

Exegesis Worksheets

REL 3673 Biblical Hermeneutics

Dr. Karelynn Ayayo

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1200 Points Total

Getting Started: Observations

1. I will complete my exegesis worksheets on *1 Thessalonians 4:13–18*.

2. Access the New American Standard translation of your text and write/type it out (5 points).

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

3. Read and reread your passage from the NAS translation. Find a minimum of 40 **meaningful** observations from your text and list them below along with the verse reference for the observation. Remember, if someone could disagree with your observation then you have probably made an interpretation! Be sure to include verse references for each observation that you make (40 points).

1. The use of “we” (1 Thess. 4:13) suggests that there may be more than one author.
2. The author(s) refers to the readers as brethren (1 Thess. 4:13).
3. There are some who are “asleep” (1 Thess. 4:13).
4. The author(s) wants the readers to be informed about those who are “asleep” (1 Thess. 4:13).
5. The author(s) does not want the readers to grieve in the same way as “the rest of men” (1 Thess. 4:13).
6. The author(s) differentiates his readers from others by means of the hope they do or do not have (1 Thess. 4:13).
7. The author(s) wants his readers to grieve in a way that is different from those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13).
8. According to the author(s), the “rest of men” are those who do not have hope (1 Thess. 4:13).
9. The author(s) confesses belief that Jesus died (1 Thess. 4:14).
10. The author(s) confesses belief that Jesus not only died but that he also rose again (1 Thess. 4:14).
11. The author(s)’s belief about Jesus’ death and resurrection informs his belief about God’s future activity (1 Thess. 4:14).

12. At some point in the future, God will act in a way that involves both Jesus and those who are asleep “in him” (1 Thess. 4:14).
13. The author(s) describes some of those who are asleep as being asleep “in him [Jesus]” (1 Thess. 4:14).
14. The author(s) speaks “by the word of the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:15).
15. The author(s) conveys information about those who are still alive (1 Thess. 4:15).
16. When speaking of those who will be alive at the coming of the Lord, the author uses the pronoun “we” (1 Thess. 4:15).
17. The author(s) anticipates a “coming of the Lord” at some point in the future (1 Thess. 4:15).
18. The author(s) believes that the Lord has not yet come (1 Thess. 4:15).
19. The author(s) believes that some will be alive at the time of the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 4:15).
20. Those who are alive are secondarily described as those who are left till the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 4:15).
21. The “alive” and the “asleep” are categories that stand in opposition to one another (1 Thess. 4:15).
22. The involvement of the alive and the “asleep” at the coming of the Lord will be sequential (1 Thess. 4:15).
23. The involvement of the “asleep” will precede the involvement of the alive (1 Thess. 4:15).
24. The coming of the Lord involves a coming down from heaven (1 Thess. 4:16).
25. The one who will come from heaven is the Lord himself (1 Thess. 4:16).
26. The author lists three sounds that will accompany the Lord’s coming down from heaven (1 Thess. 4:16).
27. When the Lord comes down from heaven, there will be a loud command (1 Thess. 4:16).
28. When the Lord comes down from heaven, there will be the voice of the archangel (1 Thess. 4:16).
29. When the Lord comes down from heaven, there will be a trumpet call of God (1 Thess. 4:16).
30. When the Lord comes, some of those who are dead will rise (1 Thess. 4:16).
31. Specifically, the dead who will rise when the Lord comes are those who are dead “in Christ” (1 Thess. 4:16).
32. When rising occurs, the first group of people to rise will be those who are dead in Christ (1 Thess. 4:16).
33. After the dead in Christ have risen, then those who are still alive will join them (1 Thess. 4:17).
34. The place where the risen dead in Christ and the risen alive will meet is “in the clouds” (1 Thess. 4:17).
35. When the alive are in the clouds, they will meet the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17).
36. As a result of all of the coming of the Lord from heaven, people will be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17).
37. The length of time that those who meet the Lord will remain with him is forever (1 Thess. 4:17).
38. The author(s) believes that he will be with the Lord forever (1 Thess. 4:17).
39. The author(s) desires that the readers be encouraged (1 Thess. 4:18).
40. The author(s) desires that the words he has written be used in order to provide encouragement (1 Thess. 4:18).

Step 1: Historical-Cultural and Contextual Analysis

Part A: Broad Historical and Cultural Research: Brainstorming

1. Read your text. Generate as many questions related to its broad scale historical or cultural context (the general time in the history of Israel or history of the church in which it took place) as required. List these questions (20 points).

What views of death were common in the first century?

What grieving processes were common in the first century? For gentiles? For Jews?

What did people believe about angels?

When would a trumpet call be given? What purpose did it serve?

Did people associate the clouds/air with spiritual dimensions?

___/10 Appropriate Number of Questions
___/10 Appropriate Range of Questions

Step 1: Historical-Cultural and Contextual Analysis

Part B: Broad Historical and Cultural Analysis: Research

2. Research the questions that you asked above. You will need to consult multiple Bible handbooks, Bible dictionaries, and/or Bible survey and introduction texts with regard to your passage in order to answer the questions you have listed. Compose a comprehensive answer to each question that you have generated. This should include all that you need to know about the world of that time in order to grasp the meaning of your passage fully. Remember to footnote your sources according to the *SBL Handbook of Style* (75 points)!

Sample answer: When would a trumpet call be given? What purpose did it serve?

In Old Testament times a trumpet or horn could be blown in a variety of circumstances. A trumpet blast during war could signal a warning, a call to battle, or even a retreat. It could serve a religious function in war when armies desired to call upon God for help. A trumpet call could also be used at times of celebration such as the coronation of a king or the dedication of the temple. In the normal religious activities of the Israelites, the trumpet or horn would be blown on many occasions to signal feasts and festivals and other holy days. Additionally, “there is a special use of the trumpet at Sinai (Exod. 19:16ff.;

cf. Zech. 9:14), where the trumpet seems to denote the inexpressible voice of God.”¹ Finally, the Old Testament alludes to the coming day of the Lord, which is to be announced by the trumpet call (Joel 2:1; Zeph. 1:16; Isa. 27:13; Zech. 9:14). All these uses appear to continue in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In the Greek world the trumpet also finds a place in warfare, signaling the time to fire, rally or retreat. “In the Roman camp it gives the signal for sleeping, watching, and waking.”² Outside warfare, trumpets had many varied uses. Shepherds might blow a trumpet to gather their flocks. Legal trials could be heralded with a trumpet call. In religious contexts, trumpets could quiet the people for prayer or indicate the time of sacrifice. Trumpets were put to use both in times of grief, like funerals, and in times of triumph and celebration.

