



Janusz Kucicki

Eschatology of the Thessalonian Correspondence

A comparative study of 1 Thess 4, 13-5, 11
and 2 Thess 2, 1-12 to the Dead Sea Scrolls and
the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

DAS ALTE TESTAMENT IM DIALOG
an outline of an old testament dialogue
Vol. 7

Peter Lang

The book refers to universal eschatology contain in the Letters to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4, 13-5, 11; 2 Thess 2, 1-12). The whole material is divided in two groups (eschatological motifs and apocalyptic motifs). Each of the motifs is analysed in the Biblical context and in the Intertestamental Literature context (the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Qumran Literature). The exegetical analysis and the comparative analysis show similarity and diversity of the way Paul used the motifs. They also show which motifs were created or extensively modified by Paul in order to contribute to the creation of Christian eschatology. After presentation of the importance of eschatological topics in the 1-2 Thess (chapter I), the analyses of *prodroms* (chapter II) and events connected with the parousia (chapter III) indicate the way of using each of the motifs in different traditions. Based on results of the analyses, the Jewish background and Paul's original contribution to the New Testament eschatology are presented in chapter IV.

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Band / Vol. 7

Herausgegeben von / edited by
Michael Fieger & Sigrid Hodel-Hoenes



PETER LANG

Bern • Berlin • Bruxelles • Frankfurt am Main • New York • Oxford • Wien

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Bibliographic information published by die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data: A catalogue record for this book is available from The British Library, Great Britain

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Kucicki, Janusz, 1967-

Eschatology of the Thessalonian correspondence : a comparative study of 1 Thess 4, 13-5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1-12 to the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Old Testament pseudepigrapha / Janusz Kucicki. – 1 [edition].

pages cm – (Das Alte Testament im Dialog = An outline of an Old Testament dialogue, ISSN 1662-1689 ; v. 7)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-3-0343-1474-9

1. Bible. Thessalonians–Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Eschatology–Biblical teaching. 3. Dead Sea scrolls. 4. Apocryphal books (Old Testament)–Criticism, interpretation, etc. I. Title.

BS2725.6.E7K83 2014

227:8106–dc23

2014002311

This book was published with the assistance of
NANZAN UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC PUBLICATION SERIES.

Umschlagabbildung: Pavol Filadelfi

Umschlaggestaltung: Thomas Jaberg, Peter Lang AG

ISSN 1662-1689 pb.

ISSN 2235-5707 eBook

ISBN 978-3-0343-1474-9 pb.

ISBN 978-3-0351-0693-0 eBook

© Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, Bern 2014

Hochfeldstrasse 32, CH-3012 Bern, Switzerland

info@peterlang.com, www.peterlang.com

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Printed in Switzerland

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Preface

In my search for a topic for a doctoral dissertation, I was drawn to examining the problem of New Testament eschatology. However, it seemed unlikely that anything new or interesting on that topic had been left unexplored. In the course of a preliminary examination of the subject and of the related literature, I was unable to find any coherent account of the eschatological teaching found in the Thessalonian Correspondence. This was the beginning of a journey through Paul's eschatology. After prolonged discussions with the promoter of the dissertation, Prof. W. Rakocy, the project took its present shape. An examination of the earliest written stage of Paul's eschatology in the context of intertestamental eschatological thought became the focus of my research during the following years. This book is a result of that exploration.

Although the task of sifting through unknown paths was necessarily something to be done personally, I did not travel the road alone. I owe special thanks to many people who contributed during the writing the thesis and afterwards during the process of translating, correcting and preparing the manuscript for publication.

I would like first to thank the promoter Prof. W. Rakocy and all the professors of John Paul II Catholic University, Lublin (Poland), where the thesis was written and accepted.

I own sincere thanks to the École Biblique in Jerusalem for hospitality shown during the periods of research I spent there.

I would like to thank Walter Dunphy, Brendan Kelleher and Robert Reimer for correction of the English translation.

A word of special appreciation goes to Nanzan Catholic University, Nagoya (Japan) for financial support of the publication.

Finally, I would like to thank all those friends whose encouragement helped me to finalize the project. I mention in particular M. Calmano, R. Strzyzewski, W. Szypula, K. Szymczycha, Ph. Rittershause, A. Gadomska, but there are many more who should be included.

Abbreviations

1. The Bible

The Old Testament

Amos	Amos
Ba	Baruch
1–2 Chron	1–2 Chronicles
Dan	Daniel
Deut	Deuteronomy
Esther	Esther
Ex	Exodus
Ezek	Ezekiel
Ezra	Ezra
Gen	Genesis
Hab	Habakkuk
Hag	Haggai
Hos	Hosea
Is	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Job	Job
Joel	Joel
Jon	Jonah
Josh	Joshua
Jud	Judith
Judg	Judges
1–2 Kings	1–2 Kings
Lam	Lamentations
Lev	Leviticus
1–2 Macc	1–2 Maccabees

Mal	Malachi
Mic	Micah
Nahum	Nahum
Neh	Nehemiah
Num	Numbers
Obad	Obadiah
Prov	Proverbs
Ps	Psalms
Qoh	Qoheleth
Ruth	Ruth
1–2 Sam	1–2 Samuel
Song	Song of Songs
Tob	Tobit
Wis	Wisdom
Zech	Zechariah
Zeph	Zephaniah

The New Testament

Ac	Acts
Col	Colossians
1–2 Cor	1–2 Corinthians
Eph	Ephesians
Gal	Galatians
Heb	Hebrews
Jam	James
Jn	John
1–2–3 Jn	1–2–3 John
Jude	Jude
Lk	Luke
Mk	Mark
Mt	Matthew
1–2 Pet	1–2 Peter
Phil	Philippians
Philem	Philemon

Rev	Revelation
Rom	Romans
1–2 Thess	1–2 Thessalonians
1–2 Tim	1–2 Timothy
Tit	Titus

2. Dictionaries, Commentaries, Series, Journals

ABD	The Anchor Bible Dictionary, New York 1992
Acr	<i>Analecta Craconiensia</i> , Krakow 1969–
AnBib	<i>Analecta Biblica</i> , Roma 1952–
AThANT	<i>Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments</i> , Zürich 1942–
BDB	The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Peabody 2005
Bib	<i>Biblica</i> , Rome 1920–
BKUL	Biblioteka KUL
BibR	<i>Biblical Research</i> , Chicago 1956–
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i> , Dallas 1844–
BU	<i>Biblische Untersuchungen</i> , Regensburg 1967–
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> , Washington 1939–
ConcTr	<i>Concilium Tridentinum</i> , Freiburg 1950–67
CT	<i>Collectanea Theologica</i> , Lviv 1931–39 / Warsaw 1949–
DNTB	Dictionary of New Testament Background, Downers Grove/Leicester 1997
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary, Grand Rapids 1982
EtB	<i>Etudes Bibliques</i> , Paris 1907–
EDNT	Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, Grand Rapids 1982
EDSS	Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Oxford 2000
EJ	Encyclopedia Judaica, Jerusalem 1971
EK	Encyklopedia Katolicka, Warsaw 2004

EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Neukirchen 1969–72
EstB	<i>Estudios Biblicos</i> , Madryt 1929–
EvQ	<i>The Evangelical Quarterly</i> , London/Exeter 1929–
ExT	<i>The Expository Times</i> , Edinburgh 1889–
HBD	Harper's Bible Dictionary, New York 1955
HTR	<i>The Harvard Theological Review</i> , Cambridge 1908–
ICC	International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh 1895–
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> , Middletown 1881–82; Boston 1883–1915; New Heaven 1916–33; New York 1934–43; Philadelphia 1944–71; Missoula 1972–80; Ann Arbor 1981; Chico 1982–85; Atlanta 1986–
JQR	<i>The Jewish Quarterly Review</i> , London 1889–
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Periods</i> , Leiden 1970–
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i> , Sheffield 1979–
JSNTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series</i> , Sheffield 1979–
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i> , Manchester 1956–
JTS	<i>Journal of the Theological Studies</i> , London 1899–
Kat	<i>Katecheta</i> , Poznan 1957–
LEH	A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuaginta, Stuttgart 1996
L-S	A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Oxford 1996
MC	<i>Mount Carmel</i> , Somerset 1953–
MoffatNTC	The Moffat New Testament Commentary I–XVII, London/New York
NBibD	New Bible Dictionary, Downers Grove/Leicester 1996
NedThT	<i>Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift</i> , Wageningen 1946–
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Grand Rapids
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i> , Leiden 1956–
NTA	<i>Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen</i> , Münster 1908–

NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i> , Cambridge 1954–
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i> , Paris 1892–
RBL	<i>Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny</i> , Cracow 1948–
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i> , Strasbourg 1921–55; Paris 1956–
RoBl	<i>Rivista Biblica</i> , Roma 1953–
RQ	<i>Revue de Qumran</i> , Paris 1958–
RT	<i>Roczniki Teologiczne</i> , Warsaw 1959–
RTK	<i>Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne</i> , Lublin 1949–
SANT	<i>Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament</i> , München 1960–
SBL.MS	<i>Society of Biblical Literature. Monograph Series</i> , Missoula 1971–
SBL.DS	<i>Society of Biblical Literature. Dissertation Series</i> , Missoula 1971–
SBT	<i>Studies of Biblical Theology</i> , London 1950–
SEA	<i>Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok</i> , Uppsala/Lund 1936–
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i> , Edinburgh 1948–
StEv	<i>Studia Evangelica</i> , Berlin 1959–64; Oxford 1965–
STV	<i>Studia Theologica Varsaviensia</i> , Warsaw 1963–
SUNT	<i>Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments</i> , Göttingen 1962–
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , Grand Rapids
ThSt	<i>Theologische Studien</i> , Zürich 1938–
ThZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i> , Basel 1945–
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i> , Leiden 1951–
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary, Nashville
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i> , Giessen 1900–42; Berlin 1950–70; New York 1971–
ZSTh	<i>Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie</i> , Gütersloh 1923–35; Berlin 1935–56
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i> , Freiburg 1891–99; Tübingen 1900–
ZWTh	<i>Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie</i> , Jena 1853–1914
ŻMT	<i>Źródła Myśli Teologicznej</i> , Cracow 1996–

3. Classical and Hellenistic Writings

Ant.	Antiquitates Iudaicae	Flavius Iosephus
Bell.	De bello Iudaico	Flavius Iosephus
Dial. Mort.	Dialogi mortuorum	Lucianus
Diatr.	Diatribai	Epictetus
Haer.	Refutatio Omnium Haeresium	Hyppolytus
Il	Ilias	Homer
Prob.	Quod omnis probus	Philo

4. The Dead Sea Scrolls

CD	Cairo text of the Damascus Document (CD-A; CD-B)
DD	Damascus Document
2Q; 4Q; 5Q; 6Q; 11Q	Numbered caves of Qumran
1QH	<i>Hôdayôt</i> (Thanksgiving Hymns) from cave 1 (1QH ^a – first copy) and cave 4 (4QH ^a – first copy)
1QM	<i>Milhamah</i> (War Scroll)
11QMelch	Melchizedek
4QMMT ^c	<i>Miqsat Ma'aseh Torah</i> (Patriarchal Blessing)
1QpHab	<i>Pesher</i> on Habakkuk
1QS	<i>Serek hayyahad</i> (Rule of the Community)
1Qsb	Appendix b (Rule of Benediction)

5. The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

ApAbr	Apocalypse of Abraham
ApAd	Apocalypse of Adam

ApEl	Apocalypse of Elijah
ApMos	Apocalypse of Moses
ApSedr	Apocalypse of Sedrach
ApZeph	Apocalypse of Zephaniah
ApEzek	Apocalypse of Ezekiel
2 Bar	Apocalypse of Baruch (Syriac)
3 Bar	Apocalypse of Baruch (Greek)
4 Ezra	The Fourth Book of Ezra
GrApEz	Greek Apocalypse of Ezra
1 Eno	Ethiopic Apocalypse of Enoch (1 Enoch)
2 Eno	Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch (2 Enoch)
Jub	Jubilees
JosAs	Joseph and Aseneth
LAB	<i>Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum</i>
MAIs	Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah
OrSib	Sibylline Oracles
PsSol	Psalms of Solomon
QuesEzra	Questions of Ezra
TestXII	Testament of Twelve Patriarchs
TestAbr	Testament of Abraham
TestAd	Testament of Adam
TesAs	Testament of Asher
TestBen	Testament of Benjamin
TestDan	Testament of Dan
TestGad	Testament of Gad
TestIsaac	Testament of Isaac
TIss	Testament of Issachar
TJac	Testament of Jacob
TestJob	Testament of Job
TestJos	Testament of Joseph
TestJud	Testament of Judah
TestLev	Testament of Levi
TMos	Testament of Moses
TestNaph	Testament of Naphtali
TestReu	Testament of Reuben

TestSim
TestSol
TestZeb
TrShem

Testament of Simeon
Testament of Solomon
Testament of Zebulon
Treatise of Shem

Introduction

The Letters to the Thessalonians are the earliest writings of the New Testament¹, and for that reason, they are the subject of unremitting interest to exegetes and theologians². Among the theological issues raised by the letters, the most analyzed and discussed problem is *universal eschatology*³. While in 1 Thess this issue occurs together with many others about which the apostle exhorts the recipients of the letter, in 2 Thess it becomes a central theme⁴. In studies of the New Testament eschatology, the Letters to the Thessalonians are one of the main sources, which provide important information about *universal eschatology*⁵, and are basic to any discussion of issues related to *prodroms*, the resurrection of bodies and the parousia of Christ.

-
- 1 See: W. Rakocy, *Paweł apostoł. Chronologia życia i pism [Paul the Apostle. Chronology of the life and the writings]*, Czestochowa 2003, pp. 118–146.
 - 2 R. E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, New York 1997, p. 457.
 - 3 In the latest study of the New Testament eschatology by the Polish scholar Augustyn Jankowski he distinguishes *universal eschatology* from *individual eschatology* and discusses them separately. The criterion for division is a subject, on which both types of eschatology are focused. *Individual eschatology* deals with the post-mortem fate of each human being, and *universal eschatology* examines the fate of all humankind and the universe at the end of times. (A. Jankowski, *Eschatologia Nowego Testamentu [Eschatology of the New Testament]*, Cracow 2007, pp. 15–17). The eschatology presented in 1 Thess and 2 Thess is a *universal eschatology*. However, some exegetes analyze parts of the Letters to the Thessalonians in the context of *individual eschatology*, see: G. Haufe, *Eschatologie Individuelle des Neuen Testaments*, ZTK 83.4: 1986, pp. 436–463; W. Wiefel, *Die Hauptrichtung des Wandels them eschatologischen Denken des Paulus*, TZ 30. 2: 1974, pp. 1965–1981.
 - 4 This is in part due to the nature of 2 Thess, which is a polemical letter intended to solve the problem and prevent possible dangers emerging from the preaching false doctrine. See: Ch. L. Holman, *Till Jesus Comes. Origins of Christian Apocalyptic Expectation*, Peabody 1996, pp. 103–110.
 - 5 See: A. Jankowski, *Eschatology*, pp. 35–115.

Although these three issues are core themes of *universal eschatology*, it does not mean that they are the only themes in the eschatological passages of 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12. The works of scholars who refer to details of *universal eschatology* as presented in 1–2 Thess are usually marked with controversy concerning the authenticity of 2 Thess or they refer to only one of many issues. In Polish, so far, there are no studies, which examine the passages 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11, and 2 Thess 2, 1–12 in order to present how Paul created a compact and comprehensive Christian eschatology.

Among the authors who analyze the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians (such as C. E. B. Cranfield, A. M. Molina, B. Witherington III) there is a trend to use a certain eschatological motif, only to demonstrate the evolutionary development of the eschatological concept in the New Testament⁶. An objective approach to the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians is also necessary for general studies, such as the introduction to the New Testament theology, and the development of the theology of Apostle Paul⁷.

In the early twentieth century, the classic studies of Pauline eschatology and eschatological motifs, the Letters to the Thessalonians (H. A. A. Kennedy, G. Vos) are already a central focus of the author's interest, but are still presented in the context of *general eschatology* in the Bible. The eschatology of 1–2 Thess is often compared to the apocalyptic writings of the Old Testament and to the eschatology of the intertestamental literature in order to search for dependence and convergence of both types of eschatology⁸. All commentators on the

6 C. E. B. Cranfield, *Thoughts on the New Testament Eschatology*, *SJT* 35: 1982, pp. 497–512; P. M. Molina, *La provisionalidad responsable: el tiempo cristiano en perspectiva escatológica*, *EstB* 45. 4–5: 1987, pp. 337–346; B. Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World*, Illinois 1992.

7 See: R. E. Brown, *An Introduction*, pp. 456–466, 590–598; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Michigan 1998, pp. 294–315; C. R. Holladay, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament*, Nashville 2005, pp. 289–302; R. Rubinkiewicz, *Wstęp do Nowego Testamentu* [*Introduction to the New Testament*], Poznan 1996, pp. 328–332; E. Szymanek, *Wykład Nowego Testamentu* [*Lecture on the New Testament*], Poznan 1990, pp. 291–296.

8 H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul's Conception of the Last Thing*², London 1904; G. Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, Michigan 1979.

Letters to the Thessalonians indicate two main sources of inspiration and influence in Pauline eschatology⁹.

A dominant trend is to emphasize the influence of the Old Testament, especially the Book of Daniel, on the thought of the apostle¹⁰. Depending on the eschatological issue in the Letters to the Thessalonians, commentators find inspiration in the Book of Isaiah, Ezekiel, or the books of Maccabees¹¹. In Polish, L. Mycielski and K. Romaniuk wrote comparative studies of eschatology and apocalyptic in the Letters to the Thessalonians and the Old Testament¹².

Some authors analyze the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians from the perspective of other apocalyptic texts in the New Testament (Mk 13; Ac). A. Sand shows that the “Christianization” of Jewish apocalyptic themes is presented by the authors of the New Testament for polemical and apologetic purposes¹³. D. Wenham examines the eschatology of the Apostle Paul in the context of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the tradition of the synoptic gospels¹⁴. Showing

9 In the latest eschatology of the New Testament written in Poland by A. Jankowski, the issue of universal eschatology is usually analyzed from the perspective of the Old Testament and the New Testaments, without any references to the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.

10 For example, H. Sahlin believes that apocalyptic ideas present in 1–2 Thess are taken from Dan 7 and Dan 12. H. Sahlin, *Paulus och Danielsboken*, *SEA* 1946: 1981, pp. 95–110.

11 See: T. R. Y. Neufeldt, *Put On The Armour of God. The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians*, *JSNTSup* 140, Sheffield 1999; J. Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia. An Exegetical and Theological Investigation*, Peabody 1997; O. D. Vena, *The Parousia and Its Rereadings. The Development of the Eschatological Consciousness in the Writings of the New Testament*, SBL 1927: 2001.

12 L. Mycielski, *Apokaliptyczna szata literacka opisow paruzji Chrystusa z Listow do Tesaloniczan* [Apocalyptic Description of the Parousia of Christ in the Letters to the Thessalonians], *ACR* 4: 1972, pp. 147–179; K. Romaniuk, *La Volontà motivo di Dio come parenetico nelle Lettere di S. Paolo*, *RivBib* 20. 4: 1972, pp. 353–368.

13 A. Sand, *Zur Frage nach dem „Sitz im Leben“ der Apokalyptischen Texte des Neuen Testaments*, *NTS* 18: 1972, pp. 167–177.

14 D. Wenham, *The Future Coming of the Lord. Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?*, Grand Rapids, 1995, pp. 289–337; Same, *Paul and Synoptic Apocalypse*, in: R. T. France, D. Wenham (eds), *Gospel Perspectives II. Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*, Sheffield 1981, pp. 345–375.

similarities between certain eschatological motifs in the Letters to the Thessalonians and the synoptic gospels (particularly Mt 23), he concludes that the concepts of “man of lawlessness” and his defeat at the revelation of the Son of man were created much earlier than it appears in the Letters to the Thessalonians.

There are no comprehensive and extensive studies concerning the relationship between the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians and the eschatology of the intertestamental apocalypses, which not only indicate the differences and similarities between both eschatology, but also explain them. Previous studies on the eschatology of the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal two trends in reference to the intertestamental literature. The first is the selective treatment of the pseudepigraphal texts that use only the best-known writings¹⁵. However, a reductive approach to the intertestamental literature makes it impossible to discover the richness of these texts, and reduces the research to searching for arguments supporting the author’s thesis. The second trend is to analyze the intertestamental literature for a selected theme within the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians¹⁶. This approach is common, particularly in monographic studies. Among exegetes dealing with the relationship between the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians and the eschatology of the intertestamental literature, there is agreement that apocryphal literature is one of the three sources (along with the Old Testament and the revelation received by Paul), which the apostle used to create his eschatology¹⁷.

15 An example of such an approach to the relationship between biblical eschatology and biblical literature is a classic work of R. H. Charles eschatology. (R. H. Charles, *Eschatology*, New York, 1963). See also: H. Pietras, *Eschatology of the first four centuries of the Church*, Cracow 2007.

16 P. Metzger focuses on a theme katechon. (P. Metzger, *Katechon. 2 Thess 2: 1–12 im Horizont Apokalyptischen Denkens*, Berlin, 2005). M. Himmelfarb focuses on the theme of the Assumption (M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, Oxford 1993). J. Plevnik focuses on the theme parousia. (J. Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, Peabody 1997).

17 H. Moore, Paul and Apocalyptic, *IBSt* 9: 1987, pp. 1935–1946; M. Sabbe, De Palinische Beschrijving van de parousia, *Collationes Brugenses et Gandavenses* 7.1: 1961, pp. 86–114.

A. Feuillet believes that the eschatology of both letters is strongly influenced by Judaic literature and there is no significant influence from Hellenism in 1–2 Thess¹⁸. In the same way W. Baird, says that despite changes in the eschatological language used by Paul, Judaic apocalyptic is not shaped by Hellenistic ideas¹⁹. Some authors do not deny the influence of the intertestamental literature but they emphasize a clear distinction between the eschatology of the Apostle Paul, the Old Testament eschatology and the intertestamental apocalypses²⁰. Others authors, such as L. J. Kreitzer, show the evolution of the Old Testament expression “the Lord’s Day”, which in the letters of Paul is named as “the day of Christ”²¹. T. F. Glasson, in turn, denies any influence from the intertestamental literature on the concept of the parousia presented by Paul²². In his opinion, the parousia is an example of the application the Old Testament idea of “the day of the Lord” to the person of Jesus, created by early-Christian apocalyptic.

Many of the monographs and articles referring to the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians are dominated by a controversy concerning the authenticity of 2 Thess. Authors, adopting different methods, examine the two letters in order to prove or refute the authenticity of 2 Thess. Most of this kind of work will be presented in the first chapter. At this point, we will present only the most recent study by C. R. Nicholl²³, in which he advocates for the authenticity of 2 Thess. Any differences between 1 Thess and 2 Thess including those relating to eschatology, he explains by changes in the external and the internal

18 A. Feuillet, Le “quotirevisement” quot; fin des justes et la double perspective eschatologique (Resurrection glorieuse et vie avec le Christ après la mort) dans la Première Epître aux Thessaloniciens, *Revue Thomist* 72.4: 1972, pp. 533–559.

19 W. Baird, Pauline eschatology in hermeneutical Perspective, *NTS* 7: 1970–1971, pp. 314–327.

20 J. Aletti, L’apôtre Paul et la parousie de Jésus Christ. L’eschatologie paulinienne et ses enjeux, *Recherches de science religieuse* 84.1: 1966, pp. 15–41.

21 L. J. Kreitzer, Jesus and God in Paul’s Eschatology, *JSNTSup* 19: 1987, pp. 93–129.

22 T. F. Glasson, Theophany and Parousia, *NTS* 34: 1988, pp. 259–270.

23 C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica. Situating 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, Cambridge 2004.

situation that occurred in the community of Thessalonica during a relatively short period, between the writing of 1 Thess and 2 Thess. Carefully analyzing both letters, he concludes that the situation described in 1 Thess is very similar to that presented in 2 Thess. In both cases, what determines community beliefs, are eschatological themes.

A different conclusion is reached by F. Laub, who also took eschatology as the subject of his analysis. He recognizes eschatology as one of the most important factors strengthening the community in Thessalonica. However, based on certain aspects of this eschatology, he argues that 2 Thess is not authentic²⁴.

The majority of studies concerning eschatology in the Letters to the Thessalonians refer to chosen eschatological themes or theological issues. The most discussed themes are resurrection and the parousia. D. Conchas and G. Kegel suggest that the resurrection of Christ is the main theme in the New Testament eschatology²⁵. In addition, G. Kegel thinks that 1 Thess 1, 9–10; 4, 14, 16 is the earliest Christian tradition concerning Jesus' resurrection. Speaking about the parousia exegeses demonstrate its close connection with the resurrection of Christ (J. Kremer)²⁶. They also deal with the problem of the coming parousia and its expectation by the community in Thessalonica (H. Giessen, S. S. Smalley, G. F. Snyder)²⁷.

24 F. Laub, *Eschatologische Verkündigung und Lebensgestaltung nach Paulus: Eine Untersuchung zum Wirken des Apostels beim Aufbau der Gemeinde in Thessalonike*, Regensburg 1973. The same is maintained by K. P. Donfried (K. P. Donfried, *The Theology of 2 Thessalonians*, in: K. P. Donfried, I. H. Marshall (eds), *The Theology of the Shorter Pauline Letters*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 81–113).

25 See: D. de Conchas, *A Doutrina da Ressureição em São Paulo*, *Revisita de Cultura Bíblica* 3.13: 1959, pp. 209–223; G. Kegel, *Auferstehung Jesu- Auferstehung der Toten. Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Neuen Testament*, Gütersloh 1970.

26 See: J. Kremer, *Was heisst Parusie und Parusieerwartung heute? Überlegungen zu den Parusieaussagen von 1 Thess*, in: K. Delahaye (ed.), *Bestellt zum Zeugnis. Festgabe für Bischof Johannes Pölschneider zur Vollendung d. 75. Lebensjahres*, Aachen 1974, pp. 251–268.

27 See: H. Giessen, *Naherwartung des Paulus in 1 Thess 4, 13–18?*, *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* 1985, pp. 123–150; S. S. Smalley, *The Delay of the Parousia*, *JBL* 83: 1964, pp. 41–54; G. F. Snyder, *Sayings on the Delay of the End*, *BR* 20: 1975, pp. 19–35.

Among issues concerning eschatology in the Letters to the Thessalonians, the following problems are examined: idea of chosen ones, hope, salvation, relationships between ethics and eschatology. J. Becker believes that the theology of 1 Thess contains an image of God's election with strong eschatological elements. This theology is the guiding principle of the whole letter, and contains all the Old Testament ideas contained in 1 Thess²⁸. F. J. Matera connects issues of God's election with the moral teaching presented in the Letters to the Thessalonians²⁹. God called the Thessalonians to be blameless in their lives, and in this way they should expect the parousia. The task of Christians in Thessalonica is the rejection of all sin and the preservation of faith, hope and love. C. B. Kaye argues that the eschatological passages do not provide evidence to support the thesis that there is a close relationship between expectation of an imminent parousia and ethical disorder in the community³⁰. These problems were already present when Paul was in Thessalonica and probably have a social background. Concerning salvation F. D. Cortes argues that the apocalyptic language of 1 Thess is used in order to convince the believers that their fate is not in the hands of those who persecute them, but fully depends on the Lord³¹. Eschatological motifs were used to strengthen the hope of persecuted Christians.

In literature on the Letters to the Thessalonians, we find many monographs and articles, which in a more or less comprehensive way, discuss the issues constituting the subject of our research. The contributions presented below contain many valuable comments

28 J. Becker, *Paulus. Der Apostel der Völker*, Tübingen 1989, pp. 138–148. See: R. B. Hays, Crucified with Christ: A Synthesis of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Philippians, and Galatians, in: D. A. Lull (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 27*: 1988, pp. 318–335; C. J. Roetzel, Election/Calling in Certain Pauline Letters: An Experimental Construction, in: D. A. Lull (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 29*: 1990, pp. 552–569.

29 F. J. Matera, An Ethic of Election. The Letters to the Thessalonians, in: J. Knox, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul*, Louisville 1996, pp. 123–137.

30 B. N. Kaye, Eschatology and Ethics in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, *NovT* 17.1: 1975, pp. 47–57.

31 D. F. Cortés, El mensaje apocalíptico de Pablo en primera de Tesalonicenses como un medio de esperanza, *Apuntes* 13.3: 1993, pp. 190–197.

and observations on the meaning and function of eschatology in the Letters to the Thessalonians, but they do not capture all the motifs and do not present the motifs in the full context of contemporary eschatological beliefs. The analysis of eschatology in the Letters to the Thessalonians provided in this work, will attempt to supplement missing elements in existing studies.

The first issue to be discussed in detail below is Paul's theology in the Letters to the Thessalonians. Speaking of theology, we have mainly in mind the issue of eschatology. Among works concerning this issue, we can distinguish two main trends: one of them tries to demonstrate the lack of systematic theology in these two letters, while the other attempts to identify specific motifs in the Letters to the Thessalonians, to prove the existence and development of Paul's theology at the earliest stage of his writing activity. J. Frans believes that the Letters to the Thessalonians are a starting point to understand the theology of the apostle Paul³². Although Paul changes the way in which he presents the motif of "hope", the subject remains the same, and it is Christ. Ch. Mearns argues that the development of Paul's theology did not take place until a later stage of his mission activities, but it is visible even in the Letters to the Thessalonians. The argument, which proves this thesis in his opinion, is the development of eschatological thought within the two letters. One example of the development of eschatological motifs is the motif of *prodroms*, introduced in 2 Thess. It had not been discussed by Paul in 1 Thess. Also R. Kieffer accepts the existence of eschatological doctrine already at the time of the writing of 1 Thess³³.

32 I. Fransem, Le jour du Seigneur: 1–2 Thessaloniens, *Bible et vie chrétienne* 8: 1954, pp. 76–88. See: R. F. Collins, The Theology of Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians, *Louvain Studies* 6: 1976/77, pp. 315–337; T. Söding, Der Erste Thessalonicherbrief und die frühe paulinische Evangeliumsverkündigung. Zur Frage einer Entwicklung der paulinischen Theologie, *Biblische Zeitschrift* 35: 1991, pp. 180–203; G. Strecker, Indicative and Imperative according to Paul, *Australian Bible Review* 35: 1987, pp. 60–72.

33 R. Kieffer, L'eschatologie en 1 Thessaloniens dans une perspective rhétorique, in: R. F. Collins (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, Leuven 1990, pp. 206–219.

The second issue is the relationship between the eschatology of 1 Thess and that of 2 Thess. Exegetes offer two opposing views. The opinion that Paul is not the author of the 2 Thess, leads some scholars to believe that 2 Thess is a correction of the Paul's eschatology presented in 1 Thess. This especially explains the mention of a sudden and rapid coming of the Lord. Also many supporters of Paul's eschatology in 2 Thess believe that in the second letter the apostle corrects the doctrine of eschatology described in 1 Thess because of its incorrect reception. Other exegetes note a unity in the eschatology of the two letters. L. Fuerbringer, analyzes four passages of the Letters to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4, 13–18; 5, 1–11; 2 Thess 1, 3–12; 2, 1–12). He lists five main themes: a sudden coming of the parousia of Christ, the revelation of the Antichrist, the judgment of Jesus and the glory of believers, the events associated with the parousia, ethical and moral aspects of the expectations of Christians³⁴. The way he uses the passages from both letters creates a comprehensive picture of Paul's eschatology at this time, and demonstrates the author's conviction regarding the authenticity of 2 Thess and the presence of eschatology in both letters. S. Agouridis, believes that the eschatology of 2 Thess is more advanced, compared to the eschatological images in 1 Thess³⁵. 2 Thess contains apocalyptic motifs concerning *prodroms*. I. H. Marshall, studying 2 Thess 2, points out the lack of many eschatological themes in 1 Thess. At the same time, he indicates new apocalyptic themes, which are a supplement to the eschatology of 1 Thess³⁶. He notes that the phenomenon of differences in the two epistles of the apostle is something normal and results from the different situations of both letters. According to Marshall, 2 Thess is an appendix to 1 Thess. These few examples cited above show that the problem of the unity of the eschatology in the Letters to the Thessalonians is unresolved.

34 L. Fuerbringer, Leading Thoughts on Eschatology in the Epistles to the Thessalonians, *Concordia Theological Monthly* 13: 1942, pp. 183–192.

35 S. Agouridis, The Intense Expectation of the End Times: How It was Dealt with in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, *Deltio Biblikon Meleton* 17: 1988, p. 22.

36 I. H. Marshall, Pauline Theology in the Thessalonian Correspondence, in: M. D. Hooker, S. G. Wilson (eds), *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, London 1982, pp. 173–183.

Another issue is the analysis of eschatological themes in the Letters to the Thessalonians. Since the early 1970's, the dominant perspective in any analysis of the eschatological passages of the Letters to the Thessalonians was the controversy concerning the authenticity of 2 Thess. The starting point of such an approach is the problem of the authenticity of 2 Thess, which determines the aim of the research. This makes it impossible – with very few exceptions – to look at the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians as the beginning of a cohesive and systematic eschatology in the New Testament.

The last issue is the relationship between the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians and the Old Testament apocalypses. The Letters to the Thessalonians represent the earliest stage of Christian thought preserved in the New Testament. Therefore, they are evidence of the formation, based on an earlier written and oral tradition, of the New Testament theology. Many theological topics such as Christology, Pneumatology and eschatology have, in the Letters to the Thessalonians, their initial development³⁷. A comparative study of theological thought in the Letters to the Thessalonians with other the New Testament writings is a common practice³⁸. However, the comparative studies of the theological thought of those letters and the intertestamental literature³⁹ is limited to selected issues and is characterised by selective use of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.

The present study focuses on two passages from the Letters to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11; 2 Thess 2, 1–12), concerning *universal eschatology*. An attempt will be made to give a comprehensive analysis of all eschatological and apocalyptic motifs occurring in these passages and compare them with similar motifs in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Qumran writings⁴⁰. The aim

37 See: G. D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence. The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, Peabody 2005; Same, *Pauline Christology. An Exegetical-Theological Study*, Peabody 2007.

38 The same is true of the comparative analysis of the theological thought of letters to the Thessalonians with the writings of the Old Testament.

39 We have in mind primarily the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Qumran writings.

40 The Qumran writings and the pseudepigraphal apocalypses were taken as the main source of comparison for the apocalyptic and eschatological

of the study, in the first place is to determine the significance of individual eschatological and apocalyptic themes in these passages (exegetical studies); in the second place, it is to show the similarities and differences in meaning and presentation of these themes in the Letters to the Thessalonians, as well as in selected the intertestamental literature (comparative studies). This will indicate how Paul used existing eschatological and apocalyptic motifs and how he created some new eschatological and apocalyptic motifs himself. In this way, we will try to describe the earliest stages of Christian eschatological thought.

In order to achieve the intended purpose, it is necessary to choose an appropriate method. Analysing the eschatological and apocalyptic motifs found in the Letters to the Thessalonians, which will be divided into two groups: (*prodroms* and *events in the parousia*), we use the historical-critical method, especially semantic analysis and history of tradition⁴¹. This well known and widely used method allows understanding of the proper meaning of eschatological and apocalyptic themes used by the apostle. Ambiguous use of the words “apocalyptic” and “eschatological” raises many questions concerning understanding of terms used and causes serious difficulties in interpretation. Although this method does not

motifs found in the letters to the Thessalonians, for two reasons. The first is the time of the creation of the letters, attributable to the Second Temple period. The second reason is that in Polish studies eschatology of the New Testament and the Old Testament are usually analysed together, but there are no studies comparing the eschatology of the New Testament (especially the letters to the Thessalonians) with the intertestamental literature. An acceptance of these sources does not mean that we omit the Old Testament, which is a primary source for of eschatological literature in the New Testament and the intertestamental literature. Analysis of all the eschatological themes will take into account the way motifs are used in the Old Testament. In this work will be quoted only the intertestamental literature but with indication to parallels of the Old Testament. See: P. Briks, *Koniec swiata czy apokatastaza? Pozytywne aspekty koncepcji eschatologicznych w Biblii Hebrajskiej* [*Apocatastasis or the End of the World? Positive aspects of eschatological concept in the Hebrew Bible*], Warsaw 2004; A. Jankowski, *Eschatology*.

41 F. G. Downing, Historical-critical method, in: W. Chrostowski (ed.), *Dictionary of Biblical Hermeneutics*, Warsaw 2005, pp. 567–568.

guarantee certainty in interpretation, it seems to be the best way to discover the meaning of these terms.

Analyzing the relationship between the eschatological and apocalyptic motifs of the Letters to the Thessalonians, and similar motifs in the intertestamental literature we will use a method of comparative study. Using the results of analysis of eschatological and apocalyptic motifs appearing in the Letters to the Thessalonians, we will compare to the same motifs present in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Qumran writings⁴². This allows us to determine the degree of dependence and similarities, and differences between compared works. Interpretation of these three relationships should reveal the degree of development and originality of the eschatology created by Paul. Many of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha were written during the time close to the creation of the New Testament writings. They provide much information about eschatological thought existing outside the formal stream (writings, which were considered canonical). The intertestamental literature is a help to understand better the period between creation of the Old Testament and the New Testament writings. Because of that, new light will be shed on the cultural, religious and philosophical background of the beginnings of Christianity.

The study is divided into four chapters. The first will be a general introduction to the problems of eschatology in the Letters to the Thessalonians, with particular attention to the problem of the use of eschatological motifs as arguments in proving or denying the authenticity of both letters. In the second and third chapters we will analyze the eschatological and apocalyptic motifs found in the Letters to the Thessalonians and compare them with similar motifs and concepts common to the intertestamental literature. In the second chapter, we will analyse motifs of *prodroms*. All events, which are related to the times preceding the coming of the Lord will be analyzed⁴³. In the

42 In addition to the apocalyptic works of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, we take into account also other writings that contain apocalyptic themes.

43 All the apocalyptic and eschatological motifs will be subject of analysis in order to create a picture of the events of end of the world presented in the Letters to the Thessalonians.

third chapter, we will discuss those motifs, which relate to the period of the parousia. Eschatological motifs are used to describe the day of the parousia. In the fourth chapter, we will interpret the results of the research and analysis carried out in the second and third chapters. In the first part of this chapter, we will try to draw conclusions from the comparative analysis of the relation between the apocalyptic and eschatological motifs in the Letters to the Thessalonians and the intertestamental literature. In the second part of the chapter, we will present some conclusions regarding the eschatology found in the Letters to the Thessalonians.

Chapter I

Preliminary Issues

Discussion of the authenticity of both letters clearly demonstrates the role that eschatological motifs play in the Thessalonians correspondence and shows the relationship between Pauline eschatology and non-canonical literature¹.

1. The History of Discussions Concerning the Authenticity of the Letters to the Thessalonians

Pauline authorship of 1–2 Thess was not doubted until the early nineteenth century. Pauline authorship, based on early Church records² and the centuries-old tradition, was indirectly challenged for the first time by J. E. C. Schmidt, who in his essay “*Vermutungen über die beiden Briefe an die*

1 A presentation of contributors to the controversy regarding authenticity of the letters seems to be necessary due to fact that in Poland, the last study concerning this problem, which was written by J. Stepien, does not include the later, but extremely important theory of W. Trilling. A later critique of Trilling’s theory, made by K. Romaniuk, has a very general character. See: K. Romaniuk, *Historycznosc Ewangelii i Pism Pawlowych* [Concerning the Gospel and the Letters of St. Paul], Warsaw 2002, pp. 287–296.

Historical overview will include a brief presentation of W. Trilling’s theory. However, proving or denying the authenticity of the Letters to the Thessalonians is not a goal of this study; therefore, the chronological presentation is not an argument for or against authenticity of 2 Thess.

2 The list of the most ancient early Christian writings, confirming Paul’s authorship of 1–2 Thess is presented by G. L. Green, *The Letters To The Thessalonians*, PNTC, Michigan 2002, p. 55; J. Stepien, *Autentycznosc listow do Tesaloniczan* [Authenticity of Letters to the Thessalonians], *CT* 34: 1963, pp. 95–102.

Thessalonicher”, proposed that 2 Thess 2, 1–12 was an interpolation. However, he does not deny the authenticity of the whole letter³. A further step was taken by F. Kern, who demonstrated the literary dependence of 2 Thess on 1 Thess, so raising doubts as to its authenticity⁴. This gave rise to a long discussion on the authorship of the Letters to the Thessalonians, in which some of the most eminent exegetes of the past century have often taken extreme positions. In discussing the authenticity of the Letters to the Thessalonians, we can identify two basic positions:

- 1.1. Denial of authenticity of both letters
- 1.2. Acceptance of the authenticity of 1 Thess and denial of the authenticity of 2 Thess

1.1. Denying the Authenticity of Both Letters

Discussion concerning the authenticity of both letters was started by Karl Schröder when in 1836 he questioned Paul’s authorship of the First Letter to the Thessalonians⁵. However, substantive questions, based primarily on literary criticism and history, were raised a few years later by F. C. Baur⁶. They addressed the following four issues:

- the lack of important theological ideas. It was widely believed that all letters of Paul should contain important theological topics and should be similar in form and character:
- dependence of the letter on the narrative of Ac and 1–2 Cor
- issues and the way of presentation are in sharp contrast to the brevity of Paul’s stay in Thessalonica and the short life-span of the Christian community in the city

3 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC, Michigan 1990, p. 17.

4 F. H. Kern, Über 2 Thess 2, 1–12. Nebst Andeutungen über den Ursprung des zweiten Briefs an die Thessalonicher, *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* 2: 1839, pp. 145–214.

5 G. L. Green, *The Letters*, p. 55.

6 F. Ch. Bauer, *Paulus: Der Apostel Jesu Christi*, Stuttgart 1845, pp. 480–485; *Idem*, Die Briefe an die beiden Thessalonicher, Echtheit und Ihre Bedeutung für die Lehre von der Parusie Christi, *Theologische Jahrbücher* 14: 1855, pp. 141–168.

- the presence of apocalyptic motifs that are not present in Paul's other letters⁷.

Following the path of Bauer, A. B. van der Veis⁸ also denied the authenticity of 1 Thess. He called for comparative studies between interpretations of those who defend the authenticity of the letter and interpretations of those who are denying its authenticity. R. Steck⁹ using lexical analysis, argued that 1 Thess depends on 4 Ezra and dated the time of writing of the letter to the end of the first century. C. Holsten¹⁰ believed that in place of typical Pauline concepts such as faith, hope and love, in 1 Thess 1, 3 there are concepts characteristic of the Jewish-Christian world, such as deeds, work, patience, which in his opinion, proves that 1 Thess 1, 3 is a compilation of two, much later texts (1 Cor 13, 13 and Rev 2, 2). R. Scott¹¹ assumes that the authors of the letter are Silvanus and Timothy.

The theories of Bauer and the Tübingen School have been subjected to constructive criticism, demonstrating the weakness and lack of strong arguments in support of their point of view. Those who deny Paul's authorship of 1 Thess have failed to persuade with their arguments a large number of exegetes¹². They were not able to refute

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- 7 Accurate presentation of objections and criticism of F. Ch. Bauer's theory were written by C. L. W. Grimm, *Die Echtheit der Briefe an die Thessalonicher* Gegen Baur's Angriff Vertheidigt, *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 23: 1850, pp. 753–816. See also: J. Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians*, Birmingham 2005, pp. 1916–1921; J. Stepien, *Authenticity*, pp. 135–147.
 - 8 A. B. Van der Vies, *Die beiden Breven aan die Thessalonicenses*, *Historisch-Kritisch Onderzoek Naar Hunnen Oorsprong*, Leiden 1865.
 - 9 R. Steck, *Das Herrenwort 1 Thess*, IV, 15, *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie* 13: 1883, pp. 509–542.
 - 10 C. Holsten, *Zur Unechtheit des Ersten Brief an die Thessalonicher*, *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie* 36: 1877, pp.731–732.
 - 11 R. Scott, *The Pauline Epistles, A Critical Study*, Edinburgh 1909, pp. 215–233.
 - 12 Authors defending the authenticity of the letter: E. H. Askwith, *An Introduction to the Thessalonians Epistles: Containing a Vindication of the Pauline authorship of both Epistles and an Interpretation of the Eschatological Section of 2 Thess*, London / New York 1902; R. A. Lipsius, *Über Zweck und Veranlassung des ersten Thessalonicherbriefs*, *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 27: 1854, pp. 907–934; H. Von Soden, *Der erste Thessalonicherbrief*, *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 58:1885, pp. 263–310; J. E. Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, Edinburgh 1912, pp. 37–38.

the many counter-arguments of supporters of Pauline authorship, which led to the marginalization and, consequently an abandoning of the hypothesis of the non-Pauline origin of 1 Thess. Leon Morris writes, “Some members of the Tübingen School considered 1 Thess to be inauthentic but they have remained alone in their views, because they did not provide convincing reasons for their theories”¹³. The dispute concerning Pauline authorship of 1 Thess is over: modern exegetes, without exception, accept 1 Thess as Pauline.

Exegetes who doubted the authenticity of 1 Thess, almost naturally challenged the authenticity of 2 Thess. However, among doubters respecting the authenticity of 2 Thess are authors who accept as authentic 1 Thess, consequently there is no consensus regarding the authenticity of 2 Thess. We turn now to the issue of the authenticity of 2 Thess with particular emphasis on the history of polemics and the position adopted by W. Trilling.

1.2. The Authors Accepting Authenticity of 1 Thess but Denying the Authenticity of 2 Thess

In contrast with 1 Thess, whose authenticity had been questioned in the nineteenth century, but also been convincingly defended, in the case of the authenticity of 2 Thess scholars are still divided. For this reason, we will present in chronological order¹⁴, the arguments put forward against the authenticity of 2 Thess and compare them with the arguments of the supporters of authenticity.

1.2.1. The Eschatology of 2 Thess 2, 1–12 Contradicts that Found in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11

This thesis was put forth by J. E. Ch. Schmidt, who points to the fact that 1 Thess 4, 13–5,11 stresses the sudden advent of the parousia,

13 L. Morris, *The First And Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, Michigan 1991, p. 16.

14 The chronology follows the order of appearance of new arguments negating the authenticity of 2 Thess.

while 2 Thess 2, 1–12 talks of the many events that will precede it¹⁵. Schmidt argues that such a radically different exposition of the coming parousia cannot be the work of the same author.

Schmidt's theory was challenged by many convincing counter arguments¹⁶. Presentation of the parousia as an event that occurs suddenly (1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11) is not in contradiction with the description of the events preceding the day of parousia presented in 2 Thess 2, 1–12. Both presentations are typical of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic (Mt 5, 14; 24, 42. 44; Mk 13, 5–8. 33; Lk 21, 8–13. 34; Rev 22, 12. 20)¹⁷. Ch. A. Wanamaker thinks that Schmidt's thesis is a consequence of misunderstanding of the function of 2 Thess 2, 3–12 and the importance of 1 Thess 5, 1–4¹⁸. He argues that the function of 2 Thess 2, 3–12 was not to present a timetable by which people would be able to recognize the time of parousia, but merely a statement of fact that the parousia has not yet occurred.

Similarly, 1 Thess 5, 1–5 should be read not as a general statement concerning everyone but as a statement concerning particular people, in this case non-Christians. Reading this passage as referring also to Christians would be opposed to 1 Thess 5, 1 4, which confirms the knowledge of the Thessalonians necessary to understand the reason for their lifestyle and the importance of preparations for the parousia. Therefore, the eschatology of 1 Thess and 2 Thess are not in opposition, on the contrary, they complement each other. They serve one purpose: to convince the Thessalonians community that the day of the Lord has not come yet.

15 J. E. Ch. Schmidt, *Vermutungen über die beide Briefe an die Thessalonicher*, Bibliothek für Kritik und Exegese des Neuen Testaments und Ältesten Christengeschichte 2/3: Handamer 1801, pp. 380–386; G. S. Holland, *A Letter Supposedly from Us. A Contribution to the Discussion about the Authorship of 2 Thessalonians*, in: R. F. Collins (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, Leuven 1990, pp. 394–402; F. Laub, *Paulinische Autorität in nachpaulinscher Zeit*, in: R. F. Collins (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, pp. 403–417.

16 See: J. G. Reiche, *Authenticae posterioris epistolae ad Thessalonicenses vindiciae*, Göttingen 1829; K. Romaniuk, *Problem drugiego listu Sw. Pawla do Tesaloniczan* [The Issue of Saint Paul's Second Letter to Thessalonians], *RTK* 21 1974, No 1, pp. 75–83; J. Stepień, *Authenticity*, pp. 159–161.

17 L. Morris, *The First*, p. 20.

18 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 17–19.

Schmidt's theory became a basic issue in the debate concerning the authenticity of 2 Thess and received a large number of comments, from both the opponents and supporters of Pauline authorship of 2 Thess. A. Lindemann believes that 2 Thess is a forgery. According to him, the forger did not accept the teaching of the apostle about the sudden coming of the parousia, presented in 1 Thess. He copied some of the content of 1 Thess but he has changed completely the section concerning the parousia¹⁹. That letter was created in order to deny the teaching of 1 Thess, which is the purpose of 2 Thess 2, 2. However, it did not happen and instead the false letter (2 Thess) was released as a Pauline writing together with 1 Thess. According to the author, this theory not only explains the differences in the eschatology of the two letters, but also explains well the interdependence of literary styles.

C. L. Mearns, accepts Paul's authorship of both letters and tries to explain the existing differences in eschatology by pointing to the fact that the apostle could change his views about the parousia²⁰. The reason for this would be an improper reception of the teaching about the parousia presented in 1 Thess.

A. von Harnack, defending the authenticity of 2 Thess tries to explain the differences in eschatology in the two letters by proposing that there were two Christian communities in Thessalonica²¹. According to his theory in Thessalonica there was a group of Jewish-Christians to whom the apostle addressed 2 Thess and there was also a group of Christian, with gentile background, to whom the apostle had addressed 1 Thess. The argument supporting the hypothesis is the "Semitic tone" of 2 Thess (e.g. 2 Thess 2, 13). Harnack's theory as modified by E. E. Ellis²², claims that 1 Thess

19 A. Lindemann, Zu Abfassungszweck des Zweiten Thessalonicherbriefes, *ZNW* 68: 1977, pp. 35–47. See also: A. Hingenfeld, Die beiden Briefe an die Thessalonicher, Nach Inhalt und Ursprung, *ZWT* 5: 1862, pp. 225–264.

20 C. L. Mearns, Early Eschatological Development in Paul: The Evidence of I and II Thessalonians, *NTS* 27: 1980/81, pp. 137–157.

21 A. Von Harnack, Das Problem des zweiten Thessalonicherbriefes, *SAB* 31:1910, pp. 560–578.

22 E. E. Ellis, Paul and his Co-Workers, *NTS* 17: 1970/71, pp. 437–452.

is addressed to the whole community and 2 Thess is directed only to some members of the community (Paul's co-workers). The argument supporting this thesis is the noun ἀδελφοί, which refers in his opinion to the Pauls co-workers in Thessalonica (2 Thess 2, 13).

Indirectly, the hypothesis of F. H. Kern²³ can be counted as another contribution to controversy concerning the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians. In 2 Thess 2, 1–12 appears the figure of an Antichrist which Kern interprets as clearly referring to historical events and having no relation with Paul's way of thinking. For Kern, the myth of Antichrist is connected with the legend that the emperor Nero, who died in 68 AD, had returned. This automatically makes Paul's authorship of the letter impossible because it was an event, which occurred after the apostle's death. According to the legend, Nero would lead the forces of evil, which will dominate all the earth. According to Kern, the figure of the "restrainers" refers to Vespasian and the term "apostasy" to the Jewish revolt against the Romans²⁴.

Critics of Kern hypothesis point to the fact that the description of the Antichrist in 2 Thess 2 has no reference to the person of Nero and this speculation is not supported by the text. As a counter-argument, they put forward the thesis that Paul could have used an existing apocalyptic tradition, which was widespread in the contemporary world. However, it does not undermine the authenticity of the letter. For example, J. Stepien believes that Paul in creating the figure of the Antichrist used as an archetype the figures presented in Dan 11, 36 and 1 Macc 1, 21–64²⁵.

23 F. H. Kern, Über 2 Thess 2, 1–12. Nebst Andeutungen über den Ursprung des zweiten Briefs an die Thessalonicher, *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* 2: 1839, pp. 145–214.

24 See: A. Hilgenfeld, *Historisch kritische Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, Leipzig 1875, pp. 642–652.

25 J. Stepien, Authenticity, p. 159. See: D. Schmidt, The Authenticity of 2 Thessalonians: Linguistic Arguments, *SBL* 1983, pp. 289–296; Same, The Syntactical Style of 2 Thessalonians: How Pauline Is It?, in: R. F. Collins (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, Leuven 1990, pp. 383–393.

1.2.2. *Literary Relations between 2 Thess and 1 Thess*

In 1839, F. H. Kern, first used the argument of literary dependence of 2 Thess on 1 Thess in order to demonstrate its post-Pauline origin²⁶. This argument was taken up and completely justified in 1903 by W. Wrede. After a comparative analysis of parallel passages from 1 Thess and 2 Thess, he came to the conclusion that 1 Thess is an authentic Pauline letter, but 2 Thess was written after 70 AD. The letter is a forgery trying to change the teaching contained in 1 Thess concerning the parousia²⁷. He attempts to prove this thesis by pointing to many linguistic similarities, identity of topics and the similarity in presentation of problems. The thesis that 2 Thess was written after 70 AD was also accepted by Braun and Marxsen, who point to non-Pauline theology and many Gnostic influences²⁸.

Authors who defend the authenticity of 1 Thess explain the problem of literary dependence of both letters with the following arguments:

- a) Paul had a copy of 1 Thess, which he used to write 2 Thess²⁹,
- b) both letters were written within a short period, which explains their similarities³⁰,
- c) the apostle's thought did not change during the time of writing of these two letters³¹,
- d) the apostle used standard words and phrases³²,

26 W. Wrede, *Die Echtheit des zweiten Thessalonicherbrief untersucht*, Leipzig 1903, pp. 3–29.

27 Critical discussion concerning the arguments presented by W. Wrede was undertaken by J. Stepien, *Authenticity*, pp. 161–166.

28 H. Braun, *Zur Nachpaulinischen Herkunft des zweiten Thessalonicherbriefes*, *ZNW* 44: 1952/3, pp. 152–156; G. Hellmann, *Die Unechtheit des zweiten Thessalonicherbriefes*, *ZNW* 5: 1904, pp. 28–38; W. Marxsen, *Auslegung von 1 Thess 4, 13–18*, *ZTK* 66: 1969, pp. 23–37.

29 Th. Zahn, *Einleitung in des Neue Testament*, Leipzig² 1900, p. 179. See: J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 53.

30 W. L. Knox, *St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem*, Cambridge 1925, p. 28.

31 W. Bornemann, *Die Thessalonicherbriefe*, Göttingen 1894, pp. 460–463.

32 E. J. Bicknell, *The First and Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*, WC, London 1932, p. XXX.

- e) 2 Thess was addressed to a different group of Christians in Thessalonica than 1 Thess³³,
- f) 2 Thess was a letter to another community³⁴.

C. R. Nicholl agrees with most arguments presented above, however, he considers them not fully satisfactory³⁵. He proposes that the literary relationship of the two letters could be explained by the similarity of the situations in Thessalonica at the time when 1 Thess and 2 Thess were written. This thesis, implicitly contains many elements of earlier arguments, and fully explains the issue of the literary similarities. In addition, it strengthens the argument presented by Ch. A. Wanamaker, concerning the unity of the eschatology of the two letters.

1.2.3. A Problem of 2 Thess 3, 17 – “I, Paul write this greetings in my own hand”

2 Thess 2, 2, 15, in which the author mentions the existence of the letters known to the Thessalonians and 2 Thess 3, 17, where the author speaks of the handwritten signature, are in the opinion of A. Hilgenfeld evidence of non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thess³⁶. He believed that the author of the false letter wished to convince the Thessalonians that 1 Thess is not a letter from Paul and in this way lend credibility to his letter. In this way, the forger wanted to change the teaching concerning the parousia contained in 1 Thess. C. R. Nicholl criticises this thesis and undermines its logic. He asks why the forger, who seeks to discredit 1 Thess refers to the tradition contained in 1 Thess (it is mentioned in 2 Thess 2, 15). If the aim of the forger was to discredit

33 M. Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher I. II An die Philipper*, Tübingen 1937, pp. 57–59; A. Harnak, *Das Problem*, pp. 560–578.

34 M. Goguel, *Introduction au Nouveau Testaments*, Zürich 1952, pp. 176–177. He believed that 2 Thess was addressed to the community in Berea; E. Schweitzer, *Der zweite Thessalonicherbrief ein Philipperbrief?*, *Theologische Zeitschrift* 1: 1945, pp. 90–105. He saw 2 Thess as a letter addressed to the Philippians.

35 C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica. Situating 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, Cambridge 2004, pp. 4–8.

36 A. Hilgenfeld, *Die beiden Briefe an die Thessalonicher nach Inhalt und Ursprung*, *ZWT* 5: 1862, pp. 225–264.

1 Thess such an approach has no reason. Nicholl believes that passages such as 2 Thess 2, 2. 15 and 2 Thess 3, 17 refute false statements, which had been proclaimed to the Thessalonians as Paul's teaching.

Some exegetes consider 2 Thess 2, 2 and 2 Thess 3, 17 as proof that 2 Thess was written earlier than 1 Thess³⁷. However, this argument cannot be defended in the light of semantic analysis. In 2 Thess 2, 15 the aorist ἐδιδάχθητε clearly indicates the past in relation to an action. In addition, εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν certainly applies to the teaching of the apostle during his stay in Thessalonica. The passage εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν suggests that the author has in mind 1 Thess. According to some authors the special emphasis on the authenticity of the letter in 2 Thess 2, 2 and 2 Thess 3, 17 is due to the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the teaching contained in 1 Thess. The Apostle correcting errors caused by a misunderstanding of his teachings contained in 1 Thess, by his signature wants to verify his teaching from 1 Thess as well as new additional explanations written in 2 Thess.³⁸ Acceptance of this thesis faces one difficulty, the fact, that 2 Thess 2, 2 refers to fake letters, and not a misunderstanding of the apostle's teaching.

1.2.4. *The Difference in Tone between 1 Thess and 2 Thess*

Some exegetes in order to demonstrate non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thess, point to the difference in the tone of the letters³⁹. In contrast to 1 Thess, which is written in a warm tone, and contains a number of personal items (1 Thess 2, 1; 3, 10), 2 Thess gives the impression

37 R. V. Thurston, *The Relationship between the Thessalonian Epistles*, *ExT* 85: 1973, pp. 52–56.

38 R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety*, Philadelphia 1986, pp. 181–191; A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, New York 2000, pp. 355–356.

39 R. F. Collins, *Letters that Paul did not Write: The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Pauline Pseudepigrapha*, Good News Studies, Wilmington 1988, pp. 222–223; G. Hollmann, *Die Unechtheit des zweiten Thessalonicherbriefes*, *ZNW* 5: 1904, pp. 28–38; M. J. J. Menken, *2 Thessalonians: Facing the End with Sobriety*, London 1994, pp. 30–31.

of a very formal, non-personal letter. It is characterized by a highly authoritative tone resulting from the use of the verb παραγγέλλομεν (2 Thess 3, 4. 6. 10. 12) and ὀφείλομεν (2 Thess 1, 3; 2, 13). The content of the teaching also shows an authoritative character (2 Thess 1, 8; 2, 5. 12; 3, 14)⁴⁰.

Authors, who defend Pauline authorship of the letter, indicate differences in the situation of the community at the time of writing of 2 Thess⁴¹. In their view, the apostle could not write 2 Thess in the same tone as 1 Thess, because the situation of the addressees and the purpose of the letter were entirely different (wrong reception of the teaching of the 1 Thess; the false teaching that parousia has already come; abandonment of work by some members of the community). While the purpose of 1 Thess was to give a support, offer encouragement and explain some matters the Thessalonians had not yet understood, the aim of 2 Thess was to correct misconceptions (2 Thess 2, 1–12) and provide the necessary admonitions (2 Thess 3, 10–12).

B. Rigaux, believes that the different tone in 2 Thess was due to a change in the circumstances in which the author found himself⁴². In Spring 50 AD the author was in Corinth, where he led a new mission⁴³. At the time of writing 2 Thess the apostle was fully involved in new work, which significantly altered the context of relations with the community in Thessalonica. B. Rigaux thinks that confirmation of this view can be found in 2 Thess 3, 1.

40 E. J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, Sacra Pagina Series v. 11, Collegeville 1995, pp. 23–24.

41 R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian*, pp. 12–17; G. Milligan, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians*, MC, London 1908; W. Neil, *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians*, MNTC, London 1950, p. XXII; J. Stepien, Pawłowy charakter nauki dogmatycznej i moralnej listów do Tesaloniczan [Pauline Character of Dogmatic and Moral Teaching in the Letters to the Thessalonians], *RBL* 13: 1960, pp. 243–268.

42 B. Rigaux, *Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens*, *ÉBib*, Paris 1956, p. 150.

43 W. Rakocy, *Paweł Apostoł: Chronologia życia i pism* [Paul the Apostle: The Chronology of the Life and Writings], Czestochowa 2003, p. 146.

1.2.5. *The Need for a Holistic Argument against the Authenticity of 2 Thess*

In the debate on authenticity of 2 Thess the work of Wolfgang Trilling became most influential. Trying to prove the non-Pauline authenticity of 2 Thess⁴⁴ he created criteria which until today determine the methodological approach (for both supporters and opponents of Pauline authorship) to the problem. The first criterion: a single argument against authenticity is not sufficient proof. Sufficient proof requires the sum of the arguments involving the most important topics of the discussion⁴⁵. The second criterion: one must explain dependence of 2 Thess on 1 Thess on the one hand, and curiosities of 2 Thess on the other hand⁴⁶.

In this way, Trilling found holistic criticism of the Pauline authorship of 2 Thess as the only way to prove the hypothesis that 2 Thess is a letter formed after the death of the apostle⁴⁷. He arranged arguments against Pauline authorship of 2 Thess into the following three groups⁴⁸:

- a) analysis of style and vocabulary,
- b) study of the history of forms,
- c) study of the theology of 2 Thess.

a) Analysis of style and vocabulary

Trilling's analysis of the style and vocabulary of 2 Thess is in fact a critique of B. Rigaux's arguments that defended Pauline authorship of 2 Thess⁴⁹. Trilling, concludes that similarity of vocabulary between both letters and others letters considered as Pauline (Rom; 1–2 Cor) rather support the thesis of the authenticity of 2 Thess.

Analyzing over forty of *hapax legomena*, which appear in 2 Thess, he says that *hapax legomena* are not an adequate proof to deny apostolic

44 W. Trilling, *Untersuchungen zum zweiten Thessalonischerbrief*, Leipzig 1972.

45 Idem, *Untersuchungen*, p. 45.

46 See: B. Widla, *Nowe spojrzenie na autentyczność 2 Tes* [A New Approach to the Authenticity of 2 Thess], *STV* 14: 1976, pp. 227–232.

47 See: J. A. Bailey, Who Wrote 2 Thessalonians?, *NTS* 25. 2: 1978/79, pp. 131–145.

48 See: W. Rakocy, *Paweł Apostoł*, pp. 138–140; G. L. Green, *The Letters*, pp. 60–64.

49 B. Rigaux, *Saint Paul*, pp. 76–111.

authorship, because they also occur in many other undisputed Pauline letters. However, the use of *hapax legomena* in a specific, apocalyptic context can be considered as confirmation of the non-Pauline origin of 2 Thess⁵⁰. Analyzing the use of parallels, antitheses, metaphors, wordplay, he concludes that it is difficult to say unequivocally whether the results of the analysis speak for or against authenticity. However, the less frequent use of these phenomena in 1 Thess compared to 2 Thess is an argument in favour of post-Pauline origin. Analyzing the use of nouns, adjectives and $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$, he concluded that 2 Thess is a letter very general in nature and does not contain any references to the concrete situation. It proves, in his opinion, non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thess.

Analyzing the tone of the letter and Paul's characteristic use of diatribe, rhetorical questions, or short sentences, Trilling concludes that it is a very formal letter, with many elements characteristic of doctrinal writings. Thus, it is in sharp contrast with 1 Thess and shows a rather later origin of the letter.

In sum, although the style and vocabulary analysis of 2 Thess does not provide solid evidence supporting his thesis, he still considered them as sufficient to deny the Pauline authorship of the Letter.

I. H. Marshall and R. Jewett criticized this method of analysis and the merits of the various conclusions⁵¹. In their opinion, a number of weak arguments based on marginal proofs cannot create one strong argument for non-Pauline origin of 2 Thess.

b) Analysis of forms

The next step in proving non-Pauline authorship of 2 Thess was an analysis of forms. Analyzing the structure of 2 Thess he points to its similarities with 1 Thess which no other letters of Paul contain on such a scale. The similarities are so significant that they could support

50 W. Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 48–51.

51 R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian*, p. 11; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, NCBC, London 1983, p. 34.

the hypothesis of a forger using 1 Thess to write 2 Thess⁵². Analysing the introductions of both letters, Trilling concludes that, in contrast to 1 Thess with clear personnel elements, the introduction of 2 Thess is general and does not contain such elements. That means, 2 Thess does not refer to a specific situation. Trilling sees this as another element indicating the post-Pauline authorship.

Making a historical analysis of apocalyptic material presented in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 he concludes that the author has used the traditional apocalyptic material (2 Thess 2, 3–4. 8–10), mixing it with his own material (2 Thess 2, 5–7. 10b–12). Ch. A. Wanamaker believes that, although it is possible to separate two types of material from the 2 Thess 2, 1–12, it is a mistake to interpret this phenomenon as evidence for the non-authenticity of 2 Thess because a similar phenomenon also occurs in 1 Cor 15, 1–11 and Phil 2, 1–11⁵³.

Analysing the end of 2 Thess Trilling shows the convergence of the prayer in 2 Thess 3, 3–5 with a prayer present in 1 Thess 3, 11–13, while in 2 Thess 3, 11–13 the prayer is more formal. Final greetings in 2 Thess 3, 6–15, in his opinion, come from the instruction included in 1 Thess 5, 13. 22. However, the end does not have a personal character. This proves a post-Pauline origin of 2 Thess.

In response to W. Trilling's analysis, R. Jewett points to an erroneous assumption in Trilling's approach. Trilling does not consider the contextual approach, which is characteristic of Paul's writings. The letters of the Apostle were written in specific contexts, and often their forms depend on situation and circumstances⁵⁴.

c) Study of the theology of 2 Thess

The last stage of proving non-Pauline origin is an analysis of the theology in 1–2 Thess⁵⁵. Trilling analyzed the theology of 1–2 Thess in

52 W. Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 67–108.

53 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *Commentary*, p. 24.

54 R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian*, pp. 12–13.

55 W. Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 109–132.

the context of Pauline theology (Rom; 1 Cor), and notes that the theology of 1–2 Thess contains many elements of Paul’s theology (eg. use of the Old Testament tradition). However, immediately he adds that, on the other hand, the theology of 1–2 Thess does not contain many details specific to Paul’s theology.

Analyzing the meaning of the term εὐαγγέλιον, present in 2 Thess 1, 8, he notes that it is used only in reference to proclaiming Christ, which represents a significant narrowing of the interpretation of the term, which is characteristic of the post Pauline period. Analysis of the term ἀληθεία (2 Thess 2, 10. 12) leads him to a similar conclusion. Paul’s reference to the tradition and other letters (2 Thess 2, 15), Trilling considers as typical of the post-Pauline period when the instructions and teaching of the apostles were considered as a tradition.

Analyzing the Christian life presented in 2 Thess W. Trilling notes that it lacks the typical atmosphere of 1 Thess which is dominated by joyful expectation. In addition, the attitude of the apostle appears to be less dynamic. The presentation of the parousia in close connection with judgement and punishment contrasts with the description of 1 Thess and is characteristic of the post-Pauline period of Christianity.

Comparing the presentation of God and Jesus Christ in 2 Thess, W. Trilling concludes that terms like “Lord”, which in the Old Testament are attributed to God, in 2 Thess are attributed to Christ. This, he believes, indicates an advanced Christology.

According to W. Trilling, his analysis proves that the theology of 2 Thess reflects a later stage of development and can be considered as proof of post-Pauline origin of 2 Thess. However, he is not able to determine the time of the creation of 2 Thess. Therefore, he indicates a hypothetical period in the early Church when the expectation of the imminent parousia of Christ was revived. According to W. Trilling, the purpose of 2 Thess was to prevent a spread of that expectation.

W. Trilling’s arguments in the analysis of 2 Thess theology were challenged by R. Jewett and other exegetes and considered to be insufficient to convincingly deny Pauline authorship⁵⁶. Trilling himself,

56 R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian*, pp. 16–17. See: J. Stepien, *Listy do Tesaloniczan i Paster-skie. Wstęp-Przekład z oryginału—Komentarz* [The Letters to the Thessalonians and

opting for post-Pauline origin of 2 Thess acknowledges that no one can convincingly say anything about the author, place, time and circumstances of the letter⁵⁷. All evidence, both confirming and negating authenticity, contain a considerable amount of probability⁵⁸.

Trilling's works, by calling for a holistic argumentation, helped to systematize the current controversy concerning the authenticity of 2 Thess, and thus launched a new phase of the discussion. The major consequence of Trilling's work is a growing tendency to doubt the authenticity of 2 Thess⁵⁹.

2. Conclusion

The above discussion concerning the authenticity of the Letters to the Thessalonians shows that on scientific grounds, objective and fully convincing arguments, which could prove or negate the authenticity of 2 Thess are still missing. On the one hand, we have a centuries-old tradition, but, on other hand, we have questions that we cannot satisfactorily answer⁶⁰. The case of the authenticity of the letter remains an open question.

Among the arguments for and against the authenticity of the letters, the eschatological motif is very prominent. Both groups of scholars, in their argumentation refer to non-canonical literature, and hope to find the sources for the eschatology of 2 Thess. Exegetes, in

the Pastoral Letters. Introduction, Translation, Commentary], Poznan-Warsaw 1979, pp. 106–108.

57 W. Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, p. 158.

58 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 27.

59 It is worth noting that some authors using Trilling's arguments drew from them much more radical proposals than Trilling himself. See. E. J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, pp. 19–28.

60 The argument of scholars supporting the hypothesis of Pauline authorship will not be discussed in this work because most of their arguments were presented while examining the critical analysis of theories of those who rejected the apostle's authorship of 2 Thess.

particular, refer to the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, the Gnostic literature and the Qumran writings. Therefore, in the next chapter we will compare the eschatology of 1–2 Thess with eschatology of the intertestamental literature.

Chapter II

Events Preceding the Parousia

In the first part of this chapter, we will gather and discuss texts referring to two themes concerned with the motif of waiting. The first one concerns vigilance and spiritual preparation for the coming of the Lord. The second theme is deception, connected with external threats. In the second part of the chapter, we will discuss two of the most mysterious characters in the First Letters to the Thessalonians: namely, “the man of lawlessness” and “the restrainer”. For believers in Thessalonica waiting for the coming of the Lord was a period filled with a strengthening of faith and hope, but at the same time, it was also a time of struggling with a number of uncertainties arising from lack of full knowledge concerning eschatological matters and numerous adversities, which in extreme situations took the form of persecution.

1. Motifs of Vigilance and Deception

Motifs of vigilance and deception are related to the period preceding the parousia and concern both Christians and non-Christians. For a clearer expression of the required attitude of Christians during this time, Paul contrasts it with the attitude of non-Christians, which leads them to condemnation. Both issues will be discussed within the context of the intertestamental literature in order to identify the common eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, which occur in the Letters to the Thessalonians, the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

1.1. *The Motif of Vigilance*

The main conclusion, which arises from reading 1 Thess 5, 1–4 concerning the sudden (included in the motif of surprise) coming of the parousia, is the necessity of vigilance and preparation for that day¹. The coming of the Lord, although unexpected, does not surprise those who are awake and prepared. For those who are prepared it will be a joyful day, the day they will meet the Lord. However, for those who are not prepared it will be the day of judgment and the end of false consciousness based on the Roman slogan “peace and security”. Teaching concerning the necessity of vigilance is built on a contrast between the attitudes of Christians and non-Christians. Therefore, we will discuss both groups separately.

1.1.1. *Christians*

Among exegetes, there exists a consensus that statements of the apostle concerning the sudden coming of the Lord (1 Thess 5, 1–4) refer to both Christians and non-Christians. Detailed analysis of the entire passage 1 Thess 5, 1–11 and the distinction between what the author says to the Thessalonians about them, and from what he says to the Thessalonians about non-Christians, will possibly show quite a different conception on the part of the apostle. For Paul the day of the Lord, although it will come suddenly and unexpectedly, would not surprise Christians, because they are prepared. The motif of surprise depends on preparation for that day. One purpose of the apostle’s exhortation in 1 Thess 5, 5–11 (addressed by the apostle to the Christians) is to strengthen their Christian identity, to stimulate their vigilance and improve their faith, love and hope in order to be saved. Detailed analysis of various elements of Paul’s teaching to the Christians will help to understand deeper the apostle’s way of thinking.

a) “The sons of the light” and “the sons of the day”. An expression υἱὸν φωτός – *the son of the light* has its origin in Jewish literature. Basically in the Old Testament, use of a noun בֶּן – *son*, in conjunction with another noun in the genitive indicates the nature of a person or

1 1 Thess 5, 1–4 will be discussed in chapter III.

his origin (e.g. בְּן עֵוֹלָה – *son of evil, wicked, wicked* in Ps 89, 23; כְּלִבְנֵי-עָנִי – *poor*, in Prov 31, 5)². In the Qumran Scriptures, there are two similar terms: בְּנֵי אֹר – *the sons of the light* (1QS col. 1, 9, 2, 16; 3, 13; 1QM col. 1, 3. 9. 11. 13) and בְּנֵי חוֹשֶׁךְ – *the sons of the darkness* (1QS col. 1, 1 0; 1QM col. 1, בְּן עֵוֹלָה, 1. 7. 10. 16; 14, 17; 16, 11)³. They define two opposite groups. Each of them has its own set of attitudes and seeks its own aims.

The Qumran Community is identified with the Jewish sect of the Essenes, who existed from middle of the second century BC until the war against Rome (67–70 AD)⁴. Although, the sect is not mentioned in the New Testament, Philo and Josephus mentioned it as one of the three main groups of Second Temple Judaism, alongside the Pharisees and the Sadducees⁵. An etymology of the name of the sect is uncertain and the name may mean *holy, pious, healers, congregation, and man of action*⁶. The origin of the sect dates back to the time of Maccabeus, and it derives from the *Hasidim* movement. H. Stegemann believes that the *Hasidim*, who accepted the teaching of the Teacher of Justice, became

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- 2 G. Fohrer, *υἱός*, in: TDNT, vol. VIII, p. 346; J. H. Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, vol. III Syntax, Edinburgh 1988, pp. 208–209.
 - 3 E. Lohse, *υἱός*, in: TDNT, vol. VIII, p. 358. See: G. Friedrich, *Der Erste Brief An Die Thessalonicher*, in: P. Althaus, H. D. Wendland, J. Becker, H. Conzelmann, G. Friedrich (eds), *Das Neue Testament Deutsch*, vol. III, Göttingen 1982, p. 246.
 - 4 T. Beall, Essenes, in: *EDSS*, pp. 262–269; O. Betz, The Essenes, in: W. Horbury, W. D. Davies, J. Sturdy (eds), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, Cambridge 1999, pp. 444–470; E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*³, Michigan 2003, pp. 521–531; A. J. Saldarini, Essenes, in: *EB* 3 ed., pp. 264–265; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism. Practice & Belief 63 BCE-66 CE*, Philadelphia 1992, pp. 341–379; L. Stefaniak, Kim byli członkowie sekty z Qumran? [Who were members of the sect of Qumran?], *RBL* 14: 1961, Nr. 3–4, pp. 129–133; G. Vermes, *An Introduction to the Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*³, London 1982, pp. 122–126.
 - 5 Josephus Flavius, *Antiquitates Iudaicae* 18.1.2, 5 and *De bello Iudaico* 2.8.2–13; Philo, *Quod omnis probus*, 75–91. For critical overview of information concerning the Essenes provided by Flavius and Philo, see: M. Baigent, R. Leigh, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception*, New York/ London/Toronto 1991, pp. 165–174.
 - 6 T. Beall, Essenes, in: *DNTB*, p. 343.

the Essenes and went to Qumran in order to create a new community⁷. Other groups of the *Hasidim* joined the Pharisees.

In studies on the development of the sect, scholars use various methods, which lead to different theories and ideas concerning the nature and character of the community⁸. Particularly interesting for us is the method of Von der Osten-Sackena (considered by some exegetes as merely adequate)⁹, who as a basis for a research in the development of the sect takes up the evolution of a dualistic concept in Qumran eschatology. Analyzing 1QS col. 3–4 he concludes that the text is not monogenic but is a collection of fragments from various periods. The text contains the motif of cosmic dualism found in 1QM (older), and motifs of ethical and moral dualism characteristic

7 H. Stegemann, *Die Entstehung der Qumrangemeinde*, Bonn 1971. Murphy O'Connor takes another opinion. He believes that the Essenes settled in Qumran before the appearance of the Teacher of Justice. His appearance caused a split among the Essenes. See: J. Murphy O'Connor, *The Essenes and Their History*, *RB* 81: 1974, pp. 215–244. Concerning the location and history of Qumran see: Z. J. Kapera, *Chirbet Qumran: Osiedle michow czy Villa Rustica [Qumran. Chirbet Qumran: Monks Abby or Villa Rustica]*, *RBL* 49: 1996 nr. 1, pp. 18–28; R. A. Kugler, *Qumran: Place and history*, in: C. A. Evans & S. E. Porter (eds), *DNTB*, pp. 883–888.

Matters of origin and identification of certain persons, mentioned in the writings of the sect (eg. the man of the sin, the Teacher of Justice) are the subject of discussion and many new hypotheses. See: J. J. Collins, *The Origin of the Qumran Community: A Review of the Evidence*, in: M. P. Horgan, P. J. Kobelski (eds), *To Touch the Text. Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S. J.*, New York/Crossroad 1989, pp. 159–178.

8 J. T. Milik based on archaeological and paleontological data distinguished four stages of development of the sect (J. T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the wilderness of Judea*, London 1959, pp. 80–82). See: R. De Vaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, London 1973. For an alternative interpretation of the settlement in Qumran see: R. A. Kugler, *Qumran: Place and History*, in: *DNTB*, pp. 887. Starcky as a basis for reflection on the development of the sect adopted the development of messianic ideas. See: J. Starcky, *Les quatre étapes du messianisme à Qumrân*, *RB* 70: 1963, pp. 481–505. Von der Osten-Sackena as a starting point took developing of eschatological ideas. See: Osten-Sackena, *Gott und Belial*, *SUNT* 6, Göttingen 1969.

9 See: P. R. Davies, *Eschatology at Qumran*, *JBL* 104/1:1985, p. 48.

for CD (later)¹⁰. An important result of this analysis is a statement that in the Essenes' teaching there was a clear division between the material world and invisible world, which were in radical opposition. Those who believe in God are under the influence of God's spirit, and are called "the sons of the light". Those who reject God and walk the path of Belial are called "the sons of the darkness"¹¹. According to the Essenes teaching, God created two spirits: one good and one bad. The 'good spirit' is love of God and it serves Him. The 'good spirit' is always connected with light, truth and justice. God hates the 'evil spirit', although He created it. The 'evil spirit' is associated with darkness, error, sin and guilt. Both spirits have their sphere of activity and people who are under their control. Each of them received from God a time for activities, which causes separation of everything that exists into two groups (1QS col. 3, 17–4, 18)¹². Between the two

10 See: J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, London/New York 1997, pp. 45–47. Collins believes that concerning the matter of cosmic dualism, the Qumran writings shows greater convergence with the Persian myths than with a tradition of the Book of Enoch or Jubilee. J. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star. Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, New York 1995, p. 293. For more about impact of the Persian mythology on the Judaic literature of the Second Temple period see: Sh. Shaker, Iranian Influence on Judaism: First Century N.C.E. to Second Century C.E., in: W. D. Davies, L. Finkelstein (eds), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, Cambridge 1984, pp. 308–325.

11 According to the canons of any religious sect, members of the Qumran community are among the sons of the light, clean and faithful to the convent of God. However, all opponents of the sect are called the children of the darkness.

See: J. A. Fitzmyer, Zwoje znad Morza Martwego [The Dead Sea Scrolls], in: *EB3* ed., pp. 1388–1393. For a discussion concerning the Qumran community and the Qumran writings see: J. Vanderkam & P. Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York 2002.

12 H. Ordon, Pneumatologia qumranska [Pneumatology of Qumran], *RT* 11: 1993, nr. 1, pp. 72–75; H. Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran. Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Crossroad/New York 1995, pp. 68–80.

Abbreviation of the Qumran writings according to P. Walewski, *Praca naukowa nad Biblią. Cytaty i skroty [Scientific work on the Bible. Citations and Abbreviations]*, Czestochowa 2006.

groups there is an absolute separation. Their attitude is different and their destiny is different.

The most common name for the Qumran community is “the sons of light” (1QS col. 2, 16; 1QS col. 3, 13; 4Q280 frg. 2, 1; 1QM col. 1, 1)¹³. Similar terms are: “the sons of truth” (1QS col. 4, 6; 4Q257 frg. 2 col. 1, 3–4), “the sons of justice” (4Q396 col. 1, 7), “the sons of heaven” (4Q418 frg. 69 col. 2, 12–13). The purpose of the community is presented at the beginning of text called “the Community Rules”:

“(…) that they may seek God with a whole heart and soul, and do what is good and right before Him as He commanded by the hand of Moses and all His servants the Prophets; that they may love all that he has chosen and hate all that he has rejected; that they may abstain from all evil and hold fast to all good; that they may practise truth, righteousness, and justice upon earth and no longer stubbornly follow a sinful heart and lustful eyes, committing all manner of evil. He shall admit into the Covenant of grace all those who have freely devoted themselves to the observance of God’s precepts, that they may be joined to the counsel of God and may live perfectly before Him in accordance with all that has been revealed concerning their appointed times and that they may love all the sons of light, each according to his lot in God’s design, and hate all the sons of darkness, each according to his guilt in God’s vengeance” (1QS col. 1, 1–11)¹⁴.

This passage contains a number of moral and ethical precepts, based on religious principles and leading to the faithful fulfilment of the Law. Following of the Rules is a necessary condition to belong to the community. In order to fulfil the Law of Moses, the Essenes separated themselves from the rest of the people, according to words

13 P. R. Davies, War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness, in: *EDSS*, p. 967.

14 Translation of Dead Sea Scrolls according to G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, London 2004. The Community Rule (1QS) contains a set of rules governing social and religious life of the sect. The Community Rule is a collection of texts created during the existence of the community. Their analysis allows you to specify the time frame of their origin. Nickelsburg gives three time-intervals: 125–100 BC, 100–75 BC, 1–50 AC. G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, Minneapolis 2005, pp. 137–142.

of instruction contained in a scroll called the Certain Rules of Law (reconstructed text):

“You know that we are separated from most people and we are not involved in this matters and we are not met people concerning to this matters” (4QMMT^c 89–90)¹⁵.

A natural consequence of separation from the rest of Israel was the division of all people into two groups. Men faithful to Mosaic Law, called “the sons of light” belonged to the group of the Essenes or to the faithful of Israel. Men who break the Law of Moses, called “the sons of darkness” were enemies of Israel or unfaithful to Israel. The major motivation for a radical following the Law of Moses was probably eschatological beliefs concerning the imminent end of the world¹⁶. This assumption is confirmed by the numerous fragments referring to the preparation of the community, found in a text called “the Rule of War”¹⁷, which includes a description of the eschatological war between

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- 15 There is no agreement between scholars concerning a time of origin of “Some Rules of Law” (4Q394–4Q399). It is assumed that the earliest of them could be created around 75 BC, the latest about 50 AD. The text 4QMMT^c is in nature a homiletic instruction addressed from members of the sect, or from the Master of Justice to the High Priest. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on Manuscripts*, Cracow 2000, pp. 115–123.
- 16 P. Muchowski, *Commentary on Manuscripts*, p. 71. See: J. Vanderkam, P. Flint, *The meaning*, pp. 264–265. There is disagreement among scholars concerning a question about the nature of teaching of the Qumran sect. Was it messianic or eschatological? See: P. R. Davies, *Sects and Scrolls. Essays on Qumran and related topics*, *SFSHJ* 134, Atlanta 1996, pp. 61–78; C. A. Evans, *Messiahs*, in: *EDSS*, pp. 537–542; S. A. Fisdell, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Understanding their spiritual message*, Northvale/New Jersey/Jerusalem 1997, pp. 252–230; F. G. Martínez, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, in: J. J. Collins (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, pp. 162–191; E. Puech, *Messianic Apocalypse*, in: *EDSS*, pp. 543–544; J. C. Vanderkam, *Messianism and Apocalypticism*, in: J. J. Collins (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism, vol. I*, New York/London 2000, pp. 214–219.
- 17 The Rules of War are present in: 1QM; 1Q33; 4Q285; 4Q471; 4Q491; 4Q492; 4Q493; 4Q494; 4Q495; 4Q496; 4Q497; 11Q14. The manuscript, whose full name is “The War of the son of Light with the Son of Darkness”, contains principles and rules concerning the eschatological war. It consists of four parts: 1, 1–17 – Introduction, 2, 1–9, 17 – organization and tactics, 10–14, 18 – liturgy

the sons of light and sons of darkness. The Rule of War begins with the significant sentence:

“(…) The Rule of War on the unleashing of the attack of the sons of light against the company of the sons of darkness, the army of Belial: against the band of Edom, Moab, and the sons of Ammon (…)” (1QM col. 1, 1).

A task of “the sons of light” will be to fight the war at the end of times, in which the troops faithful to God’s covenant, under the leadership of the Levites who will perform the necessary religious rituals, will fight and defeat all enemies of God and His People. Text 4Q496 says:

“The sons of light and the followers of darkness will fight for the power of God, amid the tumult and bustle of a great multitude of gods and men on the day of misfortune. It will be a time of anguish for all people redeemed by God. Among all their afflictions will not be like this, since its sudden beginning, until the eternal fulfilment of redemption. During a battle against Kittim they will come out to the slaughter. In the battle three times will dominate the Sons of Light, defeating iniquity, and three times they will gird themselves to the army of Belial, heading back to ... Infantry regiments will lose courage, but the power of God will refresh hearts of the Sons of Light. At the seventh time the great hand of God will overcome Belial, all angels in His power and all the people of His division ... the saints will shine with the help ... true, to destroy the Sons of Darkness...” (4Q496 col. 2 frg. 2+1)¹⁸.

The above text indicates suffering and persecution that the children of the light will suffer during the long and very hard war. Victory in this war is only possible through divine intervention. God supports the

of the war, 15–19, 13 – a war against Kittim. The text is a composition of several earlier texts and was probably written perhaps in the mid-second century BC. See: J. Duhaime, *The War Texts. 1QM and Related Manuscripts*, London/New York 2004, pp. 83–95; F. Gryglewicz, Pochodzenie “Reguly Wojny” z Qumran i data jej kompozycji [Origin of “The Rules of the War” from Qumran and Time of Writing], *RBL* 15: 1962 Nr. 1, pp. 9–18; A. Kubik, Wojna synow swiatla z synami swiatlosci [A War between the Son of Light and the Son of Darkness], *RBL* 10: 1957, Nr. 6, pp. 428–435; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, pp. 143–147.

18 See: 1QM col. 1–5.

sons of the light by sending a host of angels under the command of the Prince of Light¹⁹:

“From ancient times you ordered to the Prince of Light to support us. To him belongs all angels of true and all spirits of true are under his power” (1QM col. 13, 10);

“(…) and commander of His angels with hosts, ordering during the battle” (…)
(4Q491 frg. 1–3, 3)²⁰.

With the help of divine forces during the fight with the sons of darkness, the sons of the light will win, putting an end to all unrighteousness on the earth and taking the glory of victory. The prize of victory will be eternal peace and blessings:

“The sons of Justice will enlighten all ends of the earth, going and shining: until all the periods of darkness will pass out. During the time of God, His Majesty will shine through all eternity for times of peace and blessing, glory and joy, and long days for all the Sons of Light” (1QM col. 1, 8–9).

In the pseudepigraphal literature²¹ the term *the sons of light* does not appear as a technical term defining a group of people belonging to God and following His Law. Only 1 En 108, 11–12 mentions “virtuous spirits born in the generation of light”. However, it is difficult on the basis on this one enigmatic fragment to assume that the phrase was used as a technical term. It is clear that as technical terms the following expressions were used: the righteous (1 En 84, 5–6; 2 En 42, 3–10; 4 Ezra 7, 90–98; 2 Bar 51, 3–5; 3 Bar 10, 15; ApAd 3, 17–20), saints (1 En 39, 4; 50, 1; ApZeph 2, 7), elected (1 En 45, 4–6; 51, 5;

19 J. Duhaime, *Dualistic Reworking in the Scrolls from Qumran*, CBQ 49/1: 1987, pp. 45–46.

20 This text (preserved in very poor condition) includes an alternative version of the Rules of War (QM). See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, p. 76.

21 The scope of our study includes the pseudepigrapha apocalyptic and books containing apocalyptic themes, dating to the period between the second century BC and the second century AD. In the case of the pseudepigrapha precise dating is not certain, so we accept as a criterion the earliest possible date of edition of the text.

58, 2)²². The terms define people faithful to the God's covenant, who fulfil the commandments of the Law and who do not commit any wrong to other people. In the New Testament, the idiom "the sons of the light" is contrasted to such idioms as "the children of this world" (Lk 16, 8; Jn 12, 36) and "belonging to dark and night" (1 Thess 5, 5). The term "children" reflects the patriarchal social system, where the term originates and where it is used²³. This does not mean that it refers only to men. The term ἀδελφοί includes all members of the community in Thessalonica²⁴. Ch. A. Wanamaker believes that the function of this idiom is to distinguish between Christians belonging to the Lord, and non-Christians who are outside the community²⁵. It seems that the idiom is no more than a positive expression of ideas already put forward by Paul in a negative way in 1 Thess 5, 4a. In the context of the instructions contained in 1 Thess 5, 5–10 and used by the apostle in the whole passage 1 Thess 5, 1–11 the method of contrasting the attitude of Christians with the attitude of non-Christians, it seems reasonable to interpret the expression "the sons of light" in an ethical sense, which indicates proper behaviour for Thessalonians²⁶. Christians, who had previously "belonged to the darkness", and now they are "the sons of the light", shall act in a manner appropriate to their new status (cf. Eph 5, 8).

Occurring only in 1 Thess 5, 1–11, synonymous with the expression "the sons of the light", is the expression υἱὸς ἡμέρας – *the sons of the day*. Some exegetes believe that the idiom refers to *the coming of the Lord* who had not yet come, in some way even Christians will participate in it, because they belong to Christ²⁷. The prior background

22 Collins mentions few options under which those terms occur. See: J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic*, pp. 81–82.

23 W. Marxsen, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, *Zürcher Bibelkommentare*, vol. 11.2, Zürich 1979, p. 69.

24 R. H. Sterner, *A Semantic*, p. 120.

25 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 182.

26 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 111; W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, Göttingen 1973, pp. 116–125.

27 T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief*, p. 221; L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 153; C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, pp. 58–60; H. Schlier, *Der Apostel*, pp. 87–88.

to the idiom and the fact that it appears only in this place make such an interpretation possible, however, lack of a particle before a noun, which would indicate a certain day, makes the interpretation uncertain. Considering the suggestion that the expression “the children of the day” may relate to the parousia, we suggest that the expression takes on an ethical sense. Expressions like “the sons of the light” and “the sons of the day” are semantically close to each other and function as characterizations of a Christian’s attitude²⁸. They are also a general introduction to an exhortation concerning a proper spiritual attitude (1 Thess 5, 5–10). Moreover, in verse 8 the noun “days” functions in contrast with the expression “darkness and night” and is placed in a strictly ethical context (1 Thess 5, 7). In 1 Thess 5, 5b the apostle changes the personal pronoun from *we* to *you* and uses it until verse 10. Because of that, the exhortation presented in 1 Thess 5, 5–10 is not merely an order directed to a specific group of Christians but it is a general teaching, which applies to all Christians, including the author himself²⁹.

b) “Watch and be sober”. One major consequence of being “the sons of the day” and “the sons of the light” are obligations concerning vigilance and sobriety. An expression ἄρα οὖν appearing at the beginning of 1 Thess 5, 6, underlines the fact that the conclusion presented in this verse is a result of deliberations provided in 1 Thess 5, 4–5³⁰.

The verb γρηγορέω – *I watch* used in 1 Thess 5, 6 in the present tense comes from the perfect form of the verb ἐγείρω, ἐγρήγορα³¹. In the literal sense, the verb means “*I watch*” and is antithetical to καθεύδω – *I sleep*. In a metaphorical sense, the verb means *I am awake*, and points to deliberate and active waiting for the day of the Lord. In verse 6, it is vividly contrasted with the term καθεύδομεν which characterizes people unprepared for the coming of the Lord. In LXX

28 J. Eadie, *A Critical*, p. 182; B. R. Moore, *Doublets*, p. 53.

29 L. Morris, *The First and Second*, pp. 155–156.

30 Paul often uses οὖν, but ἄρα οὖν can be found in his letters just 12 times. Here it is used in order to strength the conclusion.

31 γρηγορέω, in: *L-S*, (Greek-English Lexicon, Oxford 1951) vol. 1, p. 360.

the term is used in a literal sense in the context of watching the city (Nhe 7, 3; 1 Macc 12, 27), or in the context of divine punishment for the sons of the nation (Jer 5, 6; 38, 28; Lam 1, 14 ; Dan 9, 14). In the New Testament the term appears in the literal sense in relation to Jesus (Mt 26, 38–41; Mk 14, 34–38). In a metaphorical sense the term appears in the context of waiting for the Lord and in the context of preparation for His coming (Mt 24, 42–44; 25, 13; Mk 13, 34–37; Lk 12, 37; Ac 20, 31; 1 Cor 16, 13; Col 4, 2; 1 Thess 5, 6. 10; 1 Pet 5, 8; Rev 3, 2–3; 16, 15). The similarities specific to this fragment are found in Mt 24, 42–44, where in addition to the term γρηγορέω an image of “a thief coming at the night” is added, in the same manner as it is in 1 Thess 5, 2.

In 1 Thess 5, 6 the term γρηγορέω is used metaphorically and describes an attitude of active waiting for the Lord³². The term also stresses the contrast between Christians and non-Christians, who are not aware of coming of the Day of Judgment³³.

The term γρηγορέω occurs also in 1 Thess 5, 10 but its interpretation is not clear. Some exegetes believe that the term should be taken as a metaphor indicating a state of vigilance and preparation³⁴. In this case, verse 10b would take the form: “so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him”, and it would undermine the teaching given by the apostle in 1 Thess 5, 6–8. It would be impossible that Paul, calling for vigilance and active expectation of the coming of the Lord, would violate the logic of his own teaching, saying that regardless of whether one watches or not, he will live with the Lord. The term γρηγορέω from verse 10 should not be taken as a metaphor for determining vigilance and preparation for the coming of the Lord. Most exegetes interpret

32 M. Bednarz, *1–2 Letter to the Thessalonians*, Czestochowa 2007, pp. 373–374; W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, p. 132; C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, p. 61.

33 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 188–189.

34 M. Lautenschlager, „Εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν“. Zum Verhältnis von Heiligung und Heil in 1Thess 5, 10. in: ZNW 81: 1990, pp. 39–59; R. L. Thomas, 1, 2 Thessalonians; in: F. E. Gaebelain (ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary vol. XI*, Grand Rapids 1981, pp. 227–337.

this as a term, which describes the physical (biological) life³⁵. Due to the fact that γρηγορέω does not take this meaning in the New Testament it is necessary to justify this unusual interpretation. The reason for searching for a meaning of the verb γρηγορέω other than that presented in 1 Thess 5, 6 is the claim that a metaphorical interpretation of the verb is in contrast to the logical meaning of 1 Thess 5, 1–11. Analysing only the passage 1 Thess 5, 1–11, we cannot justify a different interpretation of the verb. However, concerning the passage 1 Thess 4, 13–18, commentators can see some similarities between the two texts and can use it to justify an unusual interpretation of the verb. The expression that ends the fragment 1 Thess 5, 5 – 10: ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν – “we may live along with him” is very similar to the final expression of 1 Thess 4, 17: καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα – “and that always we will be with the Lord”. In both cases, it indicates the same goal. Because in 1 Thess 4, 17 those who achieve it are both *those who are asleep* and *those who are still alive*, we may assume that in 1 Thess 5, 10 it refers the same group. Found in 1 Thess 5, 10 the verb καθεύδω, expresses the same idea, as the verb κοιμάομαι which appears in 1 Thess 4, 13, and other synonymous terms used in 1 Thess 4, 13–18. On this basis it seems reasonable to interpret the verb γρηγορέω, occurring in the expression ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν – “whether we are awake or asleep”, as referring to living Christians, called by Paul “still alive” and “left behind”. Consequently, the term καθεύδω in 1 Thess 5, 10 should be interpreted as an expression that refers to the dead Christians in Thessalonica³⁶.

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- 35 E. Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, Black's New Testament Commentary, Peabody 2003, pp. 218–219; F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 114–145; J. E. Frame, *A Critical* pp. 187–188; F. S. Gutjahr, *Zwei Briefe An Die Thessalonicher und Der Brief An Die Galater*, Graz-Wien 1912, pp. 85–86; W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, pp. 1149–152; T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief*, p. 231; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 141; L. Morris, *The First and Second*, pp. 161–162.
- 36 H. Schlier, *Der Apostel*, pp. 92–93. See: T. L. Howard, The Meaning of “Sleep” in 1 Thessalonians 5, 10-A Reappraiser, *Grace Theological Journal* 6. 2: 1985, pp. 337–348.

The second verb defining the attitude of Christians is νήφω – *I am sober*. In literature of the Greek and Hellenistic periods the term was used both literally (implying one abstaining from alcohol) and in a metaphorical sense (a general moral attitude)³⁷. In the New Testament the term appears five times (1 Thess 5, 6. 8; 2 Tim 4, 5; 1 Pet 1, 13; 4, 7; 5, 8) – always in a metaphorical sense. A verb νήφω in 1 Thess 5, 6. 8 means sober thinking and self-control³⁸. This virtue together with γρηγορέω is essential for Christians waiting for the Lord³⁹. Self-control and sober thinking allow Christians, who are the sons of the light, to be guided by faith, hope and love (1 Thess 5, 8).

Metaphorical interpretation of the terms νήφω and γρηγορέω allows us to compare requirements for the Christians of Thessalonica with requirements for members of the community in Qumran. The Essenes, whose main aim was obedience to the law, were committed to constant vigilance and prudence. There was an obligation placed on “the sons of the light” (to spread the light in the world and faith in God), which required an attitude of vigilance and preparedness. Before the Essenes there are two paths, but only one of them could they walk:

“(...) and he has placed before you two ways one which is good and one which is evil. If you choose the good way, He will bless you. But if you walk in the evil way, he will curse you... and in your tents, and He will destroy you with... and mildew, snow, ice and hail ...with all” (4Q473 frg. 2, 2–7)⁴⁰.

37 O. Bauernfeind, νήφω, in: *TDNT*, vol. IV, pp. 936–938. Because of the vocabulary used by Paul, some commentators see Epicurean influence. See: A. B. Malherbe, *The Letters*, pp. 305–306.

38 E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 208; E. Lövestam, Über die neutestamentliche Aufforderung zur Nüchternheit, *Studia Theologica* 12: 1958, pp. 80–102; J. L. Precedo, El Cristiano en la metáfora castrense de San Paulo, *AnBib* 17–18. 2: 1963, pp. 346–347; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 184.

39 T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief*, p. 224.

40 The text comes from the first century BC, as is indicated by the type of writing classified for the early Herodian period. It belongs to the genre of non-canonical literature and takes the form of warnings. Presumably, these are the admonitions given by Moses to the people before entering the Promised Land. P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, p. 249. See 4Q418 frg. 81, 2–3: “You, therefore, separate from everything you hate and you shall renounce all abominations of soul because he did everything and gave them in succession, to each his inheritance” 4Q266 frg. 2 col.

Only one of them is good and the Essenes can walk only this way. Walking both ways, namely to serve good and evil, is unacceptable. The way, which the children of the light are to follow, is the path of righteousness:

“(…) Now, my sons, listen to me and choose the path of righteousness, to follow them and keep away from the road of violence …”(4Q212 col. 2, 19–20)⁴¹.

The requirement of permanently following the way of righteousness was a result of eschatological expectations, which influenced their self-understanding. This perspective assumed that the end of the world would be associated with two events. The first is a time of tribulation and test for the Essenes⁴². The second is a time of transformation, when humankind will be renewed and God will destroy all evil (1QS col. 4, 20–21)⁴³. Walking the path of righteousness is therefore designed to prepare members of the community for upcoming events, through obedience to the Law and following the Rules of Community. Members of the sect could remain on the chosen path only thanks to constant watchfulness and seeking God’s help:

“Give me strength, that I do what is pleasing before thee, and I found your mercy in front of you (…) what is right and good in front of you (…) Do not let any Satan have power over me” (4Q213a frg. 15–17)⁴⁴.

2, 15–16: “(…) If you walk in the perfection of all his ways and did not follow the thoughts of the sinful inclinations and indecent eyes”; CD-A, col. 6, 17–19: “They need to separate the clean from unclean and declare the difference between sacred and secular, and to keep the Sabbath day according to the explanation of those who joined the new covenant in the land of Damascus” 4Q212 col. 5, 24–25: “Now I tell you, my sons, love justice, and do it, because the ways of justice are worthy to take them and ways of lawlessness will die and will stop to exist”.

41 The text is part of the Epistle of Enoch, which is found in the Book of Enoch (4Q201–4Q212). It was written probably at the beginning of the first century BC, and its author was a Pharisee. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 297–298. See also: 4Q260 frg. 1 col. 1, 1–2; 4Q221 frg. 1, 6–8.

42 J. J. Collins, Eschatology, in: *EDSS* Vol. I, pp. 256–261.

43 A. R. G. Deaslay, *The Shape of Qumran Theology*, Cumbria 2000, pp. 291–295.

44 The text comes from middle of the first century BC and is part of a set called “the Document of Levi”. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 284–285.

This text indicates awareness among the Essenes that being the children of the light and walking the path of righteousness is impossible without God's help. Another element of active willingness is contemplation of the Rule, which leads to prudence and a clear mind:

“(…) Consider them all and ask him to make your council right, pass from oneself bad thoughts that you can be happy at the end of time, saying that (those few) of our commandments are valid, and that you have been reckoned as righteousness, when you do what is right and good in front of him, for sake of your and” (4Q399 col. 2, 1–5)⁴⁵.

Reading and meditating on the writings of the Essenes, regarded as essential for their beliefs, is a way to understand the purpose and aim of the community. It is also an element in building up the identity of the community as well as an element that stimulates members of the community to obey the Rules of the congregation. Studying the writings of the sect and following the knowledge learned was a necessary condition for future blessings. Those who obey the Rule and fulfill its prescriptions will receive God's help:

“You did not disgrace the face of all who are looking for me, gathering together for thy covenant. Those who walk the way of your heart listen to me and were formed for you in the council of the saints. Their law you make eternal and their truth you make righteousness. Do not be misled by the villains, according to what is plotting against” (1QH col. 2, 23–26)⁴⁶.

45 The text belongs to a group of writings known as “The Some of the Precepts of the Law”.

46 The text belongs to a group of letters called Hodayat (1QH_a, 1Q35, 4Q427–4Q433a, 4Q440) containing the works of poetry. They show similarity to the Psalms and take the form of monologue addressed to God. Texts from the cave 1 come from the period of Herod dominion (26 BC – 61 AD). See: D. Dombkowski-Hopkins, *The Qumran Community and 1Q Hodayat: Reassessment*, *RQ* 39/10: 1981, pp. 323–364; Z. Kaznowski, Hodajoth, *RBL* 10: 1957, No. 6, pp. 436–444; S. Medala, *Introduction*, pp. 103–106; P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 167–178. Regarding the Hodayat form cave 4 see: E. Schuller, *The Cave 4 Hodayot Manuscripts: A Preliminary Description*, *JQR* 85: 1994, No 1–2, pp. 137–150.

The above text confirms that meditation and fulfillment of the Rule of Community and the prescriptions of the Law was on the one hand the foundation for the spiritual formation of the Essenes and on the other hand was an indicator of orthodoxy.

Another essential element of formation in the community is a spiritual interpretation of events affecting the community. The constant struggle with opponents of the Essenes, and the God of Israel is perceived as a factor, which builds and reinforces the identity of the community. Approved by God, oppression and persecutions are for the community an occasion to build internal strength:

“You sons of his covenant, get stronger in the pot of God, until he wave his hand and his pots will come to end, his secrets for your existence” (1QM col. 17, 8–9).

The pedagogy of God toward the community not only requires, but also contains elements of education through experience and continuous care by God. The source of strength in time of oppression and misery is a deep conviction about salvation, which is coming according to the will of God at the end of time⁴⁷:

“(…) [...] people the truth [...] [...] looking for knowledge and wisdom ... loving mercy, the poor in spirit, cleansed by poverty and deprived of any impurities through difficult experience ... getting strength up until [...] your judgments, waiting for your salvation [...] (...)” (1QH col. 6, 2–5);

“(…) But those who remained faithful to his covenant, God saved and saved [...] (...)” (4Q183 col. 2, 2–3).

The life and all activities of members of the Qumran community are not focussed on this life, but are understood as a preparation for what they expect at the end of time⁴⁸. It is the basic reason for their separation from the rest of Israel. The other reasons are the Essences’ eschatological views; their relation to the Temple; their image of the Messiah, and other socio-religious teachings.

47 See: G. Martínez, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 172–178.

48 Same, pp. 184–191.

In the Old testament Pseudepigrapha the apocalyptic saints, the elected ones and the righteous must possess a set of attitudes, which are not only necessary to fulfil the Law, but also to give testimony of their faith when the times require it⁴⁹:

“In those days make ready, ye righteous, to raise your prayers as a memorial, and place them as a testimony before the angels, that they may place the sin of the sinners for a memorial before the Most High!” (1 En 99, 3)⁵⁰.

To prove that the prayers of the righteous against the sinners were true, the righteous have to walk in paths of justice and avoid all sins. This order Enoch gives to his son Methuselah:

“Love uprightness and walk therein. And draw not nigh to uprightness with a double heart, and associate not with those of a double heart, but walk in

49 Texts of the Pseudepigrapha according to R. H. Charles (ed.), *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of Old Testament* Vol II, Oxford 2004.

50 Because the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha were written at different times and different places, which affects the views and concepts presented in them, when a pseudepigraphal work is cited for the first time we will add a short note containing information on the place and the time of its creation. This will enable the reader to understand the reasons for significant differences in the views presented. The Ethiopian Book of Enoch, also called 1 Enoch, is a composite work of five books, written at different times, places and by different authors. The oldest is the Astronomic Book (1 En 72–82), which probably already existed during the creation of priestly edition of the Pentateuch. Book of Watchers (1 En 6–36) in its basic form could even date from the fourth century BC. The Book of Dreams (1 En 83–90) – in the mid-second century BC. The Letter of Enoch (91–104) containing a previously written Apocalypse of Weeks (1 En 93, 1–10; 91, 12–17), was written around the second century BC. The Book of Parables (1 En 37–71) was written in the first century AD. The great difference in time of writing between particular parts of the Book of Enoch makes 1 En theologically uneven and it includes some conflicting views. See: R. T. Beckwith, *The Earliest Enoch Literature and its Calendar: Marks of Their Origin Date and Motivation*, *RQ* 39: 1981, vol. 10/3, pp. 365–403; D. Dimant, *The Biography of Enoch and the Books of Enoch*, *VT* 33/1: 1983, pp. 14–29; E. Isaac, 1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 5–12; M. A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, Oxford 1978, pp. 1–46; R. Rubinkiewicz, *Księga Henocha etiopska* [The Ethiopic Book of Enoch], in: R. Rubinkiewicz (ed.), *Apokryfy*, pp. 141–143.

righteousness, my sons. And it shall guide you on good paths, and righteousness shall be your companion” (1 En 91, 4);

“And now, hearken unto me, my sons, and walk in the paths of righteousness, and walk not in the paths of violence; for all who walk in the paths of unrighteousness shall perish forever” (1 En 91, 19)⁵¹.

The expression “walk in justice” means first worship the One God (Jub 20, 7–10) and avoidance of all forms of idolatry (Jub 21, 5–6). The Sibylline Oracle in the Second Book lists a number of other requirements for proper attitudes, referring to ethical and social behaviour. These requirements relate primarily to a fair trial (2 OrSib 56–77), charity (2 OrSib 78–94), temperance (2 OrSib 95–118), honesty and abstinence (2 OrSib 119–148). Their aim is to indicate and identify ways of good conduct, which help one to live in this world and help to enter eternal life (2 OrSib 149–153). According to the words of the Slavonic Book of Enoch, important elements of watching and good behaviour before God are patience and acceptance of life events:

“Stretch out your hands to the poor according to your strength. Hide not your silver in the earth. Help the faithful man in affliction, and affliction will not find you in the time of your trouble. In addition, every grievous and cruel yoke that comes upon you bear all for the sake of the Lord, and thus you will find your reward in the Day of Judgment” (2 En 51, 1–3)⁵².

51 See: 2 En 61, 1: “And now, my children keep your hearts from every injustice, which the Lord hates”.

52 The date of writing of the 2 Enoch, known as the Slavonic Enoch, is impossible to determine. The Slavic translation of this book comes from the tenth century. The book is a work created by a process of collecting and editing of earlier sources. Despite references to the Book of Enoch, the book does not show dependence on 1 En. Although the style of the book may suggest Christian roots ideas similar to those contained in 1 En suggest that the book originated in the Jewish community. R. Rubinkiewicz believes that the book was written in a specific sect of the Jewish religion, which combines elements of Jewish religion and Greek philosophy. F. I. Andersen, 2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 91–100; S. Medalia, *Introduction*, pp. 138–139; S. Pines, Eschatology and the concept of Time in the Slavonic Book of Enoch, in: J. Z. Werblowsky, C. J. Bleeker (ed.), *Types of Redemption. Contributions to the Theme of the Study-Conference Held at Jerusalem*

A characteristic feature of the pseudepigraphal apocalypses is their combining ethical, religious and social requirements. The term “watching” in the pseudepigraphal literature implies an active focus on God’s commandments and at the same right human relationship. The “watching” man is a man who serves God and does justice to people.

c) “Put on the breastplate”. The aorist phrase ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης, καὶ περικεφαλαίαν, ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας is variously interpreted by exegetes. E. Best believes that despite the presence of the aorist, the whole phrase should be interpreted as an expression identical to νήφωμεν, referring to the present but oriented to the future⁵³. In this case, the whole phrase would be an explanation of a verb νήφωμεν. E. Best points to the fact that Paul often uses aorist in statements relating to present or future (Rom 13, 14; 1 Cor 15, 53; Col 3, 12). Only in Gal 3, 27 does the aorist refer to a past event. Another view is taken by Ch. A. Wanamaker, who believes that ἐνδυσάμενοι is an act prior to the νήφωμεν. Christians who are the sons of the light are watching and they are sober, because they put on armor, which allows them to watch and control themselves. The context does not indicate the time of putting on armor, however, Gal 3, 27 suggests as possible reference the time of conversion. This interpretation is consistent with the logical sense of the metaphor⁵⁴. A soldier on guard duty or going to fight first puts on armor, and then does his duty, and not vice versa. Likewise, Christians who are armed with faith, hope and love, are prepared for watching and waiting for coming of the parousia.

The metaphor “putting on armor” (Gal 3, 27; Eph 4, 24; Col 3, 10–12) and elements of armor (Rom 6, 13; 7, 23; 1 Cor 9, 7; 1 Tim 1, 18; 2 Tim 2, 3–4; 4, 7) are often used by Paul to indicate a need for spiritual watchfulness and a clear mind in time of waiting for the

14th to 19th July 1968, Leiden 1970, pp. 72–87; R. Rubinkiewicz, *Księga Henocha Słowiańska* [Slavonic Book of Enoch], in: R. Rubinkiewicz (ed.), *Apokryfy*, pp. 197–198.

53 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 215. See: J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 186.

54 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, pp. 254–255; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 185–186.

Lord⁵⁵. The term *θώραξ* occurs in the literal sense in Rev 9, 9. 17 and in the metaphorical sense in Eph 6, 14 and 1 Thess 5, 8. Exegetes are agreed that the source from which Paul drew the metaphor is Is 59, 17, where God put on armor, the helmet of salvation and justice, to punish the wicked and save Israel. In addition, Wis 5, 17–20 uses the metaphor, however naming a more extended list of God’s arms⁵⁶. Paul uses of the metaphor do not refer to the armor of God, but to the armor of man. This also is probably rooted in Judaic thought.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, there are many references to military life and attitudes. Most of them are presented in the writings called the Rule of War⁵⁷. It contains a description of the eschatological war between “the sons of the light” and “the sons of the darkness”. That struggle will also take on a cosmic dimension, because divine spirits will be involved in this war:

“The sons of righteousness shall shine over all the ends of the earth; they shall go on shining until all the seasons of darkness are consumed and, at the season appointed by God, His exalted greatness shall shine eternally to the peace, blessing, glory, joy, and long life of all the sons of light.

On the day when God of Israel, for that shall be battle and terrible carnage before the God of Israel, for that shall be the day appointed from ancient times for the battle of destruction of the sons of darkness. At that time, the assembly of gods and the hosts of men shall battle, causing great carnage; on the day of calamity, the sons of light shall battle with the company of darkness amid the shouts of a mighty multitude and the glamour of gods and men to (make manifest) the might of God. And it shall be a time of [great] tribulation for the people which God shall redeem; of all its

55 I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 138; J. L. Precedo, *El Cristiano en*, pp. 346–347. K. Staab, *Die Thessalonicherbriefe die Gefangenschaftsbriefe*, in: A. Wikenhauser, O. Kuss, *Regensburger Neues Testamen, vol. VII*, Regensburg 1958, p. 41; F. Tillmann, *Die Wiederkunft Christi nach den Paulinischen Briefen*, Berlin 1909, pp. 160–173.

56 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 213.

57 References to the eschatological war are also in other parts of the writing. See. 4Q161; CD col. 7, 20–21; 1QH col. 11, 35. For history of interpretation of The Rule of War, see: P. R. Davies, *1QM, The War Scroll from Qumran. Its Structure and History*, Rome 1977, pp. 11–23.

afflictions none shall be as this, from its sudden beginning until its end in eternal redemption.

On the day of their battle against the Kittim [they shall set out for] carnage. In three lots shall the sons of light brace themselves in battle to strike down iniquity, and in three lots shall Belial's host gird itself to thrust back the company [of God. And when the hearts of the detach]ments of foot soldiers faint, then shall the might of God fortify [the hearts of the sons of light]. And with the seventh lot, the mighty hand of God shall bring down [the army of Belial, and All] the angels of his kingdom, and All the members [of his company in everlasting destruction]...

{...The priests, the Levites and the Hades of [the tribes]... the priests as well as the Levites and the divisions of"} (1QM col. 1, 8–16).

Extending over nineteen columns 1 QM contains a detailed description of the war tactics (col. 2–9) and an accompanying description of the liturgy of war (col. 10–14)⁵⁸. This suggests that military motives were in the Qumran writings not only a metaphorical image indicating vigilance and preparation of members of the community, but they were also a part of eschatological expectations.

In the pseudepigraphal literature use of various parts of soldier's armor to create a metaphor of ethical and moral requirements does not occur. We can only find certain elements of the ethical attitude required from soldiers. The first of them is an element of preparedness for what must happen. However, the author of the Apocalypse of Baruch uses the metaphor in reference to slavery and sea journey, but not in relation to military matters:

"But as for you, if you prepare your hearts, so as to sow in them the fruits of the law, it shall protect ye in that time in which the Mighty One is to shake the whole creation" (2 Bar 83, 8);

58 Y. Yadin made very detailed analysis of military weapons and military tactics appearing in 1QM. Based on extensive research, he concluded that 1QM was written in period between the conquests of Palestine by the Romans and at the end of the dynasty of Herod the Great. See: Y. Yadin, *The scroll of the war of the sons of the light against the sons of darkness*, Oxford 1962, pp. 224–225.

“And again prepare your souls, so that when ye sail and ascend from the ship ye may have rest and not be condemned when ye depart” (2 Bar 85, 11)⁵⁹.

A motif of preparedness is closely linked with a motif of perseverance, which is particularly important in the context of persecutions:

“Ye who have done good shall wait for those days till an end is made of those who work evil, and an end of the might of the transgressors. And wait ye indeed till sin has passed away, for their names shall be blotted out of the book of life and out of the holy books, and their seed shall be destroyed forever, and their spirits shall be slain, and they shall cry and make lamentation in a place that is a chaotic wilderness, and in the fire shall they burn; for there is no earth there” (1 En 108, 2–3).

In the New Testament, Christians are presented as soldiers (Rom 6, 11–13; 13, 12–14; 16, 7; 2 Cor 10, 3–5; Phil 2, 25; Philem 22; 2 Tim 2, 3–5). In 1 Thess 5, Christians were armed with “the breastplate of faith and love” and “a helmet the hope of salvation”. In comparison with Is 59, 17 the apostle changed the breastplate of righteousness into “the breastplate of faith and love” and the helmet of salvation into “a helmet the hope of salvation”. It seems that the modification made is not accidental, but is designed to achieve the aim of the author. The combination of faith and love and presenting them as armor necessary for Christians in relationship with God, seems to be the aim of Paul use of this image (1 Thess 1, 3; 2, 6; 4, 9). A helmet of hope of salvation represents the author’s intention to highlight the status and

59 A full name of Apocalypse of Syrian Baruch is “The Apocalypse of Syrian Baruch. The book of Revelation of Baruch son of Nerijj”, translated from Greek into Syrian language, is called the 2 Bar. It was written in the early second century AD, probably in Palestine in Hebrew language. The book presents topics: God the creator of all things; the chosen people of Israel; the covenant; the final time when the Messiah will be revealed. See: A. F. J. Klijn, 2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch, in: J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament*, pp. 615–620; Same, The Sources and the Redaction of the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch, *JSJ* 1: 1970, Nr. 1, pp. 65–76; R. Rubinkiewicz, Apokryfy [Pseudepigrapha], in: J. Szlaga (ed.), *The General Introduction to the New Testament*, Poznan-Warsaw 1986, pp. 115–116; J. Wozniak, Apokalipsa Barucha Syryjska [Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch], in: R. Rubinkiewicz (ed.), *Apokryfy*, pp. 405–406.

future destination of the addresses. This is clear from 1 Thess 5, 9 in use of the phrase ἀλλὰ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας – “but to obtain salvation”. The purpose of the Christian’s attitude, defined by virtues of faith, love and hope, is salvation. Paul, introduces in 1 Thess 5, 1–11 a technical term “the day of the Lord” (1 Thess 5, 2) containing a clear idea of judgment and dualism (Christians and non-Christians), strongly emphasizing that the purpose of the Christian life is salvation from the wrath of God⁶⁰.

It seems then that arming of Christians in 1 Thess is not only defensive (its function is not only protection from the wrath of God during the judgment), but also offensive (faith and love for God and the hope of salvation allow Christians to remain in vigilant, sober, and are part of preparations for the coming of the Lord)⁶¹.

d) “To receive salvation”. The aim of the sons of the light clothed with “the breastplate of faith and love”, and “a helmet the hope of salvation”, is to walk to salvation. A phrase εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας is composed of two nouns defining two events. The first one: περιποίησις – *reach, get*, presents an eschatological salvation as a process⁶². This term is usually used in a passive sense as *posses* (2 Chron 14, 13; Mal 3, 17; Hag 2, 9; Eph 1, 14; 1 Pet 2, 9). In this passage, as in 1 Thess 2, 14 and Heb 10, 39 the term appears in an active sense, as is demonstrated by the genitive σωτηρίας and the context 1 Thess 5, 6–10⁶³. Salvation is given by God, but from a human point of view, it

60 T. R. Y. Neufeld, *Put on the Armor of God*, pp. 76–84.

61 Exegete’s opinions concerning the function of armor differ. Some argue that the function of weapons is defensive. The armor defends Christian against the evil and judgment (F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 112–113; J. Eadie, *A Critical*, p. 186; J. Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, p. 112; O. D. Vena, *The Parousia and Its Rereading*, p. 123; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 185–186) or from attack of the devil (J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 187). Others thought that a function of armor is offensive and points to elements of vigilance, sobriety and preparedness (E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 212–214; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 139; L. Morris, *The First and Second*, pp. 157–159; T. R. Y. Neufeld, “*Put on the Armour of God*”, pp. 84–91).

62 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 187–188.

63 J. E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 216; E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 188. Another view is shared by Gundry-Volf, who claims that the term is used in a passive sense,

is something that should be achieved and that is the subject of hope (1 Thess 5, 8). Achieving salvation does not mean getting it through labor and effort, but it means more fully entering into the reality of salvation⁶⁴. In this process, motifs such as vigilance and self-control can help to realize God's intention⁶⁵.

The noun σωτηρία means in classical Greek “*deliverance*” and “*salvation*”. It occurs both in a negative context – to be saved by God (e.g. from war, dangers of travel, illness, judgment) or kept alive, those who are in danger (eg. forgiveness received from the rulers, help during natural disasters), as well as in positive context (e.g. be and remain in good health, to be good)⁶⁶. It indicates an action of gods (in the religious sense) or humans (in the sociological sense) in order to help someone or protect something. In the LXX the term σῶζω and other related terms are used to translate Hebrew terms created from core עֶשׂוּ (noun יִשְׁע – *aid, rescue, salvation*), פִּלֵּט (noun פְּלִיטָה – *escape, rescue, salvation, deliverance*), מִלֵּט (in the niphil conjugation; with the meaning *to escape, to find shelter*)⁶⁷. Translation into Greek is characterized by great freedom and often does not reflect the nuances of the Hebrew language. The term indicates the liberating action of man (1 Sam 11, 3; Is 3, 35; Hos 1, 7; Job 26, 2), and the saving action of God (Is 30, 15; 63, 8–9; Ps 44, 3–4). In Judaic literature, the term σῶζω occurs with a similar meaning as in the Old Testament. In the Qumran writings, there are texts showing that the community understood salvation in terms of earthly liberation, as well as in terms of an eschatological reality. The War Rule emphasizes redemption of the children of the light, understood

and consequently shows, with the whole context of the 1 Thess 5, 6–10, on salvation as a kind of *carte blanche*. Salvation of Thessalonians is a decision and action of God himself, which does not require active participation of members of the community. J. M. Gundry-Volf, *Paul and perseverance: Staying in and falling away*, Louisville 1990, pp. 21–27. Nicholl shares the seam view. See: C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, pp. 63–67.

64 L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 160.

65 G. Nebe, „Hoffnung“ bei Paulus. Elpis und ihre Synonyme im Zusammenhang der Eschatologie, *SUNT* 18: 1983, p. 109.

66 W. Foerster, σῶζω, in: *TDNT*, vol. VII, pp. 964–969.

67 G. Fohrer, σῶζω, in: *TDNT*, vol. VII, pp. 970–979.

in terms of liberation from earthly enemies. Salvation of the sons of the light is apparently the annihilation of the children of the darkness:

“For this shall be a time of distress for Israel [and of the summons] to war against all the nations. There shall be eternal deliverance for the company of God, but destruction for all the nations of wickedness” (1QM col. 15, 1–2).

Liberation from oppression and persecution by enemies is intended for the end times, when all evil will disappear, and the sons of the light will live in peace and blessing. Liberation is regarded as salvation, which will fill everyone with joy:

“But let us, the company of Thy truth, rejoice in Thy mighty hand and be glad for thy salvation, and exult because of Thy suc[cour and] peace” (1QM col. 13, 12).

Salvation from the hands of enemies of the community (or wider - all Israel) is treated as a sovereign act of a merciful God. Natural gratitude for this should manifest itself in the act of praise and worship of God:

“But we, thy holy people, will praise Thy Name because of the works of Thy truth. We will exalt Thy splendour because of Thy mighty deeds [in all the] seasons and appointed times for ever, at the coming of day and at nightfall and at the departure of evening and morning” (1QM col. 14, 12–14).

In addition to texts that present salvation in terms of liberation from earthly enemies, which will happen in the eschatological era, there are many other texts pointing to a spiritual dimension of salvation at the end of times:

“(…) He shall watch always [for] the judgement of God” (1QS col. 9. 25).

The judgement day will be the day of just rewards for those who obeyed the Law, namely the sons of the light, and the day of just punishment for those who broke the Law, namely the sons of the darkness:

“[Then those fearing the Lord spoke with one another] and he heeded [and heard them and a book of memorial was written before him of those who feared the Lord and thought of his name.] They shall be mine, [says the Lord

of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act, and I will spare] them as [a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall distinguish] between the righteous and the wicked, [between one who you shall distinguish] between the righteous and the wicked, [between one who serves God and one who does not serve him (...)]” (4Q253a frg. 1 col. 1, 2–4)⁶⁸.

According to the above text, a primary criterion, which will be used during the time of judgement, is service of God, because the future destiny of man depends on it. The prize, which the children of light get for their faithfulness is eternal life⁶⁹. In some texts, the reward of eternal life is considered a result of faithful observance of the Law:

“The s[ons of] heaven whose inheritance is eternal life, will indeed say: we have laboured in the works of truth. Will they not walk in eternal light [and inherit] glory and great splendour” (4Q418 frg. 69 col. 2, 12–14)⁷⁰;

“But those who please Thee shall stand before Thee for ever; those who walk in the way of Thy heart shall be established for evermore” (1QH col. 12, 21).

However, there are texts indicating that the reward of eternal life is not regarded as a natural consequence of personal effort, but it is an act of God, which will take from the faithful misery and will grant them with eternal life. Although observance of the Law is necessary to be classified among the saved on the Day of Judgment, eternal life is God’s gift:

“I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast redeemed my soul from the Pit, and from the hell of Abaddon. Thou hast raised me up to everlasting height” (1QH col. 11, 19–20)⁷¹.

68 The text is classified as a Peshet to the Book of Genesis. It was written in the second half of the first century BC, and probably contained a commentary on events concerning the flood. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 159–162.

69 J. Vanderkam, P. Flint, *The meaning*, pp. 260–264.

70 The text belongs to a group of didactic texts (1Q26; 4Q415–418c; 4Q423). It was written during the period between the middle of the first century BC and the middle of the first century AD. It contains several teachings concerning social life. Its form resembles the Old Testament’s Book of Wisdom. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 217–222.

71 See: 4Q177 col. 10, 10.

The Essenes' scriptures contain little information about what will occur after the last day. The teaching of the community related to community expectations concern manifestation of the Messiah and the coming of the last day. A reflection on life after death is missing⁷². Consequently, there is no reference to a place where the saved will exist. The place is named by the general term "God's tent":

"(...) safely in the holy seat of the peace and tranquillity of the eternal glory of the angels in tents and salvation. I will praise your name among those who feel fear before you" (4Q428 frg. 8 col. 2, 8–9)⁷³.

Salvation, which is inherited by the children of the light, is something quite the opposite to that which the sons of the darkness will receive:

"(...) I an[nou]nce to you [the] firm [pat]h. I will indeed inform y[ou]... For all the Sons of Light] will shine, [and all the Sons] of Darkness will be dark. [For all the Sons of Light] ... and by all their knowledge they will... and the Sons of Darkness will be... And the Sons of Darkness will be removed ... For every fool and wick[ed will be dar]k and every [sag]le and upright will shine. [For all the Sons of Light will go] and perdition... The People shall have brightness... and they will explain to th[em]" (4Q548 frg. 1, 8–14)⁷⁴.

The pseudepigraphal literature in comparison with the Essences' literature devotes much space to speculation about what will happen at the end of time. In terms of the scope of interest all matters relating to the fate of people, both righteous and sinners, are considered. All people will be judged and a fair verdict will be

72 Concepts of life after death and resurrection will be discussed in the section referring to the relationship between the living and the dead at the parousia.

73 The text is a subset of Hodayot and contains the same version, which is contained in 1QH_a. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, p. 176.

74 The text is classified as Visions of Amram (4Q543–4Q548) and belongs to the group of Testaments. It was probably written in the second century BC in Aramaic language. The text includes specifically Qumran terminology and ideas. Particular accent is put on the priestly mission of Aaron. The text 4Q548 contains clear dualistic thought with some elements of predestination. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 331–333.

given. Those who follow a way of justice will be saved and they will belong to God:

“And the earth shall be wholly rent asunder, and all that is upon the earth shall perish, and there shall be a judgment upon all (men). However, with the righteous, He will make peace, and will protect the elect, and mercy shall be upon them, and they shall all belong to God, and they shall prosper, and they shall all be blessed. And He will help them all, and light shall appear unto them, and He will make peace with them” (1 En 1, 7–8).

The righteous will be separated from sinners (1 En 22, 9), a special place will be created for them (1 En 70 and 3; 3 Bar 10, 5) and they will be together with the angels (1 En 39, 4–50; ApAd 3, 17–20). Very often pseudepigraphal literature, in particular 1 En, presents salvation in terms of a prosperous, peaceful, earthly life. It will be filled with material wealth, intellectual and moral excellence⁷⁵:

“And then shall all the righteous escape, and shall live till they beget thousands of children, and all the days of their youth and their old age shall they complete in peace. And then shall the whole earth be tilled in righteousness, and shall all be planted with trees and be full of blessing. And all desirable trees shall be planted on it, and they shall plant vines on it: and the vine which they plant thereon shall yield wine in abundance, and as for all the seed which is sown thereon each measure (of it) shall bear a thousand, and each measure of olives shall yield ten presses of oil” (1 En 10, 17–19).

“But for the elect there shall be light and joy and peace, and they shall inherit the earth. And then there shall be bestowed upon the elect wisdom, and they shall all live and never again sin, either through ungodliness or through pride: but they who are wise shall be humble. In addition, they shall not again transgress, nor shall they sin all the days of their life, nor shall they die of (the divine) anger or wrath, but they shall complete the number of the days of their life. And their lives shall be increased in peace, and the years of their joy shall be multiplied, in eternal gladness and peace, all the days of their life” (1 En 5, 7–9).

Other texts directly refer to a paradise in heaven for the righteous, to their glory and their present supernatural reality:

75 1 En 45, 4–6; 51, 5; 2 OrSib 315–338; 4 OrSib 186–192.

“Enoch’s ascent into the paradise of the righteous. And I saw there a blessed place, and all blessed creatures and all their living in joy and in infinite happiness in eternal life” (2 En 42, 3)⁷⁶.

The concept of salvation understood in terms of earthly reality is a characteristic of early pseudepigrapha. The writings from a later period see a conceptual shift, and salvation is understood in spiritual terms as being in ‘heaven’. This is coupled with the idea of transformation. The faces of all the righteous, who have been carried into the light, (2 OrSib 316) will be transformed by a “luminous beauty” (2 Bar 51, 3)⁷⁷. To them will belong glory and the light of eternal life⁷⁸:

“Blessed are ye, ye righteous and elect, for glorious shall be your lot. And the righteous shall be in the light of the sun, and the elect in the light of eternal life: the days of their life shall be unending, and the days of the holy without number. And they shall seek the light and find righteousness with the Lord of Spirits: there shall be peace to the righteous in the name of the eternal Lord. And after this it shall be said to the holy in heaven that they should seek out the secrets of righteousness, the heritage of faith: for it has become bright as the sun upon earth and the darkness is past. And there shall be a light that never ended, and to a limit of days they shall not come, for the darkness shall first have been destroyed, [and the light established before the Lord of Spirits] and the light of uprightness established for ever before the Lord of Spirits” (1 En 58, 2–6).

This text contains an extensive account of life in heaven. The saved will live forever. They will find justice in God and inherit peace. The righteousness will live forever.

In the New Testament the term σωζω sometimes refers to being saved from physical danger (Mt 8, 25; 14, 30; Mk 15, 30; Jn 12, 27; Ac 27, 20; Heb 5, 7) or healing (Lk 7, 50; Ac 4, 9; 14, 9; Jn 11, 12;). However, the term mostly means the salvation by God in Jesus Christ. In

76 A characteristic feature for 2 En is the creation of a calm image of events connected with the last day. See. J. Frankowski, Apokryfy [Apocrypha], in: J. Homerski (ed.), Wstep ogolny do Pisma Swietego [General Introduction to Sacred Scripture], Poznan-Warsaw 1973, p. 251.

77 See: ApZeph 2, 7.

78 See: 1 En 50, 1; ApEl 4, 28–29.

the Synoptic Gospels, salvation refers to deliverance from sin (Lk 1, 77) or death (Mk 8, 35). It also means to achieve eternal life (Mk 13, 13) or to enter the Kingdom of God (Lk 13, 23), which takes place already on this earth (Lk 19, 10). In John's Gospel, the noun appears once (Jn 4, 22), while the verbal form appears several times and refers to the salvation of the universe (Jn 3, 17; 12, 47), the Jews (Jn 5, 24) and the disciples (Jn 10, 9). It means to achieve life or give life. In Ac the term appears 19 times and refers to the salvation of Christians (Ac 2, 21. 40; 15, 1. 11), which is placed in the future (Ac 3, 19; 5, 31; 22, 16). In 1 Peter the term refers to Christians and means eternal glory. The verb appears in citations referring to the last judgement (1 Pet 3, 21; 4, 18). In Heb salvation is an event that is coming (Heb 1, 14; 6, 9; 10, 25) and will be announced by the Lord (Heb 2, 3). In the letter of James, the term "salvation" means deliverance from the judgement (Jam 4, 12). The same meaning is found in Jude 3. 23.

In the letters of Paul the term σωτηρία refers only to the salvation of the soul or the person. It is an event that will happen in the future (Rom 13, 11; 1 Cor 3, 15; 5, 5; 1 Thess 5, 8–10) but which in some ways is also realized in the present (Rom. 8, 24; 1 Cor 15, 2; 2 Cor 6, 2). In a negative sense, the term means deliverance from judgement (Rom 5, 9; 1 Cor 3, 15). In a positive sense, it means, "to be in the glory of God" (Rom 8, 24; Phil 3, 20–21).

In 1 Thess 5, 10, salvation is a future event. This is indicated by 1 Thess 5, 8, where Paul speaks of the hope of salvation. Salvation is a gift from God; however, it requires an active attitude from man, a seeking for it and accepting it. In this sense, it is still the subject of hope⁷⁹. Salvation, which Christians in Thessalonica are seeking, is most probably understood by the apostle as avoiding the wrath of God on the day of judgement⁸⁰. This is indicated by 1 Thess 5, 9 and the entire context of the passage 1 Thess 5, 1–11. The day of judgement concerns all people, but not for all of them will it be the day of God's

79 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 187–188; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, pp. 139–140. Bruce thinks that the term "salvation" refers to the past as well as to the future. See: F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 112–113.

80 J. Eadie, *A Critical*, p. 190.

wrath. Christians are those who on the day of judgement will avoid the wrath of God. This will be done through Christ, who in order to achieve salvation for those who will believe in Him, died for them (1 Thess 5, 9–10)⁸¹. Christ will not only raise the dead who belong to Him, but He will save all Christians from wrath and punishment. This is not predestination, but “determination”, a consequence of God’s plan realized in Christ⁸². Such salvation cannot be obtained by human choice but by vigilance and a pure Christian heart, manifested by acts of love, faith and hope proof that they are living in the grace of salvation. Christians as *the children of the light* and *the sons of the day* are required to show such attitudes and conduct.

1.1.2. *Non-Christians*

Paul, of course, did not use the term non-Christians to indicate a specific group, whom he is contrasting with Christians; he calls them οἱ λοιποί – *others* (1 Thess 5, 6). This term defines a group of people who do not watch and do not have a clear mind (1 Thess 5, 6–7), who belong to the night and the darkness (1 Thess 5, 5) and who are destined for wrath (1 Thess 5, 9). In 1 Thess 4, 13 the apostle uses the same term to describe people without hope in the resurrection of dead⁸³. In 1 Thess 4, 5 Paul justifies his teaching about purity by saying: “not in lustful passion as do the Gentiles who did not know God”. The phrase οἱ λοιποὶ refers to non-Christians, who in 1 Thess 5, 5–10 are compared with Christians⁸⁴. Christians believe, watch and keep clear mind. Their attitude is characterized by love, faith and hope, so they are walking the way to salvation. Totally different is the case of οἱ λοιποί.

81 W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, p. 147.

82 The term τίθημι – *to devote someone to something; to appoint someone to do something* – in the context of 1 Thess 5, 1–11 should not be read as predestination, but as the intention and action of God toward Christians. See: J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 188; Ch. Maurer, τίθημι, in: *TDNT*, vol. VIII, p. 156.

83 T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief*, p. 223.

84 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 111–112.

a) “Belonging to the night and the darkness”. The terms *νύξ* and *σκότος* are present in 1 Thess 5, 5 in a metaphorical sense and define a group of people that do not know God⁸⁵. The noun *νύξ* is used a second time in 1 Thess 5, 7 metaphorically and indicates the state of those who are non-Christians⁸⁶. Some exegetes believe that in 1 Thess 5, 7 the noun is used in a literal sense⁸⁷. Placing in both sentences the noun before the verb indicates its emphatic use, suggesting use in a metaphorical sense⁸⁸. In addition, 1 Thess 5, 7 provides an interpretation of the teaching contained in 1 Thess 5, 6 where the terms “watch” and “be sober” are used in a metaphorical sense⁸⁹. The terms “night” and “darkness” are semantically contrasted with the terms “day” and “light” and those in 1 Thess 5, 5–10 are used metaphorically⁹⁰.

Paul uses *νύξ* and *σκότος* in the genitive, but without *υἱοι*, which may suggest that these terms do not emphasize membership of a group but emphasize the wrong attitude of non-Christians⁹¹. This assumption is confirmed by the use of the noun *νύξ* in 1 Thess 5, 7. The nouns *νύξ* and *σκότος* are close to each other, and their metaphorical meaning is synonymous. This allows us to treat them as doublets⁹².

Non-Christians do not belong to either the light or the day, but to the night and the darkness. These terms show them as people who do not expect the coming of the Lord but believe in the slogan “peace and security”. Their attitude is characterized by lack of vigilance and a clear mind, which is described by the metaphor “sleep” and “getting drunk”.

85 A. Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 182–183. A. Ch. Wanamaker thinks that the term also refers to the Day of Judgment. Those who do not know God on the Day of Judgment will not be on the side of the sons of the light, but on the side of the sons of the darkness and the night.

86 G. Dellinger, *νύξ*, in: *TDNT*, vol. IV, pp. 1123–1125.

87 L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 161.

88 R. H. Sterner, *A Semantic*, p. 122.

89 A. Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 184–185.

90 For more about *σκότος* in the New Testament see: H. Conzelmann, *σκότος*, in: *TDNT*, vol. VII, pp. 438–443.

91 R. H. Sterner, *A Semantic*, p. 121.

92 B. R. Moore, *Doublets*, p. 53.

In The Dead Sea Scrolls, all those who break the Law and do any kind of wickedness are called the sons of the darkness. They are opponents of the sons of the light, and they will fight the sons of the light for six years, and at the end of times. Generally, the sons of the darkness are neighbouring nations (Edom, Moab, Ammon, Kittim, and Assur) and all Jews who opposed the Qumran community⁹³. Other terms used in relation to the children of darkness are:

- people of destruction and lawlessness – “Do not rebuke and do not argue with the people of perdition. Hide the council of Right from the people of lawlessness” (1QS col. 9, 16–17)⁹⁴;
- congregation of vermin – “(...) belong to the congregation of vermin, and those who walk in darkness” (1QS col. 11, 10);
- lot of the darkness – “Cursed be all the spirits of his [lo]t in their wicked design, and damned in their thoughts of unclean impurity. For they are the lot of darkness and their visitation is for eternal destruction” (4Q286 frg. 7 col. 2, 4–5)⁹⁵.

Belonging to the sons of the darkness is a result of breaking the covenant, and doing all evil in the spirit of Belial:

“(...) for guilt the congregation of his people, for it has wallowed in the sin of the sons of men; (and it was appointed) for great judgements and evil diseases in the days according to the mighty deeds of God and in accordance with their wickedness. In conformity with their congregation of uncleanness, (they are to be separated) as a community of wickedness until (wickedness) ends” (4Q181 frg. 1, 1–2)⁹⁶;

93 Y. Yadin, *The Scroll*, pp. 7–8.

94 See: The sons or the men of lawlessness in 1QS col. 5, 1–2; 1QH col. 13, 8; 4Q 174 col. 3, 1; 4Q 429 frg. 2 col. 1, 4. The sons of extermination and people of destruction in 1QH col. 13, 25, CD-A, col. 6, 15. A man of lies in 4Q171 col. 4, 14. A lot of lawlessness in 4Q 432 frg. 3, 1; Assembly of bastards in 4Q511 frg. 2 col. 2, 3.

95 The text belongs to the group called “Blessings and Curses” (4Q286–4Q290). It was written in the first century BC. The collection was probably used for ceremonies and liturgical renewal of the covenant. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 186–187.

96 The text is classified as Peshet concerning Periods (4Q180–4Q181) and

“He shall not be justified by that which his stubborn heart declares lawful, for seeking the ways of light, he looks towards darkness” (1QS col. 3, 3)⁹⁷.

To the sons of the darkness belong not only people but also angels who serve Belial. According to the Essenes’ teaching, the fate of people is influenced by celestial beings. Angels and demons serving Belial are against all people, and particularly against those who follow the Law:

“Be cursed, Angel of Perdition and Spirit of Destruction, in all the thoughts of your guilty inclination and all your abominable plots and your wicked design and may you be damned” (4Q286 frg. 7 col. 2, 7–8);

“Afterwards they shall damn Belial and all his guilty lot. They shall answer and say, cursed be Belial in his hostile design, and damned in his guilty domination. Cursed be all the spirits of his lot in their wicked design, and damned in their thoughts of unclean impurity. For they are the lot of darkness, and their visitation is for eternal destruction” (4Q286 frg. 7 col. 2, 2–5).

Breaking the Law of God, evil doing and walking the path of Belial makes a man to be part of the lot of Belial and a member of the sons of the darkness. This attitude towards God determines their membership.

In the pseudepigraphal literature, the expression *the sons of the darkness* is not used to describe people breaking the Law of God. The Ethiopian Book of Enoch called sinners: those who were born in darkness:

“And they shall see those who were born in darkness led into darkness, while the righteous shall be resplendent. 15 And the sinners shall cry aloud and see them resplendent, and they indeed will go where days and seasons are prescribed for them” (1 En 108, 14–15).

belongs to the group of exegetical texts. It was written in the first century BC and contains commentary on events that occur at different times. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 158–159. See also: 1QH col. 7, 21–22; 4Q286 frg. 7 col 2, 11.

97 See: CD-A col. 3, 7–9 “But they chose their own will and did not heed the voice of their tents; and the anger of God was kindled against their congregation”.

This passage clearly defines the fate of those who were born in darkness, who left the path of justice and who chose works of darkness. It seems that, for the author of the book, choosing the path of evil inevitably leads to destruction. The author of the Apocalypse of Baruch uses a slightly different picture of darkness. The Syrian Apocalypse of Baruch in the context of rewards for those who act justly mentions those who came from the darkness of Adam:

“And I answered and said: He that lighted has taken from the light, and there are but few that have imitated him. But those many whom he has lighted have taken from the darkness of Adam and have not rejoiced in the light of the lamp” (2 Bar 18, 1–2).

It seems that the author in talking about the darkness of Adam has in mind the reality of “original sin”, rather than a consequence of a deliberate choice of evil.

Other expressions frequently encountered in the pseudepigraphal literature for describing people breaking the Law are: sinners (1 En 69, 27–29; GrApEz 1, 9; ApEl 1, 11–12); ungodly (2 Bar 30, 4–5), unjust (4 Ezra 8, 55–59), condemned (2 OrSib 290–309), wicked (1 En 96, 4–8), cursed (1 En 27, 2–3), the children of fornication (1 En 10, 9–10).

b) “Sleeping and being drunk.” Both expressions understood literally are truisms. However, in the context of 1 Thess 5, 6. 8 they must be read in a metaphorical sense as expressions defining ethical and spiritual attitudes of non-Christians. They are in opposition to terms located in 1 Thess 5, 6 “*to watch*” and “*be sober*”. The term “sleeping” refers to the lack of vigilance, which is the result of rejection or ignoring the Gospel. The consequence of this lack is ignorance of the Lord and in the end deserves punishment on the day of judgement. The term “sleep” shows a lack of awareness of living in eschatological times. Just like a man with closed eyes is not able to see anything around him, non-Christians without knowing the Gospel could not recognize the coming of the Lord. A consequence of ignorance concerning eschatological matters is the attitude which negates vigilance and a clear mind and which is named in 1 Thess 5, 7 as “getting drunk”. It does not indicate a real abuse of wine, but numerous ethical

transgressions⁹⁸. As a drunken man loses control of himself and his actions, so non-Christians, being unaware of the coming of the parousia, act in ways which bring upon them the wrath of God on the day of judgement.

In the Qumran writings, observance of the Law and fulfilment of the Community Rules are criteria for the conduct required of members of the community. Any breaking of the Law means to choose the side of the children of the darkness. In the Scrolls, characterization of the sons of the darkness is very negative. Their thoughts are the thoughts of Belial, because the spirit of lawlessness is living in them and they want all that is bad (1QH col. 10, 16; 1QM col. 15, 9)⁹⁹. They fail to understand the mysteries of God and His righteousness (4Q390 frg. 2 col. 1, 7–10)¹⁰⁰. This is due to negligence in learning, exploring, understanding and fulfilling God's Law (1QS col. 5, 11–13). Those who break the covenant with God do not escape punishment¹⁰¹

In the pseudepigraphal literature, the typical attitude of the wicked and condemned is disobedience toward God, which is manifested particularly in the disobedience of those angels who by their deeds introduced evil on the earth¹⁰²:

“and therefore I have not appointed wives for you; for as for the spiritual ones of the heavens, in heaven are their dwelling. And now, the giants, who are produced from the spirits and flesh, shall be called evil spirits upon the earth,

98 I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 137.

99 4Q257 frg. 2 col. 1, 6–8 – “And the spirit of lawlessness are greed, sloth, deceit, deception, cruelty, great hypocrisy, jealousy, foolishness, boastful zeal, abominable acts in the spirit of fornication, and defiled road”.

100 4Q390 frg. 2 col. 1, 7–10 – “(...) and they will not know and understand that I am furious with them because of their transgressions [by which they will have for]saken me and will have done that which is evil in my eyes, and will have chosen that which I do not desire, striving for wealth and gain [and ..., on] stealing that which is his fellow's, and one oppressing another (...)”.

101 1QS col. 3, 4–6 – “He shall not be reckoned among the perfect; he shall neither be purified by atonement, nor cleansed by purifying waters, nor sanctified by seas and rivers, nor washed clean with any ablution. Unclean, unclean shall he be (...)”.

102 See: 1 En 106, 13–17; Jub 5, 1–2.

and on the earth shall be their dwelling. Evil spirits have proceeded from their bodies; because they are born from men and from the holy Watchers is their beginning and primal origin; they shall be evil spirits on earth, and evil spirits shall they be called. [As for the spirits of heaven, in heaven shall be their dwelling, but as for the spirits of the earth which were born upon the earth, on the earth shall be their dwelling.] And the spirits of the giants afflict, oppress, destroy, attack, do battle, and work destruction on the earth, and cause trouble: they take no food, but nevertheless hunger and thirst, and cause offences. And these spirits shall rise up against the children of men and against the women, because they have proceeded from them” (1 En 15, 7–12).

This fragment presents in a different way from the book of Genesis the origins of evil on earth. The cause of evil is angels, who in spite of God’s prohibitions descended to the earth and united with people, teaching them many things. It was the beginning of every misfortune in the world. They also taught the people disobedience to God by the many evil deeds done by them. The first result is lack of honour to God:

“And when the day, and the power, and the punishment, and the judgement come, which the Lord of Spirits hath prepared for those who worship not the righteous law, and for those who deny the righteous judgement, and for those who take His name in vain—that day is prepared, for the elect a covenant, but for sinners an inquisition” (1 En 60, 6)¹⁰³.

Such an attitude has its consequences, which are lack of reverence before God (1 En 101, 9), and lack of repentance (1 En 50, 4). The result is condemnation. The Book of Jubilees mentions also a lack of circumcision among the children of Israel as a reason for condemnation (Jub 15, 26. 33–34), because it is a sign of breaking the covenant with God:

“And now I announce unto thee that the children of Israel will not keep true to this ordinance, and they will not circumcise their sons according to all this law; for in the flesh of their circumcision they will omit this circumcision of their sons, and all of them, sons of Belial, will leave their sons uncircumcised as they were born. 34 And there will be great wrath from the Lord against the children of Israel, because they have forsaken His covenant and turned aside from His

103 See: 1 En 46, 4–8; 4 Ezra 7, 22–25; 8, 55–59.

word, and provoked and blasphemed, inasmuch as they do not observe the ordinance of this law; for they have treated their members like the Gentiles, so that they may be removed and rooted out of the land. And there will no more be pardon or forgiveness unto them [so that there should be forgiveness and pardon] for all the sin of this eternal error” (Jub 15, 33–34)¹⁰⁴.

Disobedience toward God and His Law is also reflected in human relationships. The attitude of rebellion of those who are breaking the covenant makes them act against other people in ways, which God does not tolerate:

“And in that generation the sons shall convict their fathers and their elders of sin and unrighteousness, and of the words of their mouth and the great wickedness’s which they perpetrate, and concerning their forsaking the covenant which the Lord made between them and Him, that they should observe and do all His commandments and His ordinances and all His laws, without departing either to the right hand or the left. For all have done evil and every mouth speaks iniquity and all their works are uncleanness and an abomination, and all their ways are pollution, uncleanness and destruction. Behold the earth shall be destroyed on account of all their works, and there shall be no seed of the vine, and no oil; for their works are altogether faithless, and they shall all perish together, beasts and cattle and birds, and all the fish of the sea, on account of the children of men. And they shall strive one with another, the young with the old, and the old with the young, the poor with the rich, the lowly with the great, and the beggar with the prince, on account of the law and the covenant; for they have forgotten commandment, and covenant, and feasts, and months, and Sabbaths, and jubilees, and all judgments. And they shall stand <with bows and> swords and war to turn them back into the way; but they shall not return until much blood has been shed on the earth, one by another. And those who have escaped shall not return from their wickedness to the way of righteousness, but they shall all exalt themselves to deceit and wealth, that they may each

104 The Book of Jubilees was written in the second century BC (between 167 and 140) in Palestine. Apparently, it was written in Hebrew. It is a paraphrase of the Book of Genesis. The book relates events connected with the lives of the Patriarchs and the revelation given by God to Moses on the Mount Sinai. One purpose of the book was to urge faithful observance of the Law. See: J. Frankowski, *Pseudepigrapha*, pp. 198–201; A. Kondracki, *Księga Jubileusz* [Book of Jubilees], in: R. Rubinkiewicz, *Pseudepigrapha*, pp. 259–261; M. Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, Leiden/Boston 2007, pp. 1–41; O. S. Wintermute, Jubilees, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha vol. 2*, New York 1985, pp. 35–50.

take all that is his neighbour's, and they shall name the great name, but not in truth and not in righteousness, and they shall defile the holy of holies with their uncleanness and the corruption of their pollution" (Jub 23, 16–21)¹⁰⁵.

The improper attitude of sinners manifests itself in all kinds of injustice and a tendency to use power to resolve any problems in human relations. In relation to God, their attitude manifests itself in disobedience and hypocrisy.

c) "Destined to anger". 1 Thess 5, 9 concludes that God has not destined Christians for wrath on the day of His judgement, but to attain salvation. Although Paul does not say this explicitly, the context of 1 Thess 5, 1–11 indicates that non-Christians will be not among those who are saved.

The term *τίθημι* – *I put, I assume*, in the LXX is used to translate the Hebrew: *שׁוּב* – expressing the idea of *bringing, placement, location*; and *נָתַן* – in a local sense the term expresses an idea of *putting, placing something somewhere*; found in the hiphil conjugation the term *נָתַן* – *bear, order to come*¹⁰⁶. In most cases it is used in the locative sense (Job 7, 23; Jud 5, 1), but occasionally also with metaphorical senses (eg. 1 Sam 11, 2 – to cover with shame, Ezra 14, 3 – to enter into the heart). Often the acting subject is God. His activity concerning creation, salvation and judgement (Gen. 1, 17; Ps 32, 7; 11, 6; Job 38, 10; 1 Kings 9, 3; Jer, 1, 5; 1 Chron 17, 9; Ezra 5, 5; 37, 14)¹⁰⁷. In the New Testament, the term appears 101 times (in Lk – 39 times). It occurs in a local sense (Mk 4, 21; Jn 2, 10; 1 Cor 3, 13), an economical sense (Lk 19, 21; 1 Cor. 16, 2) and a metaphorical sense (Mt 24, 51; Mk 4, 30; 1 Cor. 9, 18). In the letters of Paul, although the term does not appear frequently (only 16 times), it has a strong theological significance. Paul uses the term referring to God's sovereign action of choosing and establishing men to fulfil His specific tasks (Rom 4, 17; 1 Cor 12, 18. 28; 1 Thess 5, 9; Phil 1, 16)¹⁰⁸. The term *τίθημι* does not describe predestination, but God's choosing and establishing for the fulfilment of a task, which in

105 Jub 23, 16–20; TestXII 1.

106 From the root *נָתַן*.

107 Ch. Maurer, *τίθημι*, in: *TDNT*, vol. VIII, p. 153.

108 In the Pastoral Letters, the acting subject is Paul. See: 1 Tim 1, 12; 2, 7; 2 Tim 1, 11).

1 Thess 5, 9 is to attain salvation. Christians, who watch and keep a clear mind and who are acting like the sons of the light and the sons of the day, will reach salvation and will escape from the wrath of God. The situation of non-Christians, who live in ignorance and ethical disorder, is different. Their attitude will make them the object of God's wrath.

The term ὀργή refers not to the anger of man, but to the anger of God. As in 1 Thess 1, 10; 2, 16 Paul stresses that it does not apply to Christians, but to non-Christians and it is the consequence of their conduct and lack of faith in Christ.

The term ὀργή with a term θυμός¹⁰⁹ - *passion, anger* - are used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew terms: אַף וְקִרְחַן – *fiery wrath* (Ex 32, 12; Num 25, 4; Josh 7, 26), אַרְיָ – *anger, cursing* (Num 23, 7; Is 66, 14; Ps 7, 12), אַרְיָ – *is angry* (Is 12, 1; Ps 60, 3). They are always used in the context of God's wrath¹¹⁰. In the Old Testament, the wrath of God is the consequence of human disobedience or breaking the commandments and the Law (the chosen people in 1 Sam 6, 19; 2 Sam 6, 7; 1 Chron 13, 10; Amos 3, 2; Hos 13, 9–13; Is 5, 18; Mic 3, 11; Jer 7, 4; Ezra 5, 13) or disbelief in God (the others in Is 13, 3; 59, 18; Jer, 50, 13; Ezra 25, 14; Jon 3, 9). The term is used in historical contexts, but primarily it refers to the eschatological era. In the New Testament, anger, understood as human anger, is always evaluated negatively (the exceptions are: Rom 10, 19; 2 Cor 7, 11) and considered a sign of non-Christian conduct (Rom 2, 8; 1 Cor 13, 5; Eph 4, 31; Col 3, 6; Tit 1, 7). This is quite different in the case of ὀργή θεοῦ – *the wrath of God*, which is always fair wrath and deserved by man. The wrath of God is always linked with the idea of day of the Lord, which emphasizes motifs of judgement and punishment (Rom 1, 18; 2, 5; Eph 5, 6; Col 3, 6; 1 Thess 1, 10; 2, 16; Rev 6, 17; 14, 9; 15, 1; 15, 7; 16, 1; 19, 15). All people who commit evil deeds are subject to the wrath of God on the day of judgement.

109 Both terms are etymologically different. Ὀργή emphasizes anger, while θυμός refers to emotions. See: O. Grether, θυμός, in: *TDNT*, vol. V, p. 409.

110 Other Hebrew terms for anger relate to both the wrath of God and man. See: J. Fichtner, ὀργή, in: *TDNT*, vol. V, p. 395.

1 Thess 5, 9 says that God has not destined Christians for wrath, but for salvation. This destination is not the result of an act of predestination, but is the result of faith in Christ and of following His teaching¹¹¹. Consequently, all those who do not believe in Christ will be subject to God's wrath. J. E. Frame identifies the wrath of God with condemnation¹¹². In the context of 1 Thess 5, 3, which refers to the impending destruction from which non-Christians cannot escape, the wrath of God in 1 Thess 5, 9 must be understood as a condemnation (to exist separated from God's presence). One of elements of Paul's teaching concerning the need for watching and keeping a clear mind is a motif of God's wrath, understood as a condemnation. Those who stay in Christ will be saved. Those who do not stay in Christ will be condemned.

In the Essenes' teaching, a concept of God's wrath is clearly presented. The wrath of God refers to all who break the Law and do not observe the covenant. The objects of the wrath of God are all the sons of the darkness. The ultimate manifestation of God's wrath is judgement and destruction. All who follow the path of Belial tend inevitably towards destruction, which occurs on the last day. In the Qumran writings destruction could mean loss of Life (in a physical sense):

“(...) A source of Light shall become an eternal ever-flowing fountain, and in its bright flames all the [sons of iniquity] shall be consumed; [it shall be] a fire to devour all sinful men in utter destruction (...)” (1QH col. 14, 17–18);

“And then at the time of Judgement the Sword of God shall hasten, and all the sons of His truth shall awake to [overthrow] wickedness; all the sons of iniquity shall be no more” (1QH col. 14, 29–30)¹¹³.

Probably the basis for such a presentation of destruction is the concept of salvation understood as eschatological peace on the earth. Destruction may also mean eternal damnation or annihilation¹¹⁴:

111 L. Morris, *The First and Second*, pp. 159–160.

112 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 188.

113 See: 1QH col. 12, 9–19. 26; 1QH col. 21, 9; 4Q88 col. 9, 4–8; 4Q177 col. 11, 16; 1QM col. 3, 14–16; 1QH col. 7, 20. 22; 1QH col. 14, 29–30; 4Q252 col. 4 frg. 5, 2; 4Q386 frg. 1 col. 2, 3.

114 See: 4Q204 col. 5, 1–2; 4Q495 frg. 2, 3.

“God’s wrath and his zeal for His precepts shall consume him in everlasting destruction. All the curses of the Covenant shall consume him cling to him and God will set him apart for evil. He shall be cut off from the midst of all the sons of Light, and because he has turned aside from God on account of his idols and his stumbling-block on sin, his lot shall be among those who are cursed forever” (1QS col. 2, 15–17)¹¹⁵;

“And the visitation of all who walk in this spirit shall be a multitude of plagues by the hand of all the destroying angels, everlasting damnation by the avenging wrath of the fury of god, eternal torment and endless disgrace together with shameful extinction in the fire of the dark regions. The times of all their generations shall be spent in sorrowful mourning and in bitter misery and in calamities of darkness until they are destroyed without remnant or survivor” (1QS col. 4, 11–14).

These catastrophic visions of the future fate of the sons of the darkness are not the consequence of God’s cruelty and lack of mercy, but are the result of their conduct and the choices they made. The holocaust and the destruction are the result of a fair trial, which God has prepared for all at the end of time:

“(…) and the Lord judged them according to all their ways, and according to the thoughts of the inclination of their [evil] hearts” (4Q370 col. 1, 3)¹¹⁶.

All those who are condemned by God for eternal destruction, will be separated from the children of the light and will stay in a place prepared for them. This space is presented as the eternal flame in darkness in 1QS col. 2, 4–8; darkness in 4Q201 col. 5, 5; eternal hell in 4Q418 frg. 69 col. 2, 4–9; a great abyss or eternal Sheol in 11Q 11 col. 4, 5–12¹¹⁷.

115 This text is part of a larger fragment (1QS col. 2, 1–18) which contains blessings of the people belonging to God and curses on these who belong to Belial. This is a liturgical text. See: R. C. D. Arnold, *The social role of liturgy in the religion of the Qumran community*, Leiden/Boston 2006, pp. 67–71.

116 The text is classified as a part of didactic admonitions related to the flood. It was written probably in the middle of the first century BC. It contains a description of the flood partly similar to Gen 6–9. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 229–230. Cf. CD-A col. 12, 2; CD-B col. 19, 13–14.

117 See also:

– *in the darkness of eternal fire* – “And the Levites shall curse all the men of the lot of Belial, saying: Be cured because of all your guilty wickedness! May He

In the pseudepigraphal literature condemnation, concerning judgement and punishment for sinners, is one of the main motifs of eschatological teaching. The judgement prepared for the end of time will involve both the righteous and sinners. The righteous one will be rewarded for his loyalty and perseverance, while the wicked one will be punished. God himself will make the judgment:

“And behold! He comes with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all, and to destroy all the ungodly: And to convict all flesh of all. The works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (1 En 1, 9).

Another fragment of the Ethiopian Book of Enoch indicates that the judge is “the chosen one” and “the son of man”:

“And thus the Lord commanded the kings and the mighty and the exalted, and those who dwell on the earth, and said: “open your eyes and lift up your horns

deliver you up for torture at the hands of the vengeful Avengers! May He visit you with destruction by the hand of all the Wreakers of Revenge! Be cursed without mercy because of the darkness of your deeds! Be damned in the shadowy place of everlasting fire! May God not heed when you call on Him, nor pardon you by blotting out your sin!” (1QS col. 2. 4–8),

– *in the darkness* – “For Raphael said: go, Rafael and bind Asael’s arms and legs, throw him in the dark...” (4Q201 col. 5, 5),

– *in eternal hell* – “And now, o you foolish hearts, what good is to (someone) who is not... [What] is silence for someone who does not exist, and what is judgement if it has no foundation? Why do the dead groan over there... you have been shaped and you return is to eternal destruction? For it shall wake up ... your sin. Darkness will roar against your dispute. And all those who will exist for ever, those who search truth will be aroused for your judgement [and then] all the foolish hearts will be destroyed and the sons of injustice will be found no more” (4Q418 frg. 69 col. 2, 4–9),

– *in the great abyss and eternal hell* – “and in His anger he will send against you a mighty angel [to execute] all His decisions, who will be [without] mercy on you ... against all these, who [will take] you [down] to the great abyss, [and to] the nethermost [hell.] ... dark [in the gr]eat abyss ... no more on the earth. (...) for ever, and ... by the curse of Abaddon (the bottom of hell) ... the furious anger of the L[ord] ...” (11Q11 col. 4, 5–12).

if ye are able to recognize the Elect One”. And the Lord of Spirits seated him on the throne of His glory, and the spirit of righteousness was poured out upon him, and the word of his mouth slays all sinners and all the unrighteous are destroyed from before his face” (1 En 62, 1–2);

“And he sat on the throne of his glory, and the sum of judgment was given unto the Son of Man, and he caused the sinners to pass away and be destroyed from off the face of the earth, and those who have led the world astray. With chains shall they be bound, and in their assemblage-place of destruction shall they be imprisoned, and all their works vanish from the face of the earth. And from henceforth, there shall be nothing corruptible; for that Son of Man has appeared, and has seated himself on the throne of his glory, and all evil shall pass away before his face and the word of that Son of Man shall go forth and be strong before the Lord of Spirits. This is the third Parable of Enoch” (1 En 69, 27–29).

However, the Apocalypse of Elijah sees the Son of God in the person of the judge (ApEl 5, 25–29). Although the identity of the judge is not clear, the issue of punishment for all sinners, both human and angels (1 En 10, 4 -6; 16, 2–3; 19, 1; 21, 10; 54, 4–6; 2 En 7, 1–2) is the same as in all pseudepigraphal writings. The penalty that will be imposed on them contains: earthly tribulation (1 En 5, 4–7; 38, 1–4; 2 Bar 30, 4–5; 54, 17); disappearing from the earth’s surface (1 En 53, 2–3); destruction in Sheol (1 En 98, 11–16); suffering in Gehenna (2 OrSib 290–309); residing in the eternal fire (TesJud 25). The penalty imposed will be the consequence of a fair and consistent judgment:

“I wrote out your petition, and in my vision it appeared thus, that your petition will not be granted unto you throughout all the days of eternity, and that judgement has been finally passed upon you: yea (your petition) will not be granted unto you. And from henceforth you shall not ascend into heaven unto all eternity, and in bonds of the earth the decree has gone forth to bind you for all the days of the world. And (that) previously you shall have seen the destruction of your beloved sons and ye shall have no pleasure in them, but they shall fall before you by the sword. And your petition on their behalf shall not be granted, nor yet on your own: even though you weep and pray and speak all the words contained in the writing which I have written” (1 En 14, 4–7);

“Often they will request God, who rules on high in vain, and then he will manifestly turn away his face from them” (2 OrSib 309–310)¹¹⁸.

The first of these texts relates to the irreversible fate of fallen angels, for whom there is no possibility of returning to heaven. A second text refers to sinners who will not be heard by God. However, in the pseudepigraphal literature it is possible to find a few texts expressing the belief that the punishment is temporary:

“Then the angel said to me ‘Lift up your eyes and look at the whole gamut of punishments’. But I said to the angel ‘My sight cannot embrace them because of their great number; but I desire to understand how long these people are to be in this torture’. He said to me ‘Until the God of mercy becomes merciful and has mercy on them’” (TIss 5, 31–32)¹¹⁹;

118 The Sibylline Oracles is a collection of twelve books written in different periods and representing different traditions. The book was written in hexameter. Books 1 and 2 were written around the middle of the second century AD, however parts date back to even pre-Christian times. Book 3 (of Jewish origin) comes from the first century BC, and was probably written in Alexandria. It is the oldest Book in the entire set. Book 4 (also Jewish) is dated in the 80s of the first century AD. A pagan author wrote Book 5, but in the second century AD a Jewish editor rewrote it. Book 6 was written in the third century AD. Book 7 was written in the second century AD. Book 8 is dated to around 175 AD. Book 11 was written at the turn of the first century BC and first century AD. Books 12 and 13 come from the third century AD. The latest is Book 14, which was written not earlier than in seventh century. The original Books 9 and 10 are now part of Book 8. The name of the book is derived from the name of the pagan prophetess Sibyl, whose oracles, usually foretelling coming anger and misery were highly esteemed in the ancient world. The number of Sibylline oracles increased, and both Jews and Christians adopted some oracles. Although they have numerous political references and can be viewed as a specific kind of political propaganda, the Oracles are primarily religious in nature. This is reflected in the dominant belief that everything happens by the will of the gods (pagan oracles) or God (Jewish and Christian oracles). See: J. J. Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 317–324; Same, *Seers, Sibyls and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism*, Leiden/New York/Köln 1997, pp. 181–197; D. S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire*, Oxford 1990, pp. 95–140.

119 The Testament of Isaac was probably written shortly after the Testament of Abraham (about 100 AD), presumably in Greek. A version of the text has Christian elements, which can be due to reworking by some Coptic Christians.

“To these pious ones imperishable God, the universal ruler, will also give another thing. Whenever they ask the imperishable God to save men from the raging fire and deathless gnashing he will grant if, and he will do this” (2 OrSib 330–333)¹²⁰.

Both texts demonstrate the full and unlimited power of God regarding man and his soul after death. God can accept the requests of sinners, he can also put an end to the time of punishment, but all this is a sovereign act of His will. However, according to the majority of texts, the punishment is inevitable, everlasting, and severe and it will take place at the end of time.

The place of eternal imprisonment is variously defined, but it is always a specifically designated place where sinners suffer continuously:

“And such has been made for sinners when they die and are buried in the earth and judgement has not been executed on them in their lifetime. Here their spirits shall be set apart in this great pain till the great day of judgement and punishment and torment of those who curse forever and retribution for their spirits” (1 En 22, 10–11).

The place of the condemned is known as *Bloody Valley* – (1 En 27, 2–3); Sheol – (1 En 56, 8); a place filled with darkness (1 En 63, 11; 108, 14–15), the place where Black Fire is burning (2 En 10, 1–6), Gehanna (4 OrSib 183–186; GrApEz 1, 9), the lower regions of Tartarus (GrApEz 4, 5–8).

1.2. *Motif of Deception*

The motif of deception is one of the main topics of the fragment 2 Thess 2, 1–12. It applies to both Christians in Thessalonica (2 Thess 2, 1–3. 5) as

References to the father of Jacob and the twelve tribes (Jub 2, 22) suggest that the original place of writing of this Book was the Jewish Diaspora in Egypt. The Book tells the story of Isaac, to whom God sent the archangel Michael to take him to the heaven. See. W. F. Stinerspring, Testament of Isaac, in: J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament*, pp. 903–904. See: R. Rubinkiewicz, *The Pseudepigrapha*, p. 107.

120 The second Book of the Sybilline Oracles is probably a Jewish text, which was rewritten by a Christian editor. Topics of the Book are oppression at the end times and the final judgement. J. J. Collins, *Sybilline Oracles*, p. 330.

well as to non-Christians (2 Thess 2, 10–12). The approach to the problem of deception is different for each group. It is therefore necessary to discuss separately this issue in relation to each group. It will help to understand the author's views concerning the fate of those who are deceived. It will also show a way of responding to one of the biggest problems of this letter, the false proclamation that the parousia has already come.

1.2.1. *Deceiving of Christians*

The basis for the teaching presented in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 is the problem of the proclamation of the false doctrine that the parousia has already come. The teaching was being proclaimed in Thessalonica, although it was the opposite of the teachings of the apostle to the community during his mission in the city (1 Thess 5, 5). In 2 Thess 2, 1–2 the author outlines the problem as follows:

- a) The topic of deception,
- b) The main thesis of the deception,
- c) The Method of the deception,
- d) Opposition toward the false teaching.

Below we will discuss each of these.

a) Topic of deception. In 2 Thess 2, 1 the apostle mentions two issues referring to the parousia. The first one concerns τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – *coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*¹²¹. The second refers to ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτὸν – *our assembly before him*. The noun ἐπισυναγωγή is rare both in the LXX (2 Macc 2, 7–8) and in the New Testament (2 Thess 2, 1; Heb 10, 25). In

121 The expression παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου has been discussed in section 1.1.1. As in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 the apostle uses this term, which stressed the happy aspect of the coming of the Lord and omits motifs of the judgment and punishment. This is probably related to the importance of the next expression. In 1 Thess 5, 1–11 the apostle uses a term ἡμέρα κυρίου which contains a strong idea of judgment and punishment. The purpose of the teaching of this section is to convince Thessalonians that due to their being sons of the light and the sons of the day they are destined to salvation, and not for God's wrath at the Day of Judgment.

Heb 10, 25 the term refers to a community-meeting, while the other two fragments are eschatological¹²². As a verb it is used in the Old Testament to express the re-building the nation after the Babylonian exile (Is 43, 4–7; 52, 12; 56, 8; Jer 31, 8; Ezra 28, 9; Ps 105, 47) and a collection of nations on the judgment day (Joel 3, 2)¹²³. In the New Testament, the term refers to a gathering of believers together with the Lord on the last day (Mt 24, 31; Mk 13, 27; Lk 13, 34). In 2 Thess 2, 1 ἐπισυναγωγή occurs in conjunction with παρουσία and explicitly refers to events connected with coming of the Lord. As in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 the apostle here accentuates the positive aspects of the parousia (coming of the Lord and the gathering of the community with Him) omitting issues of judgment and punishment, which are the subject of his teaching in 1 Thess 5, 1–11. The assembly of Christians with the Lord at His coming is for the community in Thessalonica the focal point of their eschatological hope. We therefore conclude that the sowing of confusion on these issues constituted an attempt to break up the community by raising doubts respecting their eschatological expectation (2 Thess 2, 3).

b) The thesis of the deception. The ending expression ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου – *as if it was the day of Lord* (2 Thess 2, 2) indicates a problem that has emerged in the community. For the Thessalonians, who expected an imminent parousia (1 Thess 5, 1–7), and felt concern about the fate of the dead on that day (1 Thess 4, 13–18) and feared God’s wrath (1 Thess 5, 8–10), this thesis had to have a strong impact (2 Thess 2, 2).

The use of the verb, ἐνέστηκεν (*indicative perfect active*) shows that the false teaching assumed that day of the Lord has come¹²⁴. The verb

122 W. Schrage, ἐπισυναγωγή, in: *TDNT*, vol. VII, p. 841.

123 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 238.

124 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 259; E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 275–278; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 248. Some exegetes try to show that this term should be translated as: *it is near, no longer insists* saying that it refers to the very near future. See: Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith. An Exegetical and theological Re-Examination of 2 Thessalonians 2*, Rome 1967, pp. 122–131; A. M. G. Stephenson, On the meaning of ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου in 2 Thessalonians 2, 2, in: *StEv* 4: 1968, pp. 442–451. For an extensive presentation, see J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, pp. 259–264.

ἐνίστημι typically occurs in the sense of time, indicating the “advent” of something (1 Macc 8, 24; 2 Macc 4, 43) or presence (1 Macc 12, 44; 2 Macc 6, 9; 12, 3).

In the New Testament, the term almost always (except 2 Tim 3, 1) occurs in a temporal sense (Rom 8, 38; 1 Cor 3, 22; 7, 26; Gal 1, 4; 2 Thess 2, 2; Heb 9, 9)¹²⁵. The apostle consistently associates the coming of the Lord with the assembly of believers before Him. This joyous aspect of the parousia was disturbed probably by the proclamation of a thesis that, although the day of the Lord already has come, Thessalonians had not been gathered around the coming Lord. Based on this text we cannot determine with certainty how the Thessalonians understood the false teaching. Using the term ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου and not the parousia, the author suggests that the Thessalonians in all likelihood accepted the view that the day of the Lord (oppression and persecution here are signs proving this teaching) has already come¹²⁶. This could lead to wrong attitudes (2 Thess 3, 6–12). Thessalonians suffering persecution could consider them as signs of the day of judgment (2 Thess 1, 4–8) and as a sign of lack of preparation for the coming of the Lord. The reason for such a reaction could be the apostle’s teaching about a sudden and unexpected coming of the Lord (1 Thess 5, 1–11), which would surprise non-Christians but not Christians. Considering that the basis for teaching in 1 Thess 5, 1–11 was the fear and anxiety of believers concerning the eventual wrath of God, it can be assumed that the persecutions affecting the community were

125 A. Oepke, ἐνίστημι, in: *TDNT*, vol. II, p. 543.

126 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 278; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *the Epistles*, p. 240. A suggestion that Thessalonians were convinced that the day of the Lord (as was describe in 1 Thess 4, 13–18) has come, must be considered unlikely, since none of events described by the apostle in 1 Thess had not yet occurred. See: I. H. Jones, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, Epworth 2005, p. 104. A Gnostic interpretation of this term made by Schmithals is unconvincing. He argues that the conviction of believers at Thessalonica was similar to those beliefs of Gnostics who believe that through gnosis they have been raised. See: W. Schmithals, Die historische Situation der Thessalonicherbriefe. Paulus und die Gnostiker. Untersuchungen zu den kleinen Paulusbriefen, in: *Theologische Forschung* 35: 1965, pp. 146–148.

interpreted as signs of the day of the Lord. It again created an anxiety among the Christians that they are being subjected to God's wrath due to lack of preparation¹²⁷.

c) The method of deception. By using in 2 Thess 2, 2 two infinitives σαλευθῆναι – *let you be shaken* and θροεῖσθαι – *give to intimidate* the author clearly demonstrates the consequences of the proclaimed thesis. The first infinitive, used in the aorist, emphasizes a one-off action, but without indicating its continuation or termination¹²⁸. The verb σαλεύω – *I lull, I shake, I give a shake* occurs in the New Testament with a literal meaning (Mt 11, 7; Lk 6, 38; 7, 24; Ac 4, 31; 16, 26; Jn 12, 28–30; Heb 12, 26–27) and in a figurative sense to describe a state of anxiety (Ac 17, 13; 2 Thess 2, 2)¹²⁹. In 2 Thess 2, 2 together with ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοῦς indicates the effect which produced a thesis concerning the Lord's coming¹³⁰. It introduced anxiety and suspicion into the thinking of Thessalonians¹³¹. Probably the false teaching challenged the existing beliefs and caused general confusion. The second infinitive θροεῖσθαι occurs in the passive voice of the present tense, which underlines the effects of the proclamation of such a thesis for the future and its having a strong negative impact¹³². Paul mentions three possible sources of the thesis. These are: διὰ πνεύματος – *by spirit*; διὰ λόγου – *by word*; δι' ἐπιστολῆς – *by letter*. Διὰ πνεύματος may relate to prophetic activity in the community, as the apostle mentioned in

127 G. D. Fee, Pneuma and Eschatology in 2 Thessalonians 2, 1–2: A Proposal about “Testing the Prophets” and the Purpose of 2 Thessalonians, in: T. E. Schmidt/ M. Silva (eds), *To Tell the Mystery. Essays on New Testament Eschatology in Honor of Robert H. Gundry*, Sheffield 1994, p. 200; R. H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, Grand Rapids 1973, pp. 118–119.

128 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 245.

129 H. Balz, σαλεύω, in: *EDNT*, vol. III, col. 534–535; G. Bertram, σαλεύω, in: *TDNT*, vol. VII, p. 69.

130 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 239. The term ὑμᾶς should be understood not as an *opinion*, but as *understanding, thinking*. See: J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 256.

131 J. Callow, *A Semantic*, p. 56.

132 L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 214. This term is found also in Mk 13, 7 in an apocalyptic context. See: M. Bednarz, *1–2 Epistles*, pp. 498–499.

1 Thess 5, 19–20¹³³, or to expressions inspired by the Holy Spirit similar to an apocalyptic vision¹³⁴. Διὰ λόγου refers to oral tradition, and δι' ἐπιστολῆς to written tradition. Paul did not know exactly what was the source of the proclaimed teaching, as is shown by the three phrases beginning with μήτε δια – *either because* and an expression ὡς δι' ἡμῶν – *allegedly by us*, which may be related to each of the three items¹³⁵. He knew, however, that people were spreading the false doctrine and unlawfully using his apostolic authority, as is indicated by ὡς δι' ἡμῶν¹³⁶.

Exegetes' opinions concerning the interpretation and function of the expression ὡς δι' ἡμῶν are divided. Some, in particular those who deny the authenticity of 2 Thess, believe that this term should refer only to δι' ἐπιστολῆς, which combined with 2 Thess 3, 17 strengthens the hypothesis of the false letter¹³⁷. According to F. F. Bruce, two other possible sources may be some members of the community or a newcomer. This expression may also relate to the last two nouns (word and letter.) This interpretation finds its justification in 2 Thess 2, 15, where the apostle refers to oral teaching (during his stay in Thessalonica) and to the Letter (1 Thess)¹³⁸. It is also grammatically correct to refer ὡς δι' ἡμῶν to all three nouns¹³⁹. The fact that the apostle does not indicate with certainty one source, but he lists a number of possibilities makes it possible to conclude that the emphasis is not on the source from which the false teaching came but on the fact that it is not

133 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 246.

134 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, pp. 324–325.

135 G. D. Fee, *Pneuma*, pp. 201–201.

136 F. Blass, A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago/London 1961, § 445; N. Turner, *Syntax*, vol. III, in : J. H. Moulton (ed.), *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. I-IV, Edinburgh 1963, pp. 137–138.

137 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 164; G. S. A. Holland, *A Letter Supposedly*, pp. 400–402; A. Lindemann, *Zu Abfassungszweck*, pp. 35–47; E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, p. 325.

138 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 258.

139 Most exegetes defending the authenticity of 2 Thess understand this phrase in this way. See: E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 278–279; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 246; G. D. Fee, *Pneuma*, p. 206; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 239.

the teaching of Paul¹⁴⁰. The false teaching, which could be a result of a deliberate action of someone, or simply a result of misunderstanding or unauthorized interpretations of the apostle's teaching (both in oral form and the letter), does not come from Paul and was contrary to his doctrine. In 2 Thess 2, 2 the apostle concludes that any teaching proclaiming that the day of the Lord had already come does not come from him (regardless of the form in which it was proclaimed to Thessalonians) and the members of the community should not accept it readily. This interpretation is confirmed by 2 Thess 2, 3, where the phrase μή τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον – *to no one in any way deceive you*, clearly indicates that the author has in mind more than one opportunity of deceiving. The verb ἐξαπατάω – *I trick, I cheat* occurs in the New Testament in context of the falsity of sensual desire (Rom. 7, 11; 2 Cor 11, 3), an action of sin (1 Tim 2, 14), not be deceive (Rom 16, 18; 1 Cor 3; Eph 5, 6; 2 Thess 2, 3), self-deception (Jam 1, 26)¹⁴¹. In 2 Thess 2, 3 the verb refers to the false teaching concerning coming of the Lord.

d) The answer of the author. The answer of Paul to the problem presented in 2 Thess 2, 1–2 is given in 2, 3b¹⁴². The passage is the *protasis* of a conditional sentence but an *apodosis* of the sentence is missing. This *anacoluton* causes a problem in determining the apodosis. Should it be the preceding passage or the following passage, which determines the meaning of the sentence? The fragment 2 Thess 2, 1–2, where the author presents the thesis of deception – “that supposedly the day of the Lord came” – and suggests its source, but without any conclusion (explicit clarification of his position), indicates a preceding context of the fragment as the place from which the apodosis can be established. It seems that the goal of the apostle is to proclaim that the day of the

140 It is unlikely that the false teaching came from all three sources simultaneously. In 2 Thess 2 the apostle mentions only two possible options, but with no certainty from which one the teaching derived. See: J. Th. Ubbink, ὡς οἱ ἡμῶν (2 Thess 2, 2) een exegetisch-isagogische puzzle?, *NedTbT* 7: 1957, pp. 269–295.

141 A. Oepke, ἐξαπατάω, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, p. 384.

142 The phrase: ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας – *because, if first there will be no revolt and the man of lawlessness will not be revealed.*

Lord had not yet come. It is the logical conclusion of 2 Thess 2, 1–3a and the following context will justify such an assertion. The conviction of Paul is that the day the Lord will not come without preceding signs, which are apostasy and the manifestation of the man of lawlessness (2 Thess 2, 3b)¹⁴³. The verb *πρωτον* indicates the apostasies and the revelation of the man of lawlessness as motifs necessary to confirm the thesis that the day of the Lord had already come. This does not mean, however, that the coming of the Lord depends on these motifs. Ch. H. Giblin, who believes that the *apodosis* for 2 Thess 2, 3b is placed in following context¹⁴⁴, goes too far with this proposal. Giblin considers apostasy and revelation of the man of lawlessness to be necessary conditions for the coming of the judgement day. Based on an analysis of the Apocalypse of Baruch and the Ethiopian Book of Enoch, he shows that the day of the Lord is a day of judgement upon apostates and the man of lawlessness. Therefore, both motifs must occur before the end of this day. In his opinion, this is not an attempt to create a scenario of the day of judgement, but is a compilation of apocalyptic ideas, which stress the logical consequence of events and should be understood as having “logical priority”¹⁴⁵. Assuming that 2 Thess 2, 3b represents the unfinished *protasis* of the conditional sentence, which is rather the conclusion of the argumentation contained in 2 Thess 2, 1–3a, rather than the (syntactically) enigmatic argument of 2 Thess 2, 4–10, Giblin’s claim is unacceptable.

Arguing that day the Lord had not yet occurred, the apostle refers to two characters, who must not only appear, but also must be visible to the Thessalonians, before the thesis that the day of the Lord had come could be considered reliable. These are: ἡ ἀποστασία – apostasies and ἀποκαλυφθῆ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας – the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition¹⁴⁶.

143 Most exegetes are in favour of this interpretation of 2 Thess 2, 3. See: M. Bednarz, *1–2 Letter to the Thessalonians*, pp. 696–697; E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 280–281; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 250; E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, p. 326; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 243–244.

144 Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, pp. 122–139.

145 *Ibid*, p. 139.

146 The second sign will be discussed in section 3. 2.

Apostasy – ἡ ἀποστασία as a sign indicating the coming of the Lord is a consequence of the revelation and activities of the man of lawlessness¹⁴⁷. In the LXX it is used to denote political (Josh 22, 22; 2 Chron 29, 19; 1 Ezra 2, 23; 1 Macc 2, 15; Is 2, 4; Jer. 2, 19; 33, 19) or religious apostasies (Josh 22, 16. 19; Num 14, 9; Is 30, 1; 2 Macc 5, 8). In the New Testament, the term appears twice. In Act 21, 21 the term appears in the context of allegations against Paul and in 2 Thess 2, 3 in context of apostasy at the day of the Lord. Apostasy has a religious nature and is directed against God¹⁴⁸. In the context of 2 Thess 2, 10–12 apostates are probably non-Christians who have not received the love of truth and are deceived by Satan¹⁴⁹. Using ἡ ἀποστασία with a definite article indicates a knowledge of this subject

147 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 251; B. Rigaux, *Les Épîtres*, pp. 253–258; H. Schlier, ἀποστασία, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, p. 512.

148 J. Ernst, Die eschatologischen Gegenspieler im zweiten Thessalonicherbrief. Die eschatologischen Gegenspieler in den Schriften des Neuen Testaments, *BU 3*: 1967, pp. 27–32; Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, pp. 81–88; J. Stepien, *Liśty do Tesaloniczan*, p. 269; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 244. Bruce thinks otherwise. Apostasy in 2 Thess 2, 3 has a character of political revolt and religious apostasy. See: F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 166–167.

149 The expression “did not receive the love of truth” tends more to indicate people who have not accepted the truth of Christ’s gospel, than those who abandoned it. In addition, the use in relation to the man of lawlessness of the term Parousia, suggests rather that he will come from outside and not from among the Christians. H. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 251. See: G. L. Green, *The Letters*, p. 307. With regard to the interpretation of the apostasy in terms of political revolt, apostasy of the Jews from monotheism and universal apostasy see. E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, pp. 326–327. With regard to interpretation of apostasy as a failure to accept Christ by the Jews, see: E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 281–283. On the interpretation of the apostasy in terms of political rebellion, see: W. Trilling, *Der zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher*, EKKNT 14, Zürich 1980, pp. 94–105. For the interpretation of the apostasy as a synonym for the Antichrist, see: Eadie J., *A Commentary*, p. 266. On the interpretation of the apostasy as a split among the believers, see: G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 204; M. Bednarczyk, *1–2 Letter*, pp. 696–697; J. Stepien, *Letters to the Thessalonians*, pp. 270–271; F. Tillmann, *Die Wiederkunft Christi*, pp. 133–136.

by the Thessalonians (2 Thess 2, 5) and the universal scale of apostasy¹⁵⁰.

Belial's attempts to deceive the sons of the light is a common topic in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Essenes and all the faithful of Israel, who obey the Law and walk in the way of righteousness, have opponents who are trying to persuade them to depart from God¹⁵¹. The main opponent of the sons of the light is Belial, who is the ruler of darkness, and his paths lead to death:

“But Belial, the Angel of Malevolence, Thou hast created for the Pit; his [rule] is in Darkness and his purpose is to bring about wickedness and iniquity. All the spirits of his company, the Angels of Destruction, walk according to the precepts of Darkness; towards them is their [inclination]” (1QM col. 13, 11–12).

He acts against the children of the light, trying to lead them from the way of justice. He does not work alone, but he has many advocates, who usually are those who break God's Law:

“Advocates of Belial use a lying tongue, like a poisonous snake, which spreads for periods, and like a earthly amphibians have used the Earth to plunder, power of snakes, for which there is no spell” (4Q429 frg. 1 col. 3, 8)¹⁵²;

“And the leaders became deceivers and the people led by them will be consumed” (4Q163 frg. 4 col. 1, 7)¹⁵³.

In service of Belial are also false prophets, who consciously deceive Israel respecting the paths of God¹⁵⁴:

150 J. Callow, *A Semantic*, p. 59; A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters*, p. 418.

151 E. Pagels, *The Social History of Satan, The “Intimate Enemy”*: A Preliminary Sketch, *HTR* 84/2: 1991, pp. 124–128.

152 The text is classified as Hodayot. It contains a collection of Hymns of the Teacher. It is later than 1QHa and 4QHa. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, p. 176.

153 The text belongs to the group called Peshet of the Book of Isaiah. The scroll is very damaged and difficult to interpret. The author using the Book of Isaiah makes some actualization and interpretation. He proclaims the coming of the final day. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 140–142.

154 See: 4Q429 frg. 2, col. 1, 6–7.

“Prophesy falsely, to dissuade Israel from God. But God remembered the covenant with the first and rose ...” (4Q269 frg. 4 col. 1, 4)¹⁵⁵;

“They will listen to those who deceive them and they will honour them [...] and how the gods they will be afraid of them in their blindness” (4Q166 col. 2, 5)¹⁵⁶.

Deception, which Belial accomplishes through his messengers, is always directed against all the sons of the light. Various ways of deceiving and the intensity of the action will produce results not only among the people outside, but also among the children of the light. Some of them will be deceived:

“They who bore the yoke of my testimony have been led astray [by teachers of lies], and have rebelled against the service of righteousness. Whereas Thou, O my God, didst command them to mend their ways [by walking] in the way of [holiness], where no man goes who is uncircumcised or unclean or violent, they have staggered aside from the way of Thy heart and languish in [great] wretchedness. A counsel of Belial is in their heart [and in accordance with] their wicked design they wallow in sin” (1QH col. 14, 19–22);

“(...) just as they came with a [devilish] plan to cause the [son] of light to stumble and to devise against them a wicked plot, that [they might become subject] to Belial in their [wicked] straying” (4Q174 col. 3, 8–9)¹⁵⁷.

155 The text is classified in a group called the Damascus Document. It includes two texts from Cairo, 8 manuscripts of CD found in Qumran Cave 4, and two manuscripts found in caves 5 and 6. The texts CD-A and CD-B originated from the medieval period (X-XII century). The text of the CD is divided into two parts: the first (CD 1–8, 19–20) is called the admonition, and describes the history of Israel and penalties for the nation; the second part (CD 9–16) is called the Law, and includes rules concerning daily life of the community. Half of the CD manuscripts found in Qumran are parallel to texts from Cairo. The text 4Q269 probably comes from the late first century BC. It contains admonitions for diseases and a list of violations of the Rule of the Community. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 1978–1988.

156 The text is a commentary on the Book of Hosea (Hos 8–9, 10–14 are quoted). It includes a proclamation of the coming of the day of judgement. For those who are under the influence of pagan cults the day will be a time of judgement. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, p. 144.

157 The text belongs to a group called the Midrash Concerning the End Times (4Q174, 4Q177, 4Q178, 4Q182, 4Q183) and belongs to the group of thematic

Belial will not deceive many of the sons of the light. This is due not so much to their personal attitudes but rather to the action of God himself, who according to their plans has custody of His lot:

“The law of all things are in His hand and He provides them all their needs. He has created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and injustice. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of injustice spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of injustice are ruled by the angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness. The Angel of Darkness leads all the children of righteousness astray, and until his end, all their sin, iniquities, wickedness, and all their unlawful deeds are caused by his dominion in accordance with the mysteries of God. Every one of their chastisements, and every one of the seasons of their distress, shall be brought about by the rule of his persecution; for all his allotted spirits seek the overthrow of the sons of light. But the God of Israel and His Angel of Truth will succour all the sons of light. For it is He who created the spirits of Light and Darkness and founded every action upon them and established every deed [upon] their [ways]” (1QS col. 3, 16–25)¹⁵⁸.

All who were deceived will receive punishment, but reward is for those who will not let themselves be deceived. Because in the thought of the Essenes there is absence of a coherent concept of life after death, the prize will have a material shape, such as reigning over all the earth or enjoying peace:

“But the humble shall possess the land and delight in abundant peace (Ps 37, 11). Interpreted, this concerns [the congregation of the] Poor who shall accept the season of penance and shall be delivered from all the snares of Belial” (4Q171 col. 2, 9–11)¹⁵⁹.

Midrashes. It was created in the first half of the first century BC and contains reflections on the end of time. The “Last Days” is a time of trial. During this period, Belial will try to deceive members of the community. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 148–154.

158 Often this section is presented as a typical example of the Essenes’ dualistic thought. See: J. J. Collins, *Interpretations of the Creation of Humanity in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, in: M. Henze (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 39–40.

159 This passage comes from the Peshier to the Book of Psalms (1Q16, 4Q171) and is a commentary to the Psalm 37. Considerations refers to the fate of the just

In the pseudepigraphal literature, the righteous who respect the commandments of God are also subject to all kinds of deception, which are aimed at separating them from God and His covenant. The source of all deception is Belial. He is also called the devil (TestJob 4, 3–5) or Satan (TesBen 3; GrApEz 4, 34–35). He works through his subordinate spirits and demons (Jub 10, 1–2; 5–6; 10, 7–9; 19, 28) and through the people who serve to him: sinners, false prophets and cruel rulers (ApEl 1, 13–14; 7 OrSib 132–138; 3 OrSib 1, 63–69; TestJud 21). The deception is directed against the nation:

“Let thy mercy, O Lord, be lifted up upon Thy people, and create in them an upright spirit, and let not the spirit of Belial rule over them to accuse them before Thee, and to ensnare them from all the paths of righteousness, so that they may perish from before Thy face” (Jub 1, 20).

Satan and all his demons are acting against people (ApSedr 5, 1–6; TestReu 2–3; TestSim 2), against all with faith (TestBen 3), in particular against those chosen by God (TesJob 4, 3–5; Jub 10, 1–2; 5–6; 19, 28). Deceptive action is permanent but it will be noticed especially at the end of time (ApEl 1, 13–14). It will take the shape of miracles, signs and extraordinary events:

“From the stock of Sebaste Belial shall come in later time and shall raise the mountain heights and raise the sea, the great fiery sun and the bright moon, and he shall raise up the dead and shall perform many signs for men: but they shall not be effective in him. Nay, but he deceives mortals, and many shall he deceive, Hebrews faithful and elect and lawless too, and other” (3 OrSib 1, 63–69)¹⁶⁰.

However, the author of the Treaty of Shem is convinced that the activity of devil will not harm the righteous:

“Devils will attack people, but in no way will hurt them” (TrShem 2, 9)¹⁶¹.

and the unjust. Both groups relate to people and events contemporary to the author. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 135–138.

160 See: 2 OrSib 167–170; TestIsaac 6; GrApEz 3, 15. For 3 OrSib and others Jewish Books of Sibylline Oracles see: J. Frankowski, *Pseudepigrapha*, pp. 230–237.

161 The pseudepigraphal Treaty of Shem is an agricultural and political calendar in twelve chapters. Each chapter corresponds to a sign of the zodiac. It was

The author of the Testament of Dan exhorts readers to be vigilant against any act of Satan. According to him the best remedy against the deceptions of the devil is to maintain fear of God and constant relation to God and His angels who support people:

“And now, fear the Lord, my children, and beware of Satan and his spirits. Draw near unto God and unto the angel that interceded for you, for he is a mediator between God and man, and for the peace of Israel he shall stand up against the kingdom of the enemy” (TestDan 6)¹⁶².

Believers are the subject of continual deception, which increases especially at the end of time, but with faith and the help of God and his angels, they will be able to resist the action of Satan and those who serve him.

probably written in Hebrew and Aramaic at the end of the first century BC (after 31 BC). The place of its origin is probably Alexandria. The author was probably a Hellenized Jew, which may be indicated by lack of references to angels, beliefs about immortality and heavenly spheres, and above all, lack – with the exception of the feast of Passover – of references to Jewish holidays. See: J. B. Charlesworth, ‘Treatise of Shem’, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 473–480.

- 162 The Testament of Dan is part of the Testament of the XII Patriarchs. There is no consensus concerning the author, date and place of writing this book. Until now, it was thought that the in its present form the work was translated into Greek, probably in the second century AD, based on text written by a Jew but later reworked by the Christians. Currently it is believed that the Testament of the XII Patriarchs is the work of a Hellenized Jew who lived in the Diaspora and was writing in Greek. The time of its writing goes back to the end of the second century BC. The place of origin could be Palestine, Syria, or Alexandria. Each of the Testaments is composed of four parts: a biography of the patriarchs, teaching, apocalypse, and the description of their deaths. The Testament of Dan contains Dan’s regret over his actions against his brother Joseph. See: S. Medala, *Introduction*, pp. 210–214; A. Paciorek, ‘Testament dwunastu Patriarchów [The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs]’, in: R. Rubinkiewicz, *Apokryfy*, pp. 43–45; E. P. Sanders, ‘Testaments of the Three Patriarchs’, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 869–880.

1.2.2. *Deceiving of non-Christians*

In 2 Thess 2, 9–12 the apostle presents ways and effects of Satan’s activity. Those who were deceived by him are called in 2 Thess 2, 10 ἀπολλυμένοις – *those who are perishing*. This group cannot be equated with believers at Thessalonica, because in 2 Thess 2, 1–3 the problem is not the deceptive activities of Satan, but the appearance of deceptive teaching causing confusion in the thinking of the community. This does not mean, however, that Thessalonians follow a path of destruction. Presented in 2 Thess 2, 1 two topics of deception, which are the parousia and the gathering before the Lord, show them as people who have accepted the love of truth and are not deceived, but in waiting for the Lord’s coming they became impatient. However, 2 Thess 2, 10 speaks of people who are deceived and who bear its consequences. Another argument, in 2 Thess 2, 1–3 is the use of the second person plural “you”, while in 2 Thess 2, 10–12 it is the third person plural “they”. Because of lack of information necessary for precise application of the phrase “those who are perishing”, it should be assumed that Paul has in mind non-Christians¹⁶³.

The participle in the present tense refers to non-Christians as those who seek to die. The verb ἀπόλλυμι in the literal sense means “I kill” (Mt 2, 13; 27, 10; Mk 3, 6; Lk 6, 9), “I lose” (Mk 9, 41; Lk 15, 8), “I am dying” (Mt 26, 52; Mk 4, 38; Lk 11, 51; 1 Cor 10, 9), “I am getting lost” (Lk 15, 4. 6. 14. 32). In a metaphorical sense in relation to the human soul: “I lose” (Mt 10, 39; Mk 8, 35), and for the man and his soul in an eschatological context means “I destroy” (Jn 10, 18; 1 Cor 1, 18; 2 Cor 2, 15; 2 Thess 2, 10)¹⁶⁴. Non-Christians are those who on the day of the Lord are doomed to destruction. Their doom is clear from their conduct and must be understood in terms of determination, and not predestination.

a) “They did not receive the love of truth”. The expression ἀνθ’ ὧν τὴν ἀγάπην τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔδέξαντο εἰς τὸ σωθῆναι αὐτούς – *because they did not receive the love of truth, that they be saved*, indicates acceptance of love of Truth as a necessary element

163 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 270.

164 A. Oepke, ἀπόλλυμι, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, pp. 394–395.

to achieve salvation. The noun ἀλήθεια found in 2 Thess 2, 12 in the expression μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ – “have not believed the truth” does not mean the truth in an absolute sense (Rom 1, 18; 2, 8. 20; 1 Cor 13, 6), but it expresses the truth of God (Rom 1, 25) or Christ (2 Cor 11, 10) or Gospel (Gal 2, 5; Col 1, 5)¹⁶⁵. The expression “have not believed the truth” means lack of faith in Christ or the Gospel. The expression “have not loved the truth” means life incompatible with the teaching of Christ or the Gospel. A consequence of such an attitude among non-Christians is their annihilation on the day of justice.

b) “They found pleasure in injustice”. 2 Thess 2, 9–10 describes the action of the devil as an activity that contains signs, false miracles and deceptions. The purpose of this activity is to deceive people in order that they would not believe either in Christ (2 Thess 2, 10) or in the Gospel, but instead they could find pleasure in injustice (2 Thess 2, 12). The term ἀδικία in classical Greek means a *preceding* or general *injustice*. In the Old Testament and Judaic literature, the term refers to lawlessness (Is 33, 18) and it is the opposite of δικαιοσύνη (Deut 32, 4; Ps 51, 5; Prov 16, 8) and ἀλήθεια (Ezra 4, 39; Ps 118, 69). It is a sin against God (Is 43, 24–25; Jer 31, 33). Widespread injustice is a sign of the apocalyptic times (4 Ezra 4, 51). In the New Testament the term is in opposition to δικαιοσύνη (Rom 1, 29; 3, 5; 9, 14) or ἀλήθεια (Jn 7, 18; Rom 1, 18; 1 Cor 13, 6; 2 Thess 2, 12. 19). Sometimes the term occurs in conjunction with ἀσέβεια (Rom 1, 18–32). It can mean a sin against God (Ac 8, 23; 1 Jn 1, 9; 5, 17) and it usually occurs in an eschatological context (Ac 1, 18; 2 Thess 2, 10; Jam 3, 6; 2 Pet 2, 13. 18). In this passage, the term appears twice. In 2 Thess 2, 12 the term means *false, untrue* and it is ambiguous because of how it occurs in 2 Thess 2, 12a in the expression μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. More problems of interpretation are created by the way this term is used in 2 Thess 2, 10. Due to the strong eschatological context in which this term appears, B. Rigaux thought that its meaning is synonymous to the term ἀνομία – lawlessness¹⁶⁶. Ch. A. Wanamaker and W. Trilling argue that the term

165 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 271.

166 B. Rigaux, *Les Épîtres*, pp. 675–676; E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 307.

must be understood in the same way as in 2 Thess 2, 12¹⁶⁷. An interpretation of the term ἀδικία affects the translation of the genitive phrase ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ ἀδικίας – *and with every deception of unrighteousness*¹⁶⁸. If we accept a meaning of ἀδικία as *lawlessness*, then the entire expression would indicate the source of deception. If we assume as a meaning for this term *false, not true*, the expression would indicate the nature of the deception and it would be together with *signs* and *wonders* a third element of the expression¹⁶⁹. H. Marshall believes that this phrase seems to contain both ideas: “what is evil in origin becomes evil in nature”¹⁷⁰. A consequence of the rejection of Christ on the one hand, and acceptance by non-Christians the man lawlessness and falsehood on the other hand, will be the wrath of God on the day of judgement (*all will be condemned*). The judgement mentioned in 2 Thess 2, 12 is the final event when non-Christians will be condemned¹⁷¹. The main basis for judgement is acceptance or rejection of the love of truth, namely, Christ and/or His gospel. Christians who accept the Gospel will not be condemned on the day of judgement. It will happen to those who do not accept the Gospel. Acceptance or rejection of the Gospel is a free choice of man, who is not under any determination by God to do anything. Anyone who believes in the Gospel accepts it, but those who believe in the slogans of this world are not able to accept it. The actions of Satan seek to deceive man, to reject the Gospel and accept the lie. God allows such actions of Satan in order that the truth about man will be manifested. The phrase καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πέμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης – *and therefore God sends to them a powerful delusion* indicates the utilitarian nature of Satan’s actions. God permits it only for a specific purpose. This concept is already present in the Old Testament, when God actively intervenes in human history to

167 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 260; W. Trilling, *Der zweite Brief*, p. 105.

168 Because the term ἀδικία occurs in the Old Testament and the New Testament in both senses, it is possible to accept each interpretation.

169 J. Callow, *A Semantic*, p. 68.

170 “What comes from evil is evil in nature”. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 202.

171 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 309; L. Hartman, *The Eschatology of 2 Thessalonians as Included In a Communication*, in: R. F. Collins (ed.), *The Thessalonians Correspondence*, Leuven 1990, pp. 476–477.

show the sin and unbelief of those who reject God (1 Kings 22, 23; Ezra 14, 9). In the Letter to Romans, describing the situation of the Gentiles, Paul also says that God gave them up by the desire of their hearts to lust for impurity (Rom 1, 20–32). God permits the reign of Satan only on those who have rejected the Gospel. It does not refer to believers. The action of Satan, through the man of lawlessness, is viewed by the author of 2 Thess as a way to reach an aim wanted by God. The aim desired by God is judgement (2 Thess 2, 12). The injustice of those who rejected the Gospel must be completed in order for a sentence of condemnation to be clearly just.

It seems that the purpose of such a radical presentation of the situation of non-Christians in 2 Thess 2, 10–12 is to strengthen the view that non-Christians will be condemned. It is a consequence of their rejection of the Gospel and their adopting deception and lies. The expressions “found pleasure in injustice” (2 Thess 2, 12), and “they did not receive the love of truth” (2 Thess 2, 10) presents non-Christian as a group whose purpose is radically different from the destination of Christians. Such a presentation of non-Christians in the 2 Thess 2, 10–12 and the presentation of Christians in 2 Thess 2, 1–3, shows a similarity to the presentation of both groups in 1 Thess 5, 1–11. The basis for the teaching contained in 1 Thess 5, 1–11 is the motif of the unexpected coming of the Lord, which will be a surprise for non-Christians who are walking the way of condemnation (1 Thess 5, 9). The basis for the exhortation in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 is the problem of the deception of the Thessalonians concerning the coming of the Lord. Arguing that the day of the Lord has not yet come, the apostle uses the motifs of apostasy and the revelation of the man of lawlessness, which must occur before the coming of the parousia. These signs will become the arguments, which will verify if the proclaimed thesis is true. A task of the man of lawlessness is deceiving those who do not accept the gospel of Christ (2 Thess 2, 12). Fragments, starting from different points and accenting different elements of argumentation¹⁷² reach

172 1 Thess 5, 1–11 accents the motif of salvation of Christians. 2 Thess 2, 1–12 accents the motif of condemnation of non-Christians.

the same conclusion: non-Christians will be condemned, while Christians will be saved¹⁷³.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, we also find the motif of deceiving those who abandoned the path of the Law. Deception can also be an action of God towards those who have forsaken the covenant of God, despising God's laws and committing unrighteousness:

“Listen now all you who know righteousness, and consider the works of God; for He has a dispute with all flesh and will condemn all those who despise Him. For when they were unfaithful and forsook Him, He hid His face from Israel and His sanctuary and delivered them up to the sword. But remembering the Covenant of the forefathers, He left a remnant to Israel and did not deliver it up to be destroyed. And in the age of wrath, three hundred and ninety years after He had given them into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, He visited them, and He caused a plant on the food things of his earth. And they perceived their iniquity and recognized that they were guilty men, yet for twenty years they were like blind men groping for the way. And God observed their deeds, that they sought Him with a whole heart, and He raised for them a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart. And he made known to the latter generations that which God had done to the latter generation, the congregation of traitors, to those who departed from the way. This was the time of which it is written, like a stubborn heifer thus was Israel stubborn (Hos. iv. 16) when the scoffer arose who shed over Israel the waters of lies. He caused them to wander in a pathless wilderness, laying low the everlasting heights, abolishing the ways of righteousness and removing the boundary with which the fore fathers had marked out their inheritance that he might call down on them the curses of His Covenant and deliver them up to the avenging sword of the Covenant. For they sought smooth things and preferred illusions and they watched for breaks and chose the fair neck; and they justified the wicked and condemned the just, and they transgressed the Covenant and violated the” (CD-A col. 1, 1–20).

The purpose of deception God is to lead the disobedient nation to do all kind of wickedness in order to reveal the righteous wrath of God.

173 According to Wanamaker this kind of presentation of non-Christians has its justification in the persecution which Christians in Thessalonica suffered from non-Christian. See: Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 263–264.

The comment of the Damascus Document concerning the Babylonian captivity is significant:

“Those who hated deception” (CD-A col. 2, 13).

The cause for the deception was the sins of the nation, and a consequence of deception was slavery. The texts of Qumran do not mention deception of the sons of the light by God. The deceiving action of God refers only to those who have abandoned God’s covenant.

As in the Dead Sea Scrolls, so also in the pseudepigraphal literature a motif of the deception of the wicked is present. Those who are deceived are the children of Belial and his spirits:

“For I see, and behold the demons have begun (their) seductions against you and against your children, and now I fear on your behalf, that after my death ye will shed the blood of men upon the earth, and that ye, too, will be destroyed from the face of the earth” (Jub 7, 27);

“And they made for themselves molten images, and they worshipped each the idol, the molten image which they had made for themselves, and they began to make graven images and unclean simulacra, and malignant spirits assisted and seduced (them) into committing transgression and uncleanness. And the prince Mastepan exerted himself to do all this, and he sent forth other spirits, those which were put under his hand, to do all manner of wrong and sin, and all manner of transgression, to corrupt and destroy, and to shed blood upon the earth” (Jub 11, 4–5).

The most common ways of deceiving are: idolatry (1 En 99, 6–9), misleading slogans and false conviction (5 OrSib 173), persistence in evil and lack of repentance:

“And I saw that valley in which there was a great convulsion and a convulsion of the waters. And when all this took place, from that fiery molten metal and from the convulsion thereof in that place, there was produced a smell of sculpture, and it was connected with those waters, and that valley of the angels who had led astray (mankind) burned beneath that land. And through its valleys proceed streams of fire, where these angels are punished who had led astray those who dwell upon the earth. But those waters shall in those days serve for the kings and the mighty and the exalted, and those who dwell on the earth, for the healing of the body, but for the punishment of the spirit; now their spirit is full of lust, that they may be punished in their body, for they have denied the Lord of Spirits and

see their punishment daily, and yet believe not in His name. And in proportion as the burning of their bodies becomes severe, a corresponding change shall take place in their spirit forever and ever; for before the Lord of Spirits none shall utter an idle word. For the judgment shall come upon them, because they believe in the lust of their body and deny the Spirit of the Lord” (1 En 67, 5–10).

The author of the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch introduces into the concept of deception a motif of destination:

“Corruption takes those who are destined for it, and life – for those who are meant to live” (2 Bar 42, 7).

Based on this passage and its context, it is impossible to determine whether the author had in mind the idea of predestination, or in this way, he expressed his conviction concerning punishment for sinners.

2. The Man of Lawlessness and the Restrainer

Both the figure of “the man of lawlessness” and “the restrainer”, are found among the topics, which are the most frequently raised by scholars in their analysis of the eschatology of 2 Thess 2, 1–12. On the one hand, the enigmatic descriptions of these two figures, and on the other hand, their critical importance for the interpretation of whole passage, means the discussion is ongoing and results in new hypotheses. Texts concerning “the man of lawlessness” provide significant information, which allow scholars to determine with a high degree of probability the figure and its function. However, concerning “the restrainer”, because of lack of information, any inquiries do not go beyond the level of more or less reasonable hypotheses.

2.1. *The Man of Lawlessness*

The second sign which will confirm coming of the Lord is ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας – a *man of lawlessness*. The revelation of this figure and his

actions will lead many people to reject “the love of truth”. The author devotes to this character and his activities the most space in the whole fragment (2 Thess 2, 3b–4. 8–10). However, paradoxically, he provides us with very little reliable information. Apocalyptic language, which the author uses, makes the vividly described figure of “the man of lawlessness” difficult to interpret. However, details contained in the text will help us with some degree of probability to determine his nature, action, destination and his function in 2 Thess 2, 1–12.

2.1.1. *The Man of Lawlessness and His Nature*

An expression such as ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας is a semantic term expressing that persons or things belong to a group or class. “The man of lawlessness” is a person who breaks with the Law or acts contrary to the Law. The noun ἀνομία means literally *iniquity*, *lawlessness* and as an evaluation of such an attitude the latter is understood as *evil* or *sin*. In the LXX, it reflects the Hebrew root עון – including the idea of *sin*, *crime*, *injustice*, און – representing the idea of *evil*, *injustice* and the root פשע – with the idea of *rebellion*, *crime*. It is used to identify sin in general, and it always appears in the context of breaking the Law of Moses. In the New Testament, where in a Christian context the Mosaic Law does not apply, it describes a sinful act committed by an individual or a group, which makes the person or group sinful (Rom 6, 19). In Heb 1, 9; 2 Cor 6, 14 and 2 Thess 2, 3 it describes sin or wickedness and it is used in opposition to δικαιοσύνη – *justice*. Found in 2 Thess 2, 8 the noun ἄνομος identifying lack of law or breaking the law later, became a synonym for injustice, of something that was both ethically and religiously evaluated as disobedience against the Law¹⁷⁴. In Judaism, the term refers to the Gentiles (PsSol 17, 11. 18) and means *lawlessness*, *evil*. In the LXX, it is used 30 times to translate a Hebrew term from the root רשע – taking on the idea of *being godless*, *being illegitimate*, and 25 times for general terms associated with sin. In the New Testament, the term in a positive sense occurs, in the context of quotations respecting Christians and the Mosaic Law (1 Cor 9, 21). In the negative sense, it refers to the Gentiles (Ac 2, 23). In the quotations from the Old

174 W. Gutbrod, ἄνομος, in: *TDNT*, vol. IV, p. 1086.

Testament, the term appears in the context of Jesus's death (Mk 15, 28; Lk 22, 37) and as a term emphasizing a moral evaluation or opinion (2 Thess 2, 8; 1 Tim 1, 9; 2 Pet 2, 8). In 2 Thess 2, 8 it describes the wicked, who will be punished on the day of the Lord.

An analysis of the terms ἀνομία and ἄνομος leads to determining ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας to mean a person doing injustice and committing sins. His actions (2 Thess 2, 4) suggest that the person is fully committed to do what he does and he is an enemy of Christ. This allows us to specify him as the Antichrist, a person who is the exact opposite of Christ. He leads those who follow him to damnation on the Day of Judgement (2 Thess 2, 12)¹⁷⁵. Although the term ἀντίχριστος appears in the New Testament only in 1 Jn 2, 18¹⁷⁶, this idea of an individual openly who consciously is opposing God and his actions are similar to those described in 2 Thess 2, 4 is already present in Judaic literature¹⁷⁷. The figure is identified with the ruler, who will be in possession of unlimited power, opposes worship of the One God in Jerusalem and is seeking to change the temple of the One God into a temple of pagan worship. A typical example of such a figure is Antiochus Epiphanes, who in 167 BC made the temple of Jerusalem a place for worshipping Zeus (Dan 6–11; 1 Macc 1, 54)¹⁷⁸. Other examples are Pompey (PsSol 2, 17), the last ruler of the time (2 Bar 40, 1), Ptolemy (1 En 6–16) or Rome as an empire (4 Ezra; 2 Bar)¹⁷⁹. However, the Book of Jubilees, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Ascension of Isaiah, identify the enemy of God with Belial¹⁸⁰. In the New Testament the figure of the Antichrist is identified with Nero, the ruler of

175 R. Yates, *The Antichrist*, *EvQ* 46: 1974, pp. 43–44; B. Widla, *W oczekiwaniu na przyjscie Pana [In Anticipation of the Coming of the Lord]*, in: *Introduction to the Thoughts and Biblical Books. Acts of the Apostles, Letters of St. Paul*, Warsaw 1997, pp. 142–145.

176 The earlier term ψευδόχριστος is used to describe a false prophet who appears in Mt 24, 24.

177 G. Milligan, *St Paul's Epistles*, pp. 158–165.

178 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 179–180.

179 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, pp. 350–351.

180 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 273. See: W. Bousset, *The Anti-Christ Legend*, London 1896, pp. 136–138.

Rome (Rev. 11, 7; 13, 17) or with false prophets (1 Jn 4, 2. 3; 2 Jn 7)¹⁸¹. In context of 2 Thess 2, 9, where the figure of *a man of lawlessness* is clearly distinguished from Satan, identification of the Antichrist with Belial is ruled out¹⁸². The man of lawlessness is an agent of Satan and his tool to achieve his aim. The power and authority, which rulers of nations possess, as well as the consequences of their decisions, can affect the fate of the world, and because of that, the man of lawlessness is usually identified with kings, emperors, Caesar or other national or religious leaders who have rebelled against God and the temple of Jerusalem. Every age has its own Antichrist, who struggles with God, and therefore the identification of *the man of lawlessness* with one specific, historical figure (such as Caligula or Nero) is an example of “apocalyptic realism” that is a socio-historical interpretation of what is essentially as an ambiguous apocalyptic text¹⁸³. The description of the behaviour of the man of lawlessness contained in 2 Thess 2, 4 suggests that author used the apocalyptic framework of Judaic literature to create an early Christian apocalyptic Antichrist, a man of sin and injustice, acting against God and those who believe in God, an opponent of the man of God¹⁸⁴. Considering the individuals actions (2 Thess 2, 4), that his power is received from the devil (2 Thess 2, 9) and he is a tool of Satan (2 Thess 2, 10), some exegetes believe that in the mind of the author of 2 Thess, the Antichrist, may be more than a man¹⁸⁵. This fact seems to be confirmed by the use, in referring to *the man of lawlessness* a verb ἀποκαλυφθῆ – *have been revealed* (2 Thess 2, 3) and a noun παρουσία – *coming, coming* (2 Thess 2, 1). In addition, the presentation of *the man of lawlessness* as a enemy of Christ, whose

181 Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, pp. 66–68. Authors who accept the authenticity of 2 Thess think that the origin of the Antichrist comes from a myth of Nero. See: F. H. Kern, *Über 2 Thess. 2, 1–12*, pp. 145–214.

182 J. Stepien, *The Letters to Thessalonians*, p. 273.

183 K. L. Hughes, *Constructing Antichrist*, Washington 2005, pp. 23–24.

184 E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 283–284; E. Szymanek, *Apostasies and the Man of Lawlessness* (2 Thess 2, 1–12), *Cat 27*: 1983, nr. 1, pp. 22–25.

185 J. Phillips thinks that the relation between the Antichrist and Satan in this world is similar to the relation between Jesus and God. (J. Phillips, *Exploring 1&2 Thessalonians*, Grand Rapids 2005, p. 203).

task is deceiving the people in order they will not believe the Truth, and consequently leading them to destruction (2 Thess 2, 12), does not allow us to think about *the man of lawlessness* only as an outspoken, hardened sinner. However, if the Antichrist is a man, he will be a man endowed with extraordinary might and superhuman strength, but his strength does not match with power of the Lord (2 Thess 2, 8)¹⁸⁶.

2.1.2. Works of the Man of Lawlessness

The Antichrist as a tool of Satan, and an enemy of Christ (2 Thess 2, 8–10), reveals his character through the deeds he does, which in 2 Thess 2, 4 are arranged in a specific way to show an escalation of his evil acts, from opposition to God to ultimately proclaiming himself to be god.

a) “Who will oppose”. The phrase ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα – *the enemy, amounting to more than anything, what is called god or object of worship*, points to the first two works of the Antichrist. This phrase, which appears in the passive participle ἀντικείμενος and in the middle past participle ὑπεραιρόμενος is variously interpreted by exegetes. Because the passive participle ἀντικείμενος occurs with the dative (1 Cor 16, 9; Phil 1, 28) and not with the accusative, some exegetes thought that the phrase ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν cannot refer to the Antichrist¹⁸⁷. Therefore, with no object for the participle ἀντικείμενος this allows them to treat it as a noun, and translate it as *enemy*¹⁸⁸. The term ὁ ἀντικείμενος in the New Testament means *enemy* (Lk 13, 17; 21, 15; 1 Cor 16, 9; Phil 1, 28; 2 Thess 2, 4; 1 Tim 5, 14)¹⁸⁹. However, the verb ἀντικειμαι in the New Testament occurs in sense of *I resist* (Gal 5, 17; 1 Tim 1, 10). In this case, the term ὁ ἀντικείμενος, according to some exegetes means the enemy of God, namely Satan¹⁹⁰. While the interpretation of this

186 It is impossible to identify sources of the Antichrist’s power, whether it is supernatural or it derives from his social standing.

187 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 268.

188 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 168; J. Callow, *A Semantic*, p. 60.

189 F. Büchsel, ἀντικειμαι, *TDNT*, vol. III, p. 654.

190 By understanding the term ὁ ἀντικείμενος as a participial noun in its use in the LXX and the New Testament in relation to the devil, some exegetes identify the man of lawlessness with Satan. See: G. J. M. Bartelink, *Antikeimenos*

term as a nominal participle is justified, identification of *the enemy* with Satan, in the context of 2 Thess 2, 3 and 2 Thess 2, 8–9, seems to be unjustified. 2 Thess 2, 4, does not indicate the enemy of God as *the man of lawlessness*, but only shows the escalation of his actions, which reaches its apogee in an act of proclaiming himself god. The participle ἀντικείμενος points to the Antichrist as the enemy. In the context of 2 Thess 2, 3–9 it appears that actions of the Antichrist are directed not only against people who believe in God or God himself, but primarily against Christ and His work on the earth. *The man of lawlessness*, Christ, and the restrainer are the main characters of this part. The Antichrist who proclaims himself “god” opposes the works of Christ, deceiving people in order that they will not believe the Truth. Other exegetes, point out that an article refers to two participles, take both expressions as participial and propose to translate them as *being the opposite, opposing*¹⁹¹.

b) “Will exalt himself over everything”. The middle participle ὑπεραιρόμενος – exalts himself (elsewhere occurring only in 2 Cor 12, 7) defines the first stage of activity of *the man of lawlessness*. Interpretation of the phrase ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα – *will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped* depends on the choice of one of three possible functions for the participle λεγόμενον – *is called*. It may serve to emphasize the difference between the true God and gods; it may point to gods and deities; or it refers to all holiness, both real (God) and false (gods)¹⁹². In the context of 2 Thess 2, 4, where the author describes the escalation of the actions of the Antichrist, the first two possibilities should be rejected. Stressing differences between God and gods seems unnecessary, since the letter is addressed to Christians who believe in one God. In turn, in a discussion of the exaltation of the Antichrist, talk of other gods would be irrelevant from the Christians’ perspective. The best possible

(Widersacher) als Teufels-und Dämonenbezeichnung, Sacris Erudiri 30: 1887/88, pp. 205–224.

191 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 255; B. Rigaux, *Les Épîtres*, p. 658; J. Stepien, *The Letters of Thessalonians*, p. 274; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 246.

192 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 255.

understanding of 2 Thess 2, 3–4 is the third interpretation. The Antichrist will place himself over all religion and belief (whether true or false) and any form of piety¹⁹³, and the purpose of such action is to highlight his importance and domination¹⁹⁴.

This passage has many points of convergence with the prophecy of Dan 11, 36–37. Daniel describes a King, who does not worship the gods of his ancestors or other gods, so demonstrating his own superiority over all that exists. Interpreters of this book generally point to Antiochus Epiphanes, as the king described by the prophet. The phrase “magnify himself above every god” is almost identical to 2 Thess 2, 4 “over everything that is called god”. Exegetes are agreed on influence from Dan 11 in the description of the Antichrist in 2 Thess 2¹⁹⁵. However, the author has modified the text of Dan 11. The Antichrist is no longer called the king, but more generally *the man of lawlessness* and the enemy. On the one hand, it deprives the figure all historical and social references but on the other hand, it gives the figure an eschatological meaning. The phrase λεγόμενον – *calling* added in 2 Thess 2, 4 (compare to Dan 11, 36–37) shows that the author makes a distinction between God and gods. The Antichrist as an opponent of Christ puts himself over everything that comes from God, whatever is considered to be God or to be an object of veneration and worship.

c) “He sets himself up in God’s temple”. The expression ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσαι – *so that he sits in the temple of God* points to an escalation of the Antichrist’s activities. He will not only put himself over the gods but he will also take the place, which rightly belongs only to God alone. An active aorist καθίσαι defines an event which will occur in an undefined future and will be a one-time event¹⁹⁶. The Antichrist will sit in place of God in τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ – *in God’s sanctuary*. The noun ναός is used in the LXX as a counterpart

193 W. Foerster, σέβασμα, in: *TDNT*, vol. VII, p. 173.

194 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 246.

195 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 269; F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 168; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 273.

196 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 286; L. Morris, *The First and Second*, pp. 222–223.

to the Hebrew אֹרְזֵל – *porch* (1 Chron 28, 11; 2 Chron 8, 12) and לְבַיִת – *Shrine*, “the main room of temple” (1 Kings 1, 9; 3, 3; 2 Kings 22, 7)¹⁹⁷. Expressions such as ναὸς κυρίου, ναὸς ἁγίος, ναὸς τῆς ἀγίας δόξης σου refer to the Temple in Jerusalem (Dan 3, 53). In the New Testament, the term occurs in both the literal and metaphorical sense. In the literal sense, the term means a temple or shrine. In most cases it refers to the Temple in Jerusalem (Mt 23, 16. 17. 21; Mk 14, 58; 15, 29; Lk 1, 9. 21; Jn 2, 20; Rev 11, 1 2). Sometimes the term means a pagan temple (Ac 17, 24; 19, 24) or a temple in heaven (Rev 3, 12; 7, 1; 11, 19; 14, 15; 15, 5; 16, 1; 21, 22)¹⁹⁸. In the metaphorical use of the term, it refers to the body of Christ (Jn 2, 19. 21) or to the baptized people as a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3, 16–17; 2 Cor 6, 16; Eph 2, 21)¹⁹⁹. The background of 2 Thess 2, 4 clearly indicates that the author is thinking about a temple in the literal sense, and the use of the article shows that he had in mind a particular temple, the temple of Jerusalem²⁰⁰. The choice of the term ναὸς and not ἱερόν specifies precisely the place where the Antichrist will sit. By the term ναὸς was defined the holiest place of an entire temple complex, which in the temple of Jerusalem was ῀ִבֵּית – holy²⁰¹. The Antichrist will sit in the Holy of Holies of the temple of Jerusalem, in which God alone is present. How should this picture be interpreted and what function does it play in 2 Thess 2, 4?

A literal interpretation of this expression leads to identification of the event described in 2 Thess 2, 4 with such historical events as the

197 O. Michel, *ναὸς*, in: *TDNT*, vol. IV, p. 881.

198 In addition to the term *ναὸς* in the New Testament there is another term *ἱερόν*, which means *temple, sanctuary*. The term refers to the Temple of Jerusalem (Mt 4, 5; 12, 5; Mk 11, 11; 12, 35; Lk 2, 27; 4, 9; Jn 2, 14; 5, 12), and sometimes to pagan temples (Ac 19, 27). Both terms have different meaning. *ἱερόν* meant the entire temple complex, while *ναὸς* referred to the building of the temple. However, in the New Testament both terms are often used imprecisely. See: U. Borse, *ναὸς*, in: *EDNT*, vol. II, col. 1122–1126. In the LXX there is one more term *τέμενος* used in refer to the temple or area of land dedicated for worship (Ezra 6, 4. 6; Hos 8, 14; 1 Macc 1, 47; 5, 43). See: O. Jurewicz, *Greek-Polish Dictionary* v. 2, Warsaw 2001, p. 389.

199 R. Popowski, *New Testament Greek-Polish Great Dictionary*, Warsaw 1995, p. 407.

200 A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters*, p. 420.

201 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 168.

desecration and destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem or with reconstruction of the Temple at the end of times²⁰². This interpretation is based on historical events, such as the desecration of the Jerusalem Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 9, 27; 11, 31; 12, 11, Mk 13, 14), Pompey (PsSol 2, 11–14. 17), Caligula (Flavius, *Ant.* 18, 261) or Titus. Although it is possible that the author refers to such an event, one that was well known and was regarded as the greatest manifestation of human pride and arrogance, a purely historical interpretation of this apocalyptic text narrows its meaning and function, reducing it only to specific events in history²⁰³.

Sometimes the temple is identified with the church or a heavenly temple²⁰⁴. Such an interpretation of apocalyptic descriptions of a universal event narrows its meaning to events only happening inside the Church or it stresses concepts absent in the teaching of 1–2 Thess. In addition, usually these interpretations show a strong confessional influence and depend on a specific figure being identified as the Antichrist²⁰⁵.

Considering the apocalyptic character of 2 Thess 2, 1–12 it seems to be appropriate to accept the thesis that the author used the image of

202 W. Trilling, *Der zweite Brief*, pp. 86–87; R. L. Thomas, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, EBC 11, p. 322.

203 An example of the problems arising from such an interpretation is the determination of the authenticity of the letter. If the letter was written before the destruction of the temple it would include an unrealized prophecy. The explanation of this difficulty by referring to the rebuilding of the temple at the end of time mainly refers to a holistic understanding of apocalyptic speeches than to perceptual capacity of recipients. How could the Thessalonians imagine a reconstruction of the temple, which still existed? However, dating the letter after the destruction of the temple in the light of the historical interpretation of 2 Thess 2, 4 is impossible.

204 G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, pp. 205–210; Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, pp. 76–80; R. J. McKelvey, *The New Temple*, Oxford 1969; Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on The Letters of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Hebrews and Philomena*, Cracow, p. 125.

205 G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, pp. 205–210; Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, pp. 76–80; E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, pp. 328–329.

the temple of Jerusalem in the metaphorical sense²⁰⁶. The author used an image of the Temple of Jerusalem as a symbol of God's presence among people and His presence on the earth. The fact that the Antichrist will put himself in the place of God would mean to dethrone God and removing His presence from among men²⁰⁷. This is not just a statue which will be placed in the Temple and it is not only one area of the temple which will be desecrated or destroyed, but more importantly, the enemy of all God's works will take the place of God. Such a deed in the eyes of believers is the worst of all possible acts of lawlessness²⁰⁸. The function of the expression *will sit in the temple of God* is not to indicate the temple of Jerusalem as the place where the Antichrist will be revealed and will sit in the place reserved for God. It is not an intention of the apostle to determine the time of the parousia in 1 Thess 5, 1–3 or to give a detailed description of the day of the Lord in 1 Thess 4, 16–18. Based on this, it can be assumed that also in 2 Thess the author did not want to point to any specific place on earth as the place of revelation of the Antichrist. The function of 2 Thess 2, 4 is to present the aspirations of Antichrist, who seeks to take the place of God (Gen 3, 5; Ac 12, 21–23; Flavius, *Ant.* 19, 343–347). The Antichrist, through the power of Satan, will take the place of God and he will proclaim himself god.

d) “Proclaiming himself to be God”. The apogee of the Antichrist's activities is to proclaim himself to be God. He will not declare himself as one of the gods, nor will he be satisfied with placing his statue in the temple. His aspirations are bigger. He will announce himself as god in the place of the only God. The verb ἀποδείκνυμι can mean *I hail, I present* (1 Cor 4, 9; 2 Thess 2, 4) or *I demonstrate, I certify* (Ac 2, 22; 25, 7). The Antichrist will not prove his divinity; he will simply

206 D. Martin thinks, “Location of the temple (whether in a literal or metaphorical interpretation) is not an essential element of Paul's argument concerning coming of the Lord”. D. M. Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, NAC 2002, pp. 236–237.

207 I. H. Marshall, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 192.

208 The question is whether such an interpretation of the words of the Apostle was possible for the Thessalonians. For Paul and Christians from Judaism this interpretation would not create great difficulty. With regard to the Christians who had converted from paganism, however, a response becomes less certain.

announce it. The manner in which he will do so will remain a mystery, since the author does not speak about it. Acclaiming himself as god suggests an extraordinary and powerful force, which makes it possible to accomplish the wishes of the usurper. In the ancient world, kings and rulers had this power. The Old Testament and Judaic literature mention a number of rulers, who announced themselves to be gods. The Book of Ezekiel describes the King of Tyre, who in his pride and confidence proclaims himself god (Ezek 28, 1–10). Similarly, Isaiah speaks of the king of Babylon, who wanted to be equal to God (Is 14, 4–20). The Sibylline Oracles talk about Nero, the ruler of Rome, who proclaimed himself a god (5 OrSib 33–34). The event closest in time to the writing of 2 Thess was an attempt by the emperor Caligula to put his image in the temple²⁰⁹. Mention of such events proves that the practice of proclaiming a human to be god was not alien to the ancient world²¹⁰. Rulers, who managed to create a strong kingdom or empire and conquered neighbouring countries and nations, often held such acts of deification of their majesty (Ac 12, 21–23). However, self-deification usually ended at the moment of death or the destruction of the kingdom, because of foreign intervention. Almost certain is that the author's description of the works of *the man of lawlessness* in 2 Thess 2, 4 refers to examples of human arrogance, well known to him and to the recipients²¹¹. As in case of the temple of God, so also in case of the self-declaration of the Antichrist, the author although uses a typical apocalyptic framework but gives it a specifically Christian character. The Antichrist's declaration of himself as god is the climax of his actions. All previously mentioned actions were moving to this point. The man endowed by the devil with extraordinary power will take the place of God. The author does not clearly identify an institution, king, or Emperor as the source of power of the Antichrist. His power comes from Satan (2 Thess 2, 9) and not from any social status. In this way, the author, in comparison with descriptions in the Old Testament, gives *the man of lawlessness* a more eschatological rather than

209 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, p. 328; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 247–248.

210 D. M. Martin, *1, 2 Thesalonian*, p. 238.

211 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 288.

a historical character²¹². In the case of usurpers of divine dignity in the Old Testament, God's punishment upon them was done by the hands of powerful enemies in the form of wars or death. Destruction of the Antichrist will happen on the day of coming of the Lord and will not have the character of fight and struggle, but will be an authoritative act of Christ (2 Thess 2, 8).

2.1.3. Revelation of the Man of Lawlessness

The Antichrist will be revealed to the world (2 Thess 2, 3) in order to deceive it with false miracles and signs and to deceive those who do not accept Christ (2 Thess 2, 9). The use of the passive verb ἀποκαλύπτω – *I reveal* shows that the Antichrist does not reveal himself, but he will be revealed. The one who reveals him will most probably be the devil, because *the man of lawlessness* is his agent and works by his power (2 Thess 2, 9). The verb ἀποκαλύπτω in the New Testament is always used in a religious sense in the context of the revelation of the man of lawlessness:

- mystery and light (Lk 2, 32; Rom 16, 25; Eph 1, 17)
- manifestation of the Spirit of Christ (1 Cor 2, 4; 14, 6. 26; 2 Cor 12, 17; Gal 1, 12; 2, 1; Eph 3, 3; Rev 1, 1),
- revelation of Christ at the end of times (Rom 2, 5; 8, 19; 1 Cor 1, 7; 2 Thess 1, 7; 1 Pet 1, 7. 13; 4, 13)
- revelation of the Antichrist (2 Thess 2, 3. 6. 8²¹³).

All actions of the Antichrist will have no hidden character, but will be open to the whole world²¹⁴. Just like Christ who has revealed himself to the world, proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God,

212 K. L. Hughes argues that apocalyptic realism (a historical interpretation of the Antichrist) characteristic of the Fathers of the Church until the end of the fourth century, was due to the unfriendly attitude of governments to Christianity. After Christians obtained the status of legality the interpretation of 2 Thess 2, 4 begins to be dominated by a so-called “spiritual interpretation”. K. L. Hughes, *Constructing*, pp. 28–115; J. R. W. Stott, *The Message of 1&2 Thessalonians*, Leicester 1991, pp. 164–167.

213 T. Holtz, ἀποκαλύπτω, in: *EDNT*, vol. I, col. 312–317.

214 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 245.

similarly the Antichrist will be revealed himself to the world proclaiming that he is god. Those who have received the love of truth will reject him but those who do not accept the truth, will accept him and come under his influence (2 Thess 2, 10–12).

In reference to the Antichrist, the author uses the term παρουσία, which always – except in this one case – refers to the coming of the Lord²¹⁵. The use of the term, understood as the public arrival of the ruler in full splendor (in the secular sense) or the Lord (in a religious sense), is not accidental. The author uses the same term in relation to the revelation of the Antichrist, which is usually used in relation to the revelation of Christ. He does so, not in order to indicate equality respecting the revelation of the Antichrist with revelation of Christ, but to point to the perversity and falsity of the acts of the Antichrist²¹⁶. The motif of revelation appears as one of the signs preceding the parousia of the Lord. The one aim of the revelation of the Antichrist is to proclaim himself to be god and to deceive people by false acts, such as miracles and signs. While the task of Christ is to raise up the faithful departed, and to gather all believers with Him in order to be with Him forever (1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11; 2 Thess 2, 1), the task of the Antichrist is to deceive people, so that they will not believe in Christ but become his followers. In the context of the false teaching, which was spread in the Thessalonians community, and in the context of the acceptance by some members of community of these rumors, the author uses the motif of the revelation of the Antichrist as a kind of test of faith, which the Thessalonians have to pass (2 Thess 2, 5. 10–12). The revelation of the deceiver – in various external manifestations confusingly similar to the revelation of Christ – will be the last attempt of the Antichrist to deceive people (2 Thess 2, 11).

2.1.4. *The Son of Destruction*

The term ἀπωλεία - *destruction, ruin* is rare in classical Greek, and usually used in poetry. The transitive form of the term means *act of destruction*,

215 A detailed discussion of the term was made in section 1.1.1.

216 Ch. A. Wanamaker thought that the revelation of the Antichrist is some kind of parody of the revelation of Christ (Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 245).

but in the intransitive form it means – *destruction*. Later, the term takes on the meaning of *loss*²¹⁷. In the LXX the term is used most often to translate a Hebrew term *יְהִיבֶשֶׁת* – *destruction, underworld, abyss*, which is often a personification of the devil (Job 26, 6; 28, 22), consequences of evil acts (Deut 28, 20; 30, 18) or - in an eschatological context – final condemnation (Prov 15, 11; 17, 20)²¹⁸. In the New Testament, and the letters of Paul the verb ἀπόλλυμι occurs in the transitive form, pointing to a punishing act of God (1 Cor 1, 15) or human helplessness (Rom 14, 15). The intransitive form can mean the final eschatological state in which man will exist (1 Cor 15, 18), a personal disaster (2 Cor 4, 9) or an act of God’s condemnation (Rom 2, 12, 1 Cor 1, 18; 2 Cor 2, 15; 4, 3). The noun ἀπωλεία in the New Testament indicates a state of destruction (Rom 9, 22; Phil 1, 28; 3, 18–19). A man who is in this state is called the son of perdition (2 Thess 2, 3; J 17, 12).

Occurring in 2 Thess 2, 3 the expression ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας – the son of perdition is a Semitism (cf. Is 57, 4; 1QS 9, 16. 22; CD 6, 15; 13, 14) which indicates rather a definitive destination than belonging to a group of the damned²¹⁹. The destiny of the son of perdition, who will be revealed to the world as the man of sin, is damnation. Despite all the actions of the Antichrist, his mission is doomed to failure, and the man of lawlessness is doomed to condemnation. 2 Thess 2, 8b: ὃν ὁ κύριος [Ἰησοῦς] ἀνελεῖ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ καταργήσει τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ – *whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming*, interrupts the author’s thought concerning the revelation of the Antichrist. The phrase explains his interpretation of the expression ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας. The breath of mouth of the Lord will destroy the Antichrist. The verb ἀναίρω – *I delete, I destroy, I stroke* indicates an action of Christ, while the breath of his mouth shows the way He will do that. The expression τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ is probably an echo of a prophecy of Isaiah: “*He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked*”, which refers to an

217 A. Oepke, ἀπώλεια, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, p. 396.

218 A. Kretzer, ἀπώλεια, in: *EDNT*, vol. I, col. 325–327.

219 M. Bednarz, pp. 697–700; E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 284.

action of the Messiah (Is 11, 4)²²⁰. Use of the prophecy by the author does not appear to be accidental, because an eschatological context indicates the absolute superiority of the Messiah and his judgments upon the wicked²²¹. Similarly, the coming of Christ at the end of time will be in glory (1 Thess 4, 16–18) and will include a motif of judgement of the man of lawlessness (1 Thess 5, 9; 2 Thess 2, 12). The absolute dominance of Christ over the Antichrist is indicated by the fact that his defeat will be an authoritative act of the Lord. There will be no fight or struggle, the simple breath of Christ's mouth will terminate the Antichrist. Some exegetes try to see the expression *breath* as referring to the Holy Spirit²²². Because in the writings of Paul the Holy Spirit does not undertake destructive action, such assumptions, although based on the writings of early Christian witnesses, should be considered unsubstantiated²²³. E. Best, looking at Is 11, 4, and the pseudepigraphal literature (PsSol 17, 24; 1 En 62, 2) comes to the conclusion that 2 Thess 2, 8 is a description of an eschatological war, in which the “breath of his mouth” is a weapon (cf. Rev 19, 15; Is 2, 16; 30, 27–28; 1QSB 5, 24)²²⁴. The basic difficulty with accepting this interpretation is lack of any signs of military activity by Christ. Acts of destruction by the Antichrist do not contain indications of active participation by Christ in the fight or active defence of the Antichrist, but is the result of God's power and glory, of His majesty. This expression, although it indicates the way in which the Antichrist will be destroyed, stresses above all the sovereign power of the coming Lord. This phrase allows us to assume that the author's intent was to discredit a revelation of the Antichrist, by indicating, in spite of the power of Satan, his powerlessness in the parousia. This is confirmed by the use of the verb καταργέω – *I do useless, hate, turning fatal*, which emphasizes the fact that all of Satan's intentions related to the activity

220 M. Bednarz, *1–2 Letter to the Thessalonians*, p. 699; J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 281.

221 In Is 11, 4 the noun *godless* is in the singular, but it is a collective noun and should be translated as a plural. By contrast, in 2 Thess 2, 8 the expression *the man of lawlessness* indicates a particular man.

222 Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, pp. 92–94.

223 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 282; J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 281.

224 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 303.

of the Antichrist on the earth shall fall into ruin, and his envoy will be destroyed when the Lord comes²²⁵.

The statement of the author seems to be clear and decisive. The Antichrist, who opposes the Lord, does not constitute any danger for Him because his actions do not threaten the divine plan, and his power cannot match that of Christ. The actions of the Antichrist are dangerous for those who are deceived by him. Such a presentation of the Antichrist can have a double function. The first function is to provide evidence that the day of the Lord has not yet come, because there has not been an apostasy and the man of lawlessness was not yet revealed. The second function is to indicate that the day the Lord will be a day of judgement upon evil and all those who follow him (cf. 1 Thess 5, 6–10).

The expression ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας has its counterpart in the Qumran writings. The expression *the son of lawlessness* in the Qumran writings is used synonymously with terms defining the sons of the darkness and people belonging to Belial. It specifies in general people who break the Law and the Covenant. The term does not have any more specific meaning. It occurs in both in the singular and plural forms:

- the son of lawlessness – “No son of iniquity [shall afflict them again] as formerly, from the day that [I set judges] over my people Israel (...)” (4Q174 col. 3, 1);
- the sons of lawlessness – “they shall separate from the congregation of the men of injustice and shall unite, (...)” (1QS col. 5, 1–2).

Those who are acting in the spirit of lawlessness (1QS col. 3, 19) belong to the sons of lawlessness²²⁶:

“But the ways of the spirit of falsehood are these: greed, and slackness in the search for righteousness, wickedness and lies, haughtiness and pride, falseness and deceit, cruelty and abundant evil, ill-temper and much folly and brazen insolence, abominable deeds (committed) in a spirit of lust, and ways of lewdness

225 G. Dellling, καταργέω, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, p. 453; R. Popowski, *A Great Dictionary*, p. 327.

226 G. W. Lorein, *The Antichrist Theme in the Intertestamental Period*, Sheffield 2003, pp. 148–218.

in the service of uncleanness a blaspheming tongue, blindness of eye and dullness of ear, stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart, so that man walks in all the ways of darkness and guile” (1QS col. 4, 9–11).

In addition, those who now belong to the sons of light, before were subjected to actions of the spirit of lawlessness. However, the power of God freed them and brought them to the congregation of the children of the light. Therefore, all who are counted among the sons of the light should thank God for delivering them from the spirit of lawlessness:

“ [...] You straighten in my heart all [works of lawlessness ...] [... established th]ru in front of my eyes and mentors of justice [in hall ...]” (4Q432 frg. 3, 1)²²⁷.

Actions of the sons of lawlessness are traps for all the sons of the light. For this reason, the sons of the light should break with everything that is connected with the spirit of iniquity and they should separate themselves from the children of darkness:

“Whoever approaches the Council of the Community shall enter the Covenant of God in the presence of all who have freely pledged themselves. He shall undertake by a binding oath to return with all his heart and soul to every commandment of the Law of Moses in accordance with all that has been revealed of it to the sons of Shaddock, the Priests, Keepers of the Covenant and Seekers of His will, and to the multitude of the men of their Covenant who together have freely pledged themselves to His truth and to walking in the way of His delight. And he shall undertake by the Covenant to separate from all the men of injustice who walk in the way of wickedness” (4Q256 frg. 5, 6–8)²²⁸.

227 The text belongs to the collection called *Hodayot*. The author, who may be the Master of Justice itself, as well as in other *Hodayot* from cave 4, describes his experience. The scroll is very damaged. It contains passages of texts from the Anthem of Creation and the Anthem of the Teacher. See: S. Mendala, *Introduction*, pp. 103–106; P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, p. 177.

228 The text has a legal character and is classified in the group called the Association Rule (1QS; 4Q255–4Q264; 5Q11). It contains rules and principles of community life. It was probably written between 30 and 1 BC. It contains 15 sections parallel to 1QS (100–75 BC). Significant differences between 1QS and 4Q256 in matters concerning the system of the community and the criminal

The task of the Teacher of Justice is to indicate all lawlessness and oppose all the sons of lawlessness, because their way is destruction:

“He put me in a village along with many fishermen, who spread out a net on the water, and catch the sons of lawlessness (...)” (4Q429 frg. 1 col. 1, 1);

“(...) in blazing flames will burn all sons of lawlessness (...)” (4Q429 frg. 2 col. 1, 4);

“But in the mystery of His understanding, and in His glorious wisdom, God has ordained an end for injustice, and at the time of the visitation He will destroy it forever”. (QS col. 4, 18–19).

In contrast with 2 Thess where the term the *man of lawlessness* has its own specific meaning and indicates a specific person, intent on implementing certain things that will happen before coming of the Lord, in Qumran writings there is no clear distinction between the meaning of the term and other terms referring to sons of the darkness. One of few similarities (apart from use of the term itself) which have parallels in 2 Thess and the Qumran writings is the idea of the instrumental function of the man of lawlessness. In 2 Thess he is a tool in the hands of Satan, and the sons of lawlessness in the Essenes' thought are tools of Belial to fight the sons of the light. Common to both texts is also a negative assessment of the sons of lawlessness and their ultimate fate.

In the pseudepigraphal literature written in an earlier period, the figure of the man of lawlessness is often identified with Belial, the devil, Satan or the Antichrist, and does not constitute a separate form. It does not have any clear characteristics similar to the concept of the man of lawlessness occurring in 2 Thess. There is also a lack of motifs, which are similar to those used to create the concept present in 2 Thess²²⁹. The situation is different in the pseudepigrapha, which are

law show development of the sect. See: S. Mendala, *Introduction*, pp. 1985–1992; Idem, *Scripture of Qumran*, in: J. Freddy (ed.), *General Introduction to Sacred Scripture*, Poznan-Warsaw 1986, pp. 147–149; P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 63–64.

229 For more information, see G. W. Lorein, *The Antichrist*, pp. 43–148.

dated to second century AD. In these pseudepigrapha there is a motif of the man of lawlessness and a description of his actions. Despite minor differences in terminology, the character of that figure and his actions significantly overlap with the description of the man of lawlessness presented in 2 Thess.

The author of Greek Apocalypse of Ezra defines the figure as an opponent of humanity, who comes from Tartarus and is able to do numerous works to make people wonder:

“Because the opponent of people who comes from Tartarus and shows people many things” (GrApEz 3, 15)²³⁰.

He is responsible for all evil and the degeneration of natural relationships between people (GrApEz 3, 11–15). He calls himself the son of God and bears on his forehead the name Antichrist. He comes from heaven, but is destined to be sent to Hades. He does many amazing acts, but is not worthy of trust (GrApEz 4, 25–33). The author of the Apocalypse of Elijah, which is heavily influenced by the Pauline letters, describes the opponent of humanity (ApEl 1, 4) and the enemy of God (ApEl 2, 17–19) as the man of lawlessness (ApEl 2, 41). The description of the man of lawlessness emphasizes his ability to change appearances. The only sign, which make it possible to recognize him, is the mark on his forehead that remains. (ApEl 3, 15–18). He will be revealed in Jerusalem, at a time when people will believe that they are living in a safe and peaceful world (ApEl 2, 40). He will be endowed with extraordinary power, which can be compared with the power of Christ:

“He will say to the sun ‘fall’, and it will fall.
He will say, ‘shine’, and it will do it.
He will say, ‘darken’, and it will do it.
He will say to the moon, ‘become bloody’, and it will do it.
He will go forth with them from the sky.

230 The Greek Apocalypse of Ezra is a Christian work created from Christian and Jewish sources. The time of writing is uncertain. The earliest could be around or after 150 AD; the latest in eighth century AD. It was written in Greek. The text contains a vision of Ezra who was taken up to heaven. See: M. E. Stone, Greek Apocalypse of Ezra, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 561–570.

He will walk upon the sea and the rivers as upon dry land.
He will cause the lame to walk.
He will cause the deaf to hear.
He will cause the dumb to speak.
He will cause the blind to see.
The lepers he will cleanse.
The ill he will heal.
The demons he will cast out.
He will multiply his signs and his wonders in the presence of everyone. He will do the same works that Christ did, except for raising the dead. In this you will know that he is the son of the lawlessness, because he is unable to give life” (ApEl 3, 6–13)²³¹.

The actions of the man of lawlessness are not limited to working signs deceiving people, but go further and reach their climax in an act proclaiming himself to be Christ (ApEl 3, 1) and appearing in the temple (ApEl 2, 41; 3, 5). He will persecute all who are not deceived, and will persecute the saints (ApEl 4, 20–23, 5, 14–21). He will have his opponents, who are the saints (ApEl 4, 1–2. 7) and sixty righteous:

“Sixty righteous ones who are prepared for this hour will hear. And they will gird on the breastplate of God, and they will run to Jerusalem and fight with the shameless one” (ApEl 4, 30–31).

Saints and the righteous will not be able to overcome the man of lawlessness, who will persecute them and will take them into captivity

231 The Apocalypse of Elijah is a Christian apocalypse, probably written in the mid-third century AD (after mid-second century AD). The text survives in Coptic and some Greek quotations. This suggests that it was written in Greek. It contains Jewish and Christian traditions. Its content includes an incentive to godly living, the coming and action of the Antichrist, and the revelation of the Messiah. There is also a Jewish Apocalypse of Elijah called the Book of Elijah. It was written in Hebrew and contains teachings revealed to Elijah on Mount Carmel by the archangel Michael. However, the texts are parallel only in their description of the works of the Antichrist. See: S. Mendala, *Introduction*, pp. 142–143; O. S. Wintermute, *Apocalypse of Elijah*, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 721–734.

(ApEl 4, 33). It will not be until the coming of Elijah and Enoch, who will put an end to actions of the man of lawlessness:

“After these things, Elijah and Enoch will come down. They will lay down the flesh of the world, and they will receive their spiritual flesh. They will pursue the son of lawlessness and kill him since he is not able to speak” (ApEl 5, 32).

The time of the man of lawlessness and those who believed him will pass and they will be trapped at the bottom of the abyss (ApEl 5, 34–35).

Many motifs that create the image of the man of lawlessness in 2 Thess can be found also in the Sibylline Oracles. A common motif in the collection of oracles is reference to specific historical figures. Many rulers, who acted against the Temple, proclaimed themselves to be god or have introduced idolatry and magic; they were called idolaters. The author of Book 8 of the Sibylline Oracles shows an emperor, Hadrian, as an idolater who supports magic and proclaims his children to be gods (8 OrSib 56–57). Similarly, the author of Book 5 of the Sibylline Oracles presents Nero as a man who proclaims his divinity (5 OrSib 137–139) and as a destroyer of Jerusalem (5 OrSib 150). After his escape to Parthia, he will return in the eschatological time to destroy the earth (5 OrSib 361–385). The author of Book 3 of the Sibylline Oracles explicitly identified Nero with Belial²³²:

“From the stock of Sebaste Belial shall come in later time and shall the mountain heights and raise the sea, the great fiery sun and the bright moon, and he shall raise up the dead and shall perform many signs for men: but they shall not be effective in him. Nay, but he deceives mortals, and many shall he deceive, Hebrews faithful and elect and lawless too, and other men who have never yet listened to the word of God. But at whatsoever time the threatened vengeance of the Almighty God draws near, and fiery energy comes through the swelling surge to earth, and burns up Beliar and the overweening men, even all who have put their trust in him” (3 OrSib 63–74).

The Testament of Moses, which was written in Palestine, contains a description of kings who will be called priests of the Most High God

232 See: MAIs 4, 1.

and desecrate the Temple. After them will come a king, full of wickedness, who does not come from a priestly family but who will be their judge (TMos 6, 1–2). The ruler, who will be cruel and will do all kinds of unrighteousness, is identified with Herod the Great, known as an *atheist* (TMos 7, 3).

The implication emerges, then, that the pseudepigraphal literature of the later period is strongly influenced by the eschatological motifs of 2 Thess. This allows us to assume that the Epistle had a powerful influence on the next generations of early Christians.

2.2. *The Restrainer*

Structural analysis of 2 Thess 2, 1–12 points to 2 Thess 2, 6–7 as a central part of the whole pericope²³³. Here the author emphasizes importance of the motif “*the restrainer*” for properly understanding the teaching contained in 2 Thess 2, 1–12. The author’s argumentation for the thesis “the day the Lord had not yet come” in the context of extensive exhortations concerning deception and the fate of those who became deceived as well as presentation of the Antichrist, would rather strengthen doubts and fear of recipients if the teaching contained in 2 Thess 2, 6–7 were absent. It seems that as presented in 2 Thess 2, 6–7 the motif of the restrainer, is meant to restore the peace of mind of recipients²³⁴.

With regard to the minimal information concerning the motif of “the restrainer” and the function of the figure, an interpretation of the whole fragment creates many problems and gives rise to a variety

233 2 Thess 2, 1–3b and 2 Thess 2, 10–12 relate to deception. The first is related to the proclamation to the community of the false teaching concerning a coming of the Lord. The second fragment refers to the fate of those who reject the truth, and believe in injustice. 2 Thess 2, 3b–5 and 2 Thess 2, 8–9 concern the man of lawlessness and his works. The first section is an explanation of the term *the man of lawlessness*, the second fragment is an explanation of the term *the son of perdition*.

234 Frame believes that the function of 2 Thess 2, 6–7 is to provide a reason for the delay of the parousia of the Lord. See: J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 262.

of interpretations²³⁵. Therefore, the motif of the restrainer will be discussed under three headings. In first section, we will discuss key terms. In second section, we will try to answer a question: whose revelation is he prevented? In the last section, we will try to determine who the restrainer is.

2.2.1. *Analysis of Important Terms*

The most important term for defining the restrainer is τὸ κατέχον or ὁ κατέχων. The masculine gender of the participle ὁ κατέχων and the neuter gender of τὸ κατέχον which comes from the verb κατέχω (which in the intransitive form occurs only once in Ac 27, 40) as a nautical term means *I hold the rudder, I control*. In the transitive form it means *I stop* (Lk 4, 42; Phil 1, 3), *I inhibit, I embarrass* (Rom 1, 18), *I hold* (2 Thess 2, 6–7). It may also mean *I hold fast* in the sense of remembrance (1 Cor 15, 2), preserving (Lk 8, 15; 1 Cor 11, 2; 1 Thess 5, 21; Heb 3, 6. 14) or possession (Mt 21, 38; 1 Cor 7, 30; 2 Cor 6, 10). Other common meanings are *I take possession* (Lk 14, 9), *I am bound* (Rom 7, 6), or *I am dominated by something* (Lk 4, 38; Jn 5, 4)²³⁶. In the context of 2 Thess 2, 6–7 the term is translated by exegetes in three ways:

- a) The majority of interpreters translate the term as *restrain*,
- b) J. E. Frame and E. Best explain it by *I take a power*²³⁷,
- c) Ch. H. Giblin explains it by *I capture* or *I overtake* in terms of spiritual control²³⁸.

Each of these translations affects the interpretation of entire passage 2 Thess 2, 6–7²³⁹. However, a more serious problem to be solved is

235 J. Stepien, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, pp. 279–280.

236 G. Milligan, *St Paul's Epistles*, pp. 155–157; R. Popowski, *The Great Dictionary*, p. 331; J. H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Massachusetts 2005, p. 339; W. Trilling, κατέχω, in: *EDNT*, vol. II, col. 670–671.

237 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 299; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 258.

238 Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, pp. 167–242.

239 Different interpretations will be discussed below. At this stage of our analysis we take the first of these translations. Justification for this choice will be given when 2 Thess 2, 6–7 will be interpreted later.

the use in 2 Thess 2, 6 of the neuter gender τὸ κατέχον and in 2 Thess 2, 7 the masculine gender ὁ κατέχων. Exegetes are agreed about the fact that in both cases the term refers to the same reality²⁴⁰. Usually exegetes focus on finding an explanation, which both in personal and in impersonal forms will refer to the same reality. The most common proposals are:

- continuation of the Roman Empire and Caesar²⁴¹,
- preaching of the gospel and Paul²⁴²,
- God’s plan and God or an angel of God²⁴³,
- prophetic activity and false prophets²⁴⁴,
- forces of evil and Satan²⁴⁵.

J. Callow proposes a different solution. The change of τὸ κατέχον occurs in 2 Thess 2, 6, to ὁ κατέχων occurs in 2 Thess 2, 7, so in his opinion, this emphasizes the personal nature of the term *the restrainer*²⁴⁶. It does not indicate two different aspects of the same reality, but use of the masculine in 2 Thess 2, 7 explains and specifies the term used in 2 Thess 2, 6 in the neuter²⁴⁷. The term τὸ κατέχον does not mean

240 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 253.

241 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, pp. 337–340. This interpretation was accepted by most of the Church Fathers from the time of Tertullian: cf. Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis* 24, 17–18, in: J. G. Borleffs (ed.), *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina 2: 1954, p. 952; Hippolytus, *The Antichrist* 49. 2, in: ZMT 17, Cracow 2002, p. 133. See also: L. J. Lietaer Peerbolte, The κατέχων/κατέχον of 2 Thess. 2, 6–7, NovT 39: 1997, pp. 141–144.

242 O. Cullmann, Le caractère eschatologique du devoir missionnaire et de la conscience apostolique de S. Paul, RHPR 16: 1936, pp. 210–245; I. H. Marshall, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 198–200.

243 R. Aus, God’s Plan and God’s Power: Isaiah 66 and the Restraining Factors of 2 Thess 2, 6–7, JBL 96: 1977, pp. 537–553; W. Trilling, *Der zweite Brief*, pp. 88–102. Among the Church Fathers such a view was shared by Theodore of Mopsuestia. See: Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary*, p. 126.

244 Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, pp. 167–242.

245 E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 301–302; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, pp. 259–262.

246 J. Callow, *A Semantic*, p. 64.

247 S. G. Brown, The Intertextuality of Isaiah 66, 17 and Thessalonians 2. A Solution for the “Restrainer” problem, in: C. A. Evans, J. A. Sanders (eds), *Paul and*

impersonal forces or systems, but is the action of a person²⁴⁸. This action may manifest itself through activities, plans or the will of the person. However, ὁ κατέχων does not constitute a proper name of the person known to addressees, but indicates a kind of personal action, which has a specific function in the history of salvation. This personal action, for us impossible to identify, was known to the recipients (2 Thess 2, 6)²⁴⁹. This interpretation gives a clear and compact explanation of the change from a neuter form into masculine form and we accept it for further analysis.

2.2.2. *The Figure of the Restrainer*

The expression: εἰς τὸ ἀποκαλυφθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ καιρῷ – *until he will be revealed in his own time*, from a grammatical point of view has two problems of interpretation. The first concerns the reference of the infinitive phrase τὸ κατέχον or το οἴδατε – *you know*. Ch. H. Giblin believes that the phrase should be combined with οἴδατε because the structure of the sentence associates an infinitive phrase with the verb immediately preceding it, as is typical for the New Testament and Paul²⁵⁰. This combination, however, is problematic due to the fact that οἴδατε has a direct object, which is τὸ κατέχον. The unusual position of the verb (after and not before τὸ κατέχον) could be a result of the author's aim, which is to highlight the past participle²⁵¹. In addition, the verb οἴδατε does not belong to a group of “action” verbs, but belongs to the group of “thinking” verbs and cannot be connected with the infinitive²⁵². Always, when the verb appears with a direct object and is followed by a subordinate clause, the phrase refers not to the verb, but to the direct object and explains

Scriptures of Israel, JSNTSup 83: 1993, pp. 259–260; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 253.

248 J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar*, pp. 150–151.

249 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 259.

250 Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, p. 206.

251 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 291.

252 M. Barnouin, Les problèmes de traduction concernant 2 Thess 2, 6–7, *NTS* 23: 1976/77, pp. 485–486.

it (cf. Rom 13, 11; 1 Cor. 2, 2; 1 Thess 1, 4–5; 2, 1)²⁵³. The majority of exegetes think that the phrase is linked with τὸ κατέχον. This enables us to indicate the object of the participle τὸ κατέχον. At this stage of analysis we may conclude that the object of the participle τὸ κατέχον, and the expression ἀποκαλυφθῆναι αὐτὸν refers to the same person. Therefore, we can translate a beginning of 2 Thess 2, 6 as follow: *Now you know what keeps [him]*²⁵⁴.

The second problem of interpretation is to determine to whom the personal pronoun αὐτὸν refers. The context allows reference to one of three figures:

- Christ (2 Thess 2, 2),
- restrainer (2 Thess 2, 6),
- the man of lawlessness (2 Thess 2, 3. 8).

If the personal pronoun αὐτὸν references Christ, the revelation that is held back will be the parousia of Christ and the restrainer will be the Antichrist, His opponent. Such an interpretation in light of 2 Thess 2, 2 would be possible under the assumption that 2 Thess 2, 6 has an apologetic character, proving the falseness of the view that the day of the Lord had already come. It seems that 2 Thess 2, 6 is linked more closely to the following context than to preceding one. Considering the following context of 2 Thess 2, 6–7, this interpretation should be regarded as unacceptable.

Assuming that the parousia of Christ is held back until the time when the Antichrist will disappear, 2 Thess 2, 6–7 would be in logical contradiction to 2 Thess 2, 8a, where the author clearly speaks of the revelation of the wicked. Another argument against referring this pronoun to Christ is the use of a passive verb ἀποκαλύπτω. In 2 Thess the verb appears three times (2 Thess 2, 3. 6. 8). Twice (2 Thess 2, 3. 8) it is associated with the expression “the man of lawlessness”, which allows us to suppose that in 2 Thess 2, 6 it has the same meaning. In addition, the verb occurs 26 times in the New Testament, including 14 times in the passive voice. The verb in the passive voice, only once

253 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 253–254.

254 J. Callow, *A Semantic*, p. 63.

appears in the context of an eschatological discourse of Jesus and it refers to the Son of Man (Lk 17, 30). In other cases, the verb refers to God's justice, wrath, glory, faith or salvation²⁵⁵. Paul does not use the passive verb ἀποκαλύπτω for Christ. Using the passive voice *to be revealed* presupposes a person who reveals. In relation to Christ the New Testament uses the noun ἀποκάλυψις – *revelation*²⁵⁶.

The personal pronoun αὐτόν cannot refer to the restrainer because of the masculine gender of the personal pronoun and neuter gender of τὸ κατέχον in 2 Thess 2, 6²⁵⁷. The personal pronoun αὐτόν taken as referring to the man of lawlessness is the last and most convincing possibility²⁵⁸. In the context of 2 Thess 2, 3. 8 whereas in 2 Thess 2, 6 the verb ἀποκαλύπτω is used in the passive voice, we can assume that it refers to the same object. The object in 2 Thess 2, 3. 8 is the man of lawlessness, so in 2 Thess 2, 6 a personal pronoun points to him. Furthermore, use of the passive voice in relation to revelation of the Antichrist is justified. The man of lawlessness is not working on his own initiative and on his own power. It will be revealed by Satan, to announce himself god and fight against works of Christ on the earth.

2.2.3. Identification of the Restrainer

Before we attempt to determine more precisely the identity of the restrainer, a summary of the information obtained during previous analysis²⁵⁹:

255 See: Mt 10, 26; Lk 2, 35; 12, 2; Jn 12, 38; Rom 1, 17–18; 8, 18; 1 Cor 14, 30; Gal 3, 23; Eph 3, 5; 1 Pet 1, 5. 12.

256 See: Rom 8, 19; 1 Cor 1, 7; 2 Cor 12, 1; Gal 1, 12; 2 Thess 1, 7; 1 Pet 1, 7. 13; Rev 1, 1.

257 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 254. E. Best, accepting that the pronoun refers to the man of lawlessness, indicates the theoretical possibility that the pronoun can refer also to the restrainer. Such a possibility would exist only if we assumed that the author's intention was to use the masculine pronoun in order to note changes in a gender of participle, which occurred in 2 Thess 2, 7. E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 291.

258 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 263.

259 By deduction from the closer context, we understand logical conclusions from a reading of 2 Thess 2, 6–7. By deduction from the further context, we understand conclusions arising from using the term in the New Testament.

- both forms τὸ κατέχον and ὁ κατέχων refer to the same reality, which allows us to suggest that ὁ κατέχων is a clarification which indicate the personal nature of τὸ κατέχον;
- the restrainer is a single person and does not specify any group;
- the meaning of the term ὁ κατέχων comes from the verb κατέχω;
- the participle τὸ κατέχον does not have an object, which requires one to assume it from the context or to accept as very rare in the New Testament, the form of an intransitive verb κατέχω and translate it as “I keep a power”²⁶⁰;
- the restraining is in relation to the man of lawlessness. Determining of the relationship (is it a relationship of dependency or relationship of opposition) will help to find answers to the question who is the restrainer;
- the action of the restrainer is scheduled for a limited period (2 Thess 2, 7b-8a – ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται καὶ τότε);
- the restrainer is already running, as indicated by 2 Thess 2, 7b;
- the Thessalonians know about whom the author speaks (2 Thess 2, 5–6a);
- this term does not occur in the New Testament, except 2 Thess, and also does not occur in Jewish eschatology.

The last two points suggest that both the recipients and the author knew the term. Although the term was in the minds of the community and the author, however it has not become a part of the New Testament eschatological terminology or it was replaced by another term or phrase. This makes it impossible for us to read this phrase as the author and Thessalonians understood it²⁶¹. The consequence of this is highly speculative interpretation, based primarily on the ambiguous meaning of the verb κατέχω. The only framework that restricts the possibility of interpretation is the personal and individual nature of the restrainer. Analysis of the personal pronoun αὐτὸν as done in the preceding paragraph, which refers it to the Antichrist, allows us

260 See chapter 3.3.2.

261 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 262.

to conclude initially that the restrainer is rather his opponent than a collaborator.

J. E. Frame cites and analyzes an opinion of Schäfer²⁶², who translates ἐκ μέσου γένηται, as a intransitive participle “to keep a power”, concludes that the restrainer is Satan²⁶³ who keeps power over the world and already acting in the world in order to support his tools, who is the man of sin. All actions, called by the author “mystery of iniquity” are preparation for the revelation of the Antichrist at a specified time. Satan hinders the revelation of Antichrist until the time that he has established. Meanwhile, there will be war in the heaven (Rev 12, 7), which will cast down Satan from heaven to the earth. In this way, Schäfer explains the meaning of ἐκ μέσου γένηται – *taken out of the way* (literally: *disappear from the centre*). These events will be accompanied by apostasy and the revelation of the Antichrist. Satan will transmit to the Antichrist all power in order to fight against Christ and to proclaim himself god. This interpretation of τὸ κατέχων and ὁ κατέχων gives the entire fragment of 2 Thess 2, 1–12 an apologetic character, whose aim is rather an indication of a reason for delaying the coming of the Lord. Satan, who restrains the revelation of Antichrist, indirectly prevents the revelation of the Lord and causes a delay of the parousia. However, the purpose of this section, particularly 2 Thess 2, 3–12 is to indicate signs confirming the falsehood of the view that the day of the parousia had already come (2 Thess 2, 1–2). Moreover, such an interpretation, in a sense would give to Satan a power to decide about the parousia of Christ²⁶⁴. However, this is inconsistent with generally accepted Judaism and Christian eschatological concepts that all events concerning the end of time are only subject to the authority of God. Another argument for rejecting this interpretation is the lack of evidence, from the context of the entire fragment 2 Thess 2, 1–12, allowing us to attribute to Satan the role of initiator of events

262 A. Schäfer, *Erklärung der zwei Briefe an die Thessalonicher und des Briefes an die Galater*, Die Bücher des Neuen Testaments 1: 1890.

263 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 262.

264 The time of revelation of Christ’s would be dependent on the revelation the man of lawlessness by Satan.

preceding the parousia. Although, from a grammatical point of view, the presumption that Satan is the restrainer is possible, the phrase: καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πέμπει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης – *for this reason God sends them a powerful delusion* (2 Thess 2, 11) emphasizes God's authority re actions of the Antichrist, especially against people who have not accepted the love of truth. The fragment 2 Thess 2, 1–12 as well as the prior and following context does not provide any arguments to identify the restrainer with Satan. The author reveals that God will inflict a punishment on persecutors (2 Thess 2, 6), and will choose the Thessalonians as His first-fruits (2 Thess 2, 13). Anything that happened to the Thessalonians is deliberate and controlled by God. Only such a concept could restore community peace and not push it in a direction of further doubt. It seems that acceptance of the concept of Satan, as the restrainer in the context of the problems of believers in Thessalonica, will rather increase anxiety and terror. It is difficult to accept that this was the intention of the author. These arguments lead us to consider it impossible to accept the view that Satan is the restrainer²⁶⁵.

Ch. H. Giblin accepts the meaning of the verb κατέχω as *I catch, I over take* and identifies the restrainer with a force opposing God²⁶⁶. The author assumes negative meaning of the verb *catch*, which in this context would mean to *conquer, to dominate someone*. In this case, the term τὸ κατέχον would correspond to the false teaching, which aim is to seize control of the community in Thessalonica. The false prophet who sowed anxiety in the hearts of the Thessalonians could do this, proclaiming that the day the Lord had already come²⁶⁷. So, the term ὁ κατέχων would mean the false prophet, who proclaims that the parousia had already come, and who must finish his activity before the

265 E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 299–300.

266 Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, pp. 167–169.

267 Although the term κατέχω does not appear in the New Testament except 2 Thess, Giblin (making a detailed analysis of the Old Testament texts, Jewish texts and Qumran writings) looking for themes corresponding to the idea of the restrainer. Conclusion of his research is identification of the restrainer with a false prophet. See: Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, pp. 167–204.

revelation of the man of lawlessness²⁶⁸. Through this narrow interpretation, which focused only on the community of Thessalonica, Giblin tries to find an explanation of τὸ κατέχον, which also explains the absence of the term in later writings of the apostle. His interpretation, which involves searching outside the context of the letter for arguments supporting a thesis already accepted, rather than as a conclusion based on analysis of the text, has several weaknesses. The basic problem is to accept a passive meaning of the term τὸ κατέχον (to be caught), which in 2 Thess 2, 6 is used in the active form. Controversial also is the adoption of a negative sense of a verb κατέχω, because in 1 Thess 5, 21 it occurs in a positive sense and refers to prophetic ecstasy²⁶⁹. If we accept that τὸ κατέχον means forces opposing God, it would be still difficult to understand why the restrainer must disappear as the author says in 2 Thess 2, 7. Paul's definition of the restrainer implies his personal and individual character. Giblin's interpretation of ὁ κατέχων as a false prophet is local, referring only to the community of Thessalonica, and does not correspond to the universal context of the entire passage which is closely associated with events re the end of the world²⁷⁰. Arguments presented above do not allow us to accept Giblin's interpretation, which, similar to Schäfer interpretation, is based on the meaning of τὸ κατέχον as a collaborator of the man of lawlessness and not as his enemy.

The majority of exegetes assume the translation of the verb κατέχω as *opposed to* and see in τὸ κατέχον the enemy of ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας – the man of lawlessness²⁷¹. However, also in this case, exact interpretation of τὸ κατέχον/ὁ κατέχων is impossible, due to lack of information.

268 Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, p. 216. G. Krodel, accepting most of Giblin's arguments, believes that the terms τὸ κατέχον/ὁ κατέχων refers to "the overwhelming religious and political demands of society". (G. Krodel, The "Religious Power of Lawlessness" (Katechon) as Precursor of the "Lawless One" (Anomos) 2 Thess 2, 6–7, *Currents in Theology and Mission* 17: 1990, p. 446).

269 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 299.

270 G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, pp. 214–215.

271 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, pp. 337–340; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 252–257.

Depending on assumptions, exegetes interpret τὸ κατέχων/ὁ κατέχων in socio-historical or religious-spiritual terms.

One of the most ancient interpretations of the two participles is the idea that they relate to the Roman Empire and the Emperor²⁷². This interpretation has its supporters among modern exegetes²⁷³. Wanamaker, indicating Old Testament and Jewish apocalyptic trends to interpret historical and social events in the light of supernatural reality²⁷⁴, identifies ὁ κατέχων with Caesar ruling the empire at the time of writing the Letter²⁷⁵. He thinks that the man of lawlessness has its historical counterpart, and similar the restrainer has his own counterpart²⁷⁶. This interpretation suggests that the system of the empire and the person of Caesar provide the world order and security, which protects us from the revelation of the man of lawlessness, until the system collapses. However, this interpretation raises a number of questions. The action of the man of lawlessness is directed not against the Empire, but against works of God on earth. It is difficult to assume that Caesar and the empire, where polytheism was the common practice, and Christianity was not recognized as authorized religion, will act to defend works of God, although they do not believe in Him. Assuming that the author knew the intentions of Pompey and Caligula, and taking into account the critical attitude of Paul to the Empire (1 Cor 2, 8), it is difficult to believe that he could see in Caesar and the Empire the restrainer. There is also a lack of parallel texts, which could prove

272 See: Hippolytus (*The Commentary of the Book of Daniel 4, 8–10*); Tertullian (*De Resurrectione* 24, 17–18). See also: W. Myszor (ed.), *Christians in the Roman Empire in II and III century*, Katowice 2005, pp. 91–95.

273 W. Bornemann, *Die Thessalonicherbriefe*, p. 325; E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, pp. 337–340; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 256–257. E. J. Richard modifies the interpretation and says that it is not referring only to the Roman Empire, but to governments and rulers in general. B. B. Warfield identifies τὸ κατέχων with the institution of state and ὁ κατέχων with a ruler, and thinks that the restraining is a Jewish state and the restrainer is James of Jerusalem. The view was not accepted and it remains isolated. See: I. H. Marshall, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 197.

274 See: J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* 2, Michigan 1998, pp. 23–42.

275 At this time, the Emperor of Rome was Claudius, who reigned from 41 to 54 AD.

276 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 256–257.

such a view²⁷⁷. In the light of 2 Thess 2, 7 the author would have to assume that the empire will fall, which at the time of writing of the Letter, seems to be impossible, because the Empire was still very strong²⁷⁸. If the text of 2 Thess 2, 7 is treated as a prophecy concerning the distant future, 2 Thess 2, 7 would be incomprehensible in the context of the expectation of the imminent coming of the Lord (2 Thess 2, 2). In this case, the fall of the Empire and the whole polity of the world should be treated by the author as the third (together with apostasy and the revelation of the man of lawlessness) sign preceding the coming of the Lord²⁷⁹. Moreover, pointing to specific but unconfirmed by other sources, historical events or persons (in the light of the apocalyptic context of 2 Thess 2, 1–12) would be a narrow interpretation of the fragment, which has a universal character.

O. Cullmann identifies τὸ κατέχων with the proclamation of the gospel and ὁ κατέχων with the person of Paul²⁸⁰. His reflection is based on the interpretation of Mt 25, 14 and Mk 13, 10, according to which before the end of times the gospel must be proclaimed to Gentiles²⁸¹. Consequently, until the announcement of the gospel to all Gentiles the man of lawlessness cannot be revealed and apostasy cannot occur. Paul, who is convinced of his vocation to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Gal 1, 16; 2, 7) is himself ὁ κατέχων. J. Munck, adopting the interpretation of Cullmann, thought that the death of the apostle is his ἐκ μέσου γίνηται – *taken out of the way* and the beginning of the judgement day²⁸². As in the case of identifying the restrainer with the emperor, so also in the interpretation that Paul is the restrainer ὁ κατέχων/τὸ κατέχων is viewed in historical and social terms. This interpretation faces a number

277 G. Friedrich, *Der zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher*, in: P. Althaus, H. D. Wendland, J. Becker, H. Conzelmann, G. Friedrich (eds), *Das Neue Testament Deutsch III*, Göttingen 1982, p. 265.

278 G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 214.

279 C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, p. 229.

280 O. Cullmann, *Le Caractère eschatologique*, pp. 210–245.

281 O. Cullmann sees here the convergence of Jewish belief concerning the reconstruction of Israel before the end of time.

282 M. Bednarz, *1–2 Letter*, pp. 702–703; J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, London 1959, pp. 36–42; A. L. Moore, *The Parousia*, pp. 112–114.

of important questions. It focuses on the development of Christianity in the pagan world, quite apart from the aspect of preaching the gospel to the Jews. The role of Paul as ὁ κατέχων in relation to the man of lawlessness seems also to be enigmatic. The apostle would possess a power to stop the man of lawlessness. Why would the apostle write about himself in such a mysterious manner? What historical figure would be the man of lawlessness whom Paul is opposing? The man of lawlessness would be revealed at the time of death of the apostle, even if preaching of the gospel to Gentiles has been not yet completed at that time. In the passage of 1 Thess 4, 13–18 the apostle expresses his belief that the coming of the parousia will happen during his lifetime²⁸³. In this context, reference of 2 Thess 2, 7b to Paul would be illogical. It is difficult to believe that both the author and the addressees of the letter were convinced that the gospel had been proclaimed to all Gentiles. It seems that the historical and social interpretation of ὁ κατέχων/τὸ κατέχον, although it may indicate a possible source of inspiration, it is not convincing in indicating a specific person or institution as the restrainer. Making such an indication is always a narrow interpretation of an apocalyptic text.

An alternative to the socio-historical interpretation is religious and spiritual, interpretation, which points to supernatural beings as ὁ κατέχων/τὸ κατέχον. It presents a number of possibilities, of which two will be discussed²⁸⁴:

- angel or angels
- God

C. R. Nicholl, in his recent monograph, presents arguments supporting a hypothesis that the archangel Michael is ὁ κατέχων²⁸⁵. The

283 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 298.

284 An example of different interpretations of ὁ κατέχων is identification of the restrainer with the Holy Spirit. See: G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 215; W. H. Burke, *The Parousia of Christ in the Thessalonians Correspondence*, Aberdeen 1979. R. H. Gundry presented criticism of the interpretation. See: R. H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, Grand Rapids 1973, pp. 122–128; Ch. C. Ryrie, *First and Second Thessalonians*, Chicago 1959, p. 111; R. L. Thomas, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, pp. 324–325.

285 C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, pp. 225–249. Also Jones accept this interpretation. See: I. H. Jones, *The Epistles*, p. 108.

hypothesis is not new, but C. R. Nicholl provides a new approach to the interpretation of the difficult and ambiguous fragment 2 Thess 2, 6–7²⁸⁶. After a listing of texts from the Old Testament, the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Qumran writings, he points to the archangel Michael as the most important among the angels. He is the defender of Israel, the leader of the heavenly army who will play a key role in the eschatological events. Nicholl wants to prove two theses:

- a) The Archangel Michael is ὁ κατέχων
- b) The Archangel Michael can be “*taken out of the way*” – ἐκ μέσου γένηται.

Argumentation of both theses is based on Dan 9–11, which according to Nicholl is a primary source of inspiration for 2 Thess 2, 3–12²⁸⁷. In Dan 10, 13. 20–21; 12, 1 the archangel Michael is presented as a prince and commander of the army fighting against Persians and Greeks to defend the people of God. His task is to stop forces opposing the fulfilment of God’s plan for humanity, especially for the chosen nation. This concept is not limited to the Book of Daniel, but it is also present in Jewish literature, as evidenced by Zauber Papyri 4, 2768–2772 (*Papyri Graecae Magicae*). In this papyrus, the term κατέχων is used in the sense of a restraining action of the Archangel Michael against the great dragon²⁸⁸. Also in the Qumran writings, the Archangel Michael works against Belial, helping all the sons of the light (1QM col. 17,

286 That interpretation was supported by: M. D. Goulder, Silas in Thessalonica, *JSNT* 48: 1992, p. 93; D. D. Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael Traditions and Angel Christology in Early Christianity*, Tübingen 1999, pp. 132–34; J. B. Orchard, Thessalonians and the Synoptic Gospel, *Bib* 19: 1938, pp. 40–41; P. G. Rinaldi, *Le Lettere ai Tessalonicesi*, Milan 1951, pp. 157–158. Some authors speak generally about angels. See: I. H. Marshall, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 199–200; M. J. J. Menken, *2 Thessalonians: Facing*, p. 113.

287 C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, p. 232.

288 According to C. R. Nicholl the papyrus comes from the third or fourth century AD and contains a much older tradition dating back to the period between the first century BC and the second century AD. Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, p. 235.

5–8a). That, according to Nicholl, proves that the thesis concerning the Archangel Michael as the restrainer was present in the thought of Judaism of Second Temple period²⁸⁹.

Another element of the argument in C. R. Nicholl is the thesis that the Archangel Michael is the one who will be taken out of the way. The thesis is based on Dan 11, 45–12, 1 and the term παρελεύσεται – *pass* in the sense of *ceasing to exist, neglect* found in the LXX (Dan 12,1)²⁹⁰. He thinks that Hebrew equivalent of the term is found in MT and it comes from the root עמד, which has various meanings including *generation, appearances, occurring*²⁹¹. Among the many meanings of the Greek term Nicholl gives – *stand* (also *constantly stand*), *stop, delete* (Josh 10, 13; Hab 3, 11; 1 Sam 19, 27; 2 Sam 2, 28; Nahum 2, 9; 2 Kings 4, 6) and *stands quietly*. He uses the latter term for further argumentation. Referring to the text of Yuth Rabbah’s Poem 1, he argues that the meaning of *stands quietly* is equivalent to word *disappear*. Consistently, Nicholl reads Dan 12, 1 in the following way: “*will take out of the way*” instead of “*in those days Michael will appear*”. Such a reading of Dan 10–12 leads him to conclude that the author of 2 Thess writing ὁ κατέχων was thinking about the Archangel Michael.

It seems that the main weakness of this interpretation is basing it only on one passage of Dan 10–12. Although 2 Thess 2, 1–12, and especially 2 Thess 2, 3–4 shows a convergence with Dan 11, 29–39, interpretation of 2 Thess 2, 6–7, and identification of ὁ κατέχων with the Archangel Michael encounters some difficulties. In Dan 10–12 the Archangel Michael is not the only angel (although the only one mentioned by name) struggling with the princes of the Persians and the Greeks. In light of Dan 10, 13. 20b. 21b it can be assumed that the fighting angel is not Michael but a second angel, whom Michael comes only to help. The Archangel Michael is referred to as “one of the first princes” (Dan 10, 13) as well as “your prince” (eg. the prince of the nation of Israel). This, however, does not yet allow us to see in the ὁ κατέχων from 2 Thess 2, 6–7 the Archangel Michael. It would be

289 Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, p. 236.

290 Παρέρχομαι, in: LEH, p. 470.

291 עמד, in: BDB, pp. 763–765; See: C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, p. 242.

more reasonable to talk about one of the archangels. Further, the Archangel Michael, as one of the first princes, is fighting a war in defence of the chosen nation, which is actually a response to an evil action of an enemy. However, in 2 Thess 2, 6–7 the ὁ κατέχων prevents the revelation of the man of lawlessness. In the description of 2 Thess the motif of struggle is absent, although the motif of two opposing forces is clearly presented. 2 Thess 2, 6–7 suggests rather a sovereign domination and complete control over the situation by ὁ κατέχων, which is a factor that cannot be deduced from Dan 10–12.

The argument that after the Archangel Michael will be taken out of the way the time of oppression will come, which is based on the interpretation of the term παρελεύσεται²⁹² appears in Dan 11, 45–12, 1, was proved using rabbinic testimony, although coming from the late period²⁹³ but referring to the earlier tradition²⁹⁴. Nicholl points out that the hypothesis of the Archangel Michael as ὁ κατέχων fits best the ambiguous meaning of the words ἐκ μέσου γένηται²⁹⁵. If one assumes that, the Archangel Michael is the guardian of the people of God and Christians, the question would arise as to how his being taken out of the way should be understood? Is he a loser in the fight against the forces of the darkness, or does he fail to carry out his functions? Assuming even that the Archangel Michael will step down at the moment in which God permits the man of lawlessness to be revealed, we can logically conclude that the archangel is merely the tool by which the will of God will be fulfilled.

Another interpretation of the terms ὁ κατέχων/τὸ κατέχον, in a spiritual and religious sense, identifies the restrainer with God. Such an interpretation sometimes appears in writings of the Fathers of the Church²⁹⁶. Among contemporary exegetes who accept this

292 C. R. Nicholl assumes that the term in the LXX reflects an idea of Hebrew core עבר rather than עמד.

293 Ruth Rabbah's Poem was written in fifth century AD.

294 For example, the tradition thought by Rabbi Johan or Rabbi Hanin who lived in the second century AD.

295 C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, p. 245.

296 Theodoret of Cyrus and Theodore of Mopsuestia accepted this view.

interpretation are A. Strobel²⁹⁷ and W. Trilling²⁹⁸. Trilling argues that there is no significant difference between τὸ κατέχον and ὁ κατέχων because τὸ κατέχον means delaying the parousia, which is a sovereign act of God. In this interpretation, God is the restrainer who prevents revelation of the man of lawlessness until the time, which has been determined by God in His plan of salvation. Against this interpretation, as well as against the previously mentioned one, a number of objections were proposed²⁹⁹. The first concerns the absence of a satisfactory explanation for the use of τὸ κατέχον and ὁ κατέχων. The second involves the interpretation of the phrase ἐκ μέσου γένηται as a reference to God. The third problem arises from the use in relation to God of the rather strange and enigmatic term ὁ κατέχων.

Because this interpretation, according to our assessment, seems to fit best in the apocalyptic context of 2 Thess 2, 1–12, we will try to answer these questions, hoping that a slight modification of this interpretation will be a constructive contribution to the discussion concerning this difficult passage.

The answer to the first question has already been partly given in section 3.3.1, where we assumed that substitution of the neuter gender τὸ κατέχον (2 Thess 2, 6) for the masculine gender ὁ κατέχων (2 Thess 2, 7) is to emphasize the personal nature of the restraining action. Assuming that the participles τὸ κατέχον/ὁ κατέχων refer to one reality but hold back on attempting to identify the reality, which could occur both in neuter, as well as in masculine forms (eg. the Empire and the Emperor), we can say that what prevents the revelation of the man of lawlessness is God's plan of salvation. God's plan of salvation is not an impersonal event, but it is work of God, which includes His active participation. Realization of the divine plan of salvation is the act of God himself. All elements of this plan are very specific and in some way causally related. Nothing happens by accident. In addition, the revelation of the man of lawlessness and his action in some way

297 A. Strobel, *Untersuchungen zum eschatologischen Geschichte von Habakkuk 2, 2–4*, Leiden 1961.

298 W. Trilling, *Der zweite*, pp. 95–105.

299 See: E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 300.

serves to reach a final purpose (2 Thess 2, 11–12). Both, revelation and the coming of the man of lawlessness (παρουσία), as well as the Lord's coming (παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου) are already defined and will occur at the time, which God knows, but not man. In 2 Thess 2, 6, the author refers to the knowledge that recipients have. We can assume that the term τὸ κατέχον/ὃ κατέχων was clearly understood by them. This allows us to suppose that the apostle spoke about this during his brief stay in Thessalonica or in his first letter. We must limit our search to 1 Thess and try to find traces of the knowledge taught to Thessalonians to which the apostle refers in 2 Thess 2, 6. Before Paul starts in 1 Thess 4–5 to solve problems that emerged in the community, first he makes a positive assessment of attitude of Thessalonians. He stresses that they are a model for believers in Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thess 1, 7), that they became followers of the Churches of God, which are in Judea (1 Thess 2, 14), and that they are his glory and joy in Christ Jesus (1 Thess 2, 20; 3, 9). The reason for such a high assessment of their attitude are the work of faith, the labour of love and hope persevering in Christ, which are characterized by their attitude, despite persecution from their countrymen (1 Thess 1, 6; 2, 14). Those virtues, which characterize an attitude of the Thessalonians, are not merely a consequence of words preached by the apostle but also the actions and power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1, 5). The first three chapters of this Letter are marked by the joy of apostle for the fact that the Gospel is spreading according to will of Christ. Proclaiming the Gospel to all peoples by words and the power of the Holy Spirit is the next stage of God's plan of salvation. It seems highly likely, that the apostle in some elements of his teaching (the Good News of Jesus, his ministry of preaching the Gospel and a fact of acceptance the faith by Gentiles) presented a perspective on the realization the divine plan of salvation. The event, which will start the final phase of God's plan of salvation, cannot occur or begin before the earlier stage is completed.

E. Best presents another argument in favour of this interpretation and proposes to refer the phrase ἐκ μέσου γένηται – *taken out of the way* to God, or – according to our proposal – to God's plan of salvation. The key to proof of this interpretation is the aorist γένηται. This verb γίνομαι occurs in the New Testament with high frequency and is used

in very different contexts³⁰⁰. Its basic meaning is: *I become, I arise, I appear*. In 2 Thess 2, 7 the term has the meaning *I take out*³⁰¹. A combination of this verb with ἐκ μέσου is unusual for the New Testament and occurs only in 2 Thess 2, 7. Some exegetes explain the expression ἐκ μέσου γένηται as *to removed*³⁰². It does not say anything about the way of removing; whether it happens suddenly or gradually, or if it is forced or occurs out of an act of free will³⁰³. M. Barnouin, referring to Greek literature, in particular to Plutarch (*Timoleon* 5, 3), where there is the expression ἕγνω ζῆν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκ μέσου γινόμενος relating to the living of a specific group of people, suggests that the expression ἐκ μέσου γένηται be explained as “*until [he] does not resign from restraining*”³⁰⁴. So this phrase is interpreted as referring to the free decision of the restrainer. This allows him to accept an interpretation according to which God has held back from a restraining action and will allow that the man of lawlessness be revealed³⁰⁵. D. J. Stephens points to a number of examples where God leaves man who departed from Him (Judt 16, 20; 1 Sam 16, 14; Ac 7, 42)³⁰⁶. In this way, he tries to argue that the idea of leaving can also be applied to God³⁰⁷.

300 See: W. Hackenberg, γίνομαι, in: *EDNT*, vol. I, col. 594–596; F. Büchsel, γίνομαι, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, p. 681.

301 R. Popowski, *The Great Dictionary*, pp. 108–110. γίνομαι, in: *L-S*, pp. 349–350.

302 It points at the fact, but not to the manner in which it will happen. See: J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 265.

303 J. Callow, *A Semantic*, p. 64.

304 M. Barnouin, *Les Problemem*, pp. 492–497. M. Barnouin concludes that the phrase ἐκ μέσου γένηται does not mean final disappearance, but the exchange of persons or objects, and applies it to the man of lawlessness.

305 We assume that ἐκ μέσου γένηται refers to ὁ κατέχω. R. D. Aus considers that a subject of this expression is *the mystery of lawlessness* (2 Thess 2, 7b). See: R. D. Aus, *God's Plan*, pp. 500–552.

306 D. J. Stephens, *Eschatological Themes in 2 Thessalonians 2, 1–12* (PhD dissertation). Quotation from E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 300.

307 Such arguments E. Best considers as selective and not based on terms that appear in the fragment. A different opinion from that of M. Barnouin and D. J. Stephens is taken by S. G. Brown. See: S. G. Brown, *The Intertextuality*, pp. 260–262.

An interpretation of the terms τὸ κατέχον/ὁ κατέχων as God's plan of salvation, in our view, simplifies the problem of understanding the expression ἐκ μέσου γίνηται. God's plan of salvation includes a variety of stages interconnected by logical and temporal consequence. These steps do not overlap, but all have a limited time. At the time of writing the Letter, the stage in which Paul was also personally involved was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. In light of 2 Thess 2, 10 where the author mentions those who received not the love of truth, we can suppose that the Gospel must be proclaimed to all people before the man of lawlessness will start his actions. By his action will be deceived only those who did not receive the love of truth but not those who did not hear the Gospel at all. Therefore, we can conclude that what needs to be completed (*taken out of the way*) is to proclaim the Gospel in a way that will complete this phase of God's plan of salvation³⁰⁸.

A response to the third of the objections raised by Best, relating to the enigmatic and rather surprising identification of God as ὁ κατέχων does not appear to be necessary, because no matter to whom the terms refers (to God, Satan, Caesar etc.) it will always sound unusual and strange. It seems to us that this difficulty disappears if the term ὁ κατέχων be interpreted not as a description of a person but as a term emphasizing the personal nature of God's plan of salvation (τὸ κατέχον)³⁰⁹.

308 Using a passive voice better reflects and responds to the context of 2 Thess 2, 6–7. See: J. Callow, *A Semantic*, p. 64.

309 Our interpretation is based on a minimalist exegesis of the text, and much more on inference from a broader context, what may be surprising in a study using the historical-critical method. In this case, this approach seems to be justified, because 2 Thess 2, 6–7 contains a negligible amount of information needed to determine the meaning of the term τὸ κατέχον/ὁ κατέχων. Not without reason, 2 Thess 2, 6–7 is known as one of the greatest *Crucis interpretum* of the New Testament. All interpretations surveyed above, despite intensive efforts to carry out their analysis in accordance with the principles of modern exegesis, look to writings of the New Testament, the Old Testament, the intertestamental literature or even broader historical-cultural studies for analogies confirming and supporting their interpretations. However, all the interpretations include a large measure of probability and subjectivity. Each

In a discussion concerning the identification of ὁ κατέχων one of the proposals is to identify this figure with the Archangel Michael. Arguments for this interpretation refer to the function, which the Archangel Michael takes in the Qumran writings, especially in the Rule of War. Therefore, we will analyse the figure of archangel Michael presented in the Essenes' writings in order to determine whether the functions which are referred to him in 1QS are similar to the functions of the restrainer in 2 Thess 2, 6–7.

Cosmological and ethical dualism, which is characteristic of the Qumran texts, is built up from an apocalyptic concept that presupposes the existence of two opposing spirits, as is described in the Rule of Community (1QS col. 3–4). A Spirit of the light that fills all the sons of the light, supported by the Prince of Light in the fight with the sons of the darkness fooled by the spirit of the darkness, and supported by the angels of the darkness. Both spirits are fighting in the heart of man in order to take power over him (1QS col. 4, 23). The fate of man is determined by his choosing one of the two groups (in terms of good or evil action in daily living). At the end of time an ethical conflict ongoing in the human heart will take the form of open conflict between the sons of the light and the sons of the darkness, in which men (4Q161; 1QM) and angels (1QH col. 11, 35) will be involved. An army of angels led by the Archangel Michael will support people belonging to the sons of the light in this war³¹⁰:

“He will send eternal succour to the company of His redeemed by the might of the princely Angel of the kingdom of Michael (...) He will raise up the kingdom of Michael in the midst of the gods, and the realm of Israel in the midst of all flesh” (1QM col. 17, 6. 8).

The Archangel Michael in 1QM is the commander of angelic troops supporting the sons of the light. By contrast, in the Book of Enoch,

of them has several weaknesses, which may be subject to criticism and reason for their rejection.

310 The role of the Archangel Michael, which is described in 1 QM, is very similar to the role played by him in the Book of Daniel. See: J. J. Collins, *The Mythology of Holy*, pp. 596–612.

the Archangel Michael, together with the archangels Gabriel and Raphael take on the mission of God's messengers or guardians³¹¹:

“(…) To Gabriel Lord said: Go to orphan and children of fornication, kill the children of guardians among men, and send them to the destructive war. (…) […] And the Lord said to Michael: Go and tell the Shemihazah and all his companions, who merged with women (…). (…) Tie them to seventy generations in the valleys of the earth, until the great day of judgement …” (4Q202 col. 4, 5. 8–10)³¹²;

“(…) Raphael and Michael, great guardians and saints, said the Lord of the world (…)” (4Q202 col. 3, 13).

As an emissary of God, the archangel Michael makes a covenant with Zedekiah:

“(…) Michael (….) Zedekiah [shall en]ter into a covenant on [th]at day (….) to practise and to cause all the Torah to be practised (….)” (4Q470 frg. 1, 5)³¹³.

In heaven, the Archangel Michael is the head of angels:

“Words of the book which Michael addressed to the angels … He said: (….)” (4Q529)³¹⁴.

311 See: M. J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran. A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1–36, 72–108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran*, Sheffield 1992, pp. 309–314.

312 4Q201 and 4Q202 are versions of the Book of Watchers, which is a part of the Book of Enoch. It was probably written in the first half of the second century BC. The book refers to Genesis 6, 1–4 and includes an extensive story about angels who descended to the earth and taught people all evil. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 295–296.

313 The fragment is classified as the text concerning Zedekiah. The text was written at the end of the first century BC. The text consists of three passages, speaks of the covenant with God. The quoted passage relates to the covenant that God made through the Archangel Michael with the king Zedekiah. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, p. 248.

314 4Q529 concern the angelic beings. It contains a number of instructions given by the Archangel Michael to the other angels and the announcement of rebuilding of the city for the name of His Majesty. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, p. 401.

Angels and archangels, including the Archangel Michael, in Qumran texts take on the function of messengers, carrying out the will of God and supporting the children of the light. They do not stop the sons of the darkness, but actively fight against them to defeat them and impose a penalty. Their role as guardians is to fulfil God's will on earth. In Qumran texts archangels do not take a task similar to the task of the restraining seen in 2 Thess 2, 6–7.

In the pseudepigraphal literature we do not find any single clear concept that is similar to the figure of the restrainer in 2 Thess 2, 6–7. The author of the Book 5 of the Sibylline Oracles, twice mentions some mysterious figures. The first time he is a king who opposes to Nero, who was considered in this oracle as Belial:

“He shall come fain even to sack the city of the blessed. And then a king sent from God against him, shall destroy all the mighty kings and the best of the men” (5 OrSib 107–108)³¹⁵.

However, it is assumed that, as in 3 OrSib 286 the expression “the king sent by God” applies to the rulers of the earth, whose activity is seen in terms of divine tools which will dispense punishment to wicked ones:

“Again, an exceptional man of heaven will appear
(he will spread his hands on a tree full of fruit),
the best of the Hebrews, who one day will stop the sun,
fairly speaking saints lips” (5 OrSib 256–259).

The fragment placed in brackets, added by a Christian, gives to the whole quotation a Christological interpretation. If we omit this addition, it becomes a messianic text similar to 5 OrSib 414. However, it is impossible to find in these two figures elements common with the restrainer of 2 Thess. In addition, the figures of the virgin Tabita, Elijah and Enoch presented in the Apocalypse of Elijah, despite the clearly outlined aspect of opposition to the “shameless one”, have more in common with martyrs than with the restrainer (ApEl 4, 1–19).

315 For more information concerning 5 OrSib see: S. Felder, What is the Fifth Sibylline Oracle?, *JSJ* 33: 2002, pp. 363–385.

Similar to the Qumran writings, in the pseudepigraphal literature, no one who fights against Belial stops his revelation, but he actively opposes Belial's evil actions.

3. Conclusion

In Chapter II we analysed motifs which are present in an eschatological picture of events proceeding the day of parousia, allowing us to draw the following conclusions. Concerning the use of terminology, it should be noted that the expressions *the sons of the light* and *the sons of the day* are synonyms, which describe ethical attitudes of the Christians in Thessalonica. The use of these terms by the apostle plays a dual role: it serves to build and strengthen community identity and it also serves to underline the opposition between attitudes of non-Christian and attitudes of believers, which is based on a motif of dualism (also in the field of terminology). This division in 1 Thess applies only to humans. A very similar pattern is found in the Qumran writings where both people and the spirits of the heaven are divided into two opposite groups: the sons of the light and the sons of the darkness. The same way of eschatological thinking about the fate of people can be found – despite a lack of convergence of terminology – also in the apocalyptic writings numbered among the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Non-Christians in 1 Thess are identified as *belonging to the night and to the darkness*. Both synonyms indicate improper ethical conduct resulting from a lack of faith in Christ and acceptance of propaganda and social trends. In contrast to 1 Thess, the Qumran writings speaking about the sons of the darkness takes into account both human and failed celestial beings. In the writings of Qumran and the pseudepigraphal literature, belonging to the sons of the darkness or sinners (the term most commonly found in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha) is determined by unethical behaviour and breaking the law. However, in 1 Thess the demarcation line is the fact of belief or disbelief in the resurrection of Christ.

Christians described by Paul as the children of the light, should be characterized primarily by evangelical vigilance in waiting for coming of the Lord, and sobriety in thinking that leads to greater self-control. The term γρηγορέω is used in 1 Thess 5, 6 in the sense of active waiting, while in 1 Thess 5, 10 its occurrence is unusual and refers to living Christians, who are left alive before the coming of the Lord. The term νήφω is used metaphorically and does not mean abstinence from wine, but in general, what is often called a “clear mind”. In the Qumran writings, we find many passages describing requirements for members of the community. The most important of these include following the law; reading, meditation and respect for the Rules of the Community; interpretation of history of the community in the perspective of God’s will. The pseudepigraphal literature lists a number of religious and ethical requirements proposed to the holy and righteous, generally presented in a social perspective. An expected attitude from the righteous is to avoid all iniquity and patient acceptance of the many misfortunes.

The attitude of non-Christians in 1 Thess is determined by using two metaphorical phrases: *sleeping*, which shows ignorance, and *drinking*, which sets a wrong attitude, both of which cause the wrath of God to come upon non-Christians at the day of judgement. For the Essenes the most characteristic attitude of the sons of the darkness is rejection of the Law and negligence concerning the Law or the Rule of Community. The pseudepigraphal literature points to hypocrisy in relationships directed toward God and injustice in human relationships as the characteristic attitude of sinners.

The motif of armour metaphorically used by the apostle in 1 Thess 5, 1–11, stresses a need for Christians to be engaging in preparations and watchfulness. Probably based on Is 59, 17 the metaphorical description of Christian weapons refers to one’s relationship to God (breastplate of faith and love), and to the future destiny of Christians (the helmet of salvation). In the Qumran writings, there is frequent use of a military theme, which does not have a metaphorical meaning, but is always used, in a literal sense. In the pseudepigraphal literature such metaphorical references are not found.

The goal, which Christians seek, is salvation defined in 1 Thess as *being with the Lord*. Salvation is a future event, which man cannot earn by his own efforts, but it requires his cooperation. Paul presents salvation to the Thessalonians as a release from wrath at the day of judgement. In the Qumran writings, salvation is seen as a future event when man will receive a reward from God for his good life. Sometimes salvation is presented as an earthly reality referring to liberation from earthly enemies and including a life full of blessings and peace. Another time, salvation is understood in a spiritual sense, as an event following the general judgement. Both understandings of salvation are also characteristic of the pseudepigraphal literature.

Paul, speaking about the destiny of non-Christians, explicitly states that on the day of judgement they are destined for the wrath of God, understood as an existence away from God (condemnation). Condemnation is irrevocable and eternal. The Qumran writings also describe the destiny of the sons of the darkness as destruction, defined in terms of physical destruction on the earth or eternal damnation after the judgement. The pseudepigraphal apocalyptic literature devotes much space to the issue of the judgement and the condemnation of sinners. Depending on the time of writing of the books, different approaches to these events are presented. The judgement day will have a universal character. However, concerning persons of judges and durability of penalty there is no consensus among the psuedepigraphal literature. Sometimes the punishment is eternal and unchanging (1 En 14, 4–7) but in other places, there are suggestