 2:1-12 as apostolic *apologia*.<sup>74</sup>

The function of the extended apostolic presentation in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 is the sticking point to a solution. In form-critical approaches to the text the primary argument of the letter begins at 1 Thessalonians 2:1.<sup>75</sup> Based upon the influence of similar passages in the Corinthian correspondance, proponents of this view argue that interpreters ‘from the time of the church fathers’ approached 1 Thessalonians 2:1–12 as an apostolic *apologia*.<sup>76</sup> In this view Paul’s primary intention in writing 1 Thessalonians is to defend his apostolic ministry in Thessalonica from the

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<sup>72</sup> M. Hooker, *Concluding Reflections*, in *Not in the Word Alone*, ed. by Hooker, pp. 155-166 (pp. 157-59), following J. Munck, ‘1 Thess. 1:9-10 and the Missionary Preaching of Paul: Textual Exegesis and Hermeneutic Reflexions’, *New Testament Studies*, 9 (1963), pp. 95-110.

<sup>73</sup> For a review of outlines of 1 Thessalonians based on rhetorical criticism, presented alongside his own, see Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, pp. 48-52.

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Jeffery Weima, ‘An Apology for the Apologetic Function of 1 Thessalonians 2.1-12’, *JSNT*, 68 (1997), 73-99; Seyoon Kim, ‘Paul’s entry (ἐἰσοδος) and the Thessalonians’ faith (1 Th. 1–3)’, *NTS*, 51 (2005), 519-42.

<sup>75</sup> See Hendrikus Boers’ summary of form-critical approaches to 1 Thessalonians for a review of scholarship. H. Boers, ‘The Form Critical Study of Paul’s Letters. I Thessalonians as a Case Study’, *NTS*, 22/2 (1976), 140-58. Boers adopts Nils Dahl’s suggestion that 1 Th. 2:1-3:13 be referred to as ‘the central section’, *Ibid.*, p. 145. Boers regards 2:1-12 as apostolic *apologia*, 2:17-3:13 as apostolic *parousia*, 4:1-5.22 as exhortation, and 5:23-8 as conclusion. 2:13-16 is rejected as an interpolation. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>76</sup> Walter Schmithals asserts, ‘On this point the exegetes from the time of the Fathers down to the last century have never been in doubt.’ Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, p. 151.

nefarious influence of outside opposition, variously identified as Judaizers, Gnostics or other traveling preachers.<sup>77</sup>

There are notable problems with this approach. Primary in the critique of the apologetic reading is a rejection of a method that reads the Thessalonian correspondence backwards through the lens of the difficulties in Corinth.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, there are no direct references within the text of 1 Thessalonians indicating that the situation in Thessalonica requires that Paul defend his individual apostolic authority from enemies or accusations. In fact, the tone of the letter is intensely encouraging. Paul's writing erupts in several enthusiastic moments of encouragement, included alongside notably tender portrayals of the initial transmission of the gospel (1 Th. 2:8). The distinct expressions of thanksgiving in verses 1:2, 2:13 and 3:9 -13 celebrate the continuing faith, hope and love of the believers. The paraenesis in 1 Thessalonians 4 consistently begins with praise for past action and an encouragement to continue in the same direction. Finally, the only new teaching (on the resurrection of the dead at the *parousia* in 4:13-18) is a section of comfort in the wake of the deaths of some of the beloved members of the community (as compared to the rebuttal of wrong teaching, cf. 1 Cor. 15).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> In addition to J. Weima and S. Kim, others who argue that 2:1-12 is an apostolic *apologia* against real or potential accusations include: H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, pp. 60-75; T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief*, pp. 66-95. Robert Jewett is representative of a minority view that identifies opponents within the congregation. Robert Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 91-109.

<sup>78</sup> W. Marxsen, *Thessalonicher*, p. 44.

<sup>79</sup> 'The verb ἀγνοέω, a word not found elsewhere in the Thessalonian correspondence, is used by Paul as a literary device to signal that new information is to follow.' Donfried, *Paul*, p. 40. See Wanamaker's view that the information need not be completely new, and may be connected to Paul's emphatic denials concerning the Day of the Lord in 2 Thessalonians (which Wanamaker suggests chronologically preceded 1 Thessalonians). Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, p. 166.

In response to these problems with an apologetic reading, a majority of recent scholars accept Malherbe's argument of a philopronetic reading of the passage.<sup>80</sup> With this approach, an extensive thanksgiving presents no difficulty.<sup>81</sup> Where previous interpretations of 2:1-12 regarded Paul as tearing down the walls of accusations that his enemies had built up around his ministry, many contemporary readings approach the passage as a constructive attempt on Paul's part to affirm and build up positive relations between himself and his listeners, possibly as a result of fall-out in the wake of his hasty exit.<sup>82</sup>

The immediate weakness of this paraenetic approach, however, is precisely in this lack of uniform agreement as to why Paul needs to include such a lengthy autobiographical section

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<sup>80</sup> Abraham Malherbe, 'Gentle as a Nurse: the Cynic Background to I Th. 2.', *NovT*, 12/2 (April 1970), 203-217. Malherbe's study of cynic preachers, paying particular attention to Dio Chrysostom, demonstrated similarities between Paul's language and that used by Chrysostom to distinguish himself from 'sophists' and charlatan cynic preachers (*Ibid.*, p. 205). Even scholars such as F. F. Bruce, whose commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians retains the traditional view of 'Apostolic Defence', cite extensively from Malherbe in support of the view that Paul is defending himself from accusations leveled against him by the compatriots of the Thessalonian Christians. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 22-33.

<sup>81</sup> The paraenetic function of the extended thanksgiving may be achieved by various designations of form. George Lyons and Raymond Collins, for example, categorize 2:1-12 as 'autobiography'. George Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding*, SBLDS 73 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985); R. Collins, *Studies*, p. 24. Both Raymond Collins and Daniel Marguerat attribute their own designation of 'autobiography' to Piero Rossano, whose identification of the pericope as an 'autobiographical confession' derives from the confessions of Jeremiah. As an illustration of the lack of consensus concerning form and function in 2:1-12 Weima, a representative proponent of the apologetic *function* of the passage, describes the *form* of 2:1-16 as autobiographical. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, pp. 120-25 (pp. 120-21).

<sup>82</sup> Thus George Lyons' conclusion that what the apostle here 'reestablishes is not his authority but his ethos, and not for the purpose of defence but for parenesis.' Lyons, *Autobiography*: p.185. Others who adopt a rhetorical or paraenetic stance toward the text include Abraham Malherbe, Robert Jewett, Charles Wanamaker, Abraham Smith, Earl Richard, and Johannes Schoon-Janseen.

intended to bolster his *ethos* among the listeners.<sup>83</sup> The suggestion that Paul's reputation had been harmed by his hasty exit does not reconcile either with the stated reason for Timothy's dispatch (to strengthen and encourage the believers) or with Timothy's report of a continuing love for the team.<sup>84</sup> Where the apologetic approach was criticized for the lack of obvious detractors in the text, the paranaetic approach suffers from a paucity of evidence for the necessity of relational bridge building between Paul and the believers.<sup>85</sup> The consistent rejection throughout 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 of negative traits, alongside various appeals to the apostolic *veracit *, do suggest that a defence is being offered.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Seyoon Kim provides a concise summary of these objections: 'Therefore, for their theory of a philophroneic purpose of 1 Thess 2–3, Malherbe and Wanamaker must explain why Paul felt the need to go to such an unusual length in establishing his *ethos*. They have to explain also why Paul felt the need to be so emphatic as to call repeatedly upon his readers (2.1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 11) and even God (2.5, 10) as witnesses to his integrity, if his intention was nothing more than establishing a friendly relationship with his readers to impart such simple and ordinary exhortations. Can Malherbe and Wanamaker explain these without acknowledging an apologetic element in the philophroneic efforts?' Kim, *Paul's entry (εἰσοδος)*, p. 533.

<sup>84</sup> Rigaux, *Les  p tres aux Thessaloniens* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956), p. 59. *Contra* Karl Donfried, 'The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonian Correspondence', in *Paul, Thessalonica*, pp. 21-48 (p. 45) (first pbl. in *NTS*, 31 (1985), 336-56).

<sup>85</sup> Weima's statement, that 'if Paul wants to ensure that the contents of his letter will be accepted and obeyed, it is imperative for him to respond to any criticism that may be directed against him and so re-establish the trust and confidence of his readers', illustrates the difference in approaches that blame a hasty exit for a need to bolster *ethos*, and those that identify detractors against whose specific accusations Paul is forced to defend himself. Weima, *Apology*, p. 87.

<sup>86</sup> See Lambrecht's argument, which concludes that 'not only the very nature of this letter but also the frequent appeal to veracity [οἶδατε in 2:1, 2, 5; μνημονεύετε in 2:9 and especially ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός in 2:10 and θεός μάρτυς in 2:5. *footnote 73*] decisively plead against Malherbe's hesitation.' (referring specifically to Abraham Malherbe's assertion that Paul's purpose is primarily exhortation intended to describe for the Thessalonians the pattern for living which Paul will promote in later chapters.) Jan Lambrecht, *Thanksgivings*, p. 204. For other solutions, see R.F. Collins' suggestion of 1 Th. 2:1 – 12 as 'autobiographical confession', crafted with comparison and contrast because he 'wanted the Thessalonians to appreciate the Paul who was trying to reveal himself to them.' Collins, *Studies*, p. 184. Rigaux likewise rejects the view that 2:1 – 12 is an apology, and considers the passage to have the form of an apostolic autobiography – a form whose purpose was the historic elucidation of the importance which Paul attached to his role as an apostle. B. Rigaux, *The Letters of St. Paul* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968), p. 122.

Three features of the situation in 1 Thessalonians are rarely included in critical approaches to the form of the letter. The first is the assumption that Paul's use of the first person plural in the letter is not genuine. As a result, the assertions made concerning Paul's apostolic self-presentation are predicated on a literary plural. As argued above, however, Paul's use of the first person plural should be read as genuine. This qualifies any arguments that the letter is addressing personal accusations. It also makes a designation of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 as 'autobiography' problematic. The best designation reflects the shared nature of the passage. Our analysis follows Jan Lambrecht's designation of the form as 'apostolic biography', alternatively referring to the function as apostolic presentation.

The second, and for the purposes of this study, most important feature overlooked in discussions of the function of 1 Thessalonians 1-3, is Paul's presentation of the gospel as a divine communication. In recollecting the recent foundational mission in Thessalonica Paul's primary gospel language is λόγος. Interpretations of 2:1-12 repeatedly follow Paul's self-presentation, rather than attending to Paul's presentation of the εὐαγγέλιον as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου / θεοῦ. However, central to the story of the initial mission as narrated by Paul in 1:2-2:16 is the arrival of and resistance to the εὐαγγέλιον as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου / θεοῦ. So while contemporary analysis of the letter is focused on Paul, Paul's own narrative is focused on the gospel among the Thessalonians.<sup>87</sup> This larger narrative context affirms the observations of scholars such as Willi

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<sup>87</sup> Karl Donfried, observing the significant emphasis on 'the word' and 'the gospel' in 1 Thessalonians, states: 'At issue in Thessalonica is the validity of the gospel he preached. [...] A frontal assault has been launched against its veracity.' Donfried asserts that Paul defends his gospel in two ways. First, as a message originating from God and second, by bringing to recollection specific elements of his preaching. Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonians*, p. 134.

Marxsen and Rudolph Hoppe, each of whom assert that Paul's defence in this passage is, in fact, a defence of the gospel as a word of God.<sup>88</sup>

One potential way forward is to engage the narrative form of 1 Thessalonians 1-3. Charles Wanamaker, in his comparison of epistolary and rhetorical approaches to 1 Thessalonians, observes that: 'None of the scholars practising formal literary analysis with whom I am familiar, except Lambrecht, has noted that 2:1-3:10 constitutes a narrative of Paul's relations with the Christian community at Thessalonica.'<sup>89</sup> 1 Thessalonians 1-3 is the longest retrospective narrative of an initial visit found in Paul's epistles. Acknowledging the form of Paul's own writing, this study approaches 1 Thessalonians 1-3 as narrative thanksgiving.

### 2.3.2 Apocalyptic Thanksgivings and Apostolic Biographies

The suggestion that the first three chapters of Paul's epistle be regarded as a narrative thanksgiving describes the context in which Paul presents the gospel as a word of the Lord / word of God. Rather than proposing a new structure for the letter, this section suggests an adaptation of Jan Lambrecht's outline of 1 Thessalonians in light of observations made by Daniel Marguerat. Jan Lambrecht's structural analysis of 1 Thessalonians 1-3 approaches the three statements of

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<sup>88</sup> Willi Marxsen's designation of the *apologia* in 1 Th. 2:1-12 as a defence of the gospel in Thessalonica reflects a similar approach to these passages. His explanation imagines Paul as one of any number of *Wanderpredigern*, whose continued presence and competing messages in Thessalonica threaten the fidelity of the new believers to the word of God as received from Paul. Marxsen, *Thessalonicher*, pp. 22-25. See also Rudolph Hoppe, 'Epistolary and Rhetorical Context', in *The Thessalonian Debate*, ed. by Donfried and Beutler, pp. 66-68.

<sup>89</sup> Charles Wanamaker, 'Epistolary vs. Rhetorical Analysis: Is a Synthesis Possible?', in *Thessalonian Debate*, ed. by Collins, pp. 255-286 (p. 267).

thanksgiving as the controlling factors, suggesting that the two narrative (autobiographical) reports are natural to the emotional tone of the epistle.<sup>90</sup> Lambrecht's suggested order is:<sup>91</sup>

1,1: salutation

(a) 1,2-10: thanksgiving

(b) 2,1-12: apologetical report

(a) 2,13-16: thanksgiving

(b) 2,17-3,8: report on the intervening period

(a) 3,9-10: thanksgiving

3,11-13: eschatological wish-prayer

With Lambrecht's warning against increasingly inventive solutions to the form of the letter ringing in our ears, our project proposes a development on Lambrecht's structure in light of Daniel Marguerat's observations on the interaction of narrative and prayer together.<sup>92</sup> Marguerat asserts a dynamic interplay between Paul's statements of thanksgiving and intervening stories, constructing a memory of shared history and announcing future purpose.<sup>93</sup> His analysis of 2:1-12 concludes that Paul's narrative presents the gospel as a 'word of God energetically at work among you who believe' in order to reinforce among the recipients an attitude of resistance in the midst of

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<sup>90</sup> Lambrecht, *Thanksgivings*, p. 199. Lambrecht reads 2:1-12 as *apologia*, most likely in reply to personal attacks. *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>91</sup> Lambrecht, *Thanksgivings*, p. 202

<sup>92</sup> Jan Lambrecht, prior to presenting his own structural outline of 1 Thessalonians 1-3, cautions: 'The danger, however, lies in exaggeration, in increasingly inventive speciousness, in too much, often farfetched and strained, genre hunting. [...] Before appealing to a compulsory obedience to given genres one should always first try a more natural procedure.' Lambrecht, *Thanksgivings*, p. 199.

<sup>93</sup> 'La fondation de la communauté et l'espoir de retrouvailles entre l'apôtre et les Thessaloniens sont mentionnés aussi bien sous forme orante [...] que sous forme narrative [...]. La prière trouve sa légitimation dans la narration, qui alimente en retour la prière. Les trois premiers chapitres de 1 Th procèdent d'une même intention, qui est de faire mémoire d'une histoire commune et d'énoncer un projet d'avenir pour Paul et pour les Thessaloniens, que ce soit sur le mode "eucharistique" ou sur le mode narratif.' Marguerat, *Imiter l'apôtre*, p. 54



affliction.<sup>94</sup> Lambrecht's reflections on the themes in Paul's 'rather unpretentious structure of chaps. 1-3' also note the affliction of the Christians in Thessalonica who have accepted God's word; Paul's apostolic concern with the believers' perseverance and eschatological salvation; and 'God's irresistible gospel'.<sup>95</sup> Lambrecht concludes that: 'human response and acceptance are needed. Yet, God's initiative possesses, as it were, an irresistible dynamic. Paul thanks God because the Thessalonians received [...] the powerful, effective word of God.'<sup>96</sup> As emphasized by both Lambrecht and Marguerat, therefore, the unifying features of 1 Thessalonians 1-3 are: thanksgiving, the gospel as an effective divine communication, and eschatological hope.

The question, however, is how the two parts – thanksgiving and apostolic biography – work together to achieve the purpose of strengthening the believers in the face of affliction. Our proposal is a very simple adjustment to that of Lambrecht's outline, extended to place chapters 1-3 in the context of the letter as a whole, and adjusted to recognize the apocalyptic expectation in the announcement of God's gospel among the believers:

1:1 Salutation

(a) 1:2-10 Apocalyptic Thanksgiving Narrative (λόγος τοῦ κυρίου)

(b) 2:1-12 Apostolic Biography - Arrival (εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ)

(a) 2:13-16 Apocalyptic Thanksgiving Narrative (λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ)

(b) 2:17-3:8 Apostolic Biography - Separation

(a) 3:9-13 Apocalyptic Thanksgiving & Wish Prayer

(b) 4:1-5:22 Apostolic Appeal (λόγος τοῦ κυρίου)

(a) 5:23-24 Apocalyptic Benediction

(b) 5:25-27 Apostolic Admonition

5:28 Closing Benediction

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<sup>94</sup> Marguerat, *Imiter l'apôtre*, pp. 32, 54.

<sup>95</sup> Lambrecht, *Thanksgivings*, pp. 202-05.

<sup>96</sup> Lambrecht, *Thanksgivings*, p. 205.

We know, reading Paul's letter, that the separation from the Thessalonians was traumatic for Paul (2:17), that the new believers are living in the midst of affliction (2:14), and that they are grieving the deaths of fellow believers (4:13). We also know that Timothy's good news of their enduring faith and love (3:6) is accompanied by a realistic appraisal that there remains a need for interpersonal apostolic contact to supply that which is lacking in the Thessalonians' faith (3:10). Paul's response is an epistle, two-thirds of which is a story of the church in Thessalonica from day one until the letter's dispatch. Yet the Thessalonians don't need to have these events told to them. The only event narrated in 1 Thessalonians 1-3 that we can be certain is 'news' is the apostolic response to Timothy's return. Paul's letter nevertheless starts at the beginning and tells it all again in a narrative interaction switching between apocalyptic thanksgiving and apostolic self-presentation. Two observations illuminate the function of Paul's unusual form.

First, there is a distinctly eschatological framework to Paul's narrative, with apocalyptic statements occurring at each transition.<sup>97</sup> The designation in this study of these statements as apocalyptic is a reference to content.<sup>98</sup> It is generally agreed that the features of the eschatological

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<sup>97</sup> The eschatological climaxes in 1:9-10, 2:14-16 and 3:13 have been approached by Hurd as evidence of continuity, supporting a narrative that extends from 1:2-2:16. John C. Hurd, 'Paul Ahead of his Time: 1 Thess. 2:13-16', in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity. I. Paul and the Gospels*, ed. by Peter Richardson (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), pp. 21-36 (pp. 28-30). Bruce Johanson's analysis presents Paul's apocalyptic statements as 'sequence-ending events'. Bruce Johanson, *To All the Brethren: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians* (Stockholm: Alqvist & Wiksell, 1987), p. 86.

<sup>98</sup> The use of 'apocalyptic' to describe the content of Paul's gospel follows Käsemann's distinction, referring to the emphasis on Jesus as the risen Lord, whose return as the eschatological Son of Man to execute justice in the Day of the Lord is eagerly anticipated. Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, tr. by W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 105, 133-34.

expectations articulated in 1 and 2 Thessalonians are predominantly apocalyptic.<sup>99</sup> The phrase ‘apocalyptic expectation’ that is employed in the course of this study is a reference to the apocalyptic content of the eschatological expectations expressed throughout the letter. Each of the three eschatological transitions in the extended thanksgiving narrative reflect this apocalyptic expectation. The opening thanksgiving that narrates the entrance of God’s gospel concludes with the eager anticipation of the rescue of the believers at the return of Jesus (1:1-10); the conclusion of the second thanksgiving answers the present suffering of the believers and apostles with God’s wrath in the end against those who oppose the gospel (2:13-16); and the closing thanksgiving enfolds the wish prayer for reunion into the hope of the *parousia* (3:9-13). The shared history of the apostles and believers is caught up at every turn in the apocalyptic expectation of thankful prayers. The label ‘apocalyptic thanksgiving’ is a description that emphasizes the apocalyptic content of the thanksgiving statements at the end of each narrative.

This, however, is only half of Paul’s pattern. The form of chapters 1-3 embeds two apostolic biographies that narrate the arrival among and separation of the co-senders, and Paul in particular, from the Thessalonians. The essential identity of the co-senders in each narrative is that of divine emissaries, suffering for the sake of an entrusted and embodied gospel of God (2:1-12), hindered and afflicted by cosmic forces opposed to the forward progress of that gospel among the Gentiles

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<sup>99</sup> The eschatological expectations encountered in reading of 1-2 Thessalonians have several of the characteristics identified by David Aune with the events of apocalyptic scenarios. These include: (1) 2 ages dualism; (2) this world as a conflict between antithetical forces (God and Satan); (3) a present evil age with people of God as an oppressed minority; (4) a period of tribulation before the imminent intervention of God to bring the present evil age to an end; (5) the end of which will be the Day of the Lord, ‘with the appearance of a redeemer figure, a messenger of God such as a Messiah ... or an eschatological prophet’; (6) The day of judgment before the present evil age gives way to the age to come, with God’s representative presiding over the final resurrection; (7) the world restored or destroyed and renewed. David E. Aune, ‘Apocalyptic and New Testament Interpretation’ in *Method and Meaning: Essays on New Testament Interpretation in Honor of Harold W. Attridge*, ed. by Andrew B. McGowan and Ken Harold Richards (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), pp. 237-258, (pp. 245-46).

(2:17-3:8). These are the models of gospel embodiment for the recent converts, who themselves have been transformed by their reception of the gospel (1:6). With the apostolic team characterized as the agonists of the story, from whom the new believers can learn, Paul narrates the experiences of suffering and grief as the *mise en scène* of the rescue and resurrection eagerly anticipated at Jesus' return.<sup>100</sup> Apocalyptic thanksgivings and apostolic biographies together form a community narrative that tells the story of the Thessalonians in light of the gospel as a divine communication.

Within the discussion of this study, references to the revelatory nature of the gospel as a word of the Lord reflect a continuity with the revelatory nature of divine speech in the OT prophetic tradition. Like the word of the Lord entrusted to the prophets in Israel's history, the gospel functions as a word of the Lord, revealing that which the Lord intends to enact on behalf of his people at the end of the age. The gospel announced and received in Thessalonica announced that which God has done through the resurrection of the Son of God from the dead, and that which God will do at the return of the Son to rescue from judgment (1 Th. 1:9-10).<sup>101</sup> As a word of God, it is an effective and enduring communication in the lives of the believers. Consideration of the believers' present circumstances is undertaken from within this revelatory prophetic framework, in the assurance of the gospel as a word of God active among the believers, empowering their endurance

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<sup>100</sup> A variation on the previous definition of narrative as a perceived series of non-randomly connected events, that Toolan calls 'a less minimalist definition', introduces an 'experiencing agonist [...] from whose experience we humans can learn.' *Ibid.*, p. 9. Used above, this addition of an exemplary agonist (the apostolic team) to the narrative of the gospel's arrival in Thessalonica, as narrated in 2:1-12, is a narrative version of the interpretation of 2:1-12 as apostolic autobiography for the sake of paraenesis.

<sup>101</sup> Thomas Boomershine concludes that, 'Jesus, Paul, and Mark use the apocalyptic tradition in a prophetic manner.' Thomas E. Boomershine, 'Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages in Paul, Jesus, and Mark: Rhetoric and Dialectic in Apocalyptic and the New Testament', in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed. by Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards, JSNTSup 24 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), pp. 147-67 (p. 164).

(1 Th. 2:13, 3:5-6). Paul's community narrative situates the story of the Thessalonians within the announcement of the gospel as a divine communication – a revelation of the current circumstances of God's people in light of God's past actions and future agency.

Referring to his own work in Galatians, Richard Hays has written that, '...to understand 'apocalyptic' in Paul, we must attend to *the gospel's imaginative remaking of the world*.<sup>102</sup> While Paul's apocalyptic discourse in 1 Thessalonians is broadly accepted,<sup>103</sup> the interest has focused primarily on the apocalyptic *content* of Paul's gospel, with less attention to its revelatory *nature*.<sup>104</sup> Hays' description of the narrative function of apocalyptic in Galatians describes the narrative dynamics in 1 Thessalonians 1-3:

'Paul is seeking to reshape the imagination of his readers, seeking to narrate them into a symbolic world where God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the

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<sup>102</sup> Richard Hays, 'Apocalyptic *Poiēsis* in Galatians: Paternity, Passion and Participation', in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel and Ethics in Paul's Letter*, ed. by Mark W. Elliott, Scott J. Hafemann, N.T. Wright, and John Frederick (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2014), pp. 200-219 (p. 205).

<sup>103</sup> For the interaction between the epistle and Thessalonica as an apocalyptic community see Beverly Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), pp. 138-9. Raymond Collins notes, in his review of scholarship between 1956 and 1984, that the major interest in the epistle has been directed at the apocalyptic disclosures in the letter. Collins, *Studies*, p. 9.

<sup>104</sup> The use of 'revelatory nature' in this study is an expression of the dynamic in Paul's gospel to which J. Louis Martyn applies the term 'apocalyptic' in his work on Galatians. The different terms are employed in this study to avoid confusion between references to the content of Paul's gospel that reflect an apocalyptic worldview that created the genre of apocalypse, and references to the function or nature of Paul's gospel, that reveals the cosmic dimensions of God's salvation in Christ. Louis Martyn's work approaches apocalyptic from its revelatory character. Richard E. Sturm summarizes the implications of this approach to Galatians, where application of the word 'apocalyptic' in discussion of Paul's gospel of the cross and resurrection in Galatians, 'is used most significantly, to *reveal* the coming of Christ, the Spirit, and faith, as well as the true course of cosmic history, the ground of his own apostleship, and the battle commands for obeying the gospel.' 'Defining the Word "Apocalyptic": A Problem in Biblical Criticism', in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, ed. by Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards, JSNTSupp 24 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), pp. 17-48 (pp. 40-41).

Spirit are powerfully at work to bring a new world into being. [...] [T]he symbolic world created by Paul's imagery is one in which all the initiative in the rescue of God's people belongs to God. It is a world in which the death and resurrection of Jesus have decisively transformed the conditions of all human existence.<sup>105</sup>

Paul's community narrative, the combination of apocalyptic thanksgivings and apostolic biographies, reimagines the events of the Thessalonians' affliction within the narrative of God's gospel as a word of the Lord / word of God, in continuity with the revelatory features of prophetic divine communication.<sup>106</sup> The apostle reorients the disorienting events of affliction (1:6, 2:13) and death (4:13) into the gospel narrative of the death, resurrection and promised return of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ (3:13).<sup>107</sup> In the apostolic biographies he assures the believers of the divine origin of the message that they have received, and models endurance in the hope that God will fulfill the promises of the gospel in the Day of the Lord.

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<sup>105</sup> Richard Hays, *Apocalyptic Poiēsis, in Galatians and Christian Theology*, ed. by Elliott, Hafemann, Wright and Frederick (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2014), pp. 200-219, (p. 208)

<sup>106</sup> Luckensmeyer's argument that eschatology is the hermeneutical key to interpreting Paul's exhortations in 1 Thessalonians concludes that Paul's use of eschatology in the letter accomplishes two things. First, it allows the believers to understand their current social disintegration. Second, it allows for integration into an eschatologically identifiable existence. Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, p. 327

<sup>107</sup> The language of disorienting / random and reorienting / non-random events is dependent on Michael Toolan's 'minimalist definition' of narrative as 'the perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events' provided by Toolan in his book, *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction*, 2 edn (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 6. What is meant by 'non-random connection' is 'a connectedness that is taken to be motivated and significant', while an event is defined as 'a recognized state or set of conditions, and that something happens, causing a change to that state'. *Ibid.*, p. 6. The analysis that follows in chapters three, four and five of this study is not an application of narrative interpretation to Paul's letters. However, Toolan's theories run in the background of the discussion. For an application of Toolan's work in an analysis of Paul's use of the creation story, see Edward Adams, 'Paul's Story of God and Creation: The Story of How God Fulfils His Purposes in Creation', in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment*, ed. by Bruce W. Longenecker, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), pp. 19-43, (pp. 20-21).

Paul constructs a community narrative in such a way that the form of 1 Thessalonians 1-3 fulfils the apostolic function of the epistle: establishing and encouraging the believers in their work of faith, labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Th. 1:2).<sup>108</sup>

In the current study, we will focus our discussion on the way in which Paul's presentation of the gospel as a divine communication is integral to the community narrative that Paul is constructing in this epistle. For ease of reference, we will refer to the 'apocalyptic thanksgiving narrative' sections simply as 'apocalyptic thanksgiving'. As such, the next three chapters are organized around the three designations of divine communication. Chapter three considers Paul's use of the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in the apocalyptic thanksgiving in 1:2-10. Since the phrase is used a second time in 4:13-18, that passage is considered as well. In chapter four the apostolic biography from 2:1-12 is considered. Finally, chapter five concludes with an analysis of the phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in the second apocalyptic thanksgiving (2:13-16). Consideration is also given to the second apostolic biography (2:17-3:8) and final thanksgiving and wish prayer (3:9-13).

## 2.4 Summary: 1 Thessalonians as Source

The designation of 1 Thessalonians as 'early' has, among previous interpreters, been applied to Paul's apostolic career or letter writing. The text of 1 Thessalonians, however, directs attention back to the early stages of the Thessalonian congregation, from whom the founding team was separated in circumstances described by Paul as traumatic to the apostles and a threat to the

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<sup>108</sup> Johan S. Vos, noting the importance of this twin pastoral purpose, classifies chapter 3 of 1 Thessalonians under the sign of "strengthening", and chapters four and five under the sign of "encouragement". Vos, *Response to Traugott Holtz*, in *Thessalonians Debate*, ed. by Donfried and Beutler, p. 83.

endurance of the congregation. Additionally, Paul's letter describes the new believers as living in a context of affliction and experiencing the grief of the recent death of fellow believers. Timothy's return with good news of enduring faith, hope and love in the midst of affliction results in a letter, co-sent by the founding apostles, that exudes gratitude. In a context of dislocation – engendered by apostolic separation, conversion out of the dominant society, suffering and deaths – Paul regathers the Thessalonian *ekklēsia* through a community narrative. The story that Paul tells in 1 Thessalonians 1-3 is a dynamic interplay of apocalyptic thanksgiving and apostolic biography. Essential to this narrative is God's 'irresistible gospel', arriving as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου and λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in Thessalonica. Paul, Silvanus and Timothy are presented in a genuinely shared prophetic ministry, speaking God's initial and ongoing call into his kingdom and glory.



## CHAPTER THREE: GOSPEL AS A WORD OF THE LORD

The focus of this chapter is on the nature of the gospel as a divine communication – a prophetic speech act through which the *ekklēsia* in Thessalonica is formed, and in which the newly converted believers place their hope. In 1:2-10 Paul opens the letter with a thanksgiving that leads, without a break, into the opening narrative.<sup>1</sup> This is the first act in the community narrative that Paul is constructing for the Thessalonians.<sup>2</sup> Paul's use of the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in close relationship to gospel proclamation is entirely unique to 1 Thessalonians. It is used twice in this epistle, as Paul will repeat the phrase in the discussion of the resurrection from the dead (4:13-18).

Section 3.1 of this chapter presents an exegetical analysis of Paul's apocalyptic thanksgiving in 1:2-10. The gospel arrives as an event, transforming idol worshipers into God's beloved and elect. It is God's agency, through the message, that compels the narrative forward. Cilliers Breytenbach notes that the word θεός is the dominant noun in 1:2-10.<sup>3</sup> Paul narrates divine agency actively working in and with the message of the gospel, directly calling Gentiles to faith in rescue from apocalyptic wrath through Jesus, the Son of God. An important feature of the message as a divine communication is the eschatological promise of the gospel, a message that is apocalyptic in content

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<sup>1</sup> The entire thanksgiving is comprised of only two sentences, the first extending from 1:2-5, and the second from 1:6-10.

<sup>2</sup> Subsequent examples of thanksgiving for the gospel among the recipients are found in: 1 Cor. 1:4-8; Phil. 1:3-5; Ro. 1: 8-16. See also O'Brien, Peter T. 'Thanksgiving and the Gospel in Paul,' *NTS*, 21 (1974), 144-155.

<sup>3</sup> Cilliers Breytenbach, 'Der Danksagungsbericht des Paulus über den Gottesglauben der Thessalonicher (1 Thess 1,2-10)', in *Not in the Word Alone*, ed. by Hooker, pp. 3-24 (p. 12). Collins demonstrates continuity between Paul's use of θεός in 1 Thessalonians and the Judeo-biblical meaning of the word, presented in the epistle in the context of the relationship between God the Father (1 Th. 1:1,3; 3:11, 13) and Jesus the Son (1:1, 10; 3:11). Raymond Collins, 'God in the First Letter to the Thessalonians: Paul's Earliest Written Appreciation of *ho theos*', *LS* 16 (1991), 137-154.

and revelatory in nature. The gospel as a divine communication is an announcement through which the Spirit of God performs that which the message proclaims – the inclusion of the Gentiles among the beloved and elect of God in the day of salvation.

Section 3.2 compares Paul's subsequent use of the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 as a category of divine speech act that is prophetically oriented toward the return of the Lord Jesus. The analysis in that section considers the entire context from 4:13-18. The summary of Paul's use of the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου, found in section 3.3, is that Paul's narrative presents the gospel as a divine speech act in the OT prophetic tradition, reinterpreted through the Lord Jesus as the acting agent of rescue in the Day of the Lord. The opening thanksgiving in 1:2-10, therefore, is an act of prophetic re-imagination, locating the affliction and dislocation at the reception of the gospel within the narrative of prophetic suffering and hope.

### 3.1 'Our Gospel' as λόγος τοῦ κυρίου

Following the apostles' thanksgiving prayer for the believers' work of faith, labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, the first gospel narrative in this epistle presents the εὐαγγέλιον among the Thessalonians as an active and authentic divine communication, in continuity with the OT tradition of prophetic speech-act (λόγος τοῦ κυρίου).<sup>4</sup> Both the vocabulary of 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 and the narrative development support the view that Paul intentionally employs the Scriptural prophetic idiom 'word of the Lord' as a category of divine communication to which the εὐαγγέλιον belongs. Paul's use of the idiom associates the apocalyptic content and

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<sup>4</sup> So also Pahl, citing general scholarly agreement that the phrase 'word of the Lord' refers to some type of 'divine utterance'. Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 105.

revelatory nature of the gospel as proclaimed in Thessalonica with the eschatological expectation of the Scriptural word of the Lord: anticipating Gentile inclusion among the beloved and elect of God at the *parousia*. The exegetical analysis that supports this reading is broken into four sections, beginning with Paul's identification in 1:4 of the believers in Thessalonica as God's beloved and chosen (section 3.1.1), a claim that Paul supports with the extended narrative of the arrival of the gospel in 1:5 (section 3.1.2), its reception among the Thessalonians in 1:6-7 (section 3.1.3), and its expansive reach as a word of the Lord in 1:8-10 (section 3.1.4).

### 3.1.1 Beloved and Chosen (1 Th. 1:2-4)

The suggestion that Paul is utilizing the phrase *λόγος τοῦ κυρίου* with an intentional connection to the Scriptural prophetic tradition would be difficult to support if it was the only language in 1 Thessalonians with a strong OT resonance. As it happens, from the opening reference to the recipients as *τῆ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων* (1:1)<sup>5</sup> through the distinctly Jewish language

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<sup>5</sup> Collins equates the noun *ἐκκλησία* with the Hebrew *qahal Yahweh*, 'a term which had become sacrosanct in Judaism insofar as it was used to describe Israel in the idealized days of its pristine purity. [...] For Paul to have called the Thessalonian Christians a church was for him to express the conviction that in this community at Thessalonica, made up of converts from paganism as well as from Judaism, the ideal Israel of Jewish expectation was being realized – and this because the Thessalonians had received the Gospel.' Collins, *Studies*, p. 375. See also Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 90.

describing the conversion from idols (1:9-10),<sup>6</sup> Paul's language in the apocalyptic thanksgiving repeatedly draws upon vocabulary and ideas traditional to Israel and her Scriptures. This extends through the rest of the epistle as well. The moral instructions in 1 Thessalonians 4-5 are closely associated to Jewish teaching in holiness.<sup>7</sup> The apocalyptic descriptions of salvation in this letter have often been associated with Jewish apocalyptic expectations of 'wrath' and 'rescue' (1:9-10, 2:16).<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the description of the resurrection of the dead at the return of the Son of Man also echoes Jewish apocalyptic hope (4:13-18).<sup>9</sup>

An early indication that Paul's community narrative for the Thessalonian believers is closely connected to Israel's history is given in the language in 1 Thessalonians 1:4: εἰδότες, ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ [τοῦ] θεοῦ, τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν. Paul's language of divine election connects to Israel's history as he employs the nominal form, ἐκλογή, reflecting the LXX use of the verb ἐκλέγω

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<sup>6</sup> There is disagreement as to whether the language in 1 Th. 1:9-10 replicates Jewish Christian preaching or Hellenistic Judaism. Victor Furnish's conclusion is reasonable: 'It is more likely that Paul himself composed this statement making use of missionary terminology that was current in both Hellenistic-Jewish and Hellenistic Jewish-Christian circles. Much of this terminology derived, in turn, from scriptural concepts and idioms.' Furnish, *1 Thessalonians*, p. 48. Furnish identifies several concepts in the passage with the OT Scriptures, including turning to God, serving the Lord, God as living and true, waiting for deliverance, rescue and God's wrath. See also the concise review by C. Breytenbach tracing the Jewish and Jewish-Christian origins in the phrase 'serve the living and true God', Breytenbach, 'Danksagungsbericht', 12-17.

<sup>7</sup> Continuity between Paul's instructions and Jewish tradition has been noted later in the letter as well. G.P. Carras, in arguing that Paul's sexual ethic in 1 Th. 4 is held in common with Jewish ethical ideas, supports his arguments by demonstrating a common semantic field between Paul's letters and Jewish vice lists, word fields from which the early Christian missionaries drew in discussing issues related to Gentile conversion. George P. Carras, 'Jewish Ethics and Gentile Converts: Remarks on 1 Thes 4,3-8', in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. by Collins, pp. 306-315.

<sup>8</sup> Henneken also associates the divine call to walk in God's kingdom with the Jewish expectation of rescue. Henneken, *Verkündigung*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>9</sup> J. Chapa notes that the apostolic comfort offered in 4:13-18 concerning the resurrection of the dead at the *parousia* is rooted in the Jewish hope in God's faithfulness and the resurrection of the dead. Juan Chapa, 'Consolatory Patterns? 1 Thes. 4,13.18; 5,11' in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. by Collins, pp. 220-28, (pp. 226-228).

for God's choice of Israel.<sup>10</sup> In the LXX, while Abraham is often referred to as the beloved of God, only Jacob as Israel is described as both beloved and elect (cf. Is. 44:2).<sup>11</sup> The verb also occurs in the words of Moses to the Israelites in Deuteronomy. In Deut. 10:15 God's election (ἐκλέγω) of Israel is attributed to the fact that God chose to love (ἀγαπάω) the Patriarchs.<sup>12</sup> Based upon the historic incidents of the divine election of Jacob and his descendants, the prophets anticipate the future age when God will restore the beloved and chosen children of Israel from exile. Paul's later use of the term ἐκλογή in Romans 9-11 reflects a continuity with this prophetic tradition of the children of Israel as God's elect.<sup>13</sup> In Romans 9:11 the nominal ἐκλογή has particular associations to the divine choice of Jacob, extended to Israel as his descendants. Subsequent to this, in Romans 11:28 Paul applies this vocabulary to his fellow Jews, asserting that, as regards the divine choice (ἐκλογή), Israel is beloved (ἀγαπητός). While the description in 1 Thessalonians 1:4 of Gentile converts as beloved (ἀγαπάω) and elect (ἐκλογή) may not be original to Paul, the power in applying this language to Gentile converts in Thessalonica derives from the primary importance of the language to describe the children of Israel.<sup>14</sup> Following this initial vocabulary of election, the description in 1 Th. 1:5-10 of the arrival and response to the gospel is replete with language and concepts that

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<sup>10</sup> The noun ἐκλογή is not used in the LXX for divine choice, although Paul clearly associates the noun to God's divine choice of Israel in Romans 9-11 (Ro. 9:11, 11:5 and 11:28). Paul's use of the same vocabulary in Romans 9, in a context clearly connected to the OT narrative of God's election of Israel, argues against Marshall's objections to an echo of the language in 1 Thessalonians. Howard Marshall, 'Election and Calling to Salvation in 1 and 2 Thessalonians' in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. by Collins, pp. 260-276 (p.262).

<sup>11</sup> παῖς μου Ιακωβ καὶ ὁ ἠγαπημένος Ισραηλ ὃν ἐξελεξάμην, LXX Is. 44:2. The LXX employs the middle form of ἐκλέγω (ἐκλέγομαι) to render the Hebrew בָּחַר.

<sup>12</sup> Victor Furnish associates Paul's use of the perfect passive participle with the precedent of the LXX, 'where it is frequently used with reference to God's electing love (e.g., Deut. 32:15; 33:5, 26; Jer. 11:15; 12:7; Hos. 2:23).' Furnish, *Thessalonians*, p. 43. Weima also emphasizes the associations of the word with Israel. Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 90.

<sup>13</sup> Furnish, *Thessalonians*, p. 43. Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 91.

<sup>14</sup> There is evidence that the language of beloved and called was used in Rabbinic literature for proselytes. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 110.

share a common linguistic and conceptual field with the OT prophetic tradition, further supporting a reading of the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου as a prophetic topos.<sup>15</sup> Offering thanks for God's election of the Thessalonians as beloved (1:4), Paul continues his narrative of the arrival and acceptance of the gospel among the Thessalonians.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.1.2 Gospel Announcement as Event (1 Th. 1:5)

Paul expands upon the co-senders' knowledge that the Thessalonian converts are the beloved and elect of God with a narrative of the gospel's arrival. Reading the ὅτι epexegetically,<sup>17</sup> 1 Th. 1:5 connects the apostles' grateful conviction concerning the divine choice of the Thessalonians in verse 1:4 with the active arrival of the gospel. The passage is cited below in its entirety from 1:5-10, with Paul's gospel language vocabulary emphasized in bold type.

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<sup>15</sup> 'This biblical 'word of God/the Lord' pattern is so prominent that it is unimaginable that any Jew in the first century brought up on the Scriptures could say or hear these phrases without hearing echoes of the previous prophetic usage.' Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 131. Bartholomew Henneken's denial of an explicit association between the topos and its occurrence in the prophetic speech of the OT is based on a difference in content and eschatological era. The OT 'word of God' in the prophets necessarily anticipated the new era that Paul's gospel announces. Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 61.

<sup>16</sup> 'Dieses Grundmotiv seiner Danksagung – der neugewonnene Glaube der Thessalonicher – wird in 1,4f unter einem anderen Aspekt fortgeführt, nämlich dem des erwählenden Gottes und der von ihm gewählten konkreten geschichtlichen Form der Erwählung.' Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 28.

<sup>17</sup> The epexegetical use of ὅτι presents the active arrival of the gospel as a demonstration of the divine choice of the Thessalonian believers. The focus of 1:5 is on the manner of the apostolic preaching (a message imbued with divine agency) rather than on the reception of the gospel on the part of the converts (1:6-10). A causal reading is inconsistent with other occurrences of the phrase in Paul (see 1 Th. 2:1, also Ro. 13:11; 1 Cor. 16:15; 2 Cor. 12:3-4) and with the immediate context of Paul's thanksgiving (since it shifts the focus from the manner of apostolic preaching to the fact of Gentile response). So also Best, *Thessalonians*, p. 73, following Rigaux and Milligan; Kemmler, *Faith and Human Reason*, p. 160; Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 110.

1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

<sup>5</sup> ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ, καθὼς οἴδατε οἱ οὖν ἐγενήθημεν [ἐν] ὑμῖν δι' ὑμᾶς. <sup>6</sup> Καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου, δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου, <sup>7</sup> ὥστε γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς τύπον πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ. <sup>8</sup> ἅφ' ὑμῶν γὰρ ἐξήχηται ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ [ἐν τῇ] Ἀχαΐᾳ, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἢ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν, ὥστε μὴ χρεῖαν ἔχειν ἡμᾶς λαλεῖν τι. <sup>9</sup> αὐτοὶ γὰρ περὶ ἡμῶν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὅποιαν εἴσοδον ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδωλῶν δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ <sup>10</sup> καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ [τῶν] νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν ρυόμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης.

Two patterns are of particular note in this opening section. The first is the repeated use of the verb γίνομαι, underlined in the passage above (1:5, 6 and 7). The verb is used twelve times in 1:2-3:13. The second pattern is the presentation of the εὐαγγέλιον (1:5) as a combination of λόγος (1:5, 6 and 8) with the Holy Spirit and power (πνεῦμα ἅγιος, 1:1:5, 6 and δύναμις, 1:5). The description develops from 'our gospel' to 'word of the Lord', an OT prophetic designation for divine speech. The repeated use of γίνομαι and the emphasis on the Spirit echoes the pattern of a direct divine encounter between the prophets and God at the reception of a word of the Lord.

Paul's focus in this opening narrative on the arrival of the gospel as an event is undergirded by his repeated use of the verb γίνομαι.<sup>18</sup> In 1 Thessalonians 1:5 Paul writes that 'τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν ... ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς'.<sup>19</sup> The use of γίνομαι to describe the arrival of the gospel in Thessalonica is entirely unique among the Pauline epistles.<sup>20</sup> The initial use of γίνομαι in verse 1:5 is followed by eleven additional occurrences in 1:5-2:14 that connect this initial eventful arrival of the gospel to the repercussions described among the apostles and this new community of believers. Paul Schubert's in-depth analysis of γίνομαι in these verses is instructive, demonstrating not only the careful structure of 1 Thessalonians 1-3, but also the unusual usage.<sup>21</sup> The verb appears four times in 1:5-10, six times in 2:1-16, and twice in 2:17-3:8, forming a syntactical framework upon which Paul constructs his recollections of the gospel's initial arrival and reception.<sup>22</sup> Schubert's analysis demonstrates that these descriptions in Thessalonians are

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<sup>18</sup> Malherbe likewise argues that 'this concentrated use of *ginesthai* where *erchesthai* or *einai* would have done equally well suggests a deliberate choice of the word to convey an eventful occurrence.' Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 111.

<sup>19</sup> The personal pronoun on εὐαγγέλιον is not indicative of origin: '[Paul] specifies 'our gospel' [...] not in order to distinguish it from other 'gospels' or because he claims to have originated it [...], but to identify it as the gospel that God has 'entrusted' him to proclaim (2:4).' Furnish, *1 Thessalonians*, p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> This is the only instance in Paul of εὐαγγέλιον in the nominative position to the verb γίνομαι in any form. Paul employs γίνομαι on 119 occasions.

<sup>21</sup> 'We reiterate emphatically that there is nothing common in the fact that eight of these ten forms are aorist passives and that one group of five forms is in the 1. ps. pl. and the other group of four forms in the 2. ps. pl.' Schubert, *Pauline Thanksgivings*, p. 20.

<sup>22</sup> The verb is used in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 (2x), 1:6, 1:7; 2:1, 2:5, 2:7, 2:8, 2:10, 2:14; 3:4 and 3:5.



connected, like a chain of reactions, all originating in the event of the gospel's arrival in 1 Thessalonians 1:5.<sup>23</sup>

Restated in Toolan's narrative terms, the arrival of the gospel in Thessalonica is the first of a sequence of non-randomly connected events.<sup>24</sup> Following from the initial use of γίνομαι with εὐαγγέλιον in verse 1:5, four occurrences of the verb in the second person plural describe the gospel's effect in the lives of the believers: they became imitators both of the apostolic team and of the Lord (1 Th. 1:6),<sup>25</sup> which in turn causes them to become an example for all the faithful in the surrounding region (1 Th. 1:7), beloved to the apostolic team (1 Th. 2:8) and imitators of the churches of God that are located in Judea in Christ (1 Th. 2:14). Similarly, in 2:1, the arrival of the messengers is emphasized, as 'our entrance' did not prove ineffective (γίνομαι with κενός). The chain effects of γίνομαι continue, describing that which the messengers proved to be among the believers (2:5, 2:7, 2:8 and 2:10); the affliction that resulted in the separation of apostles from believers (3:4); and Paul's fears that the labour in the initial mission would become vain in the midst of testing (3:5). Poetically, the final use of the verb imagines the undoing of the entire chain of events since the first use of γίνομαι with the εὐαγγέλιον in 1:5! Paul's storytelling situates the historically random events of affliction and persecution (1:6, 2:14, 3:4) within a clear, non-random sequence that begins with the advent of 'our gospel' among the Thessalonians.

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<sup>23</sup> So also Schubert, asserting that these nine occurrences of the verb from 1:5b-2:14 'are directly derived from and logically dependent on the very first occurrence of γίνομαι in 1:5a.' Schubert, *Thanksgivings*, p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> Toolan, *Narrative*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Paul repeats the use of γίνομαι as he exhorts the Corinthian believers to become imitators of him in 1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1. The Galatians are exhorted in verse 4:12 of that letter to become as Paul is. In Philippians 3:17 there is a similar command to become imitators.

The result of combining εὐαγγέλιον and γίνομαι in these opening verses is an emphasis on the advent of the message itself rather than on its spoken delivery by human emissaries. Notice that as the narrative in 1:4-10 unfolds, the apostolic team is passively transformed (1:5) or actively silenced (1:8) but never directly speaking or announcing. This is not to suggest that the gospel emissaries are unnecessary. Were human agency unessential, Paul could have easily omitted the personal pronoun with εὐαγγέλιον in verse 1:5, or omitted the narrative in 2:1-12 on the character and conduct of the co-senders as gospel emissaries. In this first narrative, however, ‘our gospel’ advances through God’s initiative. In 1:5-10 the writing directs attention to the divine agency at work through the message that arrived in Thessalonica. This focus on divine rather than human agency in the gospel’s arrival is emphasized further by the unusual combination in 1:5a of εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν with the aorist passive of γίνομαι. Eight of the ten forms of the verb in this sequence are in the aorist passive (1:5 2x, 1:6, 2:5, 2:7, 2:8, 2:10, 2:14). This is half of the 16 total uses of the aorist passive form of γίνομαι in the undisputed Pauline epistles.<sup>26</sup> Only here is εὐαγγέλιον the subject of the verb γίνομαι in any form.<sup>27</sup> The effect of the combination in the narrative that follows is a focused attention on the movement of the gospel itself rather than on the human agency of its announcement. The repeated use of γίνομαι as a divine passive reflects the reality that Paul is presenting in this narrative: ‘our gospel’ is a message through which God directly calls and transforms Gentiles into beloved children.

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<sup>26</sup> Paul employs the aorist passive form of γίνομαι in Ro.16:23; 1 Cor. 1:30, 4:9, 4:13, 10:6 and 15:10; 2 Cor. 3:7, 7:14. There are two additional occurrences within LXX citations (Ro. 9:29 and 11:9).

<sup>27</sup> A spoken or written word is the subject of γίνομαι seven times in Paul, inclusive of 1 Th. 1:5. Once the subject is a prediction of affliction (1 Th. 3:4); in three places it is the law (Gal. 3:17, 24; 2 Cor. 3:7); once it is Paul’s boasting concerning the Corinthians (2 Cor. 7:14); and once it is the fulfilment of the word written concerning the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:54).

Paul's use of γίνομαι to narrate the arrival of the gospel as an event among the Thessalonians is strongly reminiscent of the ways in which the LXX prophetic narratives describe the arrival of the prophetic word of the Lord. When a divine revelation occurs the Old Testament writers repeatedly employ γίνομαι to narrate this exchange. As demonstrated in the survey of LXX usage in section 1.2.3 of this study, γίνομαι is combined with the formula for divine speech (λόγος τοῦ κυρίου / θεοῦ) to describe the communication of the word of the Lord to a prophet.<sup>28</sup> These formulas are often followed by a more extensive call narrative in which God is presented as the acting agent entrusting the word to the prophet. The advent of the word of the Lord (or word of God) is presented as an encounter, an event initiating forward progress in the narrative, rather than as a static exchange of information or ideas.<sup>29</sup>

The superscription and prologue of Jeremiah provide an excellent example of this dynamic interplay of divine agency at work through the entrusted word of the Lord. The verb γίνομαι is employed four times in Jeremiah 1:1-4. Three of these occurrences of the verb present divine speech. As presented above, (section 1.2.3), the verb γίνομαι is combined with ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ in Jeremiah 1:1 and with λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in 1:2. In Jeremiah 1:4 the prologue begins with to the familiar prophetic topos λόγος τοῦ κυρίου with γίνομαι to introduce an extended call narrative (Jer. 1:4-10). Embedded in these repeated references to divine speech acts is the fourth occurrence of γίνομαι, employed to relate the historical era during which the prophet speaks (Jer. 1:3). The

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<sup>28</sup> LXX Jeremiah 13:3, ἐγενήθη λόγος κυρίου πρὸς με λέγων, is one example of the use of the passive rather than the more commonly found middle voice of γίνομαι in the divine speech formula. See also: Jer. 13:8, 33:1, 39:6, 41:12, 43:1, 49:7 and Ezekiel 33.23. This particular combination is used in the opening sentences of prophetic literature, identifying the oracles and narratives to follow as having originated with God and been dispatched through an emissary sent by God. The following opening verses employ the passive voice: Hosea 1:1, Joel 1:1, Zephaniah 1:1, and Jeremiah 1:2 (with λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ).

<sup>29</sup> So also Henneken who describes the preaching of the message of salvation in Thessalonica as 'ein Ereignis der Geschichte.' Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 29.

supple use of γίνομαι to introduce both divine speech act (Jer. 1:1, 2 and 4) and the historic context in which the divine communication occurs (Jer. 1:3) presents the advent of a prophetic word as an event in the unfolding history of Judah's final days.<sup>30</sup> Within the book of Jeremiah, the verb γίνομαι in combination with the phrases 'word of the Lord' or 'word of God' communicates the Hebrew sense of the word of the Lord as an event that initiates active repercussions, witnessed in the lives of both the prophet and his hearers.<sup>31</sup> This pattern of use of the verb γίνομαι creates a narrative in which historic developments among God's people unfold as direct repercussions of the divine speech act announced by the prophet.<sup>32</sup> Human agents participate by receiving or rejecting the prophetic announcement of God's judgment, but the actualization of that future is not in their hands.<sup>33</sup>

The opening verses of 1 Thessalonians contain a similar association of divine communication and active repercussions in the lives of both the evangelists and their converts. Through a similar

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<sup>30</sup> One sees a reflection of this tradition of divine communication as event retained later in Paul's writing in his use of γίνομαι with νόμος when he writes about the arrival of the Law among the Israelites (Gal. 3:17, see also 2 Cor. 3:7). Paul combines λόγος with γίνομαι in 1 Corinthians 15:54 to anticipate the fulfilment of prophetic speech (LXX Is. 25:8: 'death is swallowed up in victory'). The same dynamic of words proving to be or becoming true is found in 1 Thessalonians 3:4, as Paul's warnings of suffering came to pass, and 2 Corinthians 7:14, related to Paul's boasting about the Corinthians to Titus.

<sup>31</sup> In the Old Testament formula, γίνομαι, in the aorist middle or aorist passive, portrays God as the acting agent (the so called 'divine passive').

<sup>32</sup> As in the development of the narrative in 1 Thessalonians, the prophetic message is not simply active in its advent, but also in its progress among the people of God. In Is. 48:18-19, for example, God speaks through the prophet, telling his people that had they listened to his word there would have been peace like a river, with descendants as numerous as the sand. The verb γίνομαι is employed with each descriptive phrase, depicting the progression of events that would have occurred in the lives of those to whom the word was sent.

<sup>33</sup> As Alan Cooper states: "'Deliverance", as the author of Jonah depicts it, is neither a reward for merit nor a tempering of justice with mercy. It is, instead, a free and gracious act of love.' Alan Cooper, 'In Praise of Divine Caprice: The Significance of the Book of Jonah', in *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings*, ed. by Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines, JSOTSup 144 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 144-163, (p. 152).

use of γίνομαι Paul presents the arrival of the gospel as a divine speech act that calls and transforms the lives of those who receive the apostolic announcement of the εὐαγγέλιον. There is, in the OT prophetic tradition, a theological encounter between divine speech and historic events. So in 1 Thessalonians, the repercussions of the eventful arrival of the gospel are embodied in the believers' imitation of the apostles and Jesus (1:6), becoming examples within the region (1:7), beloved to the apostolic team (2:8), and finally imitators of the churches in Judea who also suffer in hope (2:14). Exhibiting the OT characteristics of divine speech acts, the active arrival of the gospel affirms Gentile converts as members of God's beloved elect (1:4).

*Not only λόγος but πνεῦμα ἅγιον*

Following the use of εὐαγγέλιον with γίνομαι there is a second distinct combination of terms that present the gospel as divine speech act. Paul presents the gospel announcement as both λόγος and πνεῦμα ἅγιον. The agency of the Spirit is essential to the development of εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 into a divine communication that participates in the λόγος τοῦ κυρίου at 1:8. In 1:5 Paul states that our gospel (εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν) did not arrive (γίνομαι) in word alone (λόγος μόνος) but also in power (δύναμις) and in the Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα ἅγιον) and fullness (πληροφορία πολλή).<sup>34</sup> The οὐκ μόνον ... ἀλλά καί construction amplifies the divine power at work in the gospel, emphasizing the activity of the Spirit working in and through the

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<sup>34</sup> There is debate as to whether the fullness to which Paul refers in the phrase πληροφορία πολλή is applicable to the presence and fullness of God, since both prior terms refer to divine agency (Henneken, Rigaux), or to human conviction, either that of the co-senders (Holtz, Wanamaker), or the 'deep inward persuasion of the truth' among the believers (Bruce). The emphasis is on divine rather than human agency, and on the transmission of the message. This argues against the deep conviction of the truth among the converts on the one hand, and also against the manner of proclamation on the other. 'Full abundance' may be most faithful but is unintelligible in English. For the most part, our study follows Rigaux and Henneken, referencing the fullness of God's Spirit and power in the arrival of the gospel.

message of the gospel announced by the evangelists.<sup>35</sup> ‘Our gospel’ is not only a word spoken by the apostolic team, but also a word that is empowered by the Holy Spirit, whose active presence accompanies the λόγος of the εὐαγγέλιον with powerful deeds and fullness of presence.<sup>36</sup> Paul clearly attributes the performative power of the gospel to this presence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>37</sup> A similar combination of λόγος with πνεῦμα ἅγιον is repeated in verse 1:6, describing the Spirit’s activity in enabling the reception of the word (δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον) with joy in the midst of great affliction (θλίψις πολλή).<sup>38</sup> As in 1:5, the agency of the Holy Spirit is essential to the transmission of the gospel message.<sup>39</sup> It is the Holy Spirit who enables the joyful reception of the λόγος of the εὐαγγέλιον in the midst of the affliction attendant to those receiving it. It is God, present and active in the gospel through the Holy Spirit, who not only calls Gentiles through the εὐαγγέλιον but also enables them to respond to that call with joy. In emphasizing the divine agency of the Holy

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<sup>35</sup> The history of interpretation that applies an antithetical reading to Paul’s use of οὐκ μόνον ... ἀλλά καί in 1.5a is a demonstrable misreading of this section, most often caused by the misapplication of 1 Corinthians 2:1-12. See Kemmler, *Faith and Human Reason*, pp. 149-159.

<sup>36</sup> Malherbe asserts that divine agency through the activity of the Holy Spirit marks the difference between Paul’s speech and that of philosophers. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, pp. 29-30, 33.

<sup>37</sup> Henneken connects Paul’s reference to δύναμις with Yahweh’s divine power (*Kraft*) in the Old Testament and with Paul’s connection of the gospel and power in Romans 1:16, 1 Cor. 1:18 and 2:4. Henneken, *Verkündigung*, pp. 31-2.

<sup>38</sup> It is the fact rather than the nature of the affliction to which Paul refers. Malherbe argues that ‘conversion brought with it social as well as religious and intellectual dislocation, which in turn created confusion, bewilderment, dejection, and even despair in the converts.’ Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, p. 45. In the case of 1 Thessalonians Paul’s references to θλίψις are contextually situated with the reception of the gospel by Gentiles (1:6) and speaking the gospel to Gentiles (2:16-3:4). The psychological and social strain of conversion is presented by Paul as the result of direct resistance to God’s call to salvation through the gospel as a word of God.

<sup>39</sup> So also Henneken, who concludes that the gospel is not only from God but also God’s own activity: ‘handelt nicht nur von Gott, sondern ist Gottes eigene Tätigkeit’. Henneken, *Verkündigung*, pp. 33-4. His conclusions closely align this description of divine activity through the gospel with the eschatological prophetic expectation of the Old Testament prophetic tradition. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-33.

Spirit at work in both the announcement and the reception of the gospel, Paul narrates the εὐαγγέλιον as a divinely empowered word through which God acts to call and to save.<sup>40</sup>

This presentation of the εὐαγγέλιον is reminiscent of the Scriptural concept of the prophetic word as divinely empowered human speech.<sup>41</sup> The performative power of the λόγος κυρίου is reflected in the certainty that a word originating with the Lord would also be performed by the Spirit of the Lord.<sup>42</sup> Zechariah 1:6 captures this dynamic well in a passage that shares common vocabulary with that of 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10. Zechariah's prophetic calling is described as the word of the Lord coming (γίνομαι) to the prophet (ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς Ζαχαριαν, Zech. 1:1). The content of the prophet's message concerns the Lord's wrath (ὀργή, Zech. 1:2), a subject likewise included in the gospel preached among the Thessalonians (1 Th. 1:10). Zechariah's listeners are called upon to return to the Lord, in similar language to that which Paul employs to describe the conversion of the Thessalonian believers (ἐπιστρέφω, 1 Th. 1:9). The text from Zechariah continues speaking for the Lord, who calls for the acceptance (δέχομαι) of his laws and words (λόγος μου).<sup>43</sup> The same verb and unmodified noun are used by Paul of the acceptance of

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<sup>40</sup> So also Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 35, who identifies the Holy Spirit with the presence of God in the preaching of the gospel.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Pahl calls attention to the manner in which the word of God as described in Isaiah and Jeremiah possesses power and produces life (Isa. 55:10-11, Jer. 1:12). Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 134. For God's Spirit as the acting agent in the prophetic speech see Isaiah 48:16, where the Lord sends (ἀποστέλλω) his prophet and the Lord's Spirit. See also Is. 61:1ff, 59:21. The prophecy in Joel 2:28 is important to this discussion, as God's Spirit did not move from prophet to people in the OT as happens in the New Testament narratives after Pentecost. Rigaux, writing on the phrase ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ in 1 Th. 1:5, reflects on the abundance of God's Spirit available to believers, citing Acts 4:31. Rigaux, *Les épîtres aux Thessaloniens*, p. 371.

<sup>42</sup> '... the spirit belongs to the primary equipment of a prophet ... Prophet and spirit belong together.' Johannes Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p. 176. In Micah 3:8 the Lord's Spirit empowers the prophet to make his announcement (ἀπαγγέλλω).

<sup>43</sup> Paul combines δέχομαι and λόγος twice in 1 Thessalonians: 1 Th. 1:6 for the initial acceptance of the word with joy in affliction, and in 1 Th. 2:13 for the reception of a word of God rather than a word of man.

the word in 1 Thessalonians 1:6. The Lord calls his people to return to the law and words that the Lord himself commanded by means of God's Spirit and God's servants, the prophets (ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι ἐν πνεύματί μου τοῖς δούλοις μου τοῖς προφήταις, Zech. 1:6). The situation presented in Zechariah demonstrates the interplay of divine and human agency, expressed in the Spirit and the prophets, who are dispatched together with a message calling God's people to return in order to avoid God's wrath.

Paul's description of the εὐαγγέλιον as λόγος delivered by human emissaries and empowered by the πνεῦμα ἅγιον in 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10 reflects a common conceptual field with the Scriptural interplay of divine and human agency in the prophetic word that is apparent in Scriptural passages such as that of Zechariah. Both the Scriptural tradition and Paul's retrospective narrative describe a message that is a combination of word and Spirit. The active arrival of the εὐαγγέλιον in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 reflects an OT tradition of prophetic speech. The arrival of the gospel in Thessalonica occurs with the help of human emissaries (our gospel) depending entirely on the initiative of divine agency (Holy Spirit, power and fullness). The initial description of this eventful arrival of the gospel is communicated in a manner reminiscent of the active arrival and advance of the prophetic word as presented in the OT prophetic texts. This is a presentation of the εὐαγγέλιον as divine speech act, a dynamic combination of human speech and divine power. The gospel as an active, divine communication is central to this narrative and to the continuing communion between believers and God who has called them into divine fellowship as God's chosen



and beloved.<sup>44</sup> The divine agency implicit in Paul's use of γινόμεαι is made explicit in his description of the gospel as a λόγος empowered by the πνεῦμα ἅγιον.

The difference between the Scriptural tradition and Paul's narrative, however, is that in the OT prophetic tradition, the divine agency of God's Spirit encountering humans in the word of the Lord only occurs in the exchange between God and the prophet. Paul's description, however, applies the use of γίνομαι and the agency of the Holy Spirit to the Thessalonians' encounter with and reception of the gospel. This is a development in the eschatological new age inaugurated in Jesus' resurrection, the age of the Spirit as anticipated in the prophet Joel: when the Lord promises to pour out God's Spirit on all flesh (LXX Joel 2:28). The divine agency of the Spirit, active in the gospel as a divine communication, is a sign of the advent of this new age. Both messengers and the ones who receive the message participate with the gospel in a way previously limited to prophetic figures in the OT tradition. Consistent with that prophetic tradition, this eventful arrival, empowered by God's Holy Spirit, results in the active embodiment of the message in the lives of both messengers and those who receive the message. A second characteristic of the gospel as divine communication presented in verses 1:6-7 is the gospel as an embodied word.

### 3.1.3 Joy in Affliction (1 Th. 1:6-7)

In the first few verses of Paul's retrospective narrative the gospel's arrival is described as an event that is energized by the divine agency of the Holy Spirit, imbuing the message of the apostolic

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<sup>44</sup> Helmut Koester observes that the relationship between Paul and this congregation is described 'as an event before God in which the Holy Spirit is the primary agent.' Koester, 'Experiment', p. 36.

emissaries with divine power and fullness. An additional characteristic that is reflective of the Old Testament traditions is the fulfilment of that message in the lives of both emissaries and recipients. Having experienced the εὐαγγέλιον as a dynamic mix of human speech and divine presence, the converts in Thessalonica become imitators of the apostles and the Lord (1 Th. 1:6) and models to the believers in the surrounding regions (1 Th. 1:7).<sup>45</sup> As described in verse 1:6, welcoming (δέχομαι) the divinely empowered λόγος of the gospel is concurrent to becoming imitators of the evangelists and of the Lord.<sup>46</sup> By receiving the word with joy in the midst of affliction, the Thessalonian converts imitate the one whom the message proclaims.

No other letter describes believers as imitating the Lord by welcoming a word in the midst of tribulation (θλιψις).<sup>47</sup> It is a description of conversion that is entirely unique to 1 Thessalonians.<sup>48</sup> Even when Paul refers to the reception of the gospel in other letters, there is no association with suffering as a result of accepting the gospel. The description in 1 Thessalonians of Jesus, the apostles, and the believers consenting to bear the word with joy in the midst of suffering is a

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<sup>45</sup> 'A philosopher would have said that *he* had come not only in word but also in deed, thus drawing attention to his own accomplishments as warrants for his demands. Paul, by contrast, draws attention to *God's* initiative and power. [...] According to Paul's understanding, therefore, the Thessalonians became imitators of him as divine power, manifested in the gospel, was reflected in his life.' Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, p. 58, (emphasis original).

<sup>46</sup> This understanding of the verse reads the δεξάμενοι clause as a participle of identical action, with the aorist form of the latter verb explicative of the aorist ἐγενήθητε. See J.S. Pobe, *Persecution and Martyrdom in the Theology of Paul* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), pp. 69-70.

<sup>47</sup> Henneken is among those who closely associate the word received in affliction with Paul's apocalyptic outlook, viewing affliction as imitation of the crucified Lord in the end times. Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 46. Gundry-Volf also associated the believers' affliction with the imitation of Christ's suffering, concluding that divine triumph has already taken place on the cross so suffering confirms salvation. Gundry-Volf, *Perseverance*, pp. 283-285. For the social setting of apocalyptic and affliction in Thessalonica see John M. Barclay, 'Conflict in Thessalonica', *CBQ*, 55 (1993), 512-30.

<sup>48</sup> The verb δέχομαι is repeated with λόγος again in 1 Th. 2:13. Elsewhere the verb is used with the phrase 'the love of the truth' in 2 Th. 2:10, and is applied to the reception of another gospel in 2 Cor. 11:4 (δέχομαι with εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον). See also 1 Cor. 2:14. In Gal. 1:9, 1:12; 1 Cor. 15:1 and 3 Paul combines παραλαμβάνω with εὐαγγέλιον. For the use of παραλαμβάνω with instruction see 1 Th. 4:1; 2 Th. 3:6; and Phil. 4:9.

distinctly prophetic description that is entirely unique to this epistle. It reappears in the second apocalyptic thanksgiving in this letter. Paul presents Jesus in the line of prophets killed by those who seek to hinder the forward progress of God's word among the Gentiles (1 Th. 2:13-16). The effect in both 1:6 and 2:14 is solidarity with Christ as a result of receiving the gospel as a divine word, an action previously limited to the OT prophets.<sup>49</sup>

As reflected in the later thanksgiving, an antecedent for the reception of the word in the midst of affliction is found in the Scriptural tradition.<sup>50</sup> Throughout the OT prophetic tradition there are narratives of prophets suffering affliction and death as a result of the word that they deliver from God to God's people. The writings of the prophet Jeremiah are unique for the way that they extend this external suffering into the internal tribulation of the prophet, narrated in the psalm-like

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<sup>49</sup> Paul's description of the divine encounter with God in the gospel employs γίνομαι, a verb repeatedly used for a direct divine encounter, rather than ἀκούω, a verb repeatedly used for divine communication mediated by a human agent. Paul's language for the reception of a divine communication in 1 Thessalonians aligns the initial preaching of the gospel in Thessalonica with the prophetic tradition. This is distinct from the prophetic office that spoke the word of the Lord to call the Israelites back to covenant faithfulness to the Law. The prophets repeatedly called on the Israelites to hear, that is, return to a posture of obedience to the words of the covenant received from Moses, worshiping the Lord and obeying his commands. The combination of ἀκούω with an anarthrous form of 'word of the Lord' occurs five times in the Histories, five times in the books of the Twelve Prophets, twice in Isaiah, 17 times in Jeremiah and nine times in Ezekiel. In the LXX, the faithful reception and performance of the Law is consistently described with the verbs ἀκούω and ποιέω. In Deuteronomy 30:12-14, a passage that Paul cites in Romans 10, Moses repeats the couplet ἀκούω and ποιέω in 30:12-13, ending in 30:14 with 'the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart and in your hands to do it'. Paul's use of the passage in Romans 10 does not include the command to hear and to do, explicitly rejecting the righteousness from doing the law in Romans 10:5.

<sup>50</sup> Although Zimmerli's essay is interacting with Paul's writing in 1 Corinthians, his reflections on the prophetic tradition of the suffering servant as a prophetic figure that is later identified with Jesus is instructive in so far as it sheds some light on the continuity between the figure of Jesus as a suffering prophet in 1 Thessalonians 1:6 and that of Jesus as the resurrected, exalted and returning son of God in verse 1:9. Zimmerli, 'Fruit of the Tribulation', in *A Prophet to the Nations*, ed. by Perdue and Kovacs, pp. 361-364.

confessions of Jeremiah.<sup>51</sup> In one of these confessions, found in Jeremiah 15:16f, the prophet relates ‘the bliss of the experiencing of the word with the lament over the isolation caused by this same divine word.’<sup>52</sup> 1 Thessalonians 1:6 is a distinctly prophetic characterization of imitation, in that it emphasizes the joyful reception (δέχομαι) of the word despite the unavoidable affliction of bearing a divine communication in the world.<sup>53</sup> Jesus, apostles and converts all alike experience joy and affliction at the acceptance of the word. The result of participation through reception of the word is that the converts become a living embodiment (τύπος) to their neighbouring believers of faith in this gospel (1:7). This assertion of embodiment is further reflection of the prophetic tradition, as the prophets often embodied the message that they announced.<sup>54</sup>

Paul is constructing a narrative for this nascent community within a prophetic framework: Gentile converts are presented as recipients of divine revelation, empowered by the Spirit to joyfully receive the word in the midst of affliction, with the result that their lives now embody that which the apostolic team announced. This development, from eventful arrival to reception and embodiment of the word with joy in the midst of affliction, forms a trajectory from the εὐαγγέλιον as λόγος and πνεῦμα to its outward spread as the λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in 1:8.

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<sup>51</sup> See Page Kelley’s comments on Jeremiah 12:3: ‘For the prophet Jeremiah, [...] we find that his suffering was the result of his prophetic ministry (11:21). When he complained further about the injustice of the situation, the answer he received was far from comforting. In essence, he was told that he would experience even more suffering (12:5–6). [...] As God’s messenger, he suffered as a result of his prophetic ministry.’ Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelly and Joel F. Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, WBC 26 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991), p. 253.

<sup>52</sup> Zimmerli, ‘Fruit of the Tribulation’, in *A Prophet to the Nations*, ed. by Perdue and Kovacs, p. 360.

<sup>53</sup> Brevard Childs identifies the ‘dominant motif of suffering in the prophets which made this form of the call tradition more suitable for the New Testament’s appropriation.’ Childs, *Exodus*, p. 84. For Paul’s suffering as an embodiment of his message see Hafemann, *Suffering & Ministry*, p. 65.

<sup>54</sup> Lindblom, *Prophecy*, p. 193.

### 3.1.4 The Word of the Lord Broadcast Abroad (1 Th. 1:8-10)

The enthusiastic conclusion of these verses is reached in 1:8-10 as Paul declares that the λόγος τοῦ κυρίου has sounded forth (ἐξηχέομαι) from the Thessalonians, with news of the believers' faith in God spreading outward (ἐξέρχομαι) so thoroughly throughout the region that there is no need for Paul, Silvanus and Timothy to speak of it. If early scribes did, in fact, worry about the imprudence of claiming the gospel as one's own in verse 1:5, their concern proved unfounded.<sup>55</sup> At this point of the narrative, the gospel is entirely unmoored, its momentum now independent of its original emissaries as reports of its embodiment in the faith of the Thessalonians spreads throughout the countryside. Paul's description of the advance of the gospel message as a word of the Lord is congruent with the attribute of the dynamic progress of a divine communication that one finds in the OT prophetic tradition. In these verses Paul employs the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου as a category of divine speech to which his εὐαγγέλιον belongs. The definite occurrence of the phrase situates the gospel in the prophetic word of the Lord that anticipated the conversion of the nations to worship Israel's God. The phrase occurs within a context that emphasizes the apocalyptic content of the gospel, announcing the return of the Lord Jesus to rescue God's beloved and elect from the coming wrath. In this sense, the gospel as a word of the Lord is an apocalyptic announcement, revelatory in nature (revealing God's purpose of Gentile inclusion in eschatological salvation) and apocalyptic in content (announcing Jesus as the risen and returning Lord).

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<sup>55</sup> Bruce Metzger posits that 'the expression 'our gospel' ... seems to have offended some scribes'. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 561. Variations on the majority text suggest scribal corrections: εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ in C; εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν in **ℵ\***. Both the majority textual witness and the context recommend εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν.

## *Divine Momentum and the Word of the Lord*

In 1:8-10 Paul concludes the initial narrative with the description of the forward momentum of this gospel as an event of divine communication, visible in the lives of those to whom it is addressed and by whom it is received. This feature of ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου broadcast abroad is also the nature of prophetic speech in the Scriptural tradition. The two verbs that Paul uses in these verses are nowhere else associated with the proclamation of the gospel by means of human emissaries (ἔξηχέομαι, 1:8 and ἐξέρχομαι, 1:9).<sup>56</sup> Rather, both in Paul's letters and in the OT they are associated with another feature of divine communication in the prophetic tradition, which is the metaphorical reference to the ability of God's word or voice to make its own way in the world. Specifically, in Romans 10:18 Paul quotes from Psalm 18:5 (LXX), in which the voice of creation goes out (ἐξέρχομαι) over all the earth, blanketing creation in praise of God's glory.<sup>57</sup>

The imagery for the word of the Lord here in 1 Thessalonians contains a similar dynamism, with Paul's choice of the verb ἔξηχέομαι in 1:8 alongside ἐξέρχομαι in 1:9 evoking a heraldic sense of this word of the Lord trumpeted outward in ever widening sound waves, announcing the faith of the believers in Thessalonica.<sup>58</sup> In the prophetic writings, the word of the Lord is depicted as going out, again through use of ἐξέρχομαι, not only from the mouth of the Lord (Is. 48:3) and his

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<sup>56</sup> *Contra* Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, pp. 105-133 esp. pp. 108 and 117. Malherbe argues for a preaching ministry in 1:8 based on co-worker language in 1:3. Henneken argues for missionary activity from Thessalonica based on the speed with which the reports spread. Henneken *Verkündigung*, p. 63. Paul's description of this outward advance remains focused, however, on the fact of a message on the move rather than on the human agency taking that message forward. This is in keeping with his focus throughout this section on the message rather than its messengers.

<sup>57</sup> δόξαζω is a theme that reappears in connection with the word of the Lord in 2 Th. 3:1.

<sup>58</sup> ἔξηχέομαι was described by Chrysostom as the dramatic and loud sound of a trumpet. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 56. For examples of the spatial and progressive imagery associated with ἐξέρχομαι, cf. Luke 4.14 and 7.17, verses that use the verb to narrate the reports about Jesus spreading throughout the entire region.

prophets (Jer. 17:15), but also from geographic locations (see Micah 4:2, where the word of the Lord goes out from Jerusalem).<sup>59</sup> Thus the climax of Paul's retrospective narrative is a demonstration of the gospel as a divine communication: the reports of the Thessalonians' faith reveal God's sovereign inclusion of Gentiles in eschatological salvation. This is ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου moving throughout the region independent of its original emissaries.<sup>60</sup> As in the LXX, statements of a divine communication that has its own momentum and agency occur alongside statements of human agency in advancing the message without contradiction. The divine agency at work in the presence of the Holy Spirit is essential to the forward momentum of the εὐαγγέλιον as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου.

This metaphor of a message on the move re-occurs with the second use of λόγος τοῦ κυρίου in 2 Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians 3:1 echoes the dynamic advance of the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου, similar to that presented in 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10. Paul solicits his listeners' prayers for himself, Silvanus and Timothy in order that the word of the Lord may run swiftly (τρέχω) and be glorified everywhere (δοξάζω), just as it is among the Thessalonians.<sup>61</sup> The

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<sup>59</sup> Once the word of the Lord has gone out (ἐξέρχομαι), it is only a matter of time before the initial divine pronouncement communicated in the prophetic word resulted in the final performance of that which the word of the Lord proclaimed. See for example LXX Jer. 39:24: ὡς ἐλάλησας οὕτως ἐγένετο.

<sup>60</sup> Lindblom's comments on prophetic speech in Israel are helpful to this point: 'Because the prophetic word was claimed to be the word of Yahweh, the omnipotent God, it was a word worthy of attention throughout the world. ... Jeremiah summons the nations and whole earth to hear what Yahweh has determined for His apostate people (6:18f). Thus Yahweh's word penetrates as far as His rule reaches.' Lindblom, *Prophecy*, p. 120.

<sup>61</sup> Paul's reference in 2 Corinthians 4:4 to the 'light of the gospel of the glory of Christ' provides some insight into the meaning of δόξα in relation to the λόγος τοῦ κυρίου. Against those who read 2 Corinthians 4:6 as a reference to Paul's own conversion experience, Furnish associates the description with the gospel. He states: 'The gospel is introduced as the fundamental re-presentative agency for the splendor of God. That splendor is present as Christ is proclaimed the crucified and resurrected one through the gospel. Furthermore, those who hear the gospel are challenged to respond in faith to its gift and claim.' Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 248. So also Thrall, that God's glory is present in the proclamation. Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 319.

personification of the gospel ‘running swiftly’ in 2 Thessalonians 3:1 is an idiom for the forward progress of God’s word that is also found in the Psalms (cf. Ps. 147:4).<sup>62</sup> As in 1 Thessalonians, the gospel as a word of the Lord has a forward momentum in concert with the apostles as human emissaries.<sup>63</sup> Here, as in the OT prophetic tradition, there is no conflict with a dynamic personification of the word of the Lord and the fact of human agency in its forward progress. Paul’s request that the Thessalonian believers ‘pray for us’ connects the progress of the gospel as a word of the Lord to the rescue of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy from those who do not have faith (2 Th. 3:2). As in 1 Thessalonians, the potential hindrance to the gospel in this second epistle is the resistance of those without faith (cf. 1 Th. 2:14-16). The connection with 1 Thessalonians 1:8 is this sense of momentum for the gospel as a word of the Lord.

Paul’s poetic hyperbole concerning the forward movement of the word of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians is a presentation of the εὐαγγέλιον as divine speech act reminiscent of the OT prophetic tradition: a dynamic combination of human speech and divine power engaging both the ones who announce the message and those to whom it is announced in the life of God.<sup>64</sup> The Holy Spirit’s activity in the apostolic delivery of the gospel, (with power and fullness, 1:5) is also at work in the activity of the Spirit enabling the reception of the gospel (with joy in the midst of affliction,

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Psalm 147:4 (LXX): ὁ ἀποστέλλων τὸ λόγιον αὐτοῦ τῇ γῆ ἕως τάχους δραμεῖται ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ. (‘He sends his oracles to the earth; his word will run swiftly.’) See Ro. 3:2 for an echo in τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ.

<sup>63</sup> Note that Paul does not use a phrase such as ‘through us the word of the Lord may run and be glorified...’ (cf. the use of διὰ with δοξάζω in 2 Cor. 9:13).

<sup>64</sup> An assertion of prophetic hyperbole does not eliminate the reality of a widespread report. Witherington characterizes the hyperbole in this description as a rhetorical trope, while at the same time affirming a widespread report from the city. He observes that ‘these converts live on the main north-south and east-west road (the Via Egnatia), so news travelled readily from their city throughout the region (cf. similarly Col. 1.6).’ Witherington prefers the explanation that travelling Christians are the source of the rapid spread of news from Thessalonica throughout the regions. Witherington, *Thessalonians*, p. 73.



1:6). It ultimately results in the word of the Lord moving throughout the region, apparently under its own volition. Ironically, one result of a misreading of λόγος τοῦ κυρίου as synonymous to the εὐαγγέλιον is that a passage that is crafted by Paul to demonstrate the dynamic divine initiative calling the nations has so often led to the mistaken focus on the human activities of the gospel emissaries and their converts.<sup>65</sup> It is clear from Paul's narrative that human agency is involved in the rapid expansion of the reports about the Thessalonian converts (1:9). Paul's writing exhibits the same pattern as that of the OT prophetic tradition that presents overlapping assertions of divine and human agency relative to a divine communication. The emphasis of the narrative, however, is the divine agency evident in the spread of the gospel.

#### *λόγος τοῦ κυρίου as a Category of Divine Speech*

In 1 Thessalonians 1:8 the prophetic topos ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου is a category of divine communication to which the εὐαγγέλιον belongs as an eventful divine speech act through which the Spirit of God performs that which the emissary proclaims: the call of God to the nations to turn to the living and true God and await the return of God's Son, with the hope of rescue from the coming wrath (1:9-10).<sup>66</sup> The narrative context in 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10 disrupts any suggestion that Paul is employing εὐαγγέλιον and λόγος terminology interchangeably.<sup>67</sup> In the first place, the structure of verse 1:8 undermines an interpretation of the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου as a direct synonym of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν (1:5). Paul's narrative supports his claim that ὁ λόγος τοῦ

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<sup>65</sup> The impulse to attribute the spread of the word of the Lord to an early preaching ministry from Thessalonica reflects exactly this overemphasis on human agency.

<sup>66</sup> John Dickson concludes: 'It is widely agreed that "gospel" in this Isaianic tradition connotes the announcement of hitherto unknown news of great eschatological import.' Dickson, 'Gospel as News', p. 220. See also Dickson, *Mission Commitment*, pp. 80-83.

<sup>67</sup> Perhaps due to the paucity of the term in the Pauline canon the use of the phrase in 1 Th. 1:8 and 2 Th. 3:1 is generally regarded as a simple verbal substitution for the εὐαγγέλιον.

κυρίου is resounding in all places with the reports of the faith of the converts (ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν, 1:8). This association of the ‘word of the Lord’ with ‘your faith’ is communicated by the parallelism of the synonymous subjects and predicates in each half of the comparative phrases.<sup>68</sup> The reports throughout the region of the faithful response of the Gentiles to the apostolic arrival are set in a parallel relationship to the word of the Lord resounding everywhere.<sup>69</sup> Paul does not claim that the gospel resounds out from Thessalonica.<sup>70</sup> He claims that reports of the faith of Gentiles in Thessalonica are moving out through the region. This is a very similar dynamic to Paul’s hyperbolic report in Romans 1:8 that the faith of the Roman believers is announced (καταγγέλλω) throughout the entire world – a claim that finds its companion in Romans 10:18. Both in 1 Thessalonians and in Romans, the widespread reports of Gentile faith are a report of the embodiment of the gospel. In 1 Thessalonians, this report is identified as the word of the Lord.

Secondly, 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, which summarizes the content of the message that is being broadcast abroad as a word of the Lord, is a recapitulation of the reported response of the Thessalonians to εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν, not a summary of the content of the gospel as announced by

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<sup>68</sup> With the result that ἐξηχέω in the first half of 1:8 is synonymous to ἐξέρχομαι in the comparative clause. See also Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 116

<sup>69</sup> So also Breytenbach on these verses: ‘The somewhat peculiar change of subject and predicate demonstrates that the word about the risen Lord, and trust in God go closely together.’ Breytenbach, ‘Danksagungsbericht’, p. 11. Breytenbach, following Holtz, reads the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου as an objective genitive. Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>70</sup> *Contra* Marshall, whose work understands ‘the word of the Lord’ as synonymous to the gospel message, both here and in 2 Th. 3:1. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 55.

the co-senders.<sup>71</sup> The ‘word of the Lord’ reported throughout the area describes Gentile reception and embodiment of the Spirit-empowered λόγος of the εὐαγγέλιον:

‘... how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to eagerly await his son from the heavens, the one raised from the dead, Jesus the one who will deliver us from the wrath that is coming’ (1:9-10).

This report relates a response to the gospel announcement that is specific to Gentiles.<sup>72</sup> The exhortation to turn to God from idols does not apply to Jewish acceptance of Jesus as Christ and Lord.<sup>73</sup> Where the content of the evangelistic preaching is concerned, the λόγος of the initial announcement in Thessalonica certainly included the appeal (cf. 2:3) to escape wrath by turning to

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<sup>71</sup> So also Morna Hooker: ‘What Paul is describing here is the Thessalonians’ *response* to the gospel rather than the gospel itself.’ (emphasis original) Hooker, ‘Concluding Reflections’, p. 158.

<sup>72</sup> For a thorough review of scholarly discussion concerning the relation of 1:9-10 to Jewish missionary preaching, see Luckensmeyer, ‘Excursus 3: Pre-Pauline Traditional Formulae and 1:9c-10’ in *Eschatology*, pp. 106-113. Luckensmeyer’s analysis emphasizes the nature of the recapitulation as a report from others concerning that to which the Thessalonians turned, rather than a precise recapitulation of missionary preaching. So also Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 132. For the background of the phrase ‘living God’, within a succinct recapitulation of the language in mission preaching of the early Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, see Breytenbach, ‘Danksagungsbericht’, p. 14.

<sup>73</sup> Richard, affirming the nature of the verses as report, notes the Jewish missionary terminology. Richard, *Thessalonians*, p. 74.

God from their idols and living in eager anticipation of the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Th. 1:9-10).<sup>74</sup> It is a mistake, however, to assume that Paul's recapitulation of reports of Gentile reception of the gospel represents the entirety of the content of 'our gospel' as announced among the Thessalonians. Rather, the report of faith that is resounding throughout the region is an embodiment of the message of the gospel:<sup>75</sup> the promise of eschatological inclusion of the Gentiles as the beloved and elect of God who eagerly await the *parousia* of the Son of God.<sup>76</sup> The report of Gentile faith, embodied in their conversion to serve the living and true God, is that which Paul claims has gone forth everywhere (ἐξέρχομαι, 1:8).

The gospel thus functions in continuity with prophetic speech, as a divine communication calling the nations to that which it announces: inclusion in the blessing of God's salvation through faith in the resurrected and returning Son of God.<sup>77</sup> Paul's use of the OT prophetic topos in 1:8 is

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<sup>74</sup> 'The Thessalonians' response is described as a conversion, and it is given concreteness by reminding them of the content of what they had accepted.' Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 118. J. Plevnik identifies 1:9-10 as the 'framework of the basic message' preached to the Thessalonians. Joseph Plevnik, 'Pauline Presuppositions', in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. by Collins, pp. 50-61 (p.59). Morna Hooker correctly asserts that while 1:9-10 reminds the Thessalonians of the gospel preached to them, it is an inadequate summary of Paul's gospel. Hooker, 'Concluding Reflections', p. 158. Seyoon Kim takes issue with Hooker's statements, reading in them a denial of a fully developed gospel proclamation in Thessalonica. See Seyoon Kim, 'Jesus the Son of God as the Gospel (1 Thess 1:9-10 and Ro. 1:3-4)' in *Christian History: Essays from the Tyndale Fellowship in Honor of Martin Hengel*, ed. by Michael Bird and Jason Maston, WUNT 2:320 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), pp. 117-41 (pp. 118-121). However, Kim's detailed expansion of the language in 1:9-10 in light of Paul's other letters rather proves Hooker's point about the inadequacy of these verse as summary.

<sup>75</sup> '...the gospel is the vehicle through which God brings about a possibility and a reality.' Schütz, *Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, p. 43.

<sup>76</sup> For a brief review of Scriptures that anticipated the inclusion of the Gentiles in Israel's worship of God in the last days see Bruce Longenecker, 'Different Answers to Different Issues: Israel, the Gentiles and Salvation History in Romans 9-11', *JSNT* 36 (1989), 95-123 (pp. 108-09).

<sup>77</sup> Victor Paul Furnish, commenting on Paul's *λόγος* language in 2 Corinthians, notes that, 'like the prophet (Isa 53:10-11), Paul customarily associates God's word (see 2 Cor. 2:17) ... with God's eschatological, life-giving power ... which accomplishes what God has purposed.' Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, p. 337.

definite: the word of the Lord resounds throughout the region.<sup>78</sup> Based upon the survey in section 1.2 of the use of this phrase in the prophetic tradition, Paul's use of the term here is best regarded as a fixed expression for prophetic anticipation of Gentile inclusion in eschatological salvation. Romans 9:6 demonstrates that Paul does employ the definite form of the phrase 'word of God' as a general reference to the promises and prophetic speech acts from the LXX.<sup>79</sup> His later letters also demonstrate his conviction that the gospel, as a divinely entrusted announcement, functions in concert with the Scriptural prophetic tradition. In Galatians and Romans, Paul presents his gospel as a message anticipated in a word of the Lord to Abraham (cf. Gen. 15:1-6; Gal. 3:6-8) and the prophets (cf. Rom.10:13, 20).<sup>80</sup> Where these later epistles demonstrate the continuity of Paul's gospel announcement with direct references to passages from within the Scriptural revelation of God's purposes for the nations, 1 Thessalonians employs the topos 'word of the Lord' as shorthand for prophetic communication. The description of the gospel in a manner that reflects the OT prophetic tradition of divine communication, alongside the report of Gentile conversion as an embodiment of faith, supports a reading of 'the word of the Lord' as a reference to the prophetic anticipation of Gentile inclusion in the eschatological salvation promised to the Jews. Gentile faith in response to the gospel is consistent with OT prophetic eschatological expectation of the word of

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<sup>78</sup> So also Earl Richard, who asserts that 'word of the Lord' is an echo of the OT prophetic phrase, especially in combination with γίνομαι (citing 1 Kgs 12:22; 2 Kgs 24:2; 1 Chr 17:3 and often in the Prophets). His comments note the inconsistency in ascribing an objective genitive to τοῦ κυρίου in 1:8 while asserting a subjective genitive for τοῦ θεοῦ in 2:13 when Paul is clearly referring to the same message. He states that 'Paul employs OT terms to underscore what some scholars have described as his prophetic self-concept and its missionary goal.' Richard, *Thessalonians*, p. 71.

<sup>79</sup> Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 573. The context of Romans 9, especially verses 4-5, clarify that Paul is speaking of the word of God to Israel, rather than referring to the gospel as a word of God.

<sup>80</sup> Commenting on Paul's use of Isaiah in Romans 10, J. Ross Wagner describes Paul enlisting Moses, Isaiah, and Joel as witnesses, finding that the gospel is announced beforehand in the Scriptures. Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 180.

the Lord that anticipates the inclusion of the nations in the announcement of salvation.<sup>81</sup> In Isaiah 2:3, for example, the nations are presented as announcing the way of the Lord. The verb ἀναγγέλλω used in Isaiah 2:3 is repeated by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, as the people in every region report the conversion of the faithful in Thessalonians. This faithful embodiment of the gospel among the nations demonstrates that which the prophet predicted in Isaiah 51:5: that salvation to the Gentiles would radiate out (ἐξέρχομαι) as light.

Placing this in the context of 1:4-10, Paul's narrative progression demonstrates the capacity of the gospel to function as a divine communication. Paul's gospel is a divine communication that participates within the OT prophetic tradition, performing that which it proclaims: Gentile salvation through faith in the resurrected Son of God, Jesus, the one returning to rescue God's beloved and elect from the coming wrath. The gospel belongs to the category of divine communication represented in the phrase 'word of the Lord'. The reports in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 concern Jesus as Lord, an apocalyptic content emphasizing Jesus as the divine agent through whom God will rescue the faithful in the Day of the Lord. As such, the gospel is an apocalyptic announcement as regards content. It is also a revelatory announcement, with the embodiment of faith among the Thessalonians demonstrating God's sovereign purpose for all people. The use of the phrase 'word of the Lord' in 1:8 identifies the gospel with the OT prophetic category of the word of the Lord, specifically, the Jewish eschatological expectation that the nations will abandon their idols to worship the living and true God (cf. Tob. 14:6-7). This is the dynamic represented in Paul's use of the phrase 'word of the Lord' in the Thessalonian letters: a message through which the recipients

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<sup>81</sup> Jill Hicks-Keeton identifies Tobit's expectation of the inclusion of the Gentiles, expressed in Tobit 14:6, both with the Hebrew prophets (Is. 2:2-3, 60:2-3) and the patriarchal promise tradition in Genesis 15:5, 18-21. Jill Hicks-Keeton, 'Already/Not Yet: Eschatological Tension in the Book of Tobit', *JBL* 132, no. 1 (2013) 97-117, (p. 99).

are encountered by God in Spirit and word, that has the capacity to generate faith in the divinely enacted future that it announces. Paul identifies the gospel as a message that reveals to the Thessalonian believers, beloved and chosen by God, the cosmic vision of the Lord Jesus who will return to deliver his faithful from wrath. Their reception and embodiment of that message propels the word of the Lord to the surrounding regions.<sup>82</sup>

To summarize, Paul situates the community narrative in Thessalonica in a framework that extends from initial arrival of the gospel as a divine encounter (1:5) to the return of Jesus at the *parousia* (1:10). The apocalyptic thanksgiving in 1:4-10 tells a story of God's 'irresistible gospel' happening as an event among the Thessalonians.<sup>83</sup> The narrative in 1:4-10 confirms that affliction is the expected experience of those eagerly awaiting the day of salvation.<sup>84</sup> By placing the experience

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<sup>82</sup> Paul's usage reinterprets the phrase in a manner similar to his use of ἡμέρα κυρίου in 1 Thessalonians 5:2. It is widely agreed that 'day of the Lord' is an OT prophetic topos that retains the dynamic expectation of that day with the Lord Jesus Christ as the acting agent (1 Th. 5:9). Jeffrey Weima summarizes the widely held view that the 'day of the Lord' 'refers to a future time when God would come both to punish the wicked and to vindicate his people, though the notion of judgment is more commonly stressed than that of deliverance (e.g., Isa. 2:1-4, 6; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 20:2-3; Obad. 15; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2:11, 2:31-32; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph. 1:14-18; Zech. 1:14). The early Christians, for whom Jesus Christ was their 'Lord', naturally applied the OT 'day of the Lord' to the future time when Christ would come to punish the wicked and vindicate his followers.' Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 346. (Note, concerning the notion of judgment, that Joel 2:32 contains a salvation oracle that Paul cites in Romans 10:13.) 1 Corinthians 5:5 is the only occurrence of the exact phrase 'day of the Lord' outside of the Thessalonian letters (1 Th. 5:2, 2 Th. 2:2). On that occasion the context also bears the apocalyptic hallmarks of two kingdoms (Satan's in the present and the Lord's at the eschaton) and salvation as a future event. The phrase occurs as day of our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Cor. 1:8); day of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 1:14); day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6); day of Christ (Phil. 1:10; 2:16); day of wrath (Ro. 2:5); and that / the day (Ro. 2:16; 13:12; 1 Cor. 3:13; 1 Th. 1:5; 2 Th. 1:10).

<sup>83</sup> As demonstrated by Morna Hooker's analysis, everything that follows from 1:10 in Paul's letter is prefigured in the thankful narrative that extends from 1:2-10. Hooker, 'Concluding Reflections', in *Not in the Word Alone*, ed. by Hooker, pp. 157-59. See also "'1 Thessalonians 1:9-10: A Nutshell – but What Kind of Nut?'," in *Geschichte, Tradition, Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. by Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger and Peter Schäfer, 3 vols (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1996), III, pp. 435-48.

<sup>84</sup> Fee, *Thessalonians*, p. 39.

of affliction within the story of the gospel as a word of the Lord, Paul communicates to the believers that their affliction is not an accident of conversion. It is a demonstration of their inclusion as the beloved and elect of God. News of their reception of the gospel with joy in the midst of affliction resounds throughout the region, announcing the word of the Lord concerning the inclusion of the nations in God's salvation.

### **3.2 Speaking in a Word of the Lord (1 Th. 4:13-18)**

In Paul's apocalyptic thanksgiving in 1:2-10 the believers' suffering with joy at the reception of the gospel (1:6) is re-imagined as participation in the resounding echoes of the word of the Lord throughout the region (1:8). A similar narrative dynamic occurs in Paul's exhortation to the believers not to grieve in the face of death like those who have no hope (4:13).<sup>85</sup> In each case, experiences of suffering and grief are set in the context of hope in Jesus' return. Prior to speaking in a word of the Lord (4:15), Paul communicates a statement of belief considering the death of believers in light of the gospel: 'For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep' (4:15). Paul follows this statement with a narrative of Jesus' return spoken 'in a word of the Lord' (τοῦτο γὰρ ὑμῖν λέγομεν ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου, 4:15). As in chapter one, the narrative content is apocalyptic. Jesus (4:14), the κύριος (4:15, 2x; 16; 17), is the divine agent rescuing both the living and the dead in Christ (4:16, cf. 1:10). Even the metaphor of a resounding sound that Paul used of the word of the

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<sup>85</sup> John Barclay's article reaffirms Frame's assertion that 'grief, however natural, is excluded.' 'That You May Not Grieve Like the Rest that Have no Hope' (1 Thes: 4:13): Death and Early Christian Identity' in *Not in the Word Alone*, ed. by Hooker, pp. 131-153, (pp. 139-140). Citing James Everett Frame, *Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), p. 167.



Lord in 1:8 finds an echo in the cry of the Lord himself, the archangel's call and the sound of the trumpet of God in 4:16, as the faithful (both living and dead) are taken up to meet the Lord in the air. In both narratives, that of 1:9-10 and 4:13-18, temporal events of affliction or death are regarded in light of the hope of Jesus' return. Paul concludes the discussion in verse 18 with the directive to encourage one another with these words (παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις).<sup>86</sup> The revelatory nature of the gospel as a word of the Lord, through which Jesus as the active divine agent fulfils God's eschatological promises, is identical in 1:8 and 4:15. In both verses, Paul employs the phrase 'word of the Lord' in continuity with the OT prophetic tradition of a divine speech act, through which God performs that which is promised, reinterpreted with Jesus the Lord as the divine agent.<sup>87</sup>

There is little consensus in the history of interpretation concerning the particular content included in the phrase 'in a word of the Lord' used in 4:15.<sup>88</sup> The three interpretations found most often are that Paul is referring to: (1) words given to Paul or another first century prophet by

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<sup>86</sup> Given the proximity of verse 4:18 to 4:15, and the continuity of subject matter in the intervening verses, it is safe to say that the phrase τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις used in 4:18 refers to the instruction in 4:15-17.

<sup>87</sup> See W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1948). Davies argues that while the elements of Pauline eschatology concerning the resurrection are clearly congruent with the main current of first-century Judaism, the 'source of Pauline Christianity lies in the fact of Christ'. Ibid, pp. 299-320, 323. In light of Davies' observations, the phrase 'in the word of the Lord' as employed by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 may represent a shorthand for Jewish apocalyptic expectations re-imagined in light of the Christ events of the cross and resurrection.

<sup>88</sup> Bultmann asserts that 'the tradition of the Jerusalem Church is at least in substance behind the 'word of the Lord' on the parousia and resurrection in 1 Thess. 4:15-17, though it is not certain whether Paul is here quoting a traditionally transmitted saying, or whether he is appealing to a revelation accorded to him by the exalted Lord.' Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. by Kendrick Grobel (Baylor University Press, 2007), i., pp. 188-89.

revelation from the risen Lord;<sup>89</sup> (2) Jesus' teachings prior to his ascension (cf. Matt. 24:30-31);<sup>90</sup> or (3) the prophetic witness of the Old Testament Scriptures, especially those concerning the return of the Son of Man (cf. Dan. 7:13-14, 12:1-3).<sup>91</sup> In a recent study tracing the use of 'word of' phrases in the canonical writings, the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha through to c. 150 CE, and the Apostolic Fathers through c.150 CE, Michael Pahl has summarized the limitations in each of these readings.<sup>92</sup> His conclusion is that 'word of the Lord' refers to the Christ events that are announced in the gospel.<sup>93</sup>

Pahl argues against either a first century prophetic utterance or sayings from the Jesus tradition.<sup>94</sup> In reference to the latter Pahl observes, 'while λόγος κυρίου may refer to a complex of ideas which include Jesus tradition, the phrase is never used to refer to a *particular* saying,

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<sup>89</sup> For a review of possibilities, presented within in an analysis that affirms a prophetic revelation from the risen Lord as the best choice, see Best, *Thessalonians*, pp. 189-193. So also Collins, *Studies*, 159-160. Furnish believes it more likely that the revelation was given to Paul. Furnish, *Thessalonians*, pp. 104-5.

<sup>90</sup> Marshall, *Thessalonians*, pp. 125-6; Green, *Thessalonians*, pp. 221-22.

<sup>91</sup> Fee, *Thessalonians*, pp. 173-74. Earl Richards presents a fourth alternative, which is that Paul is referring back to the authority of the statements made in 1 Thessalonians 4:14. Richards, *Thessalonians*, p. 240.

<sup>92</sup> Pahl's analysis engages four epistemic sources of authority in Paul's eschatological teaching: Scripture, Jesus Tradition, Paul's own revelatory prophetic experiences, and the Christ events as proclaimed in the gospel, especially Jesus' death and resurrection from the dead. See Pahl's concluding remarks on these epistemic authorities relative to 1 Thessalonians 4:15 in *Discerning*, pp. 164-167.

<sup>93</sup> 'Linguistically speaking, the most probable referent of the phrase ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου is the salvific message about Jesus centred on his death and resurrection.' Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 139.

<sup>94</sup> Pahl, *Discerning*, pp. 159-161. Pahl asserts that 'Paul's prophetic self-understanding is developed primarily in apostolic terms' as apostle to the Gentiles, rather than the self-presentation as 'the mediator of spontaneous, situation-specific utterances of Jesus.' *Ibid.*, p. 157. He demonstrates that at no point in Paul's writing is a first century prophetic oracle a recognized authority for Paul's instructions concerning Jesus' return. Instead, Paul's teachings on the *parousia* are consistently based upon received tradition, witnessed to by Paul and others who have seen the risen Christ (1 Cor. 15). *Ibid.*, pp. 158-59.

discourse or teaching of Jesus via tradition.’<sup>95</sup> Pahl concludes that Scripture and the Christ events, in particular the gospel proclamation of Jesus’ death and resurrection, are the primary epistemic authorities for Paul’s own teaching concerning the *parousia*.<sup>96</sup> However, Pahl argues against the suggestion that ‘word of the Lord’ is a reference to OT Scripture. Given that none of the occasions on which Paul introduces a saying from Scripture with λόγος language uses the phrase λόγος τοῦ κυρίου (cf. Gal. 5:14, 1 Cor. 15:54, Ro. 9:9 and 13:9), together with the absence of any direct citations from the OT in 1 Thessalonians, Pahl concludes that an allusion in this instance to OT Scriptures is unlikely. Therefore, the phrase ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου refers to ‘the proclaimed gospel message centered on Jesus’ death and resurrection.’<sup>97</sup> Pahl interprets the ἐν phrase as locative, resulting in a translation that reads, ‘in accordance with this message about the Lord’.<sup>98</sup> His conclusion states that, ‘the gospel message centred on Jesus’ death and resurrection is the explicit ground of [the believers’] hope for the future.’<sup>99</sup>

The breadth of Pahl’s research and analysis offers compelling support to his conclusions against a first century prophetic utterance, especially in light of the observation that there are no instances in Paul’s letters in which apostolic instruction concerning Jesus’ return is based upon the authority of ecstatic speech. Given the fact that Paul is speaking in a ‘word of the Lord’, however, the demarcation of divine utterances that excludes Jesus tradition and Scripture as epistemic

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<sup>95</sup> Pahl asserts that the Apostle Paul never employs λόγος language to introduce traditional material, preferring instead to speak of Jesus’ teachings as instruction (ὁ κύριος διέταξεν, 1 Cor. 9:14) or commands (ἐπιταγήν κυρίου, 1 Cor. 7:25). Pahl, *Discerning*, pp. 135-137.

<sup>96</sup> Pahl classifies as ‘at least possible’ the interpretation that the phrase refers to Scriptural authority. Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 165.

<sup>97</sup> Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 167.

<sup>98</sup> Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 169. An instrumental reading would introduce the precise phrasing of the word of the Lord, functioning in a similar fashion as κατὰ.

<sup>99</sup> Pahl, *Discerning*, p. 168.

sources for Paul's apocalyptic instruction is too narrow.<sup>100</sup> While Paul is not quoting a specific saying from the Jesus tradition, the argument against any influence from tradition is not convincing enough to overcome the weight of previous scholarship that supports this view.<sup>101</sup> Pahl himself acknowledges the possibility that both the gospel proclamation and traditional material are alluded to in the description that follows in 4:16-17.<sup>102</sup> Where the use of Scripture as a source is concerned, the absence of direct Scriptural citation in the letter is insufficient to reject prophetic expectation as a source of authority for Paul's instruction. 1 Thessalonians is replete with words that evoke the OT prophetic tradition. Additionally, Paul's presentation in the letter to the Galatians of the Scriptures evangelizing to Abraham the justification of the Gentiles by faith (προεὐαγγελίζομαι, Gal. 3:8) is testimony to the authority of the Scriptures in Paul's own evangelistic mission. Pahl's conclusion that the phrase 'word of the Lord' refers solely to the gospel as announced in Thessalonica is,

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<sup>100</sup> Paul's discussion of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 demonstrates his use of multiple sources to support his eschatological teaching. Paul's gospel rehearsal in 15:3ff is introduced with a reference to the λόγος of the gospel originally announced in Corinth. The chapter's claims concerning the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 draw on all four of the epistemic sources that Michael Pahl identifies as influential on the apostle's theology of the resurrection: Christ events (εὐαγγέλιον, 1 Cor. 15:1-2 and Christ's resurrection, 15:12), Scriptures (κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, 15:3, 4; LXX Is. 25:8 in 1 Cor. 15:54), Jesus tradition (1 Cor. 15:2), and direct prophetic revelation (1 Cor. 15:8, 11).

<sup>101</sup> This opinion is summarized by Howard Marshall: 'Nearly all scholars are agreed that v.15 contains a declaration which Paul makes on the basis of the teachings of Jesus, and vv. 16f. give the essence of the saying.' Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 126. The strength of scholarly opinion presents a compelling argument for including Jesus' words in the general sense of the phrase. Since Paul does not cite Jesus as the Lord who is giving the teaching or command, (as he does in 1 Corinthians 7:10 and 9:14), this suggests that, at best, Paul has in mind divine revelation concerning the resurrection of the dead that includes Jesus' teaching in continuity with Scriptural authority. Likewise, the fact that Paul does not use the phrase 'as it is written' (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9) to introduce an eschatological teaching recommends against a direct citation from Scripture. So also Best, *Thessalonians*, p. 193.

<sup>102</sup> Pahl's analysis does not, however, assess these possibilities in light of the use of the phrase in 1 Th. 1:8.

therefore, too narrow, and rather surprising given Pahl's clear association of the phrase with the prophetic tradition.<sup>103</sup>

The better interpretation is that in 4:15 Paul employs the phrase 'word of the Lord' in similar fashion to use of the phrase in 1:8, that is, as a category of divine communication, originating in the Scriptural tradition, to which the gospel belongs. As noted in the survey of LXX language in section 1.2 of this study, the phrase ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου occurs in the OT prophetic tradition as an indication of the divine authority of the message that the prophet speaks (cf. Sir. 48:3). The message spoken in a word of the Lord is revelatory of future events (cf. 1 Kgs. 13:1-5, 21:35). The word of the Lord is effective even over death. In Sirach 48:5, Elijah is reported as having raised a corpse from death in a word of the Most High (ἐν λόγῳ ὑψίστου). Paul's use of the phrase in 1 Thessalonians is consistent with these dynamics from the OT tradition. At the same time, Paul's statements in 4:14 clearly articulate the primacy of the Christ events in his use of the OT topos. Paul's use of ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου in 4:15 reflects a similar dynamic to the earlier occurrence in this same letter, specifically, that the phrase 'word of the Lord' is representative of a category of divine speech that announces the apocalyptic expectation of wrath and rescue with the Lord Jesus, Son of God, as the primary divine agent.

Paul's use of the phrase here in chapter four sheds light on the prophetic dynamic of a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου as a message both originating in the Lord, and dependent on the Lord for its fulfilment. In so far as a word of the Lord is a prophetic word, it is certain to be fulfilled in the lives

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<sup>103</sup> 'Paul appears to have intentionally employed the prophetic phrase 'word of God/the Lord', but used this and related phrases in reference to the ultimate 'word of God/the Lord', the salvific message about Jesus, and not to any ordinary prophetic revelation. He viewed not only his apostolic call and mission in prophetic categories, but also his apostolic message: he was specially called to proclaim the 'word of the Lord', the message about the Lord's saving sovereignty, 'proclaiming the good news' about the Lord Jesus as a light to the nations.' Pahl, *Discerning* p. 132.

of the faithful. The impulse for embodiment of prophetic speech includes both the living and the dead – they are not excluded from the sovereign reach of the Lord. Thus Paul exhorts the believers that they encourage one another with these words (4:18) so that they do not grieve as others who have no hope (4:13), that is, as the ‘Gentiles who do not know God’ (4:5). The recipients of Paul’s letter are to embody their faith in the return of God’s Son by replacing grief with hope.<sup>104</sup> The word of the Lord in 4:15, therefore, concerns the certainty of the fulfilment of the eschatological hope of the gospel. Understood this way, both the word of the Lord in 1:8, and the teaching in the word of the Lord in 4:15, are concerned with the full embodiment among the believers of the eschatological promises of the gospel.

### 3.3 Summary: λόγος τοῦ κυρίου as Apocalyptic Announcement

As Paul constructs a community narrative for the new believers in Thessalonica, he begins with the eventful arrival of the εὐαγγέλιον as a divine communication. The analysis above has demonstrated three characteristic qualities of OT prophetic speech that are congruent with Paul’s gospel as a ‘word of the Lord’ in 1:8: divine agency present and working in the message (1:5); the dynamic quality of divine speech that transforms human lives and propels the message forward (1:6-8); resulting in the embodiment in faith of an eschatological promise of a future salvation, announcing both judgment and hope (1:9-10). The difference between the gospel as a divine communication among the Thessalonians and that of OT prophetic speech is that the Holy Spirit is

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<sup>104</sup> John Barclay identifies three eschatological markers that distinguish Thessalonian believers from their pagan compatriots: turning away from idols (1:9-10); sexual practices that differ from the ‘Gentiles who do not know God’ (4:5); and hope rather than grief in the face of death. John Barclay, ‘That You May Not Grieve’, in *Not in the Word Alone*, ed. by Hooker, pp. 131-153 (p. 143).

involved in both the announcement and reception of the message. In the LXX, the direct divine encounter described by use of γίνομαι with λόγος κυρίου was limited to the prophets. In 1 Thessalonians, apostles and listeners alike are encountered by the gospel with the fullness of the Spirit and power that enables both the announcement and the reception of the word. This is a description of a divine speech act that fulfils the eschatological age as envisioned in Joel, when the Spirit would be poured out on God's people. As a divine communication, Paul's gospel proclaims and performs the word of the Lord revealed in the OT prophetic tradition, beginning with the promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:1-6, and continuing through the eschatological salvation envisioned in Isaiah: that Gentiles will turn from their idols to worship the living and true God, descendants of Abraham by faith. The embodiment of this message, in the lives of the Thessalonian believers, resounds throughout the region. The gospel is a message with apocalyptic content that concerns the Lord Jesus. However, Paul's use of the OT topos in 1 Thessalonians 1:8 is better read as a fixed expression of prophetic speech. Paul's use of the OT topos occurs in a narrative that presents the gospel as apocalyptic in content and revelatory in nature.<sup>105</sup> As a message concerning the Lord, the content of the gospel announces Jesus as the resurrected and returning Son of God. Gentile faith in this announcement embodies the word of the Lord announced in the gospel, in continuity with previous prophetic words – revealing God's purposes to include the Gentiles as beloved and elect in the eschatological salvation of God's people. As a word of the Lord, the gospel is an apocalyptic announcement of salvation in the full sense of the term 'apocalyptic': its content announces the return of Jesus as Lord in the *parousia*, while its nature functions as an active word,

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<sup>105</sup> Paul's narrative in 1:4-10 emphasizes divine agency through the gospel, disclosing to the elect the vision of Jesus as Lord. This is consistent with Paul Hanson's description of the category of apocalyptic eschatology in the OT prophetic tradition. It is 'a religious perspective which focused on the disclosure [...] to the elect of the cosmic vision of Yahweh's sovereignty – especially as it relates to his acting to deliver his faithful.' Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 11.

announced and received as a divine communication that reveals God's purposes for the future salvation of the Gentiles.

Paul repeats the phrase in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, in apocalyptic instruction that reorients the grief of death into the larger narrative of the gospel story. The fact of an ἐκκλησία of God's beloved and elect, called from among the Gentiles, depends entirely on the divine initiative in the εὐαγγέλιον – not only a message, but the abundant fullness of the Holy Spirit and power, enabling both its announcement and its reception, transforming converts into models of faith, and expanding with a divine momentum that spreads outward from Thessalonica throughout the region in reports of the faith of the Thessalonians in the Lord Jesus Christ. This same dynamic of a community gathered by the gospel as an apocalyptic announcement is reflected in Paul's use of the phrase in 1 Thessalonians 4:15. As a word of the Lord the gospel is an event – an act of divine grace, giving life to the dead. The same Holy Spirit that empowered the believers to receive the λόγος of the gospel with joy in the midst of affliction is capable, in a word of the Lord, to provide hope in the midst of grief.

The question of why Paul does not continue using the phrase 'word of the Lord' in other letters cannot be answered, although it may be noted that 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10 is the only Pauline epistle in which Paul presents an account of the birth of a congregation in response to the gospel. Later epistles cite passages from the LXX that are identified in the prophetic tradition as a 'word of the Lord', anticipating the inclusion of the Gentiles in the worship of the Lord. Paul's focus in 1 Thessalonians is on the revelatory embodiment of God's salvation in the conversion of the Thessalonian believers. The word of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians is embodied in the faith of Gentile converts, who abandon idolatry to worship Israel's God. 1 Thessalonians is also the only letter written to a congregation in a situation described by Paul with the language of affliction. Given the



combination of affliction language with the discussion of recent deaths in the congregation, it is reasonable to attribute Paul's emphasis on the apocalyptic content of the gospel as an encouragement to new believers in a situation of dislocation and grief. As a word of the Lord, the gospel is uniquely capable of performing that which it proclaims: salvation through faith in the Lord, Jesus, the resurrected Son of God, returning to rescue from the coming wrath (1:9-10, 2:16). The result of the announcement of the gospel in Thessalonica is that a community of beloved and elect is formed from among the nations who faithfully and lovingly embody the hope announced in Paul's gospel. The apocalyptic thanksgiving that begins Paul's narrative establishes the grateful, eschatological frame for Paul's letter.

## CHAPTER FOUR: APOSTLES AS PROPHETIC EMISSARIES

Having presented the gospel as a divine communication in the apocalyptic thanksgiving of 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10, Paul continues the narrative of the initial mission in Thessalonica in 2:1-12 with a presentation of the gospel emissaries as Christ's apostles. The story of the congregation in Thessalonica begins and culminates, in no uncertain terms, in the gospel as a free expression of God's gracious election (1:4-10). It also begins in a particular time and place with the arrival of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy as messengers. Embedded between the two apostolic thanksgivings (1:4-10 and 2:13-16), each of which presents a narrative to which the gospel message is central, Paul narrates the arrival of the apostolic messengers (2:1-12). The expansive and triumphant word of the Lord in 1:4-10 is entrusted to and embodied in the suffering, vulnerability, love and humble service of its messengers in 2:1-12. The reality, of course, is that 'our gospel' is not, in point of fact, word alone – it is entrusted speech, given by God to tested heralds in the same way that the OT prophetic word was given to prophets. In the first narrative, the gospel features as a revelatory announcement. In 2:13, it is a word of God in the apostolic report. Embedded between the two is the apostolic biography of its messengers.

In 1:4-10 the co-senders are initially presented as passive participants (1:5b), and ultimately as active listeners (1:8). 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 narrates the early days of the gospel in Thessalonica with a change in focus from the message to its messengers.<sup>1</sup> The narrative in 2:1 does not begin with 'our gospel'. It begins with 'our entrance'. God's agency continues to be emphasized explicitly and relentlessly: emboldening the apostolic team in the face of resistance (2:2); testing

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<sup>1</sup> Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', p. 247.

hearts and entrusting the gospel of God (2:4); and calling the believers to walk in God's kingdom and glory (2:12).<sup>2</sup> Significantly, however, God's agency in 2:1-12 is never independent from the gospel's human agents. Paul presents the co-senders as faithful to speak in the face of mistreatment and resistance (2:2); as demonstrating the integrity of divinely tested and purified character (2:4); and as submitting their conduct to the scrutiny of both God and fellow believers, teaching the way of obedience to God's call (2:8-12).<sup>3</sup> Where 'word' and 'spirit' were inseparable in 1:4-10, 'God's gospel' and 'Christ's apostles' are inseparable in 2:1-12.

The apostolic biography in 2:1-12 presents Paul, Silvanus and Timothy as emissaries entrusted with a divine communication, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ (2:2, 8, 9).<sup>4</sup> Paul's characterization of message and messenger reflects the OT prophetic tradition of divine communication.<sup>5</sup> Presented in continuity with OT characteristics of true and false prophets, Paul presents the apostolic team as faithful messengers of a divinely empowered, entrusted and embodied word of God. His presentation defends divine origin and agency in a series of antithetical statements, using οὐ / οὐτε / οὐκ ... ἀλλά constructions:<sup>6</sup> in 2:1-2 Paul contrasts a vain entrance with the messengers' bold speech; in 2:3-4 Paul contrasts trickery and deceit with divine testing and integrity; and in 2:5-7 he contrasts flattering and overbearing charlatans with Christ's apostles as

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<sup>2</sup> The frequent introduction of God into the text leads to Helmut Koester's observation that Paul references God 'in an almost importunate fashion'. Koester, 'Experiment', p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Paul rarely invokes God as a witness, and nowhere else does he do so twice in the same letter. cf. Ro. 1:9, 2 Cor. 1:23 and Phil. 1:8.

<sup>4</sup> Hendrikus Boers, 'Form Critical Study of Paul's Letters', p. 153. Boers is unique among advocates of an apologetic reading in that he emphasizes *both* the apostle *and* the apostolic proclamation as 'established and reaffirmed' in the central section.

<sup>5</sup> A. M. Denis' article demonstrates the LXX and Hellenistic background of Paul's language in this section by means of a systematic review of several of Paul's terms in 2:1-6, notably: παρρησιάζεσθαι, παράκλησις, πλάνη, ἀκαθαρσία, δόλος, δοκιμάζεσθαι, πιστευθῆναι, ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκειν, κολακεία, πλεονεξία and ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξα. Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', pp. 251-315.

<sup>6</sup> Kim, 'Paul's entry (εἴσοδος)', p. 541.

guileless babes (2:7), wet nurses (2:8) and trusted fathers (2:8-12).<sup>7</sup> The sections that follow in this chapter treat each of these antithetical statements in turn, beginning with 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2.

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<sup>7</sup> Most contemporary translations agree that the manuscript witness to νήπιοι is stronger, supported by a diversity of witnesses, notably ϋ<sup>65</sup> ⚭\* B C\* D\* F G I Ψ\* 104\*. 326<sup>c</sup> it vg<sup>cl.ww</sup> sa<sup>ms</sup> bo. However, a sizeable minority read ἡπιοι, most notably ⚭<sup>c</sup> A C<sup>2</sup> D<sup>2</sup> K L P Ψ<sup>c</sup> 0278. 33. 81. 104<sup>c</sup>. 326\*. 365. 630. 1241. 1505. 1739. 1881 ⚭<sup>st</sup> (sy) sa<sup>mss</sup> Clement. The oldest manuscripts ϋ<sup>65</sup> ⚭\* B support reading νήπιοι. The earliest Alexandrian manuscript that attests to ἡπιοι is A in the fifth century. Assessing the reason for the textual differences is more difficult. The ν at the end of one word and beginning of the next presents a genuine conundrum in determining the better reading, since there is no legitimate way to discern whether the diversity in witnesses is a result of dittography or haplography. Context does not resolve the difficulty, since an argument can be made for either reading (although ‘gentle’ makes more intuitive sense than ‘infants’). Again, νήπιοι is to be preferred as the *lectio difficilior*. At issue, however, is whether Paul’s shift in metaphors from ‘infants’ to ‘wet nurse’ is too abrupt to be plausible. In answer to this objection, previous work on this issue has demonstrated that an abrupt shift in metaphor is not unknown in Paul (cf. Gal. 4:19), nor is a comparison to infants uniformly negative (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11). In the progression of the argument, the shift to infants is contextually feasible if read as the first in a cascading series of familial metaphors (infants 2:7, mother 2:7, father 2:11). Additionally, as indicated by pairing νήπιοι with γίνομαι, the identification as infants belongs in contrast to the series of descriptions introduced at 2:5 (also with γίνομαι). Paul’s argument gives several statements beginning with οὔτε: neither in words of flatter, nor with a pretext for greed (2:5); nor seeking human praise (2:6). In 2:7, the use of ἀλλά introduces the positive contrast to these negative traits: the apostles became infants among the believers. In this reading, a full stop should be placed after the phrase ἐν μέσῳ ἡμῶν. Although neither choice makes a material difference to the findings in this study, and both communicate a posture of vulnerability or gentleness, ‘infants’ is the preferred reading. See Jeffrey Weima, ‘But We Became Infants Among You’: The case for ΝΕΤΤΙΟΙ in 1 Thessalonians 2:7’, *NTS* 46 (2000), 547-564; Beverly Gaventa, ‘Apostles as Babes and Nurses in 1 Thessalonians 2.7’, in *Faith and History: Essays in Honour of Paul W. Meyer*, eds. John T. Carroll, Charles H. Cosgrove and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Atlanta: Scholars press, 1991), pp. 193-207; Timothy B. Sailors, ‘Wedding Textual and Literary-Rhetorical Criticism to Understand the Text of 1 Thessalonians 2.7’, *JSNT*, 80 (2000), 81-98. For a survey of translation choices between 1956-1984 see Collins, *Studies*, pp. 7-8.

#### 4.1 Emboldened Messengers (1 Th. 2:1-2)

<sup>1</sup>Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν <sup>2</sup> ἀλλὰ προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες καθὼς οἶδατε ἐν Φιλίπποις ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλῆσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἄγῳνι.

Several features of these opening verses demonstrate the close interaction of the apocalyptic thanksgiving narrative in 1 Th. 1:4-10 and the apostolic presentation in 2:1-12. In both 1:5 and 2:1 Paul modifies the subject of his narrative with a first person plural pronoun: ‘our gospel’ in 1:5 and ‘our entrance’ in 2:1, each occurring ‘among you’ (εἰς ὑμᾶς, 1:5; πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 2:1). Both descriptions begin with a negative comparison. In 1:5 ‘our gospel’ did not arrive (γίνομαι) in word alone. Similarly, in 2:1, the arrival of the messengers is emphasized with a negative construction: ‘our entrance’ did not prove ineffective (γίνομαι with κενός). Finally, Paul’s repeated use of οἶδα in the second person plural signals a return to the knowledge of the messengers that was first introduced in 1:5: ‘you know (οἶδα) what we became among you for your sake.’<sup>8</sup> In 2:1-12 οἶδατε occurs four times, expanding on that which the believers know of the apostles: that their entrance was not in vain (2:1), and despite being mistreated in Philippi they spoke with divinely empowered boldness (2:2), never in words of flattery or greed (2:5), but rather

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<sup>8</sup> ‘The conjunction καθὼς links the following words with the preceding so as to imply: ‘we know what kind of people you turned out to be when you received the gospel *as* you know what kind of people we were when we brought it to you.’” Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 15.

exhorting and encouraging as a father with children (2:11).<sup>9</sup> Paul's narrative focus moves from message to messenger.

The close association of the message with its messengers is communicated through the use of εἴσοδος in verses 1:9 and 2:1. Paul employs εἴσοδος twice in these opening chapters, once to describe the reception of the missionaries on their initial mission in Thessalonica (1 Th. 1:9), and again at the outset of the defence (1 Th. 2:1).<sup>10</sup> The strength of the connection between the two verses is underscored by the fact that the word εἴσοδος is never used again in the Pauline corpus.<sup>11</sup> Despite the focus on the arrival of the gospel message in 1:4-8, Paul does not write concerning the residents of Macedonia and Achaia that 'they themselves report what kind of entrance *our gospel* had among you'. Instead, he states that 'they themselves report *concerning us* what kind of entrance *we* had among you.'<sup>12</sup> Paul takes the listeners back to the beginning of the entrance of the gospel in Thessalonica. The story of the entrance of the gospel among the believers cannot be

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<sup>9</sup> Henneken not only directly connects the description in 2:1-12 to 1:5, but also extends the divine agency present in the description in chapter 1 to the conduct and character of the co-senders in chapter 2, employing the phrase '*gott-menschliche Geschehen der Verkündigung*' to describe the close association of divine and human agency in the act of evangelizing. Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> Seyoon Kim's argument for an apologetic definition of εἴσοδος, signifying the integrity with which Paul discharged his duty to preach the gospel, strains the meaning of the term beyond the natural understanding of the initial mission in the city. Kim, 'Paul's entry (εἴσοδος)', esp. pp. 519-523. See also the treatment of the term by B. W. Winter, 'The Entries and Ethics of the Orators and Paul (1 Thessalonians 2.1-12)', *TynB*, 44 (1993), 57-64; John Gillman, 'Paul's Εἴσοδος: The Proclaimed and the Proclaimer (1 Thes 2,8)', in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. by Raymond F. Collins, pp. 62-70; Morna Hooker, *1 Thessalonians 1:9-10*, in *Geschichte, Tradition, Reflexion*, ed. by Cancik, Lichtenberger, Schäfer, pp. 445-47.

<sup>11</sup> The noun occurs three additional times in the New Testament: Acts 13:24 of John the Baptist's arrival; Heb. 10:19 of entrance into the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus; and 2 Pet. 1:11 for entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

<sup>12</sup> In first-century antiquity, as in the OT prophetic tradition, 'proper reception of the envoy necessarily entails proper reception of the one who sent him'. Margaret Mitchell, 'New Testament Envoys', p. 645. A minority of manuscripts read ὑμῶν in 1 Th. 1:9: B 81. 323. 614. 629. 630. 945 ar d vg<sup>mss</sup> sa<sup>mss</sup> bo<sup>ms</sup>. The reading ἡμῶν in the oldest manuscripts is to be preferred as the *lectio difficilior*. See also Best, *Thessalonians*, p. 81. Neither reading changes the essence of the report, which is the reception of the messengers rather than their message.

narrated without the story of the entrance of the gospel messengers among the believers.<sup>13</sup> The gospel enters with fullness of the Holy Spirit and power, while the messengers arrive in suffering and opposition. The manner of entrance of each carries profound eschatological implications.

#### 4.1.1 Apostolic εἴσοδος and κενός (1 Th. 2:1)

After describing the circumstances of the arrival in Thessalonica, Paul concludes 1 Th. 2:1 with the statement that their initial entrance among the believers was not in vain (ὅτι οὐ κενῆ γέγονεν). Paul often employs the κενόω word family when expressing concern that his labours do not prove themselves ineffective or without success. The use of γίνομαι in 2:1 is in the perfect tense. The certainty of the eschatological salvation described in 1:9-10 in association with the apostolic εἴσοδος is based in the effectiveness of God's gospel as a word of God. Albert Denis argues for a Scriptural source of Paul's use of κενός language in 1 Thessalonians, associating the language with the suffering servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 49:4.<sup>14</sup> In its LXX context, this verse is the lament of a prophetic mediator whose labours in the word seemingly ended in failure, yet were ultimately vindicated by God.<sup>15</sup> Carl Bjerkelund likewise identifies the OT prophetic tradition as the source of Paul's presentation of an effective ministry of the word. He concludes that, despite an eschatology that differs from the OT and Jewish Midrash, and the Christian kerygma, the OT

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<sup>13</sup> So also Luckensmeyer who, after a brief review of previous scholarship on Paul's use of the word, concludes that 'Paul may well be emphasising the power of the gospel, and *its entrance*, rather than merely the entrance of himself and his co-workers.' Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, p. 80, (emphasis original).

<sup>14</sup> Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', p. 250. C. Bjerkelund likewise identifies Is. 49:4 as background for Paul's use of κενός in these verses. Bjerkelund, *Vergeblich*, pp. 179-80.

<sup>15</sup> Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 210.

background to the function and meaning of κενός in the Pauline letters is unmistakable.<sup>16</sup> Where this background is concerned, Bjerkelund's summary of LXX usage asserts that the difference between an effective or a vain message is the difference between that which originates with God and that which does not.<sup>17</sup> Judith Gundry-Volf's study of Paul's use of κενός language further demonstrates that the apostle's conviction of an effective labour is based in his conviction of divine agency at work through the gospel.<sup>18</sup> A work undertaken without God's presence and blessing is in vain.<sup>19</sup>

Thus the divine origin of the gospel is essential to the efficacy of apostolic labour for two reasons. The first is Paul's certainty that God will complete the salvation that it announces, as narrated in 1:4-10. Second, this certainty is anchored in the divine origin of the message. The announcement of a message that originates from God is accompanied by God's presence and blessing. The use of γίνομαι in the perfect tense with κενός, as a statement of certainty about the efficacy of the initial mission, is based in the divine origin of the gospel with which the messengers entered Thessalonica.

This opening statement, asserting the effectiveness of the initial entrance, mitigates the necessity of identifying a particular source of accusations against Paul and his co-workers. In the absence of clearly identified opponents or accusations, the best approach is to read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 as a general defence against competing messengers and the ineffective, that is, human

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<sup>16</sup> Bjerkelund, 'Vergeblich', p. 182.

<sup>17</sup> Bjerkelund, 'Vergeblich', p. 180. For descriptions of human speech as vain or empty see also LXX Is. 32:6 and 59:4.

<sup>18</sup> Gundry-Volf associates the same verse with Paul's use of κενός in 2 Corinthians 6:1: 'Citing Isa 49:8 LXX, Paul places his own ministry within the eschatological 'now,' or 'the day of salvation,' in which the prophetic words are fulfilled (6:2). But, as the servant figure of Isaiah 49, who despairs for having 'toiled in vain' (κενῶς ἐκοπίασα, v. 4), Paul had suffered his share of defeat in Corinth.' Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, p. 278.

<sup>19</sup> Bjerkelund, 'Vergeblich', p. 181.



messages that they proclaim.<sup>20</sup> The text of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 offers no definitive support for Traugott Holtz's argument that Paul was responding to a concrete 'negative propaganda campaign' that classified his message with any number of specious proclamations.<sup>21</sup> It is the reputation of and confidence in the message rather than the messengers that is at stake.<sup>22</sup> In defending against competing messengers, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 is, as described by Willi Marxsen, an apology for the gospel.<sup>23</sup> Daniel Marguerat asserts that Paul's apostolic presentation (which Marguerat views as a *l'éloge de soi*), evokes the past in order to safeguard the present and future. An *apologia*, by contrast, defends past actions from actual attacks in the present.<sup>24</sup> Having affirmed the effective εἰσοδος of Christ's apostles, an assertion based in the effectiveness of a divine communication, Paul's apostolic presentation in 2:1-12 seeks to safeguard against a destructive εἰσοδος of false prophets or preachers.

An effective apostolic mission depends entirely on the origin of the message from God. As narrated in 1:4-10, the arrival of a divine communication is an event of divine agency, empowering faith in response to the announcement of salvation. An effective entrance requires an effective word. In the absence of apostolic leadership in Thessalonica, Paul's series of antithetical statements

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<sup>20</sup> Willi Marxsen's reading of 2:1-12 describes Paul confronting competitors, who remain present in Thessalonica while the apostle is absent, in order to assuage any fears (in the midst of persecution) that the gospel was powerless. Marxsen, *Thessalonicher*, pp. 22-25, 43-44.

<sup>21</sup> T. Holtz, 'On the Background of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12', in *Thessalonian Debate*, ed. by Donfried and Beutler, pp. 69-80 (pp. 78-79). Todd Still also argues for concrete Jewish and Gentile external opposition to Paul. Still, *Conflict*, p. 149.

<sup>22</sup> Johan Vos counters Holtz's view with the statement that Paul 'has a *potential* denial of the divine nature of his gospel in view.' Vos, 'Response to Traugott Holtz', p. 82, (emphasis original). See also Sumney, 'Paul's Opponents', pp. 34-35. Several interpreters rightly assert the association between confidence in Paul and confidence in his message. See Barclay, 'Conflict', p. 513; Kim, 'Paul's entry (εἰσοδος)', p. 540.

<sup>23</sup> 'Wohl aber handelt es sich um eine *Apologie des Evangeliums*.' Marxsen, *Thessalonicher*, p. 25. So also Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica*, p. 134.

<sup>24</sup> 'À la différence de l'apologie, qui répond à des attaques effectives (voir l'épître aux Galates!), l'éloge de soi vise plutôt à prévenir un danger potentiel. L'apologie rectifie l'image du passé; l'éloge de soi évoque le passé en vue d'investir le présent et l'avenir.' Marguerat, 'Imiter l'apôtre', p. 54.

in the rest of the biography defend the εἴσοδος of the apostolic team from incursion on the part of competing messengers, peddling a λόγος ἀνθρώπων, a human message incapable of eschatological salvation.

#### 4.1.2 Boldness in Suffering (1 Th. 2:2)

The first of these three antithetical statements concerning the efficacy of the apostolic εἴσοδος in Thessalonica is a reminder of the co-senders' divinely empowered boldness of speech, despite their previous suffering and mistreatment in Philippi, and in the face of severe resistance in Thessalonica (1 Th. 2:2).<sup>25</sup> The fact that Paul and his co-workers speak God's gospel in a context of previous suffering (προπάσχω), mistreatment (ὕβριζω), and great opposition (πολὺς ἀγών) is congruent with the association throughout these opening narratives of suffering and the gospel. In the face of this resistance God provides courage. F.F. Bruce observes that God is mentioned twice in this brief description, associated both as the source of boldness and the source of the gospel (εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>26</sup> Paul's description of the apostolic response to suffering opposition expresses solidarity with the description of the believers' reception of the word with a Spirit-empowered joy in 1:6. The source of both joy and courage relative to the gospel is the God from whom the message originates. The co-senders' courageous speech in the face of resistance is the first demonstration of the divine origin of their message.

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<sup>25</sup> The mistreatment in Philippi included 'vigorous, possibly physical opposition.' Barclay, 'Conflict', p. 513.

<sup>26</sup> Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 58.

This relationship between suffering and external resistance to a divine communication is reminiscent of the OT prophetic tradition. The response of the apostles to suffering as a result of external pressures and mistreatment is divinely empowered courage. This difference in focus suggests an association of prophetic suffering.<sup>27</sup> Paul, Silvanus and Timothy are described in solidarity with the suffering of OT divine emissaries that speak God's word in the face of resistance to it (cf. 1 Th. 2:15). This divinely empowered resolve in the face of opposition echoes the OT prophetic tradition.<sup>28</sup> Based on an extensive word study of παρρησιάζομαι, Albert Denis associates the divinely empowered boldness with the eschatological persecution of the just, thus indirectly introducing the prophetic ministries of Jeremiah and Isaiah.<sup>29</sup> Recall, for example, the Lord's promises to Jeremiah to fortify the young prophet against the wholesale resistance of God's people.<sup>30</sup> Denis asserts that Paul's apostolic presentation is presented in the direct line of the OT,

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<sup>27</sup> The opposition to which Paul refers may be internal anxieties alongside external dangers. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, p. 47. The lack of explicit theological reflection that associates suffering and the cross should not be regarded as an indication that Paul's gospel message in Thessalonica was not cruciform. See comments on 1 Th. 5:10 ('who died for us') by Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 114; Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 368.

<sup>28</sup> Lambrecht speaks of 'the courage which was God's gift to the inspired biblical prophets.' Lambrecht, *Studies*, p. 191.

<sup>29</sup> Denis also identifies Paul's word choice with its Hellenistic use, anticipating the comparison with Cynic-Philosophers in the rest of the passage. Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', pp. 251-9, esp. 258-9.

<sup>30</sup> 'And I for my part have made you today a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall, against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land. They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you.' Jeremiah 1:18-19

its ministry realized in affliction, through the action of the Spirit and the apostolic preaching.<sup>31</sup> The speaking of the message in the face of resistance is not only empowered by God – it also originates from God. Paul’s exemplary narrative affirms that suffering is an affirmation rather than abandonment of divine presence with the gospel.

The second essential point in verse 2:2 is that an effective divine agency in the gospel depends on the divine origin of the gospel. The repeated use of the phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, indicative of the gospel as a divine communication, is an essential element in Paul’s defensive maneuvers against the incursion of messages that depend on human agency for their communication and efficacy.<sup>32</sup> The identification of τοῦ θεοῦ as a genitive of origin is made explicit later in the passage, as Paul narrates the entrusting of the message from God to the apostles (2:3-

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<sup>31</sup> ‘Le rôle que se reconnaît l’Apôtre, est donc présenté dans la ligne directe de l’Ancien Testament. Son activité s’explique par comparaison avec celle des grands hommes du temps passé. Il en réalise la figure. Il est comme eux un prophète, homme de Dieu et chargé par lui d’une mission, mais prophète des temps messianiques. Il ne prépare plus l’arrivée du Messie, il accomplit l’Ancien Testament. Celui-ci se réalise dans les tribulations, par l’action de l’Esprit, mais aussi par la prédication apostolique, pneumatique et assurée.’ Denis, , ‘L’Apôtre Paul’, p. 259. Denis associates the figures of Jeremiah and the suffering servant in Isaiah with Paul’s individual apostolic commission rather than with a shared apostolic ministry based in the gospel as a divine communication.

<sup>32</sup> The phrase εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ occurs as a designation of divine origin in only three epistles: 1 Thessalonians (1 Th. 2:2, 8 and 9), 2 Corinthians (τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον, 2 Cor. 11:7) and Romans (Ro. 1:1 and 15:16). All six occurrences are located in a context that clearly identifies God as the source of the message. In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul rejects the idea that he could charge money to give a gospel that does not originate with him; and in Romans 1 and 15, Paul’s emphasis on the divine origin of the message is closely related to his self-presentation as a divinely commissioned apostle to the Gentiles.

4). In Paul's letters, as well as the OT prophetic tradition, the salvific power of a message derives from the divine origin of that communication.<sup>33</sup>

## 4.2 An Entrusted Message (1 Th. 2:3-4)

<sup>3</sup> ἡ γάρ παράκλησις ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης οὐδὲ ἐξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλω, <sup>4</sup>  
ἀλλὰ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, οὕτως  
λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς  
καρδίας ἡμῶν.

The next antithetical statement occurs in Paul's presentation of the gospel as an entrusted message. 1 Thessalonians 2:3-4 asserts the fidelity of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy in terms that align with the Scriptural tradition of prophets as emissaries speaking directly on behalf of God. The voice of the prophet is the voice of God. This tradition is reflected initially in Paul's choice of the phrase παράκλησις ἡμῶν. Apostolic appeal is the direct voice of God through God's emissaries.

### 4.2.1 Our Appeal – παράκλησις / παρακαλέω

The use of the παρακαλέω word family in Paul branches out in a number of directions.

When situated in context with θλίψις its meaning as comfort or consolation is fairly

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<sup>33</sup> 'The gospel here is called the gospel of God: there is a theocentric character to the gospel, especially as it is referred to in this document [...] It was, after all, God who raised Jesus from the dead (1.10) and set in motion the proclamation of the good news about his Son,' Witherington, *Thessalonians*, p. 77.

straightforward (1 Th. 3:7, cf. 2 Cor. 1:4-6). Yet most of the occurrences of παρακαλέω language in 1 Thessalonians are not contextually situated in response to affliction.<sup>34</sup> More often, the verb is employed in direct relationship to exhortation in the gospel.

The starting place for the relationship of παρακαλέω to the apostolic ministry of gospel announcement is Paul's reference to the gospel as 'our appeal' (2:3). This is the only one of Paul's letters in which παράκλησις represents the apostolic activity of speaking the gospel. When Paul branches out and uses the word group as gospel language, the roots go back into the OT prophetic tradition. The word family in the LXX occurs frequently in prophetic literature, particularly of the Messianic expectation concerning the comfort of Israel (LXX Is. 40:1).<sup>35</sup> Albert Denis identifies the language as primarily occurring in Isaiah.<sup>36</sup> His study of Paul's use of the word concludes that Paul's use of παράκλησις in 2:3 represents the prophetic anticipation of the consolation of Israel announced to the Thessalonians, with the promise of salvation from apocalyptic wrath (1:10).<sup>37</sup> In

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<sup>34</sup> Beyond its use in 1 Th. 3:7, five of the eight occurrences of παρακαλέω in the letter are a continuation of apostolic exhortation or appeal that began during the initial mission (1 Th. 2:12; 3:2; 4:1, 10; 5:14). The remaining 2 are a mutual extension of apostolic teaching concerning the *parousia* (4:18, 5:11).

<sup>35</sup> 'Paraklesis and its cognate verb, studied by Schmitz and Stählin and by Bjerkelund, are linked with prophecy in the sense both of comfort and exhortation.' W. Horbury, '1 Thessalonians 11:3 as Rebutting the Charge of False Prophecy', *JTS*, 33 (1982), 492-508, p. 496. See Denis' review of possible meanings in Paul: exhortation, comfort, spiritual gifts and kerygma. Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', pp. 260-65.

<sup>36</sup> One occurrence noted is in LXX Is. 49:8. Denis notes that the larger context of Is. 49 is of particular significance to Paul (cf. Gal. 1:15, Phil. 2:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:2, 7:6; Rom. 14:11). Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', p. 265-66.

<sup>37</sup> 'Si saint Paul choisit ce terme [παράκλησις] pour parler de son kerygme à Thessalonique, c'est un signe que sa pensée évolue ici dans un contexte d'Ancien Testament. Son Évangile est selon l'Esprit ; grâce à lui, les Thessaloniens seront arrachés à la colère ; et comme le Serviteur de Yahweh, Paul n'a pas œuvré en vain.' Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', p. 267. The theme of comfort as deliverance from wrath is emphasized by Paul, as is the eschatological scope of an effective labour. For further development of Paul's association of his apostolic ministry with the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 49 see G. K. Beale, 'The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5-7 and Its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1', *NTS* 35 (1989), 550-81, esp. p. 562.

this sense, ‘consolation’ is the announcement of eschatological deliverance, which represents a particular emphasis from the εὐαγγέλιον as spoken among the Thessalonians.<sup>38</sup> Paul’s use of παρακαλέω language in the apostolic narratives presents suffering and grief as the temporal conditions in which the eschatological comfort of the gospel is most fully embodied and announced.

Additional features of παρακαλέω language in the LXX render insight into Paul’s use of the word to represent the missionaries’ appeal in Thessalonica. Paul employs the word in a context that presents God acting through the human agency of true emissaries. In the LXX, the παρακαλέω word group represents the activity of emissaries (LXX Is. 33:7). This gives insight into Paul’s application of the first person plural pronoun to the term. Recall that in 1:5 ‘our gospel’ was the gospel as a divine speech act delivered by human agents. In a similar dynamic, in 2:3 ‘our appeal’ is a divine appeal spoken by the apostles as entrusted emissaries.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, in LXX usage relative to the consolation of Israel, God is the acting agent of rescue and restoration (cf. LXX Is. 38:16; 49:10, 13; 51:12; 57:18; 66:13). Likewise, the comfort of those who mourn is an activity of the Lord’s anointed (LXX Is. 61:2). Therefore, Paul’s use of the phrase παρακλήσις ἡμῶν in 2:3 is a human announcement of God’s salvation. The human agency of heralds announces the divine agency of salvation. Finally, as in the LXX, false prophets and emissaries are capable of false speech, delivering a comfort that does not come from God, in which case the comfort is ‘vain’ rather than ‘God-given

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<sup>38</sup> In 2 Corinthians 5:20, for example, God’s appeal through the apostles is a particular exhortation to reconciliation with God in Christ. If Denis is correct, then the content of the apostolic appeal in 2:3 may well be expressed in the report in 1:9-10 that the Gentiles in Thessalonica turned from idols to worship the living and true God, and to eagerly await his Son whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

<sup>39</sup> Malherbe observes that Paul’s description in 2:3 ‘is of what he habitually does’, allowing with reference to 2 Cor. 5:20 and 6:1 that Paul’s reference could be to an appeal that God makes through Paul. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 139.

and 'true' (Is. 28:29, 30:7).<sup>40</sup> True divinely commissioned emissaries, announcing the Messianic comfort of God with sincerity, introduce no distortion of or hindrance to God's direct divine appeal. Here again Paul's narrative of the divinely commissioned messengers mirrors the earlier narrative of divine message. Where 'our gospel' in 1:5 was a divine speech act delivered through human agency, 'our appeal' in 2:3 is divine comfort spoken by human agents.

The frequent repetition of παρακαλέω language in verbal form throughout 1 Thessalonians reflects a three-way relationship. The initiative of consolation originates from God and is shared in mutual relationship between believers, especially in the midst of affliction (θλίψις, 1 Th. 3:7, cf. 2 Cor. 1:4-6).<sup>41</sup> When παρακαλέω is contextually understood as exhortation, that exhortation is the human articulation of God's direct divine call to walk in ways worthy of his kingdom and glory, that is, in anticipation of the consolation of Israel at the Lord's return (1 Th. 2:12).<sup>42</sup> Every occurrence of παρακαλέω in the letter participates in God's work among the faithful – encouraging believers in their faith and sanctifying them in hopeful anticipation of the Day of the Lord (1 Th. 3:2; 4:1, 10, 18; 5:11, 14).<sup>43</sup> Paul's use of παράκλησις and παρακαλέω language in this letter reflects divine and human co-agency in the gospel as a message of God's salvation. The apostolic παράκλησις is a

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<sup>40</sup> Horbury, 'Rebutting', p. 497.

<sup>41</sup> See David Briones' discussion of παρακαλέω in 2 Corinthians interpreted in light of brokerage relationships that demonstrates the importance of God as source of the consolation shared between apostles and believers in a situation of distress: 'the "Father", as "the God of all comfort (παράκλησις)" (2 Cor. 1.3), possesses a "first order resource", direct access to the commodity of παράκλησις [...] God, therefore, as the benevolent patron, imparts the commodity of παράκλησις/χάρις to Paul (1:4)'. Briones, 'Mutual Brokers of Grace', p. 544.

<sup>42</sup> The use of both παρακαλέω and παραμυθέομαι (consolation, comfort) in 2:12 argues against a primary meaning of consolation to Paul's use of παρακαλέω in the context of apostolic exhortation.

<sup>43</sup> Marguerat, alert to the fact that λαλέω occurs in the present rather than the aorist that is predominant in 2:1-12, suggests that Paul connects the appeal spoken by the apostles in this verse to the legitimacy of the paraenetic instruction that follows in 1 Th. 4-5. Margeurat, 'Imiter l'apôtre', p. 42.



three way comfort, spoken from God through emissaries to the listeners. In contrast, two-way interactions, between preachers and listeners, represent the dynamic of false speech against which Paul argues in his *apologia*, again in a manner reminiscent of the Scriptural tradition.

#### 4.2.2 LXX Jeremiah and False Emissaries

Paul's demarcation between false and true messengers in 1 Thessalonians 2:3-4 has been firmly established as an echo of the OT test of false prophets, especially as found in Jeremiah. Paul asserts that he, Silvanus and Timothy are not in the line of false prophets who lead people astray into idolatry or impurity, likely for the sake of personal gain. Rather, they have been entrusted with a message of good news that originates with God who tests the heart. As Daniel Marguerat correctly asserts, the three denials – of error, impurity or guile – are expressions of origin rather than moral character.<sup>44</sup> The emphasis is on corruption at the source of the message.

These phrases find significant parallels in the OT prophetic tradition.<sup>45</sup> Denis demonstrates the association of the word πλάνη with the apostasy of Israel, wandering in the ways of idolatry, and especially associated with the action of false prophets who 'lost' Israel.<sup>46</sup> The metaphor of 'straying' or 'leading astray' captures the consequences of error.<sup>47</sup> Karl Sandnes has demonstrated the strong connections of the terms πλάνη and ἀκαθαρσία in 2:3 to the OT descriptions of false

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<sup>44</sup> 'La dénégation ne porte pas sur le standard moral des apôtres, mais sur l'origine de leur prédication; elle ne tire pas sa provenance de l'erreur (ἐκ) ou de l'impureté (ἐκ), ni ne s'impose par le moyen de la ruse (ἐν instrumental). À cette triple origine viciée, Paul va opposer non pas une série de vertues, mais une source autre.' Marguerat, 'Imiter l'apôtre', p. 41.

<sup>45</sup> William Horbury's article presents a caution against moving away from Paul's prophetic apostolic self-presentation. Horbury, 'Rebutting'.

<sup>46</sup> Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', pp. 270-71.

<sup>47</sup> Horbury, 'Rebutting', p. 497-9.

prophets.<sup>48</sup> He asserts that ‘deceit and impurity’ occurred together, as the deceit of the false prophets led people astray into the uncleanness of idolatry (cf. Jer. 19:13).<sup>49</sup> Denis contrasts this to the purity that characterizes true prophets (cf. Is. 6:5-7).<sup>50</sup> The third term, δόλος, was commonly used for guile, especially as connected to wealth won by deceit (cf. Jer. 5:27).<sup>51</sup> The opposite of guile is sincerity.<sup>52</sup> Not sincerity as a human virtue, however. Paul does not contrast the deception, impurity and guile of messages generated from a human source with the positive characteristics of human virtue (i.e. truth, purity and sincerity). He counters with an assertion of the divine origin of an entrusted word. Put another way, it is not the motivation of the messenger that matters – it is the source of the message.

In contrast to false emissaries, the message of good news that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy speak has been directly entrusted by the God who tested the emissaries’ hearts.<sup>53</sup> True prophets brought a divinely entrusted message while false prophets delivered a message originating from the human heart and imagination.<sup>54</sup> The repeated use of the genitive τοῦ θεοῦ emphasizes the continuity and integrity between the gospel announced and received in the initial mission with the

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<sup>48</sup> Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets*, p. 204. So also Horbury: ‘False prophecy is regarded as defiling.’ Horbury, ‘Rebutting’, pp. 499-503, esp. 501. Denis reads ἀκαθαρσία as the ‘unclean profanity of paganism’. Denis, ‘L’Apôtre Paul’, pp. 276-282.

<sup>49</sup> Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets*, p. 210.

<sup>50</sup> Denis, ‘L’Apôtre Paul’, p. 281.

<sup>51</sup> Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets*, p. 211.

<sup>52</sup> Horbury, ‘Rebutting’, p. 505.

<sup>53</sup> Donfried’s application of testing as a controlling motif for the entire section that follows takes the metaphor in 2:3 too far. Donfried identifies the prophetic polemic in 2:15-16 with condemnation appropriate to those who have resisted a tested and approved prophet (citing Jer. 11:20), the return of Timothy as a proxy to assess the believers, and the further admonition to the believers to do their own testing (1 Th. 5:2). Donfried, ‘The Epistolary and Rhetorical Context of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12’, in *Thessalonian Debate*, ed. by Donfried and Beutler, pp. 31-60, (p. 54).

<sup>54</sup> Lindblom describes the true prophets of Israel as those who received their message directly from the mouth and in the counsel of God rather than speaking from their own hearts (Jer. 23:16, 22). Lindblom, *Prophecy*, pp. 110-113.

gospel directly entrusted to the messengers from God. Paul's language of testing (δοκιμάζεσθαι) the hearts of those entrusted with the gospel echoes that of LXX Jeremiah.<sup>55</sup> Karl Donfried has also demonstrated Paul's reliance on Jeremiah for the concept of God 'testing the hearts' of the prophets (cf. Jer. 6:27, 11:20 and 12:3).<sup>56</sup> Albert Denis further suggests that the use of δοκιμάζεσθαι in LXX Jeremiah has the sense not only of knowledge but also of purification.<sup>57</sup> Paul's assertion of hearts tested and purified counters the vices of deceit, impurity or guile that corrupt any message that has as its source the human heart.

The contrast between a message that originates in the councils of Yahweh and those that start in the imagination of the prophet is a measure of true and false prophets.<sup>58</sup> Only a message that originates from God has the power described by Paul in 1:4-10. In this way Paul's presentation draws from a broader OT background than that of Jeremiah.<sup>59</sup> Even 'good virtues' of the emissary generating a human message are irrelevant. As asserted in Paul's denial of speaking to please men, reliable apostolic speech is motivated by fidelity to the God that has sent the emissary, rather than a desire to please the persons receiving the missive (not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts, 2:4). Prophets are accountable to God, in whose name the prophet speaks. In contrast to human messages that lead people to wander, gospel emissaries speak with a true, pure and sincere word from God (1 Th. 2:12).

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<sup>55</sup> Collins, *Studies*, pp. 189-191; Marguerat, 'Imiter l'apôtre', p. 41

<sup>56</sup> Karl Donfried connects Jer. 11:20, 12:3 and 6:27 to Paul in this context. Donfried, 'Epistolary and Rhetorical', pp. 50-51. Collins likewise confirms the connection of Jer. 11.20 and 2.4, concluding that 'Paul stood within the great prophetic tradition as one who had been set apart to bring the word of God to his people.' Collins, *Studies*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>57</sup> Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', pp. 291-292.

<sup>58</sup> See the use of this tradition in Jeremiah 23:9-40. 'The reality of God's heart and God's decision (v.20) contrasts with the heart and fantasy of Jeremiah's opponents (v. 16).' Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 213.

<sup>59</sup> Holtz, 'Selbstverständnis', p. 327.

Paul's first demonstration of an effective entrance in Thessalonica was the divinely empowered speech with boldness in a context of suffering and opposition (2:1-2). The second demonstration, in 2:3-4, forms the theological heart of the narrative: the apostles are entrusted with a εὐαγγέλιον that originates from God, and therefore is an effective message. The echoes of language from Jeremiah contrast the effectiveness of this divinely entrusted message with the vanity of a human message, originating in deceit, impurity, or guile. 1 Thessalonians 2:3-4 is a presentation of apostolic faithfulness in direct continuity with the OT prophetic tradition, asserting an announcement of good news originating from God and entrusted to apostles as divine emissaries. The παράκλησις of divine emissaries is direct divine appeal, both communicating the consolation of the gospel, and calling for those that hear the message to turn to God.<sup>60</sup> This is not based in the truth of the content but the source of its speech. The efficacy of a divine word is its power to save. It is not vain or empty speech. The apostolic *apologia* centers in this OT prophetic tradition of the eschatological effectiveness of the divinely entrusted message.

Paul, Silvanus and Timothy's shared ministry in the gospel as a divinely entrusted communication is the background to Paul's next antithetical statement. The conduct of Christ's apostles is presented in contrast to deceptive emissaries, continuing the dynamic of the OT concept

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<sup>60</sup> The test of false prophets was visible in whether their message resulted in a turning to Yahweh. 'If the prophets had had access to the [divine] council their message would have been different [...]. They would have spoken the divine words and the people would have turned from their evil ways.' Carroll, *Jeremiah*, p. 463. The lack of return on the part of God's people was also the reason for the prophetic lament that their words are vain, that is, ineffective to return God's people to God.

of the true prophet as one that embodies the entrusted message in contrast to the cynic philosophers of the day.<sup>61</sup>

### 4.3 An Embodied Announcement (1 Th. 2:5-12)

<sup>5</sup> οὔτε γάρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἴδατε, οὔτε προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεὸς μάρτυς, <sup>6</sup> οὔτε ζητοῦντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν, οὔτε ἀφ' ὑμῶν οὔτε ἀπ' ἄλλων, δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι <sup>7</sup> ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι. ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν νήπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν, <sup>8</sup> ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἑαυτῆς τέκνα· οὕτως ὁμειρόμενοι ὑμῶν ἠυδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς, διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε. <sup>9</sup> μνημονεύετε γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον· νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαί τινα ὑμῶν ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. <sup>10</sup> ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός, ὡς ὀσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐγενήθημεν, <sup>11</sup> καθάπερ οἴδατε ὡς ἕνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν ὡς πατὴρ τέκνα ἑαυτοῦ παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς καὶ παραμυθούμενοι καὶ μαρτυρούμενοι, <sup>12</sup> εἰς τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν.

The antithetical argument in 2:5-12 is longer than the previous denials. It follows the same οὔτε ... ἀλλά pattern. Paul begins with a denial of speech or conduct antithetical to the gospel (2:5-6). He finishes with a demonstration of speech and conduct that faithfully embodies the

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<sup>61</sup> Sandnes concludes that critiques of false prophets from the OT dominate 2:3, while those from traditional sophist-criticism dominate 2:5-6. Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets*, p. 214.

message with which they have been entrusted (7b-12). The lynch pin for these two sides of the comparison is the identification of the co-senders as Christ's apostles (7a). The shared apostolic ministry in Thessalonica is based in the OT prophetic tradition of emissaries entrusted with a divine communication. Twice in this final antithetical argument God is called as a witness to the apostolic character and conduct (2:5, 10).<sup>62</sup> Divine affirmation is invoked in 2:5 and 2:10, alongside the witness of the converts, regarding the sincere embodiment of the gospel by the apostles. In Greco-Roman letters, as in the OT tradition, the envoy represents the one sending them in words as well as in action. As divine emissaries the missionaries are accountable for their conduct both in the sight of God and in the fellowship of the church.<sup>63</sup>

The first half of the comparison denies words of flattery as a pretext for greed (2:5), seeking human praise (δόξα, 2:6), or making demands as apostles of Christ (2:7a). Each of these negative traits is countered with descriptions of the apostolic character among the believers: they were vulnerable and self-giving as opposed to throwing their weight around (2:7b-8); worked with their own hands rather than burdening the believers (2:8-9); and rather than seeking human praise encouraged the new believers for the sake of the glory of God who calls them (2:10-12). Paul concludes this section in 2:12 with an affirmation of God's direct call to the believers through the

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<sup>62</sup> Isaiah 43:9-12 anticipates the Lord acting as witness, alongside his servant, at the gathering of the nations. In that context, as in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, a spoken message (ἀναγγέλλω) must be demonstrated as reliable (43:12). The LXX of Isaiah 43:12 repeats the Lord's intention to act as witness (introduced initially in 43:10): ὑμεῖς ἐμοὶ μάρτυρες καὶ γὰρ μάρτυς λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός. The anticipated result of the testimony is that those gathered know and believe that the Lord is God and there is no other saviour (Is. 43:10-11).

<sup>63</sup> 'Paul is influenced by the conceptual world of Old Testament prophecy and the normative criteria of the true prophet which involves not only the content of teaching as deriving from God but also involves the moral behavior of the prophet as one accountable and acceptable to Yahweh.' Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica*, p. 136.

work of the apostolic team. This final argument demonstrates apostolic conduct that embodies the gospel of God with which they have been entrusted.

#### 4.3.1 Distinguishing Human Messages (1 Th. 2:5-6)

Paul's presentation of the co-senders as divine emissaries derives from the OT prophetic tradition of a divinely entrusted message (2:3-4). The content of 2:5-6, however, communicates this essential theological dynamic in descriptions and imagery common in discussions of Hellenist philosophers.<sup>64</sup> Paul draws upon a litany of negatives from the same semantic field used by the Cynic philosophers that frequented Thessalonica.<sup>65</sup> Paul begins this section with a denial that the apostles arrived ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας. His use of λόγος represents rhetorical speech, and is a shift from the use of the λόγος word family to represent apostolic speech that participates with God's Spirit in announcing the divinely entrusted message of the gospel (1:5) to a phrase that represents speech originating from the human desire to flatter.<sup>66</sup> Unlike the earlier use of λόγος, where human speech is presented as empowered by the Holy Spirit, this second narrative employs λόγος in an antithetical relationship with the εὐαγγέλιον.<sup>67</sup> Paul denies any relationship between the

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<sup>64</sup> Lambrecht describes Paul as a man 'belonging to two worlds', the Hellenistic and Jewish, so that his 'language and his self-image reflected are a product of his double roots.' Lambrecht, *Studies*, p. 191.

<sup>65</sup> Bruce Johanson asserts that the presence in Paul's writing of features held in common with Cynic-Hellenistic conventions does not demonstrate dependence as much as it does a 'commonality of exhortatory features bridging the horizons of Cynic-Hellenistic and O.T.-Jewish exhortatory traditions.' Johanson, *To all the Brethren*, p. 186.

<sup>66</sup> Witherington reads these verses as a denial of employment by words. Witherington, *Thessalonians*, p. 79.

<sup>67</sup> Pogoloff's analysis asserts that Paul's use of λόγος in these verses is a critique of rhetoric. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, p. 143.

evangelists and the flattering rhetoric as a pretext for greed that was regularly criticized by Hellenistic writers.

Paul continues his defence with assertions that the apostles were not motivated by human praise, and did not exercise the rights that they have as apostles of Christ. Abraham Malherbe identifies Paul's denial of a desire for praise as the third of three vices rejected in standard descriptions of ideal philosophers.<sup>68</sup> Harshness (βάρος, 2:7) is another characteristic of sophist philosophers rejected by Dio Chrysostom.<sup>69</sup> Paul's reference to the apostles' ability to make demands may be associated with the right to make a living from the gospel.<sup>70</sup> Contextually, however, a better argument is made for a denial of the heavy handed use of authority. The rejection of financial gain has been clearly articulated in the denials of flattery and greed, while the reference to throwing one's weight around is set in contrast to the vulnerability of infants (2:7b).<sup>71</sup> Where unreliable cynic philosophers were accused of flattery that thinly veiled their greed and lust

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<sup>68</sup> Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 143. Malherbe's examples from Dio Chrysostom are instructive: 'The common market-place preachers are accused of error (ἀπάτη, πλάνη), flattery (κολακεία), and preaching for reputation (δόξα) and money (χρήματα), and to satisfy their sensual appetites (ῥόδονή). A special complaint is that the transients were sometimes brutally harsh rather than seeking to benefit their hearers. This harshness (βάρος), we learn elsewhere, is justified by an insistence on the philosopher's παρρησία that would allow no gentleness (ἡπιότης) under the circumstances. After thus describing the different Cynics, Dio characterizes the ideal Cynic in negative and antithetic formulations designed to distinguish him from them (32, II f.): "but to find a man who with purity and without guile speaks with a philosopher's boldness (καθαρώς καὶ ἀδόλως παρρησιαζόμενον), not for the sake of glory (μήτε δόξης χάριν), nor making false pretensions for the sake of gain (μήτ' ἐπ' ἀργυρίῳ), but (ἀλλ') who stands ready out of good will and concern for his fellowman, if need be, to submit to ridicule and the uproar of the mob – to find such a man is not easy, [...] so great is the dearth of noble, independent souls, and such the abundance of flatters (κολάκων), charlatans and sophists.'" Malherbe, 'Gentle as a Nurse', p. 214.

<sup>69</sup> Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 142.

<sup>70</sup> Bruce, *Thessalonians*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>71</sup> Fee, *Thessalonians*, pp. 64-65. In reference to the contrast with infants, Fee writes that, 'Paul now concludes his sentence with imagery that is so unexpected that it has had no end of being tampered with.' *Ibid.*, p. 65.



for glory, the true philosopher made no such heavy demands on his listeners – either for money or for honour.

Thus, in 2:3-7a, Paul's presentation of the apostolic team as emissaries entrusted and sent with a divine communication is translated into common Cynic-Hellenistic conventions, through which the recent converts are equipped to recognize charlatans and pretenders.<sup>72</sup> The activity of these false emissaries is the embodiment of speech originating in deceit, impure motives or trickery (2:3). By contrast, the character and conduct of Christ's apostles embody the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. The apostolic character and conduct described from 2:7-12 allows for the unhindered communication of God's appeal to the Thessalonians.

#### 4.3.2 Christ's Apostles

Following these denials, the term Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι, used in 2:7, creates a firm demarcation between the visible characteristic of Christ's apostles and those of philosophers announcing a human message.<sup>73</sup> Paul's introduction of this description for himself, Silvanus and Timothy is the turning point that reinterprets the OT tradition of divine emissaries as gospel messengers. It may be that the genitive relationship presents Christ as the acting agent, sending Paul and his team. The narrative in 2:1-12, however, repeatedly emphasizes God as the source of the gospel, and apostles as trusted divine emissaries. It is more likely that the genitive relationship

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<sup>72</sup> 'Paul, operating out of a *prophetic context*, uses certain language also present in the popular rhetoric of the day to clarify to the Thessalonians the radical difference between himself and certain of the charlatan-type popular philosophers.' Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica*, p. 136 (emphasis original).

<sup>73</sup> 'Paul employs the language of his day, but he does so in ways that are determined to speak the gospel, not the culture's presuppositions.' Gaventa, *Thessalonians*, p. 31.

of the apostles to Christ situates their agency as participation in and extension of God's work through Christ in the world.<sup>74</sup>

On three occasions in 1 Thessalonians Paul situates the apostolic ministry of the word directly with Jesus. In 1:6 reception of the word with joy is an imitation of 'us and of the Lord'. In 2:15, Jesus is included in the line of prophets killed as divine emissaries. Finally, in 1 Thessalonians 3:11 it is God himself and the Lord Jesus that direct the way of the apostles. This understanding of apostleship, as a sending by God through Christ, is consistent with the manner in which Paul presents God and Jesus together throughout the epistle. Nearly all of the occurrences of Χριστός in the letter are in verses that also reference Jesus' relationship to God (1 Th. 1:1, 3; 2:14; 5:9, 18, 23, 28). In 1 Thessalonians Jesus is the agent through whom God the Father works. The eschatological expectation of the gospel is in God's salvation through his Son (1:9-10, 5:9); sanctification in the last day is a work of God at the coming of our Lord Jesus (3:13, 5:23); God's trumpet announces the resurrection of those that have fallen asleep in Christ (4:16); and God's will, in Christ Jesus, motivates the closing imperatives in Paul's epistle (5:18).

Therefore, the presentation of apostleship as under and through Christ's authority is consistent with the Christology of the letter.<sup>75</sup> Paul, Silvanus and Timothy are entrusted by God with the gospel, sent as emissaries who speak in and through Christ. This analysis supports Albert Denis' approach to the phrase as indicative of apostles as an extension of Christ's messianic work in

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<sup>74</sup> Collins follows Barrett in the suggestion that the genitive relationship may represent both the fact that Paul is sent by Christ (a subjective genitive) and that Paul is the property of Christ (possessive genitive). Collins, *Studies*, p. 183.

<sup>75</sup> '[...] daß dieses Selbstverständnis des Paulus seinen Grund in seiner Christologie hat', Marxsen, *Thessalonicher*, p. 45.

the world.<sup>76</sup> Christ, sent as God's anointed, in turn sends the apostolic team to continue his Messianic mission in the world.<sup>77</sup> Paul's use of 'Christ's apostles' to describe all three co-senders is best regarded in a non-technical sense, as divine emissaries sent with the gospel of God, under the authority of Christ. As asserted by Earl Richards, 'Paul considers his co-senders apostles [...] [T]hey are missionaries, examined and commissioned by God (2:4) to be entrusted with the gospel.'<sup>78</sup> In contrast to those who impose a personal authority (βάρως), Paul, Silvanus and Timothy operate in a shared apostolic ministry as divine emissaries sent in the authority of Christ.<sup>79</sup>

In the context of Paul's later letters, it is difficult to imagine Paul including Timothy in the phrase 'Christ's apostles'. Timothy is described as Paul's 'beloved child' (1 Cor. 4:17), an emissary and co-worker of Paul's (Ro. 16:21, Phil. 2:19). In the salutation to 2 Corinthians Paul self-designates as 'an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God' and refers to Timothy as 'our brother'. However, in 2 Corinthians 1:19 Paul clearly includes Timothy alongside Silvanus and Paul in the proclamation (κηρύσσω) of Jesus at the foundation of that congregation. The designation and activity in 2 Corinthians is identical to those used of Timothy by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 3:2: a brother (2 Cor. 1:1) proclaiming the gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 1:19). The difference in 1 Thessalonians

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<sup>76</sup> 'Le Messie est venu, l'attente, entretenue et avivée par les prophètes anciens, est devenue réelle dans la personne et l'œuvre du Christ. Cette œuvre, à son tour, doit se poursuivre par l'action d'hommes chargés par Dieu, de cette fonction. Saint Paul se considère comme l'un d'eux. Or il l'exprime en comparant son activité à celle des prophètes de l'Ancien Testament.' Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', p. 267.

<sup>77</sup> Mitchell also identifies a chain of interrelated commissionings: 'The envoy or emissary represents the one by whom and in whose name he was sent. [...] God sent Jesus who sent the apostles.' Mitchell, 'New Testament Envoys', p. 644. 1 Thessalonians 1:6 illustrates the close association that Paul makes between their presence as envoys and the presence of Christ when he asserts that the believers became 'imitators of us and of the Lord'.

<sup>78</sup> Richards, *Thessalonians*, p. 110.

<sup>79</sup> 'That [Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy] are apostles of Christ highlights their representative function and their alien authority.' Collins, *Studies*, p. 183. For the genitive as an indication of authority see also Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 144.

3:2 is Paul's inclusion of the phrase 'co-worker of God'. Margaret Mitchell identifies a conventional formula for Greco-Roman envoys that is evident in Paul's description: name, relationships (to sender and addressees), qualifications and assignment.<sup>80</sup> In Timothy's case Paul identifies him as Timothy, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν (relationship to sender and addressees) καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (qualification), εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν (assignment).<sup>81</sup> Timothy's authority as an emissary, as described by Paul in this narrative, derives from his 'co-labour' with God in the gospel of Christ. Consistent to the narrative in 2:1-12, Timothy's apostolic designation is based in God's agency as the one from whom the gospel originates. Therefore, since Paul's use of the term 'apostle' for the initial team in Thessalonica occurs in a context that presents the co-senders as emissaries of a divinely entrusted communication, working alongside Paul in the foundational mission of a congregation, there is no difficulty including Timothy in the phrase. The phrase is a description of the character and conduct of emissaries, not an assertion of ecclesial office.<sup>82</sup> In the context of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 the designation 'apostle' is applied to divine emissaries that faithfully proclaim the gospel that originates from God and through which God actively works among the believers.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Mitchell, 'New Testament Envoys', p. 652.

<sup>81</sup> There is no difference in content between the 'gospel of God' in 1 Th. 2 and 'the gospel of Christ' in 3:2. The latter is a designation of Christ as the subject of the announcement of good news. So also Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 27.

<sup>82</sup> The proposition that Paul is setting aside the apostolic authority of the role is made by Best (*Thessalonians*, p. 100) and accepted by Wanamaker (*Thessalonians*, p. 99) and Jennifer Houston McNeel, *Paul as Infant and Nursing Mother: Metaphor, Rhetoric and Identity in 1 Thessalonians 2:5-8* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014) p. 53. See also Jennifer Houston McNeel's concise notes on Paul's use of the term 'apostle' in McNeel, *Paul as Infant*, p. 54n83.

<sup>83</sup> See also Collins' discussion of apostles both as emissaries sent with a message, and as 'those who enjoyed the charism of the apostolate'. Collins identifies the former with Paul's application of 'Christ's apostles' to all three co-senders. Collins, *Studies*, p. 182.

### 4.3.3 Infants, Mothers and Fathers (1 Th. 2:7b-12)

In 2:1-2 Paul asserted that the entrance of the apostles was not in vain. In 2:3-4 his narrative demonstrating the origin of the Gospel from God asserted a divine, and therefore, effective source of the message. Here in 2:7-10, Paul provides the evidence for the assertion of divine origin and efficacy by demonstrating the manner in which Christ's apostles embodied their message. That embodiment is an imitation of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the one in whose name they are sent.<sup>84</sup> Despite the predominant use of language from the Hellenistic context of Thessalonica in 2:5-7, Paul's apostolic presentation retains the Scriptural tradition of prophets whose lives embody the entrusted message. Prophets and apostles are each characterized by the announcement of a divinely entrusted word, through which God speaks to call God's people and acts for their salvation. Paul, Silvanus and Timothy share this divinely entrusted mission in Thessalonica. There is, however, an essential distinction between prophets and apostles. Prophets announced a message anticipating the consolation of Israel. Apostles announce Jesus as both the Messiah of prophetic expectation and as Lord, the agent of God whose work ushers in the salvation of God as a present reality.<sup>85</sup> In this regard, Denis concludes that Paul stands at the juncture of two horizons, a

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<sup>84</sup> 'Although the gospel originates from God who is its source of power and not from the apostle, the messenger is the key to the message, for the community can apprehend and perceive a visible incarnation of the gospel most credibly in their founding apostle', John Gilman, 'Paul's Εἰσοδος: The Proclaimed and the Proclaimer (1 Thes 2,8)', in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, pp. 63-70 (p. 67). Our argument extends this embodiment to Silvanus and Timothy as Christ's apostles.

<sup>85</sup> 'The primary meaning of apostleship is eschatological; the apostle is the unique link between the end of the old world and the beginning of the new.' Barrett, 'Pillar Apostles', p. 19. For the distinction between the OT prophetic office and the apostolic office see also Holtz, 'Selbstverständnis', p. 324.

‘messianic prophet’ who, as apostle to the nations, announces Gentile inclusion in God’s salvation and the gift of the Spirit.<sup>86</sup>

Entrusted by God with the gospel, and sent in the authority of Christ, the third demonstration of the gospel of God as a word of God is the manner in which the character and conduct of the apostolic team embodied the character and conduct of Christ. This characteristic of a trusted emissary is true both in the OT prophetic tradition and Hellenistic culture. Writing about the prophet Jeremiah, for example, J. G. McConville remarks, ‘there is an incarnational aspect to [Jeremiah’s] role, by which he embodies both the experience of the people, and that of YHWH.’<sup>87</sup> Abraham Malherbe observes that, ‘As with serious philosophers, Paul’s life could not be distinguished from what he preached: his life verified his gospel.’<sup>88</sup> Likewise, Margaret Mitchell’s study of emissaries in Greco-Roman culture demonstrates that to be an emissary is to intimately represent the one sending you.<sup>89</sup> As Mitchell concludes, ‘In seeing Paul, one sees Jesus who sent

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<sup>86</sup> Denis, *L’Apotre Paul*, pp. 317-18.

<sup>87</sup> J. G. McConville, *Judgment and Promise: An Interpretation of the Book of Jeremiah* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993), p. 76. Prophetic embodiment is pronounced in the confessions of Jeremiah, from which Paul explicitly draws in 1 Corinthians 9, and in the figure of the Servant of Yahweh in Deutero-Isaiah.

<sup>88</sup> Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, p. 54.

<sup>89</sup> Mitchell, ‘New Testament Envoys’, p. 651. Mitchell emphasizes intimacy between envoys and the ones sending them: ‘the envoy represents the one by whom he was sent out of an intimate relationship which guarantees that he can accurately represent him or her. For this reason Paul the ambassador can confidently claim to speak the words of Christ or God.’ *Ibid.*, p. 650.

him.<sup>90</sup> As trustworthy emissaries, Christ's apostles not only faithfully speak the message with which they were entrusted, but also faithfully embody Christ, the one in whose name they are sent.<sup>91</sup>

Having defended the emissaries in terms that clearly disassociate them from the charlatans and sophists of the day, Paul represents himself, Timothy and Silvanus as infants and wet nurses. In drastic contrast to characteristics of flattery, greed, glory or harsh demands, the apostolic team is characterized by the innocence and vulnerability of infants.<sup>92</sup> In 2:8 Paul continues the overall vulnerability of their description with a change in image from that of infants to a nursing mother, more precisely, a wet nurse.<sup>93</sup> An embodiment of the rejection of status asserted in 7a, the image of a wet nurse is an evocative metaphor of divine comfort provided through human emissaries.<sup>94</sup> Remember that in 1:4-10 the positive portrayal of the participation of human speech with the power of the Holy Spirit was communicated by means of οὐκ μόνον ... ἀλλά as a complementary construction, communicating the expansive relationship of the gospel as word, Spirit, power and fullness. This same expansive construction appears here in 2:8, in the positive description of the

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<sup>90</sup> Mitchell, 'New Testament Envoys', p. 651. Mitchell refers in this same argument to Galatians 3:1, suggesting that Paul's physical embodiment of Christ is that to which he refers when he asserts that Christ crucified was placarded (προγράφω) before the Galatians. On embodiment of the gospel of God as an imitation of Christ as apostolic role model see Marxsen, *Thessalonicher*, p. 45.

<sup>91</sup> Marxsen asserts the impossibility of distinguishing between word and action in the life of the apostles, and so Paul in 2:7-11 offers his life as 'proof' of the assertions made in 3-7. Marxsen, *Thessalonicher*, pp. 45-6.

<sup>92</sup> 'In this context, the infant metaphor functions to highlight the innocence of the apostle and his co-workers. Little babies are not capable of using deceptive speech, having ulterior motives, and being concerned with receiving honour; in all these things they are innocent.' Weima, 'Case for NETTIOI', p. 563. See also McNeel's discussion of the implications of the infant metaphor for Paul's apostolic presentation. McNeel, *Paul as Infant*, pp. 128-131.

<sup>93</sup> The term τροφός most commonly refers to a wet nurse rather than a nursing mother. Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 147. For association of the term with Qumran see Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, pp. 368-69.

<sup>94</sup> One recalls the description in Isaiah of Jerusalem rebuilt in the consolation of Israel 'in order that you may nurse and be satisfied from her consoling breast (μαστοῦ παρακλήσεως) (LXX Is. 66:11). For literary background to the metaphor of a nursing mother/wet nurse in LXX and Qumran see McNeel, *Paul as Infant*, pp. 108-121.

apostles as giving not only the gospel but their very lives as well (2:8). Deep, mutual love, initiated by the apostolic messengers, is the context that faithfully embodies the truth of the gospel.

In this context, the emphasis on the relationship between a wet nurse and her *own* children heightens the strength of loving, mutual connection between the apostolic emissaries and their converts.<sup>95</sup> The image is an implicit rejection of a transactional approach to preaching that regards the gospel as a commodity, such as one may encounter with a preacher who operates with a mask of kindness as a pretext for greed (cf. 2:3).<sup>96</sup> The real power of the metaphor, however, is the association of comfort and belovedness with a woman wholly attentive to the needs of her own children. Her deep longing is expressed in delight, sharing with them not only the milk upon which their lives depend but her very self.<sup>97</sup> This, Paul asserts, is how beloved these little ones are to her.<sup>98</sup> Just as a woman literally gives herself in the giving of milk to a child, creating a physical and emotional bond that is arguably without parallel, so the apostolic emissaries gave themselves to the Thessalonians along with the gospel of God. This is how beloved the Thessalonians had become to the Apostles – a belovedness that embodies God’s love for them (1:4).

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<sup>95</sup> Marxsen asserts that the full expression of Christ’s authority is visible in devotion. Marxsen, *Thessalonicher*, pp. 45.

<sup>96</sup> Gaventa observes that the nursing mother is both at the mercy of the demands of her children, and under the authority of the male head of the household. Gaventa, *Thessalonians*, pp. 33-34. McNeel goes further to identify the low social status of wet-nurses, most of whom were slaves. McNeel, *Paul as Infant*, p. 138.

<sup>97</sup> ‘It is logical to conclude that Paul calls himself a nursing mother because he experienced Christ as mother-like in that he nurtured, nourished, taught, suffered, and gave his very self to Paul and to all believers.’ McNeel, *Paul as Infant*, p. 146. See also pp. 142-48 in McNeel for a discussion of the implications of the nursing mother metaphor to Paul’s apostolic presentation and leadership.

<sup>98</sup> The verb μεταδίδωμι in 2:8 grammatically governs both the giving of the gospel of God and the giving of the Apostles’ selves, literally ‘souls’. Considering the double object ‘gospel of God’ and ‘our very selves’ of the verb ‘to share’ in 1 Th. 2:8, John Gillman asserts: ‘The gospel of God is manifested in the life of the apostle; he is the visible incarnation of the divine message of salvation. In that sense the life and character of the apostle is the key to the credibility of the message in the eyes of the community.’ Gillman, ‘Paul’s Εἰσοδος’, p. 69.



The rejection of the gospel of God as a commodity is made explicit in the description of the work practices with which the Thessalonians are well acquainted. In 1 Thessalonians 2:9 the believers are charged to remember (μνημονεύω) the hard labour and toil of the apostolic team, working day and night so as not to financially burden anyone while they proclaimed the gospel of God.<sup>99</sup> This second description is in contrast to those preachers described in 2:5 who preach for profit. Read alongside Paul's expansion in 1 Corinthians 9, Paul's work practices are a reflection of the divine origin of the apostolic ministry in which he and his co-workers are engaged.<sup>100</sup> Malherbe draws a comparison between this verse and Paul's extensive self-defence of the same practices in 1 Corinthians 9, concluding that Paul's 'freedom to serve is then exhibited in his practice of conforming to the circumstances of people in order to save them, doing everything for the sake of the gospel.'<sup>101</sup> The apostles choose a posture of servants in order to lay no burdens that could hinder the free exchange of the gospel of God. In contrast to preachers that cannot be trusted, their embodiment of vulnerability, self-giving love and service without expectation of reward stands in contrast to the practices of exerting authority, seeking glory, and speaking for one's own gain that the apostle rejects in 2:5-7a. As demonstrated by Werner Kemmler in his own analysis of

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<sup>99</sup> Reading μνημονεύετε as a second person plural imperative, Gaventa's reflections associating Paul's phrase ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Th. 2:9) with Mark's depiction of the early ministry of Jesus in Mark 1:14, ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, are of interest in light of Paul's identification of himself as a model of Jesus to be imitated (1 Th. 1:6). Gaventa, *Thessalonians*, p. 30.

<sup>100</sup> Barnabas is included alongside Paul as working in order not to place a hindrance to the gospel, a practice that Paul describes in 1 Cor. 9:17 as evidence that he has been entrusted with a commission (οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι). In 1 Thessalonians, however, the apostolic presentation is based in the divine source of Paul's communication (δεδοκιμάσμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, 2:4).

<sup>101</sup> Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 162.

Paul's language for preaching, it is a λόγος that renders the preacher vulnerable to ridicule and suffering unless God acts, in Spirit and power, to enable the hearers to recognize its truth.<sup>102</sup>

Having offered evidence for the character in which the apostles imparted the gospel, Paul concludes his presentation in 2:10-12 with a demonstration of the integrity with which they instructed the new converts in their faith.<sup>103</sup> As above, this section in 2:10-12 invokes God as witness to apostolic behaviour. The Thessalonians are also called to witness for the first time. Where 2:7-9 demonstrate the cruciform character of the apostles, 2:10-12 demonstrate the integrity of their moral exhortation. The aorist use of γίνομαι in 2:10, connecting the three adverbial descriptions of pure (ὁσίως), upright (δικαίως) and blameless (ἀμέμπτως),<sup>104</sup> carries the sense of a proving over time. This is the sort of description that the listener might have expected in the counterpart to Paul's denial, in 2:3, that the apostles' παράκλησις originated in error, impurity or deceit. Significantly, it is offered to describe the manner in which the apostles did exhort the new believers (παρὰκαλέω, 2:12). Paul delays the description, however, until the end, embedding the narrative of an entrusted and embodied message in between the descriptions. The moral instruction given by the apostles neither originates with them, nor is it given for their sake. The purity, uprightness and blamelessness of the emissaries ensures that no distraction or deception hinders the believers from hearing the direct, divine call of God spoken through the apostolic exhortation, consolation and warnings.

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<sup>102</sup> Kemmler, applying Paul's suffering to that of other Christian preachers, whose 'suffering consists in the fact that his preaching must be so human and that *he* has nothing in his hand to distinguish his speech from the rest of human speech – unless God himself reveals to the hearer that here in this human word God's own message is conveyed.' Kemmler, *Faith and Human Reason*, p. 74 .

<sup>103</sup> Gaventa, *Thessalonians*, p. 29.

<sup>104</sup> ἀμέμπτως occurs in 1 Th. 3:13 in Paul's wish prayer that the believers be blameless at the *parousia* (cf. Phil. 2:15), and ἀμέμπτως in 1 Th. 5:23, again referring to the believers' holiness up to the *parousia*.

Paul completes the metaphors of infant and mother in 2:10-12 with that of a father – the one to whom the responsibility of instructing and socializing children was entrusted.<sup>105</sup> In an extension of the tenderness described above, one can imagine a young father using every possible manner of words at his disposal as he cheers, comforts and instructs his beloved toddler how to walk – not into his own arms, but toward the reach of God, the one who calls the Thessalonians into his kingdom and glory. Thus in the closing verse, 2:12, Paul recapitulates the claim initially stated in 1:4: that the God who has chosen the believers (ἐκλογή, 1:4) continues to call them, through the apostolic ministry, into God’s kingdom and glory (καλέω, 2:12).

In summary, in the final antithesis from 2:5-2:12, Paul presents himself, Silvanus, and Timothy in a genuinely shared apostolic ministry of the gospel as a divinely entrusted message. As divine emissaries they conduct their ministry in the sight of God (2:5, 10; cf. 2 Cor. 2:17) through the person and authority of Christ (Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι, 2:7). The metaphors of infant, mother and father vividly demonstrate that which the apostles became among the Thessalonians (1:5). In all of this, their character and conduct is an embodiment of the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, imitating the person of Jesus Christ. Their profound vulnerability and deeply interpersonal imparting of the word in a relationship of gentleness and belovedness, without cost to the recipients, is an extension of Christ’s work in the world.<sup>106</sup> Apostles of Christ do not embody a message, that is, its content. They imitate a person – Jesus Christ, the one whom they announce (εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 1 Th. 3:1) and in whose name they are sent (Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι, 1 Th. 2:7).

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<sup>105</sup> ‘It was commonly assumed that the patriarch, that is the *paterfamilias*, was essentially responsible for the entire socialization of his own children as they are incorporated into the family and wider community.’ Trevor J. Burke, *Family Matters: A Socio-Historical Study of Kinship Metaphors in 1 Thessalonians*, JSNTSup, 247 (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), p. 133.

<sup>106</sup> McNeel further argues that Paul’s use of infant and nursing mother metaphors ‘encourage the formation of Christ-centered group identity in the Thessalonian community.’ McNeel, *Paul as Infant*, p. 157.

#### 4.4 Summary: εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ as Embodied Announcement

The apostolic biography, narrated by Paul in 2:1-12, completes the first act of the community narrative that Paul is composing for the new believers in Thessalonica. We could call the combination of the apocalyptic thanksgiving and apostolic biography of arrival ‘act one’: the beginning of the *ekklesia* in Thessalonica. In the apocalyptic thanksgiving in 1:4-10 Paul narrates the arrival of the gospel as the advent of the Lord’s salvation in Thessalonica. The gospel is presented in as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου, that transforms former pagans into God’s beloved and elect. However, as the report in 1:9 makes clear, this was not a disembodied message. The εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ arrived in Thessalonica entrusted to Paul, Silvanus and Timothy as divine emissaries and apostles of Christ.

Paul’s narrative presents the genuinely shared apostolic mission in Thessalonica in terms of the OT prophetic tradition. In 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2 the apostolic boldness in the face of suffering reflects the prophetic tradition of suffering as one who bears a divine communication. God is the entrusting and active agent of the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. The origin of the gospel from God is essential to Paul’s claim that the εἴσοδος among the believers (2:1) was not in vain, another concept from the LXX. The perfect tense of γίνομαι with κενός reflects the prophetic theology that it is the divine origin of the message, rather than the agency of the messengers, that is essential to the fruitfulness of prophetic apostolic mission. The antithetical construction of Paul’s apostolic biography in these verses communicates the Jewish prophetic theology of a divine communication in terms recognizable within a Hellenistic context. Christ’s apostles are distinct from unreliable sophist preachers in two ways. First, their character embodies Christ, the one whom they proclaim and in whose name they are sent. Second, their manner of moral exhortation reflects the divine

source of the message, in contrast to the error, impurity and deceit of a message that originates from a human source.

In the opening thanksgiving of 1 Thessalonians, the apostles as divine emissaries were like the husk of a seed, falling away from the divine agency of the narrative as the gospel grew and bore fruit among the Gentiles in Thessalonica. 1:4-10 was a generative narrative, with the apostles themselves participating in an essential but temporary manner in the advance of salvation among the Gentiles. One could say that the apostolic ministry is a metaphor for the resurrection that they announce. In 2:1-12, the apostles as divine emissaries embody the rest of the story – the humble, courageous, suffering love of Jesus Christ. This is the ‘seed’ that contains the regenerative power of the gospel as a divine communication. The believers in Thessalonica became imitators ‘of us and of the Lord’ by the reception of the word with joy in affliction by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul, Silvanus and Timothy embody for the new believers what it means to receive the word with divinely empowered joy in the midst of suffering, assuring the new converts that the cruciform experience of ‘waiting in anticipation’ will bear fruit in the Day of the Lord Jesus (2:1-2). Where the narrative in 1:2-10 located the events of suffering and death as ‘non-randomly connected events’ in the story of God’s victory, the narrative in 2:1-12 provides, in the words of Michael Toolan’s less minimalist definition, ‘the experiencing agonist [...] from whose experience we humans can learn.’<sup>107</sup> Paul narrates both the vision of hope (1:2-10) and the way of faith and love (2:1-12). While the apostolic embodiment of the gospel is exemplary, it does not contain the generative power to guard against a vain entrance. Paul’s thanksgiving statement in 2:13 explicitly states what the narrative in 2:1-12 demonstrates: that the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ embodied by Paul, Silvanus and Timothy is a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ -- a divine speech act. Christ’s apostles are the emissaries in whose suffering,

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<sup>107</sup> Toolan, *Narrative*, p. 9.

vulnerability, love and service is contained the generative, effective power of the gospel energetically at work among the believers. Paul's narrative of the apostles' arrival in Thessalonica is embedded between two apocalyptic thanksgivings. The narrative in 2:1-12 leads directly from the apocalyptic thanksgiving of 1:2-10, and into the apocalyptic thanksgiving of 2:13-16.

## CHAPTER FIVE: GOSPEL AS A WORD OF GOD

In the absence of the apostolic team, the early chapters of 1 Thessalonians construct a community narrative of the *ekklēsia* in Thessalonica. Since this chapter considers the rest of 1 Thessalonians 1-3, beginning at 2:13, a brief re-orientation with that larger community narrative is helpful at this juncture. In terms of narrative trajectory, the combination of apocalyptic thanksgiving in 1:2-10, followed by the apostolic biography in 2:1-12, narrates the story of the believers from initial encounter to abrupt departure. Two themes have continued through both the thanksgiving and the biography. The first is the coexistence of the reception of a divine communication with the experience of affliction. Paul's narrative re-orientates experiences of affliction and suffering, experienced by both believers and apostles, as non-random responses to the incursion of the gospel into Thessalonica. Paul's narrative affirms for the new believers that at this stage of the story, until the return of Jesus to rescue, suffering and the word are coterminous. He does so in a story that is thankful to its very core – an act of praise. God's Holy Spirit is abundantly present in each event, enabling joy in affliction for the believers and courage in suffering for the apostles. The second theme is the gospel as an event, the whole of which is embodied in the lives of emissaries and converts.<sup>1</sup> The gospel as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου is the apocalyptic announcement that gets this story started. The faith of the Gentiles in eager anticipation of the *parousia* embodies the power and promise of Jesus as resurrected and returning Lord announced in the gospel. The εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ is embodied in Christ's apostles as prophetic emissaries. The vulnerable, self-

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<sup>1</sup> '[...] the Pauline gospel typically conceives of sequential events in their unity and coherence as representing the *singular* saving action of God.' F. W. Watson, 'Is There a Story in These Texts?', in *Narrative Dynamics*, ed. by Longenecker, pp. 231-239, (p. 232).

giving, service of the emissaries in the midst of suffering and mistreatment embodies the crucified Christ. During this time between arrival and expulsion, affliction and suffering are embedded in a larger narrative of wonder, hope, hard work, deep mutual love and forward progress. This is a great story!

No wonder it leads to another expression of thanksgiving in 2:13, nearly identical to the first in 1:2. Except at this point, the story takes a turn. In 2:13-16 Paul narrates the reception and resistance to the gospel in a second apocalyptic thanksgiving. The themes of *θλιψις*, imitation, and the gospel as a divine communication introduced in the first thanksgiving continue in the second, although Paul's language changes from *λόγος τοῦ κυρίου* to *λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ*. There is a change in imitation as well, from apostles and Jesus in 1:6 to Judean *ekklēsia* and Jesus in 2:14-16. The apocalyptic expectation in this second thanksgiving takes an ominous turn, as wrath overtakes rescue.

The second apostolic biography in 2:17-3:8 goes from an entrance with boldness to separation and anxiety. The themes of *παρακάλειω* and *κενός* are set in a context of uncertainty. What was a successful initial mission in a particular time and place becomes a cosmic struggle with Satan hindering movement and threatening faith. Finally, the language of divine communication exits the scene with the departure of the apostles. The presentation of the gospel as a divine communication rightly belongs to the advent of a new *ekklēsia*. The gospel as a word of the Lord / word of God is the initial, eventful announcement in which a congregation is founded and remains. Timothy's good news in 3:6 affirms the good news that, while the messengers may leave, the word of God endures, effective in an embodied gospel.

In section 5.1 of this chapter we consider the second apocalyptic thanksgiving as it narrates the reception and resistance to the *εὐαγγέλιον* as a *λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ* among the Gentiles. In 5.2



the apostolic biography is considered in two parts. The first (section 5.2.1) considers the events of Timothy's dispatch and return as an extension of the initial apostolic παράκλησις among the believers. The second part (section 5.2.2) considers Paul's apostolic self-presentations, especially his concern regarding an ineffective labour among the Gentiles. Section 5.3 turns from Paul's use of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in 1 Thessalonians to the use of λόγος as gospel language in 2 Corinthians 1-9, in a demonstration of continuity between the epistles. The chapter summary in 5.4 concludes that Paul's presentation of the gospel as a divine communication in 1 Thessalonians is foundational language, demonstrating the genuinely shared prophetic ministry at the initial formation of an *ekklēsia*.

## 5.1 Reception and Resistance (1 Th. 2:13-16)

<sup>13</sup> Και 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. <sup>14</sup> 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 συμφυλετῶν καθὼς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, <sup>15</sup> τῶν καὶ τὸν κύριον ἀποκτεινάντων Ἰησοῦν καὶ τοὺς προφῆτας καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων καὶ θεῷ μὴ ἀρεσκόντων καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων, <sup>16</sup> κωλυόντων ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἔθνεσιν λαλῆσαι ἵνα σωθῶσιν, εἰς τὸ ἀναπληρῶσαι αὐτῶν τὰς ἀμαρτίας πάντοτε. ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος.

The second apocalyptic thanksgiving in 2:13-16 recapitulates the establishment of the community in 1:4-2:12 in a statement that repeats the presentation of the gospel as a divine communication.<sup>2</sup> Both the initial apocalyptic thanksgiving (1:4-10) and the initial apostolic biography (2:1-12) are concluded in these verses.<sup>3</sup> Notice, for example, that Paul repeats the initial language of thanksgiving from 1:2 in 2:13: εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως. At the same time, the second thanksgiving is constructed as an antithetical comparative phrase between λόγος and εὐαγγέλιον, denying human origin to the message: παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ. Finally, the apocalyptic content in 2:14-16 is a coda to that of 1:9-10. Where the composition of a community narrative is concerned, the totality of 1:2-2:16 assures the Thessalonian believers that the message that they have received through the human agency of its messengers is a communication that originated from God and through which God is actively working (ἐνεργέω).

### 5.1.1 Receiving the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Th. 2:13)

Having reached the end of the apostolic biography presenting the apostolic team as true messengers from God, Paul confidently repeats in 2:13 their constant thanksgiving to God that 'when you received the word of God proclaimed from us you did not welcome a human word but that which it truly is – a word of God.' The thanksgiving in these verses summarizes the presentation of the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ from 2:1-12. However, the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ is

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<sup>2</sup> The διὰ τοῦτο is best read as recapitulating the previous verses, especially 2:1-12, and giving thanks for that which follows. For a review of scholarship see Luckensmeyer, *Eschatology*, pp. 128-30.

<sup>3</sup> For the close association of 1:5 and 2:13 see also Breytenbach, 'Danksagungsbericht', pp. 9-10.

presented as a particular message of good news, belonging to the larger category of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. Paul contorts the syntax of his sentence such that λόγος has two genitive relationships.<sup>4</sup> In the first the gospel is a λόγος ἀκοῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν. The noun ἀκοή may mean either the thing heard, (a report, as in Romans 10:16), or the act of hearing (1 Cor. 12:17).<sup>5</sup> Either meaning of ἀκοή describes the nature of gospel transmission as an interaction between preachers and listeners. The use of the second genitive, τοῦ θεοῦ, captures the tripartite reality of prophetic communication: when the emissary speaks, the message heard is the word of God.<sup>6</sup> The question is whether Paul is emphasizing the active reception of the word by the Thessalonians in an act of hearing, or emphasizing that the message of the gospel, the ‘word of proclamation’, originates from God.<sup>7</sup>

Henneken associates Paul’s use of the phrase λόγος ἀκοῆς with the OT tradition of hearing the word of God that one finds in Exodus.<sup>8</sup> In the books of the Law, however, ἀκοή occurs with its

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<sup>4</sup> Fee, *Thessalonians*, p. 87.

<sup>5</sup> Malherbe argues that the active understanding, ‘the word that you heard from us’, is based on Romans 10:14-18, that faith is engendered by the hearing of the word, and ‘agrees with the dynamic nature of God’s word described in this verse.’ Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, p. 166. See also Eugene Boring, *I & II Thessalonians: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2015), pp. 92, 96. So also Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 162.

<sup>6</sup> Based on the use of the similar phrase, ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς, in Hebrews 4:2, Sam K. Williams suggests that λόγος ἀκοῆς is a fixed expression, a feature that explains ‘the awkwardness of the second genitive, τοῦ θεοῦ,’ modifying an already set expression. ‘The Hearing of Faith: ΑΚΟΗ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ in Galatians 3’, *NTS*, 35 (1989), 82-93 (p. 83).

<sup>7</sup> Richard Hays translates the phrase as, ‘you received God’s “word of proclamation” from us’, suggesting that the conceptual field of 1 Thessalonians 2:13 is much closer to Romans 10:17 and Galatians 3:2, 5 than it is to 1 Corinthians 12:16-17, so that ‘the translation of ἀκοή as “hearing” seems entirely inappropriate.’ in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, rev. edn (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 129.

<sup>8</sup> Henneken, *Verkündigung*, pp. 47-48. In Exodus 19:8, when the Lord makes his covenant with the children of Israel, the LXX translates the conditional phrase: אִם-שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹלִי (if hearing you will hear my voice) as ἐὰν ἀκοῆ ἀκούσητε τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς, so that ἀκοή is the thing heard. In these cases, ἀκοή should be understood as the act of hearing, with its presence in the phrase serving to intensify the action, just as the infinitive absolute of שָׁמַע before its verbal cognate intensifies the act of hearing. For ἀκοῆ with ἀκούω see Ex. 15:26; 19:5; 23:22; Deut. 11:22; 28:2.

cognate verb, ἀκούω, to emphasize the act of listening.<sup>9</sup> Paul neither uses the verb ἀκούω nor does he emphasize the listening activity of the Thessalonians (compare to the use of ἀκούω in Romans 10:18 following two occurrences of ἀκοή in 10:16 and 17). The focus on the Thessalonian reception of the message is communicated by means of the two verbs, παραλαμβάνω and δέχομαι.<sup>10</sup> The human agency of the believers is characterized as ‘receiving’. That which they received is a λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ. The phrase in its entirety refers to the message that the believers received. The phrase, which Fee aptly refers to as an ‘enclosed’ word order, emphasizes the double nature of the gospel as a word that originates from God and is also a message that is heard from the apostles: ‘Paul’s double message seems clear enough: the message of the gospel that they received, conveyed to them through the agency of the apostles, came ultimately from God.’<sup>11</sup> 1 Thessalonians 2:13 is emphasizing the gospel as a report spoken by

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<sup>9</sup> The only other NT occurrence of the phrase λόγος ἀκοῆς in reference to the gospel is in Hebrews 4:2: ἀλλ’ οὐκ ὠφέλησεν ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς ἐκείνους μὴ συγκεκρασμένους τῇ πίστει τοῖς ἀκούσασιν. The reference is to the message heard by the wilderness generation, calling them to enter the promised land. Their rejection of that message embodied their lack of faith in the God calling them to enter rest. The emphasis in Hebrews 4 is on the rejection of the message heard. See also William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC 47A (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1991), p. 98. Contextually, Hebrews 4 also emphasizes the active nature of the word of God (Heb. 4:12).

<sup>10</sup> The two verbs should be taken as synonyms for the reception of the gospel. Paul employs παραλαμβάνω alongside παραδίδωμι in the discussion of the reception and handing on of tradition, which occurs in the process of evangelization (see 1 Cor. 15:3, 1 Th. 4:1-2). That the announcement of the gospel includes traditional material is demonstrated in 1 Corinthians 15, in which the initial reception of the gospel in 1 Cor. 15:1, where the εὐαγγέλιον is received (παραλαμβάνω), is referenced prior to the rehearsal of the tradition received in 15:3ff. However, as indicated by the use of δέχομαι here and in 1:6, in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 the emphasis is on the reception of the gospel as an announced message (see also Gal. 1:9). So also Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 166. Notable in light of Paul’s emphasis on both λόγος and πνεῦμα in 1 Thessalonians 1, and the assertion of the word of God as active among the Thessalonians in 2:13, when describing the initial reception of the gospel among the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11:4 Paul employs δέχομαι with λόγος and λαμβάνω with πνεῦμα. The emphasis in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 is on the reception of an announced message rather than the entrusting of the gospel tradition. Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 162. Finally, παραλαμβάνω, in broader Greek usage, was commonly used for the reception of teaching from a teacher (see 1 Th. 4:1). Green, *Thessalonians*, p. 139.

<sup>11</sup> Fee, *Thessalonians*, p. 87.

human agents (λόγος ἀκοῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν) that originates from God (τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>12</sup> The use of ἀκοή as ‘message’ is also in continuity with the LXX prophetic tradition, as demonstrated by Paul’s use of LXX Isaiah in Romans 10:16: κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; (LXX Is. 53:1). The origin of the message – whether human or divine – is the emphasis of the thanksgiving, as made evident in the second assertion: ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ. The focus is on the apostolic messengers and the origin of their report, not on the reception or hearing of that message by the Thessalonians. The emphasis in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 is on the message heard, rather than the act of hearing it.

Paul is focused on the message for two reasons – its origin from God and therefore the divine agency from God through the word. The phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is indicative not only of divine origin but also of divine agency.<sup>13</sup> The second half of the thanksgiving emphasizes the divine agency energetically at work through the word of God. Paul’s use of τοῦ θεοῦ emphasizes that God is the source of the message.<sup>14</sup> The gospel as a word of God is the mediator of divine agency at work among the believers (Rom. 10:17).<sup>15</sup> The verb ἐνεργέω in 2:13 implies the energetic working of a divine agent.<sup>16</sup> However, the use of ἐνεργέω in the middle voice only occurs elsewhere with an impersonal subject, and never with God (compare 2 Cor. 4:12). This suggests that Paul has the word

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<sup>12</sup> So Richards, *First and Second Thessalonians*, p. 112; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, p. 111.

<sup>13</sup> Sandnes argues that the contrast ‘not men’s words, but God’s presents Paul’s preaching as revelatory. Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets*, p. 219.

<sup>14</sup> Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 166.

<sup>15</sup> Earl Richards demonstrates that God, rather than the word, is the antecedent to the relative clause ὅς ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. ‘Nowhere in the Pauline letters is “the word” or “the word of God” said to be active or at work ... On the contrary, God is regularly the subject of *energeō* in Paul.’ *First and Second Thessalonians*, p. 114.

<sup>16</sup> Six occurrences of ἐνεργέω in Paul’s letters depict divine activity working in or among believers (Gal. 2:8 [2x], 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:6, 12:11; Phil. 2:13). See also Earl Richards: ‘This word-family in the NT almost invariably relates to the activity of supernatural, whether divine or demonic, beings.’ *First and Second Thessalonians*, p. 114.

of God, rather than God, in mind as the subject of ὡς.<sup>17</sup> This performative description of a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ as the means through which God is energetically at work among the faithful provides an important recapitulation of the description of the gospel in 1:5 as both λόγος and πνεῦμα.<sup>18</sup> The divine agency described in the announcement and reception of the gospel in 1:4-10 continues to work among the believers in the absence of the apostolic team. It is an echo of divine communication in the LXX as an effective word. Since the gospel originates from a divine rather than human source, the beleaguered believers can trust that God is working on their behalf with as much energy as those who seek to oppose the announcement of his salvation. As summarized by Jan Lambrecht: ‘The powerful, effective word of God or, as Paul calls it in this same letter, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ (2:2, 8, 9), τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:2), τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν (1:5), is at work and remains compellingly active in the believers and, through them, in the world.’<sup>19</sup> The same Holy Spirit of God that actively works through the gospel as a word of the Lord (1 Th. 1:5, 6), in anticipation of a future consummation at the *parousia*, remains actively working through the gospel as a word of God.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 167; Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 164. Richards defends a minority view that God is the subject of ἐνεργέω, and that the combination of καί with the middle voice denotes emphasis on the dual effectiveness of the gospel as a word of God both at the initial kerygmatic moment and in the intervening time of testing. Richards, *First and Second Thessalonians*, p. 165. Richard’s reading, while not as exegetically convincing, does remind the interpreter that no where in 1 Thessalonians does Paul advance a theology of divine speech that is capable of energetically working on its own apart from the presence of the Spirit of God (1 Th. 1:4-10).

<sup>18</sup> Henneken connects the divine ‘power’, ‘Spirit’ and ‘fullness’ of 1 Th. 1:5 to Paul’s conclusion in 2:13 of an ‘effective’ word of God among the Thessalonians. Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 38.

<sup>19</sup> Lambrecht, ‘Thanksgivings’, p.205.

<sup>20</sup> See also Collins’ reflection that ‘Paul is telling us that the word of God is powerfully forming a church through the power of the Spirit, through the power of the word, spoken by the apostle Paul.’ Collins, *Studies*, p. 376.

Thus in both phrases for divine communication, λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ and λόγος τοῦ κυρίου, the dynamic nature of the message is the same: a divine speech act through which God actively works to accomplish that which is announced. Paul gives thanks for the reception of the gospel as a divine revelation as described in 1:4-10 – the direct grace of God received with joy by the power of God’s Spirit – the God revealed in Jesus Christ who remains actively at work among the believers.<sup>21</sup> As in the OT prophetic tradition, there is no theological or functional difference between the terms. In the context of 1 Thessalonians the difference in the use of the two terms is temporal. As a word of the Lord, the temporal focus looks forward to divine agency at the return of Jesus. As a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, the emphasis is on God as the source of the gospel, and God’s initiative working through the gospel. There is, however, no theological distinction in the genitive modifiers. In the context of 1 Thessalonians, this is the living and true God of Israel to whom the Gentiles turn in faith in response to the announcement of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the God that gathers his beloved and elect through the gospel (1:4). Finally, in the continuation of this passage from 2:13-16, Paul emphasizes the continuity between the gospel and the story of God’s people. The continuation of the thanksgiving into the apocalyptic description of 2:14-16 identifies the beloved and elect from among the Gentiles in Thessalonica with the beloved and elect, the *ekklēsia*, from among the Judeans.

### 5.1.2 Resisting the Gospel’s Advance (1 Th. 2:14-16)

The association of the gospel with the OT prophetic tradition is especially stark in the prophetic polemic immediately following the thanksgiving in 2:13. In 2:14-16 Paul returns to the

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<sup>21</sup> See further Schütz, *Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, pp. 128-33, 226-28.

theme of *θλιψις* first introduced in 1:6, a verse in which converts became imitators of the apostles and Jesus, suffering with joy as they receive the word and bearing it with exemplary faith in the world. Paul repeats this same dynamic in 2:14 with a reference to the suffering (*πάσχω*) of each *ekklesia*. The narrative moves forward in time from the eventful beginning to the abrupt ending of the initial mission to Thessalonica. As in 1:6, the reception of the apostolic message in 2:13 transforms the converts into imitators of others whose suffering exhibits exemplary faith.<sup>22</sup> The *ἐκκλησία θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ* (1:1) became imitators (*μιμηταὶ ἐγενήθητε*, cf. 1:6) of the *ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* (2:14). Paul emphasizes the Thessalonians' cohesive identity as a congregation alongside congregations in Judea. The imitation to which Paul refers is the shared experience of suffering as a result of receiving the gospel as a word of God.<sup>23</sup> This coherence is supported by the parallel progression from reception to suffering, as narrated in the imitation motif in 1:5-6. While the believers are initiated by their reception of the gospel into a solidarity of suffering with the gathered brothers (and sisters) in Judea,<sup>24</sup> their

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<sup>22</sup> Hooker emphasizes that this is an imitation through circumstances, in which the believers in Thessalonica and Judea 'suffer in the same way that their Lord suffered.' Morna Hooker, 'A Partner in the Gospel: Paul's Understanding of His Ministry', in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters: Essays in Honor of Victor Paul Furnish*, ed. by Eugene H. Lovering, Jr. and Jerry L. Sumney (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), pp. 83-100, (p. 94).

<sup>23</sup> 'Das standhafte Ertragen dieser Drangsal ist ein Zeichen für die Treue gegenüber dem Wort.' Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 54. Bockmuehl notes: 'Our text offers a concrete re-application of the repeated motif of the imitation of Christ and the apostles. Recurring as it does both before and after our passage, (1:5-6; 4:1; cf. 2:1-12), this motif constitutes an additional argument for textual integrity.' Bockmuehl, '1 Thess. 2:14-16', p. 71.

<sup>24</sup> Bockmuehl states further that, 'For the Thessalonian Christians, the intensity of their compatriots' opposition should be seen as analogous to the severity of afflictions endured by Jerusalem Christians.' Bockmuehl, '1 Thess. 2:14-16', p. 71. For solidarity as a theme in 2:14-16 see also Schlueter, *Filling up the Measure*, p. 197.



compatriots are initiated by their fierce rejection of the gospel into a solidarity of opposition.<sup>25</sup>

Equally true to its apocalyptic outlook, 1 Thessalonians promises a cosmic reversal of fortune in the Day of the Lord. For those who now suffer for receiving the gospel in faith, there is the eschatological hope of salvation at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:10). And for those who resist the gospel and therefore oppose God, filling up the measure of their sins, there is the all-encompassing wrath of God at the end of all things (2:16).<sup>26</sup>

The history of debate on these verses warrants a great deal more discussion than we are able to afford in this study.<sup>27</sup> For our purposes, two features are important in these verses. The first is the prophetic continuity. The assertions in 2:15 place the apostles in the prophetic tradition of messengers who suffer at the hands of those who seek to silence their message.<sup>28</sup> Like other

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<sup>25</sup> συμφυλέται is a *hapax legomenon* which may be ethnic (Gentile as opposed to Judeans) or territorial, indicating the inhabitants of Thessalonica. Weima's conclusion, following Lightfoot, is that in light of the ambiguity in the text 'fellow citizens' is the best solution. Weima, *Thessalonians*, p. 168.

<sup>26</sup> Since the relationship between hindrance of a divine communication and wrath is the substantive issue for our study, a discussion of εἰς τέλος is beyond the scope of our concerns. Quoting Barclay's note on this thorny phrase, 'it is clear that opposition to the gospel is the decisive event that brings on the wrath of God in climactic fashion.' Barclay, 'Hostility to Jews as Cultural Construct: Egyptian, Hellenistic, and Early Christian Paradigms', in *Josephus und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen: II. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judaeo-Hellenisticum, 25-28 Mai 2006, Griefswald*, ed. by Christfried Böttrich and Jens Herzer, WUNT, 209 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), pp. 365-385, p. 381n47. For the aorist form of φθάνω as indicative of a recent event see Hurd, 'Paul Ahead of His Time', p.35. For events that may have precipitated Paul's observations see Bockmuehl, '1 Thessalonians 2:14-16', pp. 73-87.

<sup>27</sup> For a treatment of these verses as representative of an emerging Christian paradigm of Jews / Judeans as enemies of the church see John Barclay, 'Hostility to Jews', pp. 378-385. The passage is one of several listed in Luke Timothy Johnson's article for which Johnson seeks to provide the historical and social context that locates the polemic within the conventional rhetoric of slander in the Hellenistic world. L. T. Johnson, 'The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic', *JBL*, 108 (1989), 419-441 (p. 423). One of Johnson's concluding suggestions is that 'polemic signifies simply that these are opponents' (p. 441).

<sup>28</sup> 'The function of 2:13-16 in this context is primarily to present the church as successor to the true prophets and the messengers of God in a world hostile to them.' Vos, 'Response to Traugott Holtz', p. 87.

prophetic emissaries, Christ's apostles speak God's direct divine communication.<sup>29</sup> Those who actively persecute the faithful who bear the word of God, and seek to hinder the advance of the divine emissaries that speak God's word, are in fact opposing God's purposes of salvation for the Gentiles.<sup>30</sup> The second feature is the resistance to the forward progress of the messengers. Opposition to God's messengers is in fact opposition to God. Paul's polemic thus again reflects the Scriptural tradition of the suffering of the prophet that bears and proclaims God's word in the world.<sup>31</sup>

Given the placement of 2:14-16 at the end of a narrative that is demonstrably dependent on the Scriptural prophetic tradition, it is more likely that Paul is placing Jesus in solidarity with the

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<sup>29</sup> For an argument that Paul is referring to Jesus' prophets rather than Jewish prophets, see Frank D. Gilliard, 'Paul and the Killing of the Prophets in 1 Thess. 2:15', *NovT*, 36/3 (1994), 259-270. The distinction is immaterial to our argument, which concerns violence toward those announcing the word, and therefore will, of God.

<sup>30</sup> So also W. D. Davies: 'The determinative words in 1 Thess 2:13-16 are those that refer in 16a to hindering the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles: this indicates heedlessness of God's will and animosity to men. This is Paul's own indictment and is not simply traditional. The anticipation of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God in 'the end of the days' was well marked in the eschatological thinking of Judaism: Paul shared in it. To hinder the preaching to the Gentiles was to hinder the very purpose of God. [...] The wrath of God has expressed itself finally for this reason.' W. D. Davies, *Jewish and Pauline Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) p. 126. See also Schlueter, *Filling up the Measure*, p. 191.

<sup>31</sup> For a rebuttal of attempts to neutralize the danger of Paul's polemic through arguments of either its Hellenistic or Jewish context, see John Barclay's article 'Hostility to Jews', pp. 378-85. Barclay demonstrates that 'both Hellenistic and Judean traditions are here adopted and adapted in the service of a new logic for hostility to Judeans: that they oppose Christ, hinder his apostles, and prevent the fulfilment of the church's destiny, the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles.' *Ibid.*, p. 381. He convincingly demonstrates how a polemic by a Jewish author becomes generalised, in content and history of reception, into 'a specifically Christian form of anti-Judaism'. *Ibid.*, p. 382.

long line of prophets, killed by those opposed to the message of God.<sup>32</sup> There is symmetry between the imitation themes, therefore, in 1:6 and 2:14.<sup>33</sup> The Thessalonian believers receiving the word with joy in affliction became imitators of the apostles and Jesus. In 2:14, the Thessalonian believers, receiving the apostolic word of proclamation as a word of God become imitators in suffering with the prophets and Jesus. Paul's parallel construction sets the gathered beloved and elect in Thessalonica within the larger narrative of God's people Israel, in solidarity with the *ekklēsia* in Judea. However, this is not the *telos* of Paul's apocalyptic thanksgiving. The repetition of the eschatological hope of the gospel firmly embeds the local experiences of the Thessalonian believers within the greater cosmic narrative of God's purpose, both for those gathered from among the Jews (the *ekklēsia* in Judea) and gathered from among the Gentiles.

Pastorally and theologically, therefore, Paul reassures the Thessalonian believers that their suffering as a result of receiving the word (1:6) is identification with and suffering in solidarity with all believers who have accepted the gospel – an experience of affliction and suffering that ultimately is an imitation of Jesus. Paul's summary also transitions from the initial reception of the gospel as a divine communication (in imitation of the apostles and Jesus) to steadfast endurance of faith and love in the midst of affliction (in imitation not only of the apostles and Jesus, but also

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<sup>32</sup> Paul uses identical vocabulary in Romans 11:3, when he quotes Elijah's lament from 1 Kings 19:10 that "they have killed your prophets". John Barclay notes the similarities between Mt. 23 and 1 Th. 2, which 'might suggest some common (pre-synoptic) tradition, or the development in early Christian discourse of a common set of tropes in which the Christian experience of 'persecution' from Judean / Jewish sources was linked to the history of Israel's rejection of prophets, the death of Jesus and the mission to the Gentiles.' Barclay, 'Hostility to Jews', p. 382. See also Marshall, *Thessalonians*, p. 79; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, p. 115.

<sup>33</sup> Donfried argues that 2:13-16 can only be understood in light of 1:6. Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica*, pp. 126-128. For a fuller treatment of these verses, see Karl Donfried, 'Paul and Judaism: 1 Thess. 2.13-16 as a Test Case.' in *Paul, Thessalonica*, pp.195-208.

alongside congregations in Judea). The Thessalonians' eager anticipation of Jesus' return and rescue (1:10) requires patience in affliction as they await God's justice in the end (2:14-16).<sup>34</sup>

## 5.2 Apostolic Affliction and Joy (1 Th. 2:17-3:13)

As Paul's community narrative continues in 2:17, the apostle frames the localized affliction of the Thessalonians in cosmic terms – as a drama between the God who sends and calls and Satan who hinders and tests. The presentation of a cosmic struggle is an additional apocalyptic feature of Paul's writing. The second half of Paul's narrative confirms for the Thessalonians that both their suffering and their endurance are essential to the larger drama of God's purpose in the world. Here in 2:17-3:8 Paul returns again to an apostolic biography, but this time it is a separation narrative.

1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:8 relates the account of separation between apostles and believers in three consecutive events: the inability of the team to return to Thessalonica (2:17-20); Timothy's dispatch (3:1-5); and Timothy's return (3:6-8). The section closes with a thanksgiving and a wish prayer (3:9-13). Notice two things, each of which carries key terms from the first apostolic biography into this second one. First, Timothy's return continues the work of appeal / encouragement (παρακαλέω) so closely associated with the foundational gospel work among the believers. Timothy's report in 3:6 is an announcement of good news of the believers' faith and love, that is, their continued embodiment of the gospel. Second, the apostolic focus moves from the team to Paul. Silvanus is not mentioned again. Timothy is mentioned as an emissary of the whole team, but especially of Paul. Once the team is no longer involved in the foundational prophetic

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<sup>34</sup> Gundry-Volf writes of Paul's converts that 'they await the completion of their salvation while enduring testing and afflictions in the present.' Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, p. 283.

mission in Thessalonica, Paul's apostolic presentation takes a distinct turn toward self-presentation. It is in this context of an apostolic self-presentation that the theme of *κενός*, first introduced in the apostolic biography in 2:1, is revived in 3:5. In this section we will consider the narrative of Timothy's dispatch and return (5.2.1) and then Paul's individual apostolic presentations (5.2.2).

### 5.2.1 Envoys and Epistles (1 Th. 3:1-3:13)

Paul's description of the separation in 2:17 is a wonderful play on the same infant and mother themes of 2:7, as he describes the team as orphaned (*ἀπορφανίζω*, 2:17) and the attempts to return as undertaken with deep longing (*ἐπιθυμία*, 2:17). While the paternal apostolic instruction of the initial visit may continue by means of emissary and epistle, this depth of loving interpersonal connection that was the context for imparting the gospel of God has been broken by separation.

The blocked route to the team's return is attributed to Satan (2:18). Paul's response to a cosmic enemy of God's will for Gentile salvation is an appeal to the ultimate victory of Jesus as Lord. In 2:19 Paul's rhetorical questions express his eschatological affirmation of the believers as the apostles' hope, joy and crown of boasting in the presence of the Lord Jesus at his *parousia* (2:19), and the glory and joy of the apostles in the present (2:20). Paul's eschatological focus at this point is important to the trajectory of the narrative in two ways. In the first place it maintains the apocalyptic expectation of the narrative coming out of 2:16, affirming Paul's confidence that the gospel as a divine communication will not fail to result in the presence of both apostles and converts together before the Lord at his coming. Secondly, it relativizes the effectiveness of Satan's opposition to the forward progress of the gospel among the Gentiles, with the confident

declaration of the ultimate eschatological effectiveness of the initial mission in Thessalonica. In 2:20, Paul's emphatic 'yes' in answer to his own rhetorical question is enthusiastic affirmation that the current separation is a temporary setback.<sup>35</sup>

There is a long road, however – figuratively and literally – between the current separation and reunion in the *parousia*. In 3:1, the focus turns from the eschatological certainty of the message among the Thessalonians, to the apostolic uncertainty of the believers' endurance. Where 2:17-20 expresses Paul's confidence in the former, 3:1-5 expresses his anxiety about the vulnerability of the latter. Unable to return to Thessalonica, Paul and Silvanus send Timothy as an emissary in their place. Timothy's return to Thessalonica is also an extension of a foundational labour, sent to strengthen and encourage (παρακαλέω) the believers. Timothy's παρακαλέω extends the apostolic παράκλησις (2:3) of the initial announcement of the gospel as well as its foundational instruction (παρακαλέω, 2:12). The first line of the paraenetic section, sent in response to Timothy's return, is also identified as an extension of this initial appeal and foundational exhortation in the gospel (παρακαλέω, 4:10).

This repetition of the word family within the narrative trajectory in 1 Thessalonians – from initial mission, to emissary, to epistle – suggests that the view of 1 Thessalonians as a pastoral letter requires reinterpretation in light of the explicit connection between the apostolic ministry of the

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<sup>35</sup> The causal conjunction, γάρ, in 1 Th. 2:20 communicates the affirmative answer to the questions in 2:19. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 186.

gospel and the παρακαλέω word family.<sup>36</sup> Based on the exegesis presented in this study, the initial appeal, παράκλησις, spoken by the apostles is a message of prophetic consolation, originating directly from God in the past divine act of salvation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the future divine act of salvation in the return of Jesus Christ at the *parousia*.<sup>37</sup> In 1 Thessalonians, therefore, apostolic comfort is not primarily an expression of interpersonal care adapted from the philosophic tradition and offered in response to events since the co-senders' departure.<sup>38</sup> While it certainly includes interpersonal relationship, the activity is primarily continued comfort and exhortation that establishes the believers in the foundation announcement of God's comfort and call in the gospel.

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<sup>36</sup> Abraham Malherbe's work in Thessalonians has cultivated the 'pastoral care' paradigm, primarily in comparison to patterns of moral instruction within the context of nurture found in the philosophic tradition. *Paul and the Thessalonians*, see esp. pp. 54-5, 94. Malherbe's observations concerning the depth of mutuality and love as the context for ongoing instruction between the apostolic team and their converts is correct. His analysis of 'pastoral care', however, is ill-defined, referring to nurture, emotional support and relationships in a manner that suggests the application of terms borrowed from modern ecclesial practice. See Kemmler's discussion of the history of interpretation of παράκλησις ἡμῶν, arguing that an interpretation of the word in the particular situation of resistance suggests an appeal both to emotion and intellect. Kemmler cites as an example Paul's introduction in 1 Th. 4: 13 of knowledge, ἀγνοέω, to the Thessalonians in his pastoral response to their grief. Kemmler, *Faith and Human Reason*, pp. 168-177 (p. 177).

<sup>37</sup> John Dickson distinguishes between the nouns εὐαγγέλιον and παράκλησις, asserting that 'the root εὐαγγελ- was not associated with moral or philosophical discourse in the way words such as διδασχῆ (teaching), νοουθεσία (instruction/correction) and παράκλησις (exhortation) frequently were.' Dickson, *Gospel as News*, p. 214. As Donfried correctly asserts, 'It is Paul's hope that when the Christian community in Thessalonica is more thoroughly rooted in the gospel the result will be a firmer establishment, encouragement, and stabilization of their faith in the midst of their current afflictions.' Donfried, 'Epistolary and Rhetorical Context', p. 56.

<sup>38</sup> Chapa observes that, "consolation is Christian hope, based on Christ's resurrection and his coming. Christian hope contrasts with pagan emptiness which is unable to give a greater comfort than that of the word of exhortation to self-mastery." Juan Chapa, 'Consolatory Patterns?', in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. by Collins, p. 226. Chapa demonstrates that while the apostolic comfort offered in the paraenetic section may be framed in Greek rhetorical forms, it is rooted in the Jewish hope in God's faithfulness and the resurrection of the dead (citing 2 Mac.). Ibid., pp. 226-228.

The affection in the letter that Malherbe and others characterize as pastoral care is the deep mutual love and encouragement that is the essential context in which the congregation is established. There is no context for divine authority apart from relationships rooted in love. The narrative also identifies God as the source of the gospel entrusted to the apostolic team, and their *apologia* of the divine origin and agency in their message equips the believers to recognize any incursion of counterfeit preachers in Paul's absence. The hearing of faith (2:13) requires the embodiment on the part of faithful emissaries of the Christ whom they proclaim (2:7-12). Yet one thing remains missing without attention to all of Paul's community narrative – including the accounts of Timothy's dispatch and return: the context for delivering faith in the initial mission was a relationship of deep, self-giving love between apostles and converts. Set within the eschatological framework of the gospel, in which the journey of faith continues from conversion to final consummation, a mutual relationship of self-giving love between apostolic emissaries and their converts *remains* the context for encouraging faith. This fact may be demonstrated by Paul's deep anxiety by the loss of this solidarity in later epistles (cf. Gal. 4:13-15; 2 Cor. 6:11-13).

Defining παρακαλέω in 1 Thessalonians as the interpersonal comfort required to keep afflicted and grieving believers walking in faith is too narrow. It reduces the tripartate relationship of the letter (a direct divine appeal, through apostolic emissaries, to the believers) to a binary relationship between human agents.<sup>39</sup> Albert Vanhoye likewise concludes that Paul's letter '[...] serves relationships which are not bilateral but rather trilateral, or to put it better, serves the

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<sup>39</sup> Malherbe correctly identifies the equipping of believers to give pastoral care to one another, again, however, without the explicit identification of that care coming from God through believers. Malherbe's functional definition of 'pastoral' obscures God as the source of consolation, delivered by means of human agents. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 88-94.



communion of the missionaries and the faithful in God and in Christ.<sup>40</sup> So before sending this epistle, Paul sends Timothy as an envoy for the team. For Paul's apostolic labours to be effective, the faith of the believers must remain established in the gospel as announced during the initial visit. This is reflected in Timothy's mandate to establish, that is, strengthen and encourage, the believers for the sake of their faith (στηρίζω and παρακαλέω, 3:5).<sup>41</sup> In Paul's narrative, the apostolic strengthening and encouragement of faith occurs in a context of deep, self-giving love. Perhaps this is why, in 1 Thessalonians 3:6, Timothy's good news reports the continuing faith of the believers *and* their love – that they always remember the apostles kindly and long to see them (ἐπιποθέω).<sup>42</sup> Mutual, loving relationships are the context for Paul's eschatological effectiveness as an apostle to the Gentiles. As Paul tells the story of this foundational mission, 'holding on' to the gospel message in faith also means 'holding on', if you will, to its divinely appointed apostolic messengers.

Following the good report at Timothy's return, the dispatch of the epistle continues the initial ministry of encouraging the believers to walk in God's way. This is Paul's practice throughout his ministry, to send epistles and envoys in order to continue the initial establishment in the gospel

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<sup>40</sup> Discussing Paul's purpose in writing, Albert Vanhoye asserts that: 'Toute la lettre est *ecclésiale* (on cherchera en vain cette catégorie dans les traités de rhétorique classique!), c'est-à-dire que <la fonction épistolaire de contact> y est au service de relations, non pas bilatérales, mais trilatérales, ou, pour mieux dire, au service de la communion des missionnaires et des fidèles en Dieu et dans le Christ.' Albert Vanhoye, 'La Composition de 1 Thessaloniens', in *Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. by Collins, pp. 73 – 86 (p.86). So also Marguerat, 'Imiter l'apôtre', p. 31.

<sup>41</sup> Of the six times that Paul employs the verb στηρίζω in his epistles, four are found in the correspondence with the Thessalonian believers (1 Th. 3:2, 3:13; 2 Th. 2:17, 3:3). In 1 Th. 3:2, Timothy is sent to encourage and establish the Thessalonians concerning their faith. The second usage in 1 Th. 3:13 is in a prayer that Lord may strengthen the hearts of the believers until the last day (also 2 Th. 2:17, paired again with παρακαλέω, and 3:3). In Romans 1:11 Paul expresses his desire to share a spiritual gift to strengthen the Roman church – which he then immediately clarifies as a mutual encouragement (συμπαρακαλέω). Ro. 16:25 expresses Paul's confidence that God is able to strengthen the faithful in Rome. Regarding the particular role of Timothy's visit (1 Th. 3:2) in the encouragement and establishment of the Thessalonian church, see Karl Donfried, 'Epistolary and Rhetorical', p. 56.

<sup>42</sup> Bjerkelund, 'Vergeblich', p. 185.

in ongoing encouragement. Paul, Silvanus and Timothy send a written appeal in the Lord Jesus concerning how to live to please God (παρακαλέω, 1 Th. 4:1), according to instructions through the Lord Jesus (παραγγελία, 1 Th. 4:2) concerning the will of God (1 Th. 4:3), who calls the believers to holiness (1 Th. 4:7).<sup>43</sup> Paul concludes with the statement that whoever rejects these instructions rejects not human authority but God (οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἀθετεῖ ἀλλὰ τὸν θεόν, 1 Th. 4:8). As Henneken has observed where this final passage is concerned, ‘God’s word in a human word’ is even more radical in 4:8 than 2:13 since it involves apostolic instruction in the eschatological age of the Spirit.<sup>44</sup> Paul’s apostolic instruction and authority, based on the demonstrable fact that God is speaking through apostolic messengers, extends from the initial announcement of good news to the *parousia* anticipated in that announcement.

### 5.2.2 Paul’s Apostolic Self-Presentation (1 Th. 2:18, 3:5, 5:27)

Paul’s individual apostolic concerns are explicit in two first person singular statements in 1 Thessalonians. Paul’s statement in 2:18 that he is a particular target of resistance, taken together with the reference in 2:16 to those seeking to hinder the announcement of the gospel among the Gentiles, demonstrates that Paul’s individual apostolic commission to the Gentiles determined the

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<sup>43</sup> Malherbe classifies παρακαλέω alongside nine other terms describing moral exhortation. Malherbe, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, p. 139. Terms signifying moral instruction that occur in 2:12 and 3:2 are explicitly connected by Paul to God’s call (2:12) and work (3:2) among the believers. The remaining terms all occur in the paraenetic section in 1 Th. 4-5. The three verses in which παρακαλέω is used alongside other terms are: 2:12, παρακαλέω with παραμυθέομαι (consolation, also 5:14) and μαρτύρομαι (charge or witness); 3:2, παρακαλέω with στηρίζω (establish); and 5:11, παρακαλέω with οἰκοδομέω (build up). Other terms as identified by Malherbe are: παραγγελία (4:2, instruction, also 4:11, παραγγέλλω); διαμαρτύρομαι (4:6, solemnly charge, also 2:12); ἔρωτάω (5:12, urge); πρόϊστημι (5:12, manage, care); νουθετέω (admonish, also 5:14); ἀντέχω (5:14, help); μακροθυμέω (5:14, be patient).

<sup>44</sup> Henneken, *Verkündigung*, p. 58.

direction of the team. Secondly, Paul states his particular concern with the enduring effectiveness of the Gentile converts in the midst of testing (3:5). To overcome the personal separation from the believers Paul communicates two additional individual apostolic actions. He personally sends Timothy as an emissary to Thessalonica (3:5), and individually includes the solemn command in the Lord that the letter be read to all (5:27). Attention to Paul's apostolic self-presentation in these three verses provides insight into the relationship of the gospel as a divine communication to Paul's purpose in writing.

One such insight in this second half of Paul's gospel narrative is that the effectiveness of Paul's ministry is interdependent with the faithful actions of others.<sup>45</sup> In 2:1-12 Paul reminds the recipients of that which they already know – that the apostolic entrance was not ineffective (κενός). While there is no concern expressed by Paul with the effective ministry of the gospel as a divine communication, there is concern with its endurance. Paul's concern is repeated in the first person singular in 1 Thessalonians 3:5.<sup>46</sup> This later use of γίνομαι is subjunctive. As demonstrated by the repetition of κενός in 1 Thessalonians 3:5, however, the measure of Paul's effective apostolic

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<sup>45</sup> See also Galatians 2:1 and Philippians 2:16. Discussing Gal. 2:1 Bjerkelund suggests that in Galatians 2:1 Paul's concerns with 'vain proclamation' have the faithfulness of the Jerusalem church in view. Bjerkelund, 'Vergeblich', p. 187.

<sup>46</sup> κενός occurs 10 times in Paul of 18 NT occurrences. Two are in 1 Thessalonians (2:1 and 3:5), each concerned with apostolic labours among the believers. Both Galatians 2:2 and Philippians 2:16 (2x) include the metaphor of running (τρέχω) in vain in Paul's concerns about his labour among the Gentiles. The use in Phil. 2:16 is explicitly eschatological. The five remaining occurrences are all in the Corinthian correspondence. Paul denies receiving grace in vain (1 Cor. 15:10), declares that if Christ was not raised from the dead both proclamation and faith are in vain (15:14, 2x), and encourages the believers that in Christ their labour is not in vain (15:58). In 2 Corinthians 6:1 he exhorts the believers again not to accept grace in vain. The verb κενόω occurs 5 times in the NT, all of them Pauline. The most often noted occurrence is in the Christ hymn in Philippians 2:7, a verse that associates the word family with the loss of effective power. In 1 Corinthians Paul refuses to announce the gospel in σοφία λόγου in order that the cross may not be emptied of its power. The three final occurrences are not directly related to apostolic labours (1 Cor. 9:15, empty boast; 2 Cor. 9:3, the collection; Ro. 4:14, faith in vain).

labour is not based solely on the initial entrance of the apostolic team in a place. Both Bjerkelund and Gundry-Volf conclude that Paul's use of κενός is eschatological in scope, so that the measure of effective labour is the endurance of Gentile faith to the Day of the Lord Jesus.<sup>47</sup> Effective apostolic mission is eschatological in scope, encompassing the journey from conversion to eschatological consummation. The conclusion in 2:12 refers to this journey, presenting the apostolic team instructing the believers in the ways that they should walk, obedient to the God that calls them into his kingdom and glory – another eschatological phrase.<sup>48</sup> Paul's use of κενός language in his letters indicates the close connection between an effective ministry and the endurance of Gentile believers faced with affliction.<sup>49</sup> The purpose of an apologetic narrative concerning the messengers is safeguarding the *endurance* of the believers – their faithful progress in love, faith and hope.<sup>50</sup>

However, the eschatological effectiveness of the mission in Thessalonians is dependent not only on the messengers that faithfully communicate a divine word (1 Th. 2:1-13), but also on the

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<sup>47</sup> C. Bjerkelund's review of the use of κενός in the LXX and rabbinic tradition concludes that Paul's concern with labouring in vain is eschatological, envisioning a lack of divine commendation in the Day of the Lord. Bjerkelund, 'Vergeblich', p. 182. So also Judith Gundry-Volf: 'Paul thinks that to labor in vain is to produce nothing of eternal value, of eschatological significance.' Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, pp. 263-64.

<sup>48</sup> Paul's specific language is to walk in the ways of the kingdom, an eschatological metaphor. As summarized by Bruce Longenecker, this reflects Jewish expectation of the inclusion of the nations with one essential change: that the revelation in which Paul's message calls the Gentiles to walk is the gospel of God rather than the law (1 Th. 2:12, 4:1). Longenecker writes of Jewish expectation: 'salvation comes to the Gentiles only as they learn the ways of God and walk in his paths by aligning themselves with the law and its practices.' 'Different Answers', p. 109.

<sup>49</sup> 'When persecution, testing, and false teaching in conflict with the gospel threaten Paul's converts, he fears that his labour might prove to be "in vain" (Phil 2:16; 1 Thess 3:5; Gal 2:2; 4:11). Instead of producing lasting fruit, his apostolic service would be characterized by futility and, by implication, his seeming converts would have no salvation.' Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, pp. 281-282.

<sup>50</sup> So also Marxsen, *Thessalonicher*, p. 43.

converts who walk in that word by faith (1 Th. 2:12, 3:6).<sup>51</sup> Their desertion from the faith of the gospel would render the initial apostolic labours ineffective.<sup>52</sup> Paul's commendation at the return of the Lord Jesus – his crown of boasting – is dependent on the enduring faith of his Gentile congregations, embodied in character and conduct worthy of the God calling them into his kingdom and glory (1 Th. 2:12, 19; Phil. 2:16, 4:1). Paul never wavers in his confidence in the power of the gospel to save.<sup>53</sup> He also does not waver in his conviction that human agency must participate with the divine agency of the gospel as a divine communication, through the work of faith and labour of love, in the steadfast hope of eschatological commendation. Paul follows the recollection of Timothy's good news report with the imperative command to stand firm (στήκω, 3:8) for the sake of the co-senders' joy.<sup>54</sup> The imperative to the believers in 3:8, that they stand firm for the sake of the apostles' joy, reflects Paul's conviction that believers and apostles alike must participate in the grace communicated in the gospel. The narrative in 1 Thessalonians illustrates the explicit apostolic concerns in 1 Corinthians 15:10 and 2 Corinthians 6:1.

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<sup>51</sup> So also Bjerkelund, 'Vergeblich', p. 183. In a discussion of Paul's eschatology N. T. Wright refers to 'what one colleague has called "collaborative eschatology". For Paul, the present work of the church is already part of the new world, and hence is "not in vain."' George Van Kooten, Oda Wishmeyer and N. T. Wright, 'How Greek was Paul's Eschatology?', *NTS*, 61/02 (Apr., 2015) 239-253 (p. 252). This phrase, 'collaborative eschatology', captures the dynamic of human and divine agency in the new age of the gospel as described above.

<sup>52</sup> Bjerkelund associates Paul's concern that congregations hold on to the gospel in anticipation of eschatological salvation and life with the OT exhortation to uphold and maintain the law as a source of salvation and life. Bjerkelund, 'Vergeblich', pp. 182-83.

<sup>53</sup> 'Paul distrusts his own success, but not God's saving power. His confidence in the success of God's saving work through the gospel and his attributing his own success in ministry to divine power may suggest that to "labour in vain" is to labour apart from the gospel and in this way produce works of "wood, hay and straw", which will be consumed by the eschatological test of fire, instead of genuine converts.' Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, p. 282.

<sup>54</sup> Paul uses the same verb in the second person imperative in 1 Cor. 16:13, Gal. 5:1, Phil. 1:27 and 4:1, and 2 Th. 2:15. In each of the later uses, there can be no doubt that the verb is meant in the imperative rather than the indicative. It seems prudent, therefore, to understand it here with an imperative sense. There is a third person indicative use in Ro. 14:4.

The gospel as divine announcement communicates the certainty of the promise of eschatological salvation for believers from among the nations (1:4-10).<sup>55</sup> It also communicates that participation by faith is integral to the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου / θεοῦ. Joyful endurance in the midst of affliction originates from the divine power at work through the gospel as the source of their faith (1:6, 2:13).<sup>56</sup> Therefore, effective apostolic ministry encompasses the entire life of faith from initial conversion to apocalyptic consummation.<sup>57</sup> Facing separation from the new congregation at a point in the believers' life in Christ that leaves them vulnerable to the temptation of apostasy in the face of testing, Paul extends the work of the apostolic team by means of Timothy as an envoy. Paul's apostolic self-presentations in 1 Thessalonians 2:18 and 3:5 demonstrate the passion behind his use of envoys and epistles (3:5, 5:27), sent to encourage the continued establishment of this Gentile congregation. The deep concern that Paul expresses in the two statements of apostolic self-presentation in 1 Thessalonians 2:18 and 3:5 is also consistent with his presentation as an apostle to the Gentiles in other epistles.

To summarize the observations from 2:13-3:13, the apocalyptic thanksgiving of 2:13-16 and narrative of apostolic affliction in 2:17-3:8 complete the trajectory of the gospel arrival in Thessalonica from the point of the apostles' expulsion to the sending of the epistle. Paul's narration of the gospel as a word of God in 2:13 reintroduces the suffering of apostles and believers into the cosmic narrative of God's mission, sending the announcement of salvation among the Gentiles. Just

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<sup>55</sup> Gundry-Volf concludes that 'where God is at work through the gospel Paul preaches, he has full confidence that the results will endure.' Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, p. 286. See also Bjerkelund, 'Vergeblich', pp. 184-85.

<sup>56</sup> So also Bjerkelund, 'Vergeblich', p. 184, and Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, p. 282.

<sup>57</sup> Gundry-Volf concludes that for Paul salvation depends on 'the repeated intervention of God in human lives [...] God's promised faithfulness will be proven as Christians successfully endure eschatological testing and onslaughts of evil (1 Cor 10:13, 2 Thess 3:3) and at the day of reckoning when Christ comes again (1 Cor 1:8, 9; 1 Thess 5:23, 24).' Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, pp. 283-84.

as the narrative in 2:1-12 presented the apostles as agonists from whom the new believers could learn to walk in the way of the eschatological kingdom of God, the narrative in 2:17-3:8 presents Paul as agonist from whom the believers can learn participation in God's story up to the day of salvation. The narrative in 2:17-3:5 engages the believers as participants in the eschatological scope of Paul's apostolic mission. In 2:17-3:13 Paul communicates that which the believers in Thessalonica did not know: that the source of Paul's apostolic separation anxiety was concern for the endurance of the believers' faith in the midst of affliction.<sup>58</sup> Timothy's announcement of good news broke into Paul's abandonment and anxiety with the good news of continuing faith and love in Thessalonica. Their enduring faith and love embody the hope of the εὐαγγέλιον, strengthening and encouraging the apostles in God's mission of salvation among the nations. At the close of the community narrative, Paul returns to the vocation of the new believers during the time between arrival and fulfillment of the eschatological promises in the gospel: their work of faith, labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. The final thanksgiving affirms the eschatological significance of the believers' enduring faith and love: 'What possible thanksgiving can we return to God for all of the joy in which we rejoice because of you?' (3:9). Thus Paul arrives at the wish prayer in 3:10-13 that locates the intermediate apostolic ministry of cultivating faith (3:10-11) alongside the believers' vocation of love (3:12) in the certain hope of God's continuing sanctification to the day of Jesus' return (3:13).

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<sup>58</sup> 'Paul's fear of labouring in vain arises in situations in which his converts' steadfastness in faith is threatened through Satanic onslaughts of persecution (1 Thess 3:3-5) or through false teaching (Gal 4:9-11). Paul apparently does not contemplate a mere temporary wavering in faith but a setback which could make his missionary efforts *ultimately* futile.' Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, p. 263, see also pp. 281-82.

### 5.3 Divine Communication in 2 Corinthians 1-9

The examination of Paul's use of divine communication in the community narrative that he constructs in 1 Thessalonians 1-3 has demonstrated that in his eschatological retelling of the foundation of the *ekklēsia* in that city the phrases 'word of the Lord' and 'word of God' represent categories of divine speech from the OT prophetic tradition. Paul presents himself, Silvanus and Timothy in a genuinely shared prophetic ministry of the gospel as a divine communication through which God calls and establishes a church.

In 2 Corinthians, a letter in which Timothy is named as co-sender and written to a congregation that was founded by Paul, Silvanus and Timothy (2 Cor. 1:19), Paul makes sustained use of *λόγος* as gospel language as he presents himself and his co-workers as reliable gospel emissaries: keeping their word (*λόγος ἡμῶν*, 1:19), spoken from pure motives (*λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ*, 2:17), without trickery or delusion (*λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ*, 4:2), speaking the message of reconciliation as entrusted to them by God (*λόγος τῆς καταλλαγῆς*, 5:19).<sup>59</sup> Paul's discussion of the gospel as *λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ* occurs within arguments defending the apostolic integrity of the team as Christ's ambassadors (5:20).<sup>60</sup> In each letter Paul presents a defence of apostolic ministry with confidence of its acceptance among the readers, with a use of negative comparisons that is general to unreliable messengers rather than specific to identified opponents.<sup>61</sup> Similar to 1 Thessalonians,

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<sup>59</sup> For an extensive review of the similarities between the two letters see Kim, 'Paul's entry (εἴσοδος)', pp. 533-42. See also Hafemann, *Suffering & Ministry*, pp. 175-76.

<sup>60</sup> For *λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ* as gospel rather than OT Scriptures see Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 178. Thrall identifies 2:14-7:4 as a defence of apostolic ministry with 2:14-17 governing the whole of what follows through 6:10. Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, pp. 187, 189.

<sup>61</sup> For 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4 as an understanding of apostolic ministry that Paul presents with confidence of acceptance see Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 9. Furnish asserts that the section is concerned with 'the authenticity and meaning of apostleship itself.' Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 185.



Paul makes extensive use of the first person plural construction in his apostolic presentation and defence.<sup>62</sup> Finally, in both letters Paul employs παρακαλέω and κενός language relative to apostolic ministry.

In both letters, the apostolic activity of Paul and fellow preachers is characterized in terms that reflect the Scriptural prophetic tradition. The defence of apostolic integrity in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 bears several features in common with the *apologia* in 2 Corinthians, in which Paul repeats his use of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. In 2 Corinthians 2:17, Paul states that he and his companions are not like the many who peddle the word of God (οἱ πολλοὶ καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>63</sup> Rather, Paul's motives are pure (ἐξ εὐκρινείας), as one who is in the sight of God (ἐκ θεοῦ κατέναντι θεοῦ) and speaks in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ) – an affirmation of sincerity that stresses Paul's reliability as a divine emissary.<sup>64</sup> The pejorative reference to those who manipulate a divine communication for their own financial gain (καπηλεύω) is in contrast to sincere emissaries – those sent by God, conducting themselves in divine oversight and speaking in Christ. Faithful emissaries announce a word that originates with God rather than humans, speak in Christ's name rather than

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<sup>62</sup> Although Paul's defence of apostolic ministry in 2:14-7:4 is not located in a narration of the initial visit in Corinth, Paul's reference to himself, Silvanus and Timothy in 1:17-19 invokes the foundational ministry. The exclusive plural in 2:14-7:4 most likely refers to Paul as associated with other trustworthy apostolic emissaries rather than to Paul, Silvanus and Timothy in particular. Harris, *Second Corinthians*, p. 244; Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, pp. 209-15. *Contra* Hafemann who argues for a literary plural. Hafemann, *Suffering & Ministry*, pp. 14-15. It is likely that the discussion in 2 Corinthians 4:1-5 is in reference to an initial preaching of the gospel. Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 302.

<sup>63</sup> Furnish offers a helpful discussion of the verb καπηλεύω, which only appears here in the New Testament. He renders the participle as 'hucksters', stating that, 'in Paul's day it was not uncommon for [the term] to be used specifically by the opponents of itinerant teachers, who were charged with showing more concern for their own welfare than for the truth.' Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 178. The term οἱ πολλοί is a general reference to the category of preachers whose conduct is in contrast to that of Paul and other faithful Christian messengers, so also Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 211.

<sup>64</sup> 'The reference here is not just to preaching in the narrow sense but to the whole apostolic witness to Christ (cf. Shutz 1975:211).' Furnish, *II Corinthians* p. 179.

their own, and are able to call God as witness to the integrity of their conduct. It is a description that echoes the same characteristics present in the *apologia* of 1 Thessalonians 2. In both letters Paul conducts a defence in the framework of the true prophets of the OT, while also making use of terms recognizable in philosophical polemics against spurious philosophers.<sup>65</sup> As in 1 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians 2:17 presents a rejection of those who ‘preach the gospel to get a good living out of it for themselves, selling what should be freely given.’<sup>66</sup> Each letter claims sincerity in speech, divine origin, and the invocation of God as witness.<sup>67</sup>

Where 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 defends apostolic ministry in general, 4:1-5 is a defence of initial preaching in particular.<sup>68</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:2 contains Paul’s second reference in the epistle to the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>69</sup> As with the initial reference in 2 Corinthians 2:14-17, in 4:1-5 Paul asserts the mishandling of the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (2:17 and 4:2) in contrast to faithful apostolic witness (2:17, 4:2, 5).<sup>70</sup> Paul refers once again to his own practices relative to the word of God, which are neither cunning nor deceitful (μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ μηδὲ δολοῦντες

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<sup>65</sup> Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 212,213.

<sup>66</sup> Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 213. Hafemann concludes his analysis of καπηλεύω with the statement, ‘Unless Paul is deviating from normal semantic usage, for which there is no indication in the context, II Corinthians 2:17 ought to be rendered “selling the Word of God as a retail dealer sells his wares in the market.”’ Hafemann, *Suffering & Ministry*, p. 124. Collange associates the term with false sophists and philosophers. J. F. Collange, *Enigmes de la Deuxième Epître de Paul aux Corinthiens: Etude Exégétique de 2 Cor. 2:14-7:4*, SNTSMS 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 37-40, esp. 38. Thrall rejects these readings, associating the term instead with those who ‘water down’ the message. Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, pp.213-15.

<sup>67</sup> See J. Lambrecht’s observation that the three phrases in 2:17b ‘present themselves [...] as a further explanation of ὡς ἐξ εἰλικρινείας ... λαλοῦμεν.’ J. Lambrecht, ‘Structure and Line of Thought in 2 Co. 2:14-4:6’, *Bib*, 64 / 3 (1983), 344-380 (p. 378).

<sup>68</sup> Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 302.

<sup>69</sup> Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 301. So also Collange, *Enigmes*, p. 129.

<sup>70</sup> ‘What was asserted in 2:14-17 is proven from the character of the gospel [in 4:6].’ Bultmann, *2 Corinthians*, p. 109.

τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:2).<sup>71</sup> As stated above, the term δόλος was commonly used for guile, especially as connected to wealth won by deceit. The word reoccurs three times in 2 Corinthians of false apostles (cf. 2 Cor. 4:2, 11:13, 12:16). The language in the passage is reminiscent of the characterization of false emissaries in 1 Thessalonians 2:3. The claims to sincerity are consistent with Paul's presentation of trustworthy divine emissaries in 1 Thessalonians 2. In both passages Paul invokes not only God but others as witness to apostolic sincerity.<sup>72</sup> The reference in 2 Corinthians 1:12, to every man's conscience in the sight of God, is a similar dynamic to the repeated reference to that which the Thessalonians know and to which God gives witness.<sup>73</sup> Thrall characterizes Paul's claim that 'we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord' as countering the charge that 'his evangelistic activity is motivated by the egotistical concern to achieve power over other people' (cf. 2 Cor. 1:24, 10:8).<sup>74</sup> This denial of self-promotion or personal power may be

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<sup>71</sup> In 2 Cor. 11:3 Paul refers to the serpent's cunning (πανουργία) in tempting Eve, which, one will recall from the story in Gen. 3, involved a clever turn of phrase with the words of God.

<sup>72</sup> Thrall suggests that it is surprising that Paul 'should allow the possibility of the evaluation of his apostolic services by others', citing 1 Cor. 4:3 as a basis for her comments. Her conclusion, that Paul is responding to a specific situation in 1 Corinthians where the comments here in 2 Corinthians are in general, still displays an underlying assumption that Paul does not subject himself to any shared accountability. This is certainly true of his individual commission. Where Paul's integrity as an emissary entrusted with a divine communication is concerned, however, Paul consistently calls both himself and other gospel emissaries to accountability for character and conduct in light of the message announced.

<sup>73</sup> Here and in 2 Cor. 1:12 Thrall defines conscience as 'an inward faculty of judgment which assesses conduct in accordance with given norms.' Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 301.

<sup>74</sup> Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 313.

compared with the denial in 1 Thessalonians 2:6 of seeking glory from men or God, or that of ‘throwing his apostolic weight around’ in 2:7a.<sup>75</sup>

In 2 Corinthians 5:20 the reference to apostles as ‘Ambassadors of Christ’ is dynamically equivalent to Paul’s use of ‘Christ’s Apostles’ in 1 Thessalonians. The important feature in this comparison is the divine origin of and agency in the gospel as a message of reconciliation (τὸν λόγος τῆς καταλλαγῆς).<sup>76</sup> In 5:20, the apostles are described as ambassadors for Christ through whom God appeals (παρακαλέω). God is the subject of παρακαλέω, making his appeal through Paul and his fellow gospel emissaries.<sup>77</sup> Carl J. Bjerkelund has demonstrated that the verb παρακαλέω is the sort of diplomatic language that an ambassador would use in delivering a message.<sup>78</sup> As summarized by Raymond Collins, it is employed by an ambassador carrying a ‘kinder gentler’ authority of a king, framing his ‘commands as requests, sent with an ambassador in the form of an appeal.’<sup>79</sup> In the case of 1 Corinthians 6:1, the apostles working together (συνεργέω) with Christ exhort the recipients not to accept the grace of God in vain (κενός). The dynamic of

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<sup>75</sup> ‘Paul’s peculiar use of the apostolic *parousia* in his Corinthian correspondence challenges scholars to envision a new model of leadership for Paul – at least Paul in conjunction with the Corinthians. Although we have to forfeit the prototypical model of a leader in antiquity (popular even in modern culture) as a powerful, decisive, and consistent individual, Paul’s unique literary interaction with the Corinth community reveals his creativity, his adaptability, and his ability to acknowledge his limitations. He had the courage to risk vulnerability, and he ultimately was successful.’ Lee Johnson, ‘Paul’s Epistolary Presence in Corinth: A New Look at Robert W. Funk’s Apostolic Parousia’, *CBQ*, 68 (2006), 481-501, p. 501.

<sup>76</sup> Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, pp. 430-31.

<sup>77</sup> Barrett asserts that 2 Cor. 5:20 sums up ‘the picture of Paul’s apostleship. On the one hand, Paul has no importance, and indeed no message, of his own. [...] On the other hand, where Paul is at work, Christ, whom he represents, is at work; where Paul speaks, God speaks.’ Barrett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 178. See also Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 436.

<sup>78</sup> Carl J Bjerkelund, *Parakalô. Form, Funktion und Sinn der parakalô-Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen*, BTN 1 (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1967).

<sup>79</sup> Collins, following C. J. Bjerkelund, observes: ‘The formula suggests the authority of a king, but of an authority which has chosen to make its demands in the form of a request. Paul’s use of the *parakalô*-formula is thus both an indication of the real authority of which he was the bearer, and of the sensitivity with which that authority was exercised.’ Collins, *Studies*, p. 196.

Paul's description of himself and his fellow apostolic emissaries as 'ambassadors of Christ' (ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οἶν πρεσβεύομεν) is equivalent to the activities of the apostolic team as Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι in 1 Thessalonians 2:7. In each case, the locus of apostolic authority is the divine origin of the message, since the apostolic appeal (1 Th. 2:3, 2 Cor. 6:1) is a divine appeal.<sup>80</sup> Both 1 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians present Paul in a shared ministry of παράκλησις, identifying the authority of the exhortation as a direct appeal from God, through or on behalf of Jesus Christ, delivered by human emissaries.<sup>81</sup>

1 Thessalonians is a source for our understanding of Paul's presentation in 2 Corinthians of a shared apostolic ministry. The extended narrative of the εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ entrusted to Christ's apostles, together with its defence in alignment with that of the OT prophetic tradition of divine emissaries, gives insight into an apostolic function that Paul presents as shared in each case. In each case Paul presents himself alongside fellow gospel emissaries. In both letters the gospel as a divine communication is central to the *apologia*. Additionally, each defence is general to competing preachers laying claim to a divine message rather than targeted at named opponents. Finally, both letters make clear that true apostles have in common that their gospel is, in fact, a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ whose source is God and through which God speaks. The divine source of the gospel is demonstrated not only in sincerity of speech, but importantly, in the character and conduct of human messengers. 1 Thessalonians provides a narrative of an initial mission that clearly asserts the necessity of a cruciform embodiment on the part of apostles in order that the power of the resurrection may be witnessed and the direct appeal of God may be heard.

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<sup>80</sup> 'For the necessary human response to become effective, the saving event must be made known. Hence, the task of its proclamation has been entrusted to the apostles.' Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1-7*, p. 431.

<sup>81</sup> 'Il y aurait ainsi un parfait parallèle avec 2 Cor., V, 20-VI, 1, où la même action est accomplie d'abord par Dieu, et puis, comme intermédiaire, par l'Apôtre ('par nous').' Denis, 'L'Apôtre Paul', p. 264.

There is one final concern that is expressed in both 2 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians. In 2 Corinthians 6:1, Paul writes, ‘As we work together (συνεργέω) with [Christ], we urge you (παρακαλέω) not to accept the grace of God in vain (κενός)’. In each of the two epistles, along with a shared use of the phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in the context of an apostolic defence of divine emissaries, Paul expresses his concern that those initial labours endure. The apostolic activity captured in the verb παρακαλέω participates in that endurance. As Paul’s narrative in 1 Thessalonians makes clear, deep mutual love is the context in which exhortation to endurance in faith is communicated.<sup>82</sup>

#### **5.4 Summary: λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ as Entrusted Announcement**

In summary, Paul in the foundational ministry conducts a genuinely shared prophetic apostolic mission of announcing the gospel. As Christ’s apostles, Paul, Silvanus and Timothy were tested and entrusted to speak a divine communication. As a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ the gospel originates from God and is the message through which God calls and empowers faith. The study of the gospel as a divine communication has added an important clarification to Paul’s presentations of shared apostolic ministry. In this letter Paul’s apostolic presentation is also based in the prophetic tradition of the gospel as an entrusted word. Paul, Silvanus and Timothy are tested and entrusted by God with a divine communication, emboldened to speak this message in the face of opposition, and demonstrate in their character and conduct the integrity of divine emissaries. Their lives embody

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<sup>82</sup> Judith Gundry-Volf makes a similar suggestion concerning 2 Corinthians 6, and Paul’s admonition not to receive the grace of God in vain: ‘The potential cause of alienation from grace here can only be rejection of the gospel as a consequence of rejection of the apostle and the apostolic message.’ Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, p. 280.

the gentleness and love of God in Christ, calling the nations through the free gift of the gospel. This presentation of apostleship is not based in Paul's unique calling as the Apostle to the nations. It is based on his mutual calling as a prophetic emissary entrusted with the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.

The community narrative that Paul constructs in 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3:13 tells the story of the foundation of a Gentile *ekklēsia*, birthed through the eventful arrival of the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου, nurtured in the shared prophetic mission between Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, and enduring in faith and love with hope of Jesus' return. At the beginning, middle and end of the story Paul includes apocalyptic moments of thanksgiving, the longest in 1:4-10, which describes the advent of the gospel as a 'word of the Lord' among the believers. The apostolic biography of the messengers in 2:1-12 is a demonstration of divine agency that empowered the apostles with boldness in the face of opposition; entrusted the gospel; witnessed to the character and conduct of the apostles and directly called believers through the ministry of Christ's apostles. Paul's presentation of the gospel as a divine communication, specifically as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, is a source for understanding his passionate continuing engagement with congregations that he has founded, as well as his own labour in order that the grace of God is not in vain. Because the gospel originates from God, the Spirit of God remains energetically at work among the believers in Paul's absence (2:17-3:8), encouraging (παρακαλέω) them in their labour of love (4:1-12 and 5:12-28), and establishing (στηρίζω) them in the steadfast hope in the *parousia* of the Lord Jesus Christ (4:13-5:11). The continuing reliance of the believers on God's presence and promise to them in the gospel as a word of God enables them to remain faithful in the midst of suffering, and thus prove at the last day that the entrance of the apostles with this gospel has not proved in vain.

## THESIS CONCLUSION

1 Thessalonians is our best source for understanding Paul's gospel as a divine communication, and the implications of this for his apostolic presentation in prophetic terms. Our study has demonstrated that the early stage in the life of the Thessalonian church is the reason for characteristics in the letter that are often referred to as 'early Paul'. Writing in order to participate in God's work of encouraging and establishing a young Gentile congregation in the gospel, Paul composes an extensive community narrative. This narrative, in 1 Thessalonians 1-3, moves between apocalyptic expressions of thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' welcome of the gospel as λόγος τοῦ κυρίου and λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, and apostolic biographies of arrival and separation. The identification of the gospel as a divine speech act is central to the story of the *ekklēsia* in Thessalonica. Describing the gospel as event, Francis Watson writes:

The Pauline gospel announces a definitive, unsurpassable divine incursion into the world – “vertically from above,” in Karl Barth's celebrated phrase – that both establishes the new axis around which the entire world thereafter revolves and discloses the original meaning of the world as determined in the pretemporal counsel of God. So unlimited is the scope of this divine action that it comprehends not only the



end but also the beginning – although it takes the highly particular form of an individual human life that reaches its goal not only in death but also in resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

Paul's narration of the events in Thessalonica – from entrance to expulsion (2:2-16) and emissary to epistle (2:17-3:13) – engages the imaginations of isolated and grieving new believers in the full story of Jesus' death, resurrection and return.

### *Divine Communication in 1 Thessalonians*

The primary question addressed in the preceding chapters has been the extent to which Paul represents his gospel as a divine communication in continuity with the LXX prophetic tradition. Paul's use of the phrases in 1 Thessalonians is a reflection of the genuinely early stage in the life of the *ekklēsia*. The gospel as divine speech act, in continuity with the nature of a word of the Lord / word of God in the OT prophetic tradition, is essential to God's call among the Gentiles. Their response to that gospel announcement in faith demonstrates that they are included among God's beloved and elect. The exegetical studies in 1 Thessalonians have demonstrated that Paul uses the phrases λόγος τοῦ κυρίου and λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in the apocalyptic thanksgiving narratives to represent general categories of divine communication to which the gospel belongs. Each phrase demonstrates continuity with OT prophetic usage of divine communication reinterpreted in light of the Christ events. The gospel as a λόγος τοῦ κυρίου is an apocalyptic announcement of Jesus as the divine agent in the anticipated *parousia*. Paul's description of the gospel among the Thessalonians echoes the language of reception of a word of the Lord in the Scriptural prophetic tradition. While the events of the cross and resurrection are 'news', the anticipated inclusion of the

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<sup>1</sup> Watson, 'Is There a Story', p. 232.

Gentiles in God's salvation is, according to Paul's letters, as old as Abraham – to whom the Lord promised innumerable descendants in a word of the Lord in Genesis 15:1-6 (cf. Gal. 3:6-9). Gentile faith, in response to the encounter with a word of the Lord, models that of Abraham. Their abandonment of idols to turn and serve the living and true God was imagined in the eschatological word of the Lord in the Jewish prophetic tradition (cf. Is. 2:2-3, 60:2-3; Tob. 14:6). Paul's use of a definite form of the topos 'the word of the Lord' in 1 Thessalonians 1:8 is best read as a shorthand designation for the various prophetic speech acts in the LXX tradition that reveal the purpose of the Lord, the God of Israel, to include Gentiles in eschatological salvation. The distinction in Paul's gospel as a word of the Lord, announced in continuity with previous prophetic anticipation, is that the content of the gospel identifies Jesus as the Lord – the divine agent through whom God acts to rescue the beloved and elect in the Day of the Lord. Unlike the prophetic tradition, in which a direct divine encounter by the power of the Spirit only occurs between the Lord and a prophet, in the eschatological age anticipated by Joel an effective and enduring word is communicated with power and the Spirit to all flesh. Those who respond in faith, bearing the word with anticipatory joy in the midst of present suffering, reveal God's sovereign purpose in human history. The use of 'word of the Lord' in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 and 2 Thessalonians 3:1 is also a reference to the gospel as a divine communication functioning in continuity with the eschatological expectations of the word of the Lord in the OT prophetic tradition.

The gospel as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is the divinely entrusted announcement of the salvation events from God in Christ. The intervening designation of the gospel as εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ is central to Paul's presentation of the co-senders as working in a genuinely shared prophetic mission among the Thessalonians. The apostles' cruciform embodiment of the message entrusted to them demonstrates the divine origin and agency in the gospel as a word of God, energetically working

among the believers for their endurance in faith, hope and love to the day of Christ Jesus. The presentation of the gospel in continuity with the OT prophetic tradition of Israel indicates Paul's confidence that as a word of God the gospel will not fail to perform that which it promises: the reconciliation of all humanity in worship of the living and true God, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

In both the LXX and Paul the designation of the gospel as a word of the Lord / word of God holds no theological or functional distinction. Each refers to the God of Israel, identified in 1 Thessalonians as the Father of Jesus, the Son of God, raised from the dead and anticipated in the *parousia*. The Old Testament prophets anticipated an announcement of God's salvation, using the language of εὐαγγελίζομαι, at times with κηρύσσω. Paul's writing presents his εὐαγγέλιον that he proclaims within the larger category of prophetic speech, as an entrusted and empowered divine communication. In continuity with this tradition, the gospel originates from God, and concerns that which God has done and will do for the salvation of God's people. It is revelatory of God's future salvation of the faithful, Gentiles and Jews, as beloved and chosen; effective to empower that which it announces; and enduring to the end of the age, so that the labour of those who hope in its promise will not be in vain. The gospel is also a new thing. Unlike the OT prophetic tradition, in which the divine agency of the Spirit accompanied the word of the Lord only in the experience of the prophetic figure, the gospel is a message that encounters its recipients with the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit empowers both the announcement and reception of the word of God, and remains energetically at work among God's people. The Gentile believers in Thessalonica have received, in the εὐαγγέλιον, the word and Spirit of the Lord, the God of Israel, who governs all of creation – and will restore all of creation at the return of Jesus in the Day of the Lord.

## *A Genuinely Shared Prophetic Mission*

The related question that this study has asked concerns Paul's apostolic presentation in 1 Thessalonians. In the first apostolic biography, the presentation is that of a genuinely shared prophetic mission, based in the OT tradition of divine emissaries sent with an entrusted message. Within the narrative logic of 1 Thessalonians, Paul's gospel as a εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ in 2:1-12 is a particular message of divine origin, belonging to the category of divine speech represented in the phrase λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ. The word of God describes the gospel as an entrusted message, through which God continues to energetically work among the faithful as they lead a life worthy of the God who, through the gospel, calls them into his kingdom and glory. Paul presents himself, Silvanus and Timothy working together in a genuinely shared foundational mission in Thessalonica, patterned on the OT prophetic tradition of divine emissaries.

Comparison with Paul's use of λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ language in 2 Corinthians has further demonstrated the importance to Paul of the integrity of divine emissaries to the faithful delivery of the gospel as a divine communication. In 2 Corinthians, the gospel as a λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is an entrusted message through which God directly appeals. The sincerity and truth of the messengers' speech allows for the unhindered perception of God's direct appeal in Christ. Additionally, the cruciform embodiment on the part of apostles, in weakness and humility, is the *mis en scène* for an apocalyptic revelation of the glory of the resurrected and returning Lord Jesus. The structure of the community narrative in 1 Thessalonians 1:2-2:16, in which apostolic embodiment forms the narrative bridge between two apocalyptic thanksgivings for the gospel as a divine communication, demonstrates that Paul's humility is not simply an exemplary ethic. The cruciform embodiment of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy is demonstration for the Thessalonians that the power actively at work among them (2:13) is of divine rather than human origin. According to Paul, a cruciform

embodiment and integrity are the common character and conduct of true emissaries of the gospel as a word of God. This is true in both 1 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians.

The second apostolic biography in 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:8 presents the distinctions in Paul's apostolic authority after the foundational mission had finished. The eschatological scope of the gospel, from arrival to *parousia*, requires of Paul that the ministry of exhortation and comfort in the gospel (παρακαλέω) continue to the end, in order that his labours not prove in vain (κενός). The sending of Timothy as envoy, followed by the dispatch of an epistle, extend the παράκλησις of the initial mission in the fitting context of mutual love between apostle and converts. The purpose of Paul's apostolic ministry, extended by envoy and epistle, is to participate in God's work of calling believers into his kingdom and glory.

#### *Implications for Further Study*

1 Thessalonians has long been recognized as a source of inquiry into the apocalyptic content of Paul's gospel. This study demonstrates that the letter is also a source of insight into the revelatory nature of Paul's gospel as an apocalyptic announcement through which God calls Gentile congregations into existence. Coterminous to the arrival of the gospel as a message with fullness of the Holy Spirit and power are its messengers as embodiments of Christ's humility, self-giving love, sacrifice and suffering. The community narrative that Paul composes for this new congregation is a field report of his gospel and apostolic practice from the earliest days of a congregation.

Comparisons of Paul's narrative in 1 Thessalonians with the gospel language clusters from other letters that were identified in the word study from chapter one in this study promises new insights into the unanswered question in our study concerning the relationship between Paul's prophetic

presentation of the gospel as divine communication and his own prophetic self-presentations in other letters.

For example, in many ways, 1 Thessalonians could serve as the narrative field report of an apostolic team among the Gentiles that takes their mission practices from Paul's description in Romans 10.<sup>2</sup> An initial indication of the potential for further study of the interaction between prophetic divine communication and prophet self-presentation is demonstrable through a brief comparison of 1 Thessalonians 1-3 to Romans 10. J. Ross Wagner's study of Paul and Isaiah as fellow preachers of good news in the letter to the Romans, *Heralds of the Good News*, provides a thorough and trustworthy guide for a comparison of the two letters.

God's election is a central concern in each letter. The reflection on Israel in Romans 9-11 follows a discussion in Romans 8 of God's election and 'triumphant confidence in suffering', also a central concern in 1 Thessalonians.<sup>3</sup> However, where 1 Thessalonians is written to affirm God's choice of the Gentiles as beloved, Romans 9-11 is a discussion of the election (ἐκλογή) of Israel. What is of interest are the dynamics described in Romans 10 of the initial announcement of the gospel as a divine communication, through which Gentiles hear God's call and are formed into an *ekklēsia* that embodies the gospel. J. Ross Wagner suggests that Paul uses passages from the Servant song in a manner that demonstrates that, for Paul, Isaiah remains a living voice, even a co-

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<sup>2</sup> Karl Donfried likewise calls attention to the surprising frequency of 'gospel' and 'word' language between 1 Thessalonians and Romans. He notes that the term εὐαγγέλιον is used six times in 1 Thessalonians (1:5; 2:2, 4, 8, 9; 3:2) compared to nine times in Romans (1:1, 9, 16; 2:16; 10:16, 11:28; 15:16, 19; 16:25) and λόγος as a synonym for 'gospel' appears at least four times (1:6, 8; 2:13; 4:15) as compared to once in Romans (9:6). Karl Donfried, 'Epistolary and Rhetorical', in *Thessalonian Debate*, ed. by Donfried and Beutler, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 45.

worker of Paul's in the Gentile mission.<sup>4</sup> In Romans Paul finds in Isaiah a prefigurement for his own apostolic mission to the Gentiles.<sup>5</sup> As suggested by Albert Denis, and supported in our exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, the eschatological expectations of the Servant of Yahweh, as described by Isaiah, are reflected in the description of apostles as divine emissaries. In both letters God's word is a foundational event. In both 1 Thessalonians 1-3 and Romans 10 Paul uses *λόγος* language to describe an initial preaching mission, through which God calls the Gentiles to faith, as an extension of OT prophetic ministry. In 1 Thessalonians the LXX prophetic tradition plays in the background throughout Paul's presentation of the gospel as a divine communication. In Romans 10:8-13, it is in the foreground.

Just as interesting as the content of each letter is the narrative trajectory of the passages. As described by Wagner, in Romans 10:8-13 Paul outlines the progression from the proclamation of a word of faith to the response that calls on the Lord and is saved.<sup>6</sup> Wagner then observes that in Romans 10:14-15 Paul 'retraces this progression from the opposite direction', that is, from the Gentiles' response of faith to the God that sent heralds of good news.<sup>7</sup> Romans 10:16-17 connects faith and obedience to hearing, using language from Deuteronomy 6:4.<sup>8</sup> Romans 10:18-20 reflects on the reception of the gospel by Gentiles and its rejection by Israel, using LXX Psalm 18 and Isaiah 65:1.<sup>9</sup> Consider this progression in Romans 10 alongside the trajectory of 1 Thessalonians 1-3: from a narrative of Gentile response to proclamation (1 Th. 1:4-10, Ro. 10:8-13), to the description of

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<sup>4</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p.180.

<sup>5</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 41

<sup>6</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 170

<sup>7</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 170

<sup>8</sup> Henneken, *Verkündigung*, pp. 47-48. Henneken compares 'the word of hearing' to the *Shema* in Dt. 6:4 and Paul's description of the role of emissaries in Ro. 10:17.

<sup>9</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 211. See especially Wagner's careful analysis of Paul's use of Scripture in Romans 10:8-20. Wagner, *Heralds*, pp. 170-217.

heralds sent from God (1 Th. 2:1-12, Ro. 10:14-15), reception among the Gentiles of the word of hearing (1 Th. 2:13, Ro. 10:16-17) and rejection by Israel of that same message (1 Th. 2:14-16, Ro. 10:18-20). Where Romans 10 presents a theological and hermeneutic reflection on Paul's mission practices, 1 Thessalonians presents a narrative of the gospel in Thessalonica in a remarkably similar trajectory.

Both Romans and 1 Thessalonians also present Paul in the company of other gospel messengers at the initial announcement of the gospel and foundation of a Gentile *ekklēsia*. A reading of 1 Thessalonians alongside Romans 10 helps to clarify the pattern of shared prophetic mission in 1 Thessalonians. In the narrative presentation in 1 Thessalonians, Paul presents his foundational mission in a place as a genuinely shared prophetic mission, in which Silvanus and Timothy are co-workers alongside Paul, sent in Christ's authority to proclaim the gospel. Likewise in Romans 10, Paul's apostolic self-presentation is of himself as one of many messengers of the good news. The trajectory of the narrative in 1 Thessalonians 1-3 also demonstrates, however, that once separated from the city, and from one another, Paul's particular apostolic responsibility moves to the foreground. Timothy is sent as a co-worker of God, that is, continuing to engage in a ministry of gospel appeal and encouragement among the believers, but he is not designated as an apostle of Christ. The patterns suggest that Paul's application of the term 'Christ's apostles' derives from Paul's individual apostolic commission to evangelize, as represented in the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι. As suggested in Romans 10 and narrated during the foundational visit in 1 Thessalonians 2, this is a genuinely shared prophetic mission among Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. The three men proclaim (κηρύσσω) that gospel alongside one another in a narrative of initial mission that embodies the prophetic mandate presented by Paul in Romans 10.



The progression in both letters moves from the reception of a saving word, to the entrusting of that word to heralds, into a reflection on the word of hearing based in Deuteronomy. In each letter Paul presents the gospel as a λόγος ἀκοῆς. The context of both passages, embedded in a discussion of election, moves directly into the reality of reception and rejection of the gospel. Finally, in each letter Paul's missionary strategy is to establish and encourage communities that joyfully embody the gospel, in the midst of the suffering caused by those who reject the same announcement of salvation, with faith, hope and love – this is the vocation of a hopeful *ekklēsia* in the world. Wagner, concluding his reflections on Paul's writing in Romans 11, suggests that, until the last day, the gospel embodied in living communities lets the tension stand between Gentile acceptance and Jewish rejection.<sup>10</sup> Similarly in 1 Thessalonians, Paul's response to violence and rejection is to strengthen and encourage the Thessalonians as examples of faith, hope and love throughout Macedonia, Achaia 'and in every place'. In 1 Thessalonians, as in Romans, this faith is announced (ἀπαγγέλλω, 1 Th. 1:9; καταγγέλλω, Ro. 1:8) so widely that Paul has no need to speak of it – or, in the language of Romans 15, he has fully announced the gospel of Christ (Ro. 15:19).

Paul's discussion of initial gospel preaching among the Gentiles in 1 Thessalonians and Romans 10 is a further demonstration that 1 Thessalonians does not represent an apostle early in his understanding of the nature or stewardship of his divine apostolic commission among the nations. The narrative trajectory of Paul's mission in Thessalonica – the arrival of the gospel as a divine communication announcing Jesus as Lord, the sending of the apostles with an entrusted message, the reception of a word of hearing and the rejection of that same word – forms a community narrative of the foundation of the *ekklēsia* in Thessalonica that embodies in practice the

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<sup>10</sup> Wagner, *Heralds*, p. 301

Scriptural mission theology that Paul presents in Romans 10. In each letter, the gospel as a word from God is foundational language. Also in both letters, the announcement of that word of hearing occurs in a genuinely shared prophetic mission. What Paul presents as a general shared mission in Romans is narrated as a specific mission, shared by a particular apostolic team, in Thessalonica, with Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, as its divinely commissioned leader.

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