Within the New Testament, a trumpet sound is used to describe the voice of God (Rev. 1:10; 4:1). According to Revelation 8–9, multiple trumpets will signal judgments in the final days. Matthew 24:31 and 1 Corinthians 15:52 are comparable to 1 Thessalonians 4:15 in describing the role of the trumpet call when the Lord returns and the dead are raised.

- ____/10 Used scholarly sources
 ____/5 Used a sufficient number of sources
 ____/25 Answered questions with sufficient detail
 ____/25 Answered questions with accuracy
 ____/5 Style/grammar
-

¹G. Kittel, G. Friedrich, and G. W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translation of: *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (electronic ed.), Logos Library Software (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1995).

²Ibid.

___/5 Footnoting

Step 1: Historical-Cultural and Contextual Analysis

Part C: Narrow Historical Analysis: Internal Evidence

By consulting **only** the entire biblical writing in which your text is found, draw as many detailed observations as you can about the authorship, audience, etc., of the text under consideration as prompted by the questions listed below. Keep in mind that not all questions will be applicable to every text. Be sure to record verse references for each of your observations (30 points).

1. Authorship:

- Paul, Silas and Timothy are identified as the authors (1 Thess. 1:1).
- They identify themselves as the ones who brought the gospel to Thessalonica (1:5).
- They call themselves “apostles of Christ” (2:6).
- They are active in the ministry to Gentiles (2:16).
- They were driven out of town because of persecution and not allowed to return (2:17–18; 3:4).
- Timothy was sent from Athens to visit them (3:2).

2. Audience:

- The letter is written to the church in Thessalonica (1:1).
- The audience is described as faithful, loving, hopeful (1:3; 3:6).
- Paul lived among the Thessalonians when he shared the gospel with them (1:5).
- The audience has experienced and is experiencing suffering and persecution for their faith (1:6; 2:2, 14).
- That the Thessalonians “turned to God from idols” suggests a Gentile background to many of the believers (1:9).
- 2:14–16 supports a Gentile Christian audience.
- The Thessalonians are standing firm in their faith (3:6).
- The account in Acts 17 further describes Paul’s evangelism of Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–9).

3. When was the document written?

- The letter is written after Paul evangelized the Thessalonians (1:5–6).
- Enough time has passed since their evangelization for Paul to say that the news of the Thessalonians faith is well known everywhere (1:8).
- The letter was written after Paul sent Timothy from Athens to Thessalonica to bring a report back to him. Timothy has just returned (3:6).

4. Where was the document written?

- There is no internal evidence about provenance.

5. Purpose:

- There is no overt statement of purpose.
- Paul wrote at this time because he was concerned about the Thessalonian believers and their response to persecution. Timothy visited them and returned to Paul with a positive but not perfect report. Paul's letter to them addresses their situation and calls for them to be encouraged and remain faithful until the Lord's coming.

- ___/5 Provided verse references
- ___/10 Information was accurate
- ___/15 Information shows sufficient detail

Step 1: Historical-Cultural and Contextual Analysis

Part D: Narrow Historical Analysis: Research

Now supplement the information about authorship, audience, dating and provenance that you gleaned from the text alone by researching these topics in **secondary sources** (Bible dictionaries, introductory OT/NT texts, or commentaries as needed). This research should expose you to traditional positions on authorship, audience, and dating as well as modern positions on such matters. Clearly explain the various positions taken and the reasons scholars have for holding each position. Remember to footnote properly all information that you gain from these sources (60 points)!

A **partial sample** of what is expected is provided below.

1. Authorship:

1 Thessalonians is among the seven undisputed letters of Paul.³

The apostle Paul (formerly Saul) was a first century Jewish man who was trained as a Pharisee (Phil 3:5). While initially persecuting those Jews who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, an encounter with the risen lord transformed Paul into a leading missionary of the early church (Acts 9). Paul's ministry began with the Jewish people in any given locale but turned to the Gentile population if and when he was rejected by the Jewish community. As such, Paul was called as an apostle to the Gentiles,⁴ and central to his gospel was the proclamation of freedom from the Mosaic Law.⁵

2. Audience:

“Their city was the central station and largest city on the Egnatian Way, the Roman highway connecting the Adriatic and Aegean Seas.”⁶

Thessalonica, the capital city of Macedonia, had a large Jewish population and a synagogue.⁷

³ D.A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 344.

⁴ J. R. Michaels, “Paul in Acts and Letters” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993), 683.

⁵ See F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 188–202.

⁶ H. L. Willmington, *Willmington's Bible Handbook*. (electronic ed.), Logos Library Software (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1997).

⁷ R. B. Hughes and J. C. Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, rev. ed. (electronic ed.), Logos Library Software (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2001).

Relationship between Paul and Thessalonian believers:

The church in Thessalonica was founded by Paul and Silas on their second missionary journey. Paul spent time a relatively brief time ministering in Thessalonica to both Jews and Gentiles before being run out of town by his opponents (Acts 17:1–9).

Acts records that Paul spent only three weeks there preaching the gospel in the synagogue. This is in accordance with his usual practice whereby he went first to the Jews in each locale (Acts 16:13; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4; 19:8; Rom. 1:16). Starting from the Hebrew Scriptures and speaking to those who knew them, Paul argued that Jesus was the Messiah and that the Messiah had to suffer and die and be raised from the dead.

It is not clear whether that three weeks refers to his entire time in Thessalonica or only his time in the synagogue. That is, he could have stayed longer, during which time he was preaching and teaching to Gentiles outside the synagogue. Passages that talk about how he worked night and day while among them (1 Thess. 2:7–9) are used to point to a stay longer than three weeks. Others pick up on the Philippians 4:16, which speaks about aid Paul received from the Philippians, suggesting at first that he might have received multiple gifts from them while in Thessalonica. The NIV reads, “for even when I was in Thessalonica, you [Philippians] sent me aid again and again when I was in need.” Logic requires a stay longer than three weeks to make multiple gifts a likely occurrence! However, the grammar of Philippians 4:16 need not mean that the multiple gifts arrived while Paul was in Thessalonica. It could read more like, “for you sent me aid again and again when I was in need, even when I was in Thessalonica.” In that case, the verse reveals nothing about the length of Paul’s ministry in that city. In either scenario, Paul’s time in Thessalonica seems to have been quite limited, certainly no more than a matter of months.

Acts records that the gospel had success in Thessalonica. “Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks, that is those of non-Jewish background who had nonetheless allied themselves with the Jewish religion and the Jewish God but who had not submitted themselves to full conversion through circumcision, and not a few prominent women (Acts 17:4).

But it did not take long until there was intense opposition. Some of the Jewish people became jealous and stirred up a mob. They desired to bring trouble on Paul and Silas with the city officials. And they used the same accusation brought against Jesus – political subversion. “They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus” (Acts 17:7).

“The departure of the missionaries did not end the harassment of the Christians. The Thessalonian church was subjected to persecution that seemed to Paul as severe as that endured earlier by the Jewish Christians at his own hands.”⁸

3. When was the document written?

Paul and Silas were protected from the riot in Thessalonica, and they left the city in great haste, moving west down the coast and arriving in Berea about 50 miles away. Paul again approached the synagogue, and the gospel found favor among many in that city. But when the Jews in Thessalonica who had opposed Paul heard about it, they came after him in Berea too! Thus Paul was shipped off to

⁸ David Williams, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992), 5.

Athens, but Silas and Timothy managed to stay in the area, planning to catch up with Paul as soon as possible. They found him having already moved on the Corinth. And when Paul received their report, he put pen to paper and wrote what we call 1 Thessalonians as his response (Acts 17:10f)

“C. AD 51, shortly after Timothy rejoined Paul in Corinth, making it the second earliest of Paul’s letters (after Galatians).”⁹

4. Where was the document written?

Parallel information from Acts 18 suggests that by the time Timothy returned to Paul with news from Thessalonica, Paul was in Corinth (Acts 18:5).¹⁰

5. Purpose:

Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians to defend the content of the gospel message and the purity of his motives for proclaiming it. Additionally, his letter is intended to strengthen and encourage the Thessalonian believers in the context of persecution, in the beginning stages of living according to a Christian ethic, and in a state of confusion about Christ’s return and the relationship of the *parousia* to the dead in Christ. “In short, Paul wrote to meet the needs of his flock. They were a new church, not long enough in the faith to understand many things that more mature Christians would take for granted. Paul, their father in God, was concerned about them and wrote to help them go forward in the service of their Lord.”¹¹

⁹ Willmington.

¹⁰ Carson, 347.

¹¹ Ibid., 352.

- ___/10 Used a sufficient number of scholarly sources
- ___/20 Provided sufficient detail in answers
- ___/25 Answered with accuracy
- ___/5 Proper Footnotes

Step 1: Historical-Cultural and Contextual Analysis

Part E: Contextual Analysis: Outlining

1. Consult non-Internet secondary sources to find three outlines of your biblical book. List the outlines below. Be sure to document your sources. Carefully consider the various outlines you have found and read the entire biblical book in which your text is found with an eye to the literary arrangement (10 points).

J. F. Walvoord, R. B. Zuck, and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (electronic edition), Logos Library System (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985).

- a. Salutation and Greeting (1:1)
- b. Personal Commendations and Explanations (1:2–3:13)
 - A. Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians (1:2–10)
 1. Summary statement (1:2–3)
 2. Specific reasons (1:4–10)
 - B. Reminders for the Thessalonians (2:1–16)
 1. How the gospel was delivered (2:1–12)
 2. How the gospel was received (2:13–16)
 - C. Concerns for the Thessalonians (2:17–3:13)
 1. Paul's plans (2:17–20)
 2. Timothy's visit (3:1–5)
 3. Timothy's report (3:6–10)
 4. Paul's prayer (3:11–13)
- III. Practical Instructions and Exhortations (4:1–5:24)
 - A. Christian living (4:1–12)
 - i. General conduct (4:1–2)
 - ii. Sexual purity (4:3–8)
 - iii. Brotherly love (4:9–12)
 - B. The Rapture (4:13–18)
 - C. Personal watchfulness (5:1–11)
 1. The day of the Lord (5:1–3)
 2. Consequent preparedness (5:4–11)
 - D. Church life (5:12–15)
 1. Attitude toward leaders (5:12–13)
 2. Relationship among themselves (5:14–15)
 - E. Holy living (5:16–24)
 1. Personal living (5:16–18)
 2. Corporate living (5:19–22)
 3. Divine enablement (5:23–24)
- IV. Conclusion (5:25–28)
 - A. Personal appeals (5:25–27)
 - B. Benediction (5:28)

W.W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (electronic edition), Logos Library System; “An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire ‘BE’ series,” (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989).

- I. Paul Remembers (1–3)
 - A. How the church was born (1)
 - B. How the church was nurtured (2)
 - C. How the church was established (3)
- II. Paul Exhorts (4–5)
 - A. In holiness (4:1–8)
 - B. In harmony (4:9–10)
 - C. In honesty (4:11–12)
 - D. In hope (4:13–5:11)
 - E. In helpfulness (5:12–28)

D.M. Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians* (electronic ed.), Logos Library System, New American Commentary, vol. 33 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001).

- I. Introductory Formulae (1:1)
- II. Thanksgiving and Hope (1:2–3:13)
 - 1. Introduction (1:2–10)
 - 2. Apostolic Character while in Thessalonica Rehearsed (2:1–12)
 - 3. Thanksgiving for Perseverance in the Gospel (2:13–16)
 - 4. Apostolic Activities after Leaving Thessalonica Rehearsed (2:17–3:8)
 - 5. Thanksgiving and Intercessory Prayer (3:9–13)
- III. Ethical Exhortations (4:1–5:22)
 - 1. Exhortations Regarding Sanctification and Obedience (4:1–12)
 - 2. Exhortations Regarding the Dead (4:13–18)
 - 3. Exhortations Regarding Times and Seasons (5:1–11)
 - 4. Exhortations Regarding Life in the Fellowship (5:12–22)
- IV. Benediction and Conclusion (5:23–28)
 - 1. Benediction (5:23–24)
 - 2. Concluding Exhortations (5:25–27)
 - 3. Epistolary Conclusion (5:28)

2. Drawing on the suggestions from other outlines and on your own reading, produce your own general outline (no more than three levels – I. A. 1.) of the writing. You will want to ask yourself: How does the author organize his/her information? Can you recognize a progression or logical argument in the writing? Is the work arranged topically, chronologically, etc.? Include verse references for each section of your outline (45 points).

- I. Salutation (1:1)
- II. Thanksgiving (1:2–10)
- III. Indicative Section (2:1–3:13)
 - A. Rehearsal of past events (2:1–3:10)
 - 1. Paul’s behavior in Thessalonica (2:1–12)
 - 2. The Thessalonians perseverance after Paul’s departure (2:13–16)
 - 3. Paul’s behavior after his departure (2:17–3:10)
 - B. Transitional Benediction and Prayer (3:11–13)
- IV. Imperative Section (4:1–5:22)
 - A. Instructions regarding sexual purity (4:1–8)
 - B. Instructions regarding interaction with others (4:9–12)
 - C. Instructions regarding encouragement in the face of grief for the dead (4:13–18)
 - D. Instructions regarding encouragement while waiting for the return of Christ (5:1–11)
 - E. Final instructions (5:12–22)
- V. Conclusion (5:23–28)

3. Refer to the outline you have completed. Now write 1–2 sentences (each) summarizing each major section (most likely at the A, B, C... level) in your outline that precedes your passage (10 points).

A **partial sample** only is presented below.

I. Salutation (1:1)

Following the traditional epistolary conventions of the day, Paul begins his letter by declaring the names of the authors, of which he is primary, and the destination of his letter. He greets them with “grace and peace,” his standard modification of both Jewish and Greek greetings.

II. Thanksgiving (1:2–10)

This initial thanksgiving is a positive overview of the state of the church in Thessalonica. Paul gives thanks to God that he need not say anything about the Thessalonians faith because their own words and actions testify to God’s work in them in spite of persecution.

III. Indicative Section (2:1–3:13)

A. Rehearsal of Past Events (2:1–3:8)

1. Paul’s Behavior in Thessalonica (2:1–12)

This section briefly reviews Paul’s experience while evangelizing the Thessalonians, drawing attention to Paul’s own sacrifice for the

sake of the gospel and his upright behavior, both of which are to serve as an example to the Thessalonian believers.

4. Write another paragraph summarizing the entirety of topics and literary context that come after your passage (10 points).

Having taken up the topic of the *parousia* in 4:13–18, Paul is quick to ensure that his readers do not misunderstand his focus. Although Paul makes it clear that he does not know when the Lord will come, his confidence in the coming of the Lord as an indisputable fact leads him to exhort his readers to live properly in light of the reality of Christ's return. Finally, Paul lists off a number of commands for proper Christian living and closes his letter with a brief greeting.

5. What is the main point of the section immediately before your passage? How does it relate to the passage you are studying (10 points)?

In the preceding passage (1 Thess. 4:9–12) Paul commends the Thessalonians for much of their conduct even as he commands them to continue in right living.

There is no explicit connection between this passage and the passage that follows. It is possible, although by no means certain, that the reminder to work with their hands (1 Thess. 4:11) is Paul's response to the news that some of the Thessalonians believed Christ's return to be so imminent that they had stopped working, assuming that they did not need to provide for themselves for much longer (cf. 2 Thess. 3:6–11). If this is the case, this mention might have transitioned Paul into his further corrections of improper eschatology and the resulting improper or unnecessary behaviors, such as excessive grief over those who had died prior to Christ's return.

6. Write one paragraph about the theme and purpose of your book as a whole, highlighting the place of your text within the larger purpose (10 points).

The apostle Paul, having brought the gospel to the Thessalonians, is unable to return to them but instead is restricted to writing to them because of persecution. Having just received news from Timothy about the Thessalonians' faith in the midst of persecution, Paul writes to encourage the Thessalonians. As they suffer for faith in Christ, they are not alone. Christ suffered. The earliest churches in Judea suffered. Paul suffered. He calls them to endure suffering faithfully, assuring them that Christ will return and that they can look forward in hopeful anticipation to that time when the suffering will end and they will be with the Lord.

- ___/5 Found three outlines from scholarly sources
- ___/5 Appropriate footnoting of outlines
- ___/15 Own outline is appropriate
- ___/15 Own outline displays critical thinking
- ___/5 Own outline shows three levels
- ___/5 Own outline includes verse references
- ___/5 Own outline is formatted properly
- ___/10 Summaries of preceding
- ___/10 Summaries of following
- ___/10 Main point of preceding section with relationship
- ___/10 Accuracy of paragraph

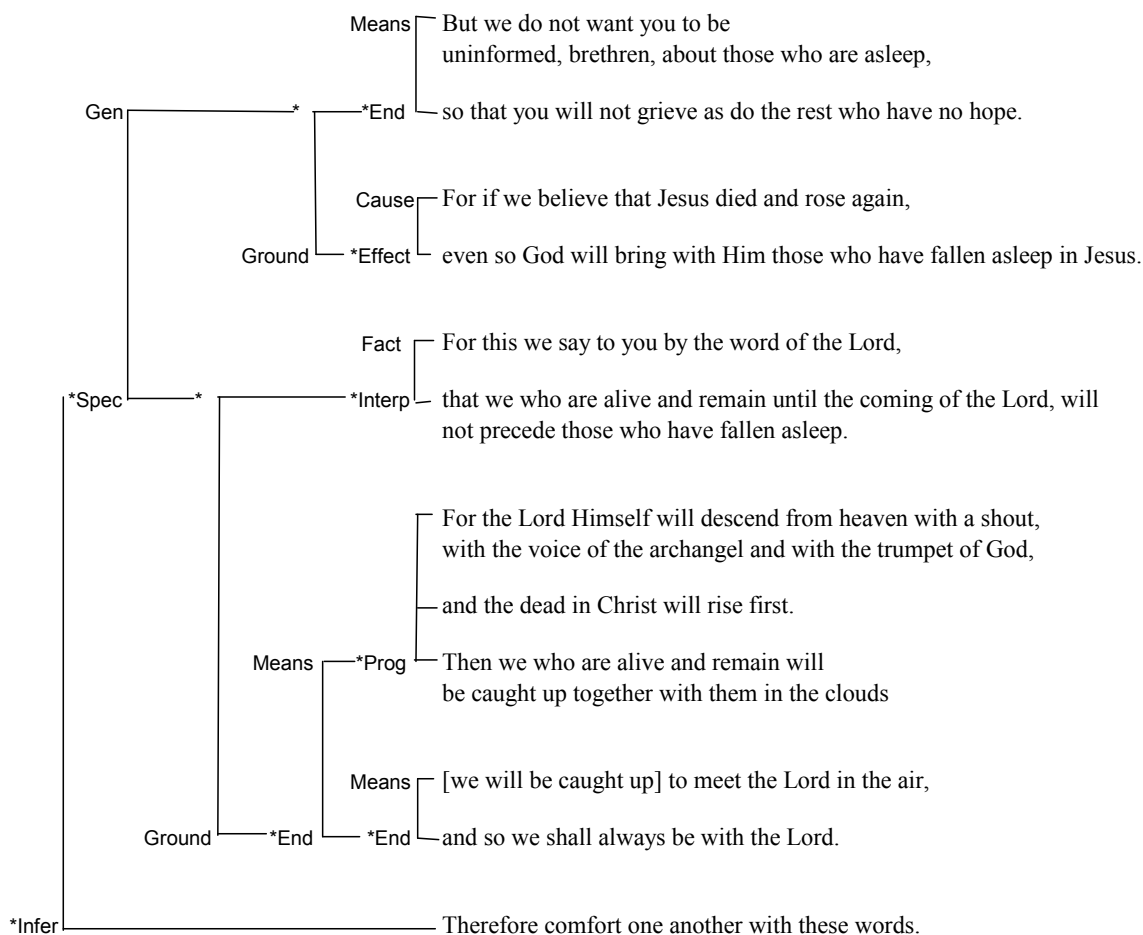
Step 2: Lexical-Syntactical Analysis

Part A: Logical Relationships

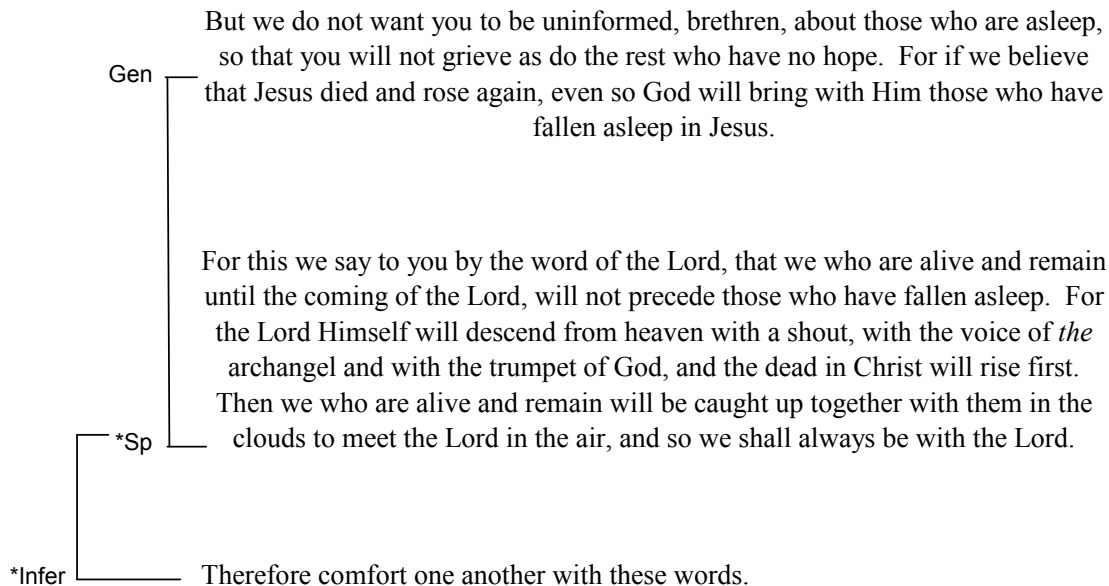
1. Isolate the individual propositions in your passage, and list each proposition on a separate line with a blank line in between. Be sure to work with the New American Standard translation (10 points)!

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep,
so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.
For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,
even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.
For this we say to you by the word of the Lord,
that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those
who have fallen asleep.
For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the*
archangel and with the trumpet of God,
and the dead in Christ will rise first.
Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds
[we will be caught up] to meet the Lord in the air,
and so we shall always be with the Lord.
Therefore comfort one another with these words.

2. Now consider what specific subordinate or coordinate relationship exists between each proposition. Use brackets and labels to indicate these logical relationships on your worksheet next to each proposition. Begin your linking of propositions with phrases and work your way out to sentences and paragraphs until all propositions have been linked (25 points).



3. Consider where your passage should be broken into paragraphs. How do they relate to one another? Again use brackets and symbols to indicate these larger logical relationships on your worksheet next to each paragraph (10 points).



4. On the basis of your logical analysis, which proposition(s) is the single main point of your passage (5 points)?

Therefore comfort one another with these words.

5. Write a thesis statement for an exegesis paper on your passage that effectively indicates the main point and argumentation of your text (10 points).

In the face of a brother or sister's death, the Christian community should take comfort in what it believes about the guaranteed resurrection of believers (1 Thess. 4:18).

6. Drawing on all the interpretive decisions you have made about logical relationships within your passage, create a modified translation that brings out clearly all of the decisions you have made about logical relationships. Write the paraphrase below (15 points).

Brothers, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who have died. For the result of having the proper understanding about those who have died is that you will not grieve in the same way that those who have no hope grieve. And the reason that you do not need to grieve like those without hope is because we find hope in our belief that Jesus died and rose again, facts that guarantee the result that God will also bring with Him those who have died with faith in Him.

In specific terms, we teach you by the word of the Lord that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who are dead. We can say this because the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and at that time the dead in Christ will rise first. Then, after that, we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds in order that we too might meet the Lord in the air. In this way, we shall be with the Lord forever.

As a result of being informed about all of these things, you should now encourage one another with this knowledge.

- ___/10 Separated propositions accurately
 ___/5 Labeled all needed
 ___/20 Labels evidence critical thinking
 ___/5 Paragraphs split appropriately
 ___/5 Paragraphs labeled accurately
 ___/5 Identified main point in accordance with labels
 ___/5 Thesis is concise
 ___/5 Thesis is appropriate
 ___/15 Paraphrase clearly reflects labels and addresses all relationships

Step 2: Lexical-Syntactical Analysis

Part B: Selecting Words for Study

1. Access four translations of your biblical passage including at least two formal equivalents and two dynamic equivalents. Write/type out your passage in each of the four translations (10 points).

1 Thess 4:13–18 (New American Standard)

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thess 4:13–18 (King James Version)

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thess 4:13–18 (New International Version)

13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

1 Thess 4:13–18 (New Revised Standard Version)

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.

15 For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died.

16 For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.

18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

2. Based on a comparison of the functional and dynamic equivalence translations note any words that are translated in significantly different ways. List these words. List out any additional words that are of central importance in determining the meaning of your passage such as words that are repeated, words that have theological significance, or words that are of additional interest to you (15 points).

Ignorant/uninformed (4:13)

Dead/asleep (4:13, 14, 15)

Caught up/raptured (4:17)

___/10 Four appropriate translations used

___/15 Identified appropriate

Step 2: Lexical-Syntactical Analysis

Part C: Completing the Word Study

Complete a word study for **each** of the two words assigned to you according to the following process.

Sample for “dead/asleep” in 1 Thess. 4:13, 14, 15

- a. What is the original Greek (if you are studying a New Testament text) or Hebrew (if you are studying an Old Testament text) word (10 points)?

koimavomai

- b. What is its range of meaning (20 points)?

1. Fall asleep
2. Fall asleep figuratively, to die; a common euphemism for death

- c. Where else does the Bible use this Greek/Hebrew word? Which meanings are evident? Analyze, categorize and nuance as you are able (70 points).

1. Fall asleep
 1. Matt. 28:13
 2. Luke 22:45
 3. John 11:12
 4. Acts 12:6
2. Die
 1. Matt. 27:52
 2. John 11:11
 3. Acts 7:60; 13:36
 4. 2 Pet. 3:4

- d. Where else does my author use this word? Which meanings are evident? Analyze, categorize and nuance as you are able.

1. Die
 - a. 1 Cor. 7:39; 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51

- e. Which meaning does my author intend in the context of my passage? Why is this meaning the most likely meaning in this verse (50 points)?

The most likely meaning for koimavomai **each** of the three times it appears in 1 Thess. 4:13–15 is that of death. The author of this text, Paul, shows awareness of this figurative use of the word in 1 Corinthians. Furthermore, the context of 1 Thess. 4:13 speaks of grieving for those who are “asleep.” While it would be exceedingly unusual for a person to grieve when someone takes a nap, grief is a frequent response to death. 1 Thess. 4:14 uses a different word to speak of Jesus’ death but then patterns the believers “sleep” and resurrection after that of Jesus. Finally, 1 Thess. 4:15 contrasts those who are alive with

those who “sleep.” In a context where Paul is concerned with improper grief in the face of death, the use of this common euphemism for death shows sensitivity.

Sample for “ignorant/uninformed” in 1 Thess. 4:13

- a. What is the original Greek (if you are studying a New Testament text) or Hebrew (if you are studying an Old Testament text) word (10 points)?
ajgnoevw
- b. What is its range of meaning (20 points)?
 1. Not to know; be ignorant; unaware
 2. Not to be acquainted with a person
 3. Not to understand something
 4. Do wrong, sin in ignorance
- c. Where else does the Bible use this Greek/Hebrew word? Which meanings are evident? Analyze, categorize and nuance as you are able (70 points).
 1. Not to understand
 - a. Of the disciples inability to understand what Jesus meant when he predicted his suffering, death and resurrection.
 - a) Mark 9:32:
 - b) Luke 9:45
 - b. Of the inability of the Jerusalem people and leaders to understand Jesus’ identity as Messiah
 - a) Acts 13:27
 2. Not to know; be ignorant; unaware
 - a. Acts 17:23
 - b. Hebrews 5:2
 - c. 2 Peter 2:12
- d. Where else does my author use this word? Which meanings are evident? Analyze, categorize and nuance as you are able.
 1. Not to understand the full implications or significance of something that is already known in part
 - a. Rom. 2:4; with regard to the kindness of God
 - b. Rom. 6:3; with regard to baptism
 - c. Rom. 7:1; with regard to the law
 - d. Rom. 11:25; with regard to God’s unexpected use of Gentiles for Israel’s benefit
 2. Not to know; be ignorant; without any awareness
 - a. Of unbelievers’ ignorance or unbelief
 - i. Rom. 10:3 (of gentiles)
 - ii. 1 Tim. 1:13 (of Paul’s preconversion life)
 - b. Of Satan’s schemes
 - i. 2 Cor. 2:11
 3. Identical phrase as 1 Thess. 4:13
 - a. Used to transition to a new topic
 - i. Not to understand fully
 - 1) 1 Cor. 10:1; with regard to OT significance;

- 2) 1 Cor. 12:1; with regard to spiritual gifts
- b. Not to know; be ignorant; without any awareness
 - i. Of Paul's experiences or intentions
 - 1) Rom. 1:13: This is an identical phrase to 1 Thess. 4:13
 - 2) 2 Cor. 1:8: This is an identical phrase to 1 Thess. 4:13
- 4. Give assent
 - a. 1 Cor. 14:38 (first time)
- 5. Not acknowledged; not regarded with esteem
 - a. 1 Cor. 14:38 (second time)
 - b. 2 Cor. 6:9
- 6. Not to know or recognize a person
 - a. Gal. 1:22 (regarding Paul)
- e. Which meaning does my author intend in the context of my passage? Why is this meaning the most likely meaning in this verse (50 points)?

In 1 Thess. 4:13 Paul seems to be using a stock phrase (Brothers, I/we do not want you to be unaware) to transition fully to a new topic in his letter. In this sense, the interpreter should not read too much into the use of the term *agnoeo*. Clearly Paul sees the need to discuss the matter of the status of those in Christ who have died prior to His *parousia*, suggesting that not all of his audience had a full understand of the implications of Jesus' death and resurrection with regard to believers' life after death. Whether or not the Thessalonians had received any teaching on this matter during Paul's ministry with them is impossible to determine on the basis of lexical evidence.

- ___/10 Identified original language word
- ___/20 Used BDB or BAGD for range of meaning
- ___/10 Listed up to 50 occurrences
- ___/30 Categorized occurrences
- ___/30 Added nuance
- ___/20 Appropriate conclusion given
- ___/30 Explanation of conclusion

Step 3: Theological and Canonical Analysis

1. Which theological issues does this passage address [theology, anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology, etc.]? Write a paragraph summarizing the contributions this passage makes to each theological issue it addresses (100 points).

Christology:

Paul makes it clear that he believes in both the death and the resurrection of Jesus (1 Thess. 4:14). He speaks of Jesus as “Lord” (1 Thess. 4:15, 16), a term that was used to indicate Jesus’ divine status. Finally, Paul believes that it is the Lord Jesus who will continue the work He began with His life, death, and resurrection at the time of His coming. It is His return that triggers the general resurrection, the result of which is to allow people to be with the Lord forever (1 Thess. 4:17).

Soteriology:

Although Paul’s letters clearly indicate that some benefits of salvation are to be enjoyed during the earthly life, 1 Thess. 4:13–18 indicate that a substantial aspect of salvation will not be experienced until after this life. For those who are “in Christ” (1 Thess. 4:14), the promise of resurrection from the dead is guaranteed by Jesus’ own resurrection (1 Thess. 4:14). Both those who die prior to the *parousia* and those who remain alive on that day will experience resurrection to life with Jesus forever (1 Thess. 4:16–17).

Eschatology:

This passage indicates many specific details about Jesus’ second coming. At the appointed time, Jesus will descend from heaven, where he currently resides (1 Thess. 4:16). That momentous event will not go unnoticed as it will be accompanied by great fanfare in the heavens (1 Thess. 4:16). This passage speaks of the return of Jesus as a clear fact to be anticipated, and it is Jesus’ coming that triggers the general resurrection, an event reserved for the end of time.

With regard to individual eschatology, this passage reveals that no true believer, no one who is identified “in Christ,” will miss out on resurrection and eternal life with Christ. However, the passage does seem to suggest that those believers who die prior to Christ’s return are not immediately raised to their final state. There is at least some aspect of the resurrection that awaits the end times, although 1 Thess. 4:14 hints that those who are dead in Christ are already present with him in some way.

The explicit ordering of the resurrection, that is, the explicit preference for the dead in Christ before those who remain alive, is a detail that is revealed nowhere else in Scripture.

The passage does not overtly mention when Paul believes Jesus’ coming will occur. However, 1 Thess. 4:15 uses the pronoun “we” to speak of those who will be alive at the *parousia*. It is not unreasonable to think that Paul uses this term because he anticipates that he, or at least some of his readers, will be among those who remain alive until the coming of the Lord. It is alternatively possible that “we” indicates “those of us who are believers” in contrast to an unstated “they” referring to the rest of men who are without hope. At the very least, this passage does not dogmatically teach that Paul expects an imminent return of Jesus that he himself will be alive to witness.

2. What other biblical passages add to your understanding of your passage? In what way (50 points)?

1 Thess. 5:1–11 confirms the position taken above that Paul does not guarantee that Jesus' return will occur within his lifetime. This is why he can say that the time and date is unknown (1 Thess. 5:1). 1 Thess. 5:10, likewise, repeats the use of "we" to speak of those who may be "awake" or "asleep" when Jesus returns.

1 Cor. 15:51–52 speaks about the time of the final resurrection and uses trumpet language in a way similar to 1 Thess. 4:16.

In 2 Cor. 4:14 Paul again speaks about the believer's resurrection being intimately connected to the reality of Jesus' own resurrection.

Matt. 16:27 records Jesus' own words about his coming in glory, the accompaniment of angels at that time, and the rewards of the kingdom that will come upon believers.

Matt. 24:30–3: When Jesus describes his coming, he specifies that he will come from the clouds in glory. This passage also speaks of angels and a trumpet call which will make the gathering of the elect at that time.

Rev. 7:9 is a passage that offers further clarification for the question of the present state of the dead in Christ. If they have not yet been fully raised, what is their situation? In this vision, John sees the dead in Christ having meaningful interaction before the throne of God, but it also – state of dead in Christ prior to *parousia*.

3. What other biblical passages pose potential difficulties for the interpretation of your passage? In what way? How will you reconcile these potential difficulties (50 points)?

The use of "by the word of the Lord" in 1 Thess. 4:15 poses a small difficulty because there is no specific gospel passage that records a teaching of Jesus that covers this material. However, it could be that Paul is aware of oral tradition about a teaching of Jesus on these matters that was not recorded in the gospels. It is also possible that Paul uses this phrase to speak of a specific revelation of the Lord that has been given rather than something that Jesus taught in his earthly ministry.

Rev. 20:5–6 speaks about a first resurrection (Rev. 20:6) and a one-thousand-year reign before the rest of the dead are raised, while no such thing comes to light in 1 Thess. 4. One possibility is that Revelation provides additional details that are not contained in 1 Thess. However, it is also possible that the resurrection spoken of here is a spiritual one and that the one-thousand-year specification is in fact symbolic. In light of the apocalyptic genre of Revelation, a symbolic interpretation of this vision is possible.

- ___/20 Identified 2–3 appropriate categories
- ___/40 Described the contribution to each category accurately
- ___/40 Describe the contribution to each category in sufficient detail
- ___/20 Identified appropriate additional passages
- ___/30 Described the contribution of each
- ___/10 Identified problem passages
- ___/20 Described the nature of the difficulty
- ___/20 Proposed solutions to the difficulty

Step 4: Literary (Genre) Analysis

1. Identify the literary form used in your text. Is your passage a historical narrative, letter, prophecy, poem, etc. (5 points)

1 Thessalonians is an epistle.

2. Describe at least five ways that identification of this literary form will affect your interpretation of your text (50 points).

No sample answer given since many students are also working on epistles!

___/5 Identified literary form
___/50 Describe affects on interpretation (10 points each)

Step 5: Commentaries and Secondary Sources

Part A: Brainstorm

1. Now that you have completed your own preliminary investigation of your text, list out the most significant exegetical issues in your passage (25 points).

Sample questions:

1. Did the Thessalonians ask a question about these matters that Paul has to address?
2. Were the Thessalonians uninformed completely, misinformed, or informed but had misunderstanding about the return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead?
3. Is there any significance to Paul's description of death in terms of sleep?
4. What is the basis of the hope that Paul's readers have that "the rest of men" do not?
5. Is Paul advising the Thessalonians not to grieve at all or simply not to grieve in the same way that the pagans do?
6. What is the "word of the Lord" that Paul has in mind?
7. What is the significance of Paul's use of "we" to speak of those alive at the return of Christ?
8. What is the relationship between the shout, voice and trumpet? Are they the same thing? Are they metaphorical or literal?

Step 5: Commentaries and Secondary Sources

Part B: Research

- Consult numerous commentaries, journal articles, or monographs on your passage. For each exegetical issue you identified above, indicate the position taken by at least three scholars and the reasons why they take that position. Try to choose scholars who represent the full range of interpretive options so that you clearly understand the various positions. Be sure to footnote accurately (150 points).

A **limited** number of **sample answers** are provided.

- Is there any significance to Paul's description of death in terms of sleep?

David Williams puts much emphasis on Paul's vocabulary of sleep and wakefulness to speak of Christian death. Citing that Paul regularly uses the term *sleep* to describe Christians who have died but never uses the term *sleep* to speak of Jesus' death, claiming that the hope of the resurrection turns death into mere sleep for Christians who can expect to awake later.¹²

- What is the significance of Paul's use of "we" to speak of those alive at the return of Christ?

D. Martin argues that Paul's use of "we" to speak of those who are alive at the coming of the Lord is best understood as a "convention, not a prediction."¹³ He maintains that Paul's intent in this text was not to predict the timing of the Lord's return. Rather, since Paul was alive when he wrote, it was most natural to include himself among the group of those who were alive at any given time.

- For each exegetical issue you identified above, indicate the position that YOU take and the reasons why you take that position (25 points).

No sample provided.

___/25 Used three scholars for each issue
 ___/50 Accurately described their positions
 ___/50 Accurately described the reasons for their positions
 ___/25 Appropriate footnoting

¹² Williams, 81–2.

¹³D. M. Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 33 (electronic ed.), Logos Library Software (Broadman & Holman Publishers: Nashville 2001, c1995).

___/25 Student's own position given and argued

Step 6: Application

1. What is the main point of your passage? [Referring to your work with Logical Relationships above may help you here, although it is quite possible that you will have needed to refine your main point since that time in light of additional research!] Try to write this main point as clearly and succinctly as possible so that it could serve as a thesis statement of an exegesis paper on your text (10 points).

In 1 Thess. 4:13–18 Paul argues that the believer should find encouragement in the face of death because Christ's death and resurrection guarantee a future resurrection for all those (both the living and the dead) in him when he comes.

2. What is the general principle behind the main point (10 points)?

Beliefs about Jesus' death, resurrection, and return provide hope and encouragement in the face of Christian death.

3. How was that principle expressed in the time your passage addresses? Your answer should include at least three concrete, specific examples (75 points).

Those who were nonbelievers grieved by means of cathartic grief rituals.¹⁴ Such practices were representative of the hopelessness of the non-Christian world. One application of this passage is that the believer was not to grieve for a brother or sister in Christ in the same way that pagans, who do not have the hope of resurrection with the Lord, grieve. The actual grief practices would differ.

Second, 1 Thess. 4:18 demonstrates that Christians can use words about Jesus' death and resurrection in their time of grief in order to find encouragement and be able to grieve with hope.

Third, 1 Thess. 4:18 indicates that Christians are to encourage one another during the time of grief. The body of Christ, together, is a source of encouragement for those who are grieving.

¹⁴C. S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (electronic ed.), Logos Library Software (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993).

4. The biblical principle will continue to apply in all cultures and times, but the *expression* of the principle *might* vary among different people and cultures. What practices or actions in your culture would express the biblical principle taught in your passage? Your answer should include at least two concrete examples (50 points).

Paul tells the Thessalonians to use words about Jesus' death and resurrection as a source of encouragement when faced with the death of a believer. Today Christians have the full written revelation of God in a way that first-century Christians did not. Thus, the reading of Scripture, such as the gospels, is an extension of Paul's command to use words for encouragement. To that end, many Christians may choose to read passages of Scripture about Jesus' death and resurrection at the funerals of their Christian brothers and sisters.

Second, Paul indicates that Christians are to encourage one another during the time of grief. In today's culture this encouragement by the body of Christ might be expressed by fellow believers' presence at a funeral or even by the provision of food or other needed items to those who are most grieved.

5. Suggest at least two applications that others derive from your passage that you believe are incorrect applications. Why are they misapplications? Discuss in 1–2 paragraphs (25 points).

1 Thess. 4:13–18 does not teach the doctrine of soul sleep, the idea that believers who have died prior to Christ's return are in an unconscious state like sleep until his return. Such a teaching does not fully understand the euphemistic use of "sleep" in Paul's teaching, and it ignores the widespread presence of such language to speak of death.

Likewise, this passage does not teach that it is wrong for Christians to express any grief when faced with the death of Christian brothers and sisters. Grief is a natural, human response to death. However, the gospel enables the Christian to experience hope in the midst of grief, providing comfort and encouragement during a time of separation from loved ones who will experience the full benefit of their faith at the time of resurrection. In this sense, a Christian is not without grief altogether but is enabled to grieve in a way that an unbelieving world cannot.

- ___/10 Main point is appropriate
- ___/5 Principle is general enough
- ___/5 Principle is appropriate
- ___/15 Accurate example 1 - historical
- ___/10 Concrete example 1
- ___/15 Accurate example 2
- ___/10 Concrete example 2
- ___/15 Accurate example 3
- ___/10 Concrete example 3
- ___/15 Accurate example 1- contemporary
- ___/10 Concrete example 1
- ___/15 Accurate example 2
- ___/10 Concrete example 2
- ___/10 Identified two misapplications
- ___/15 Critiqued the two misapplications

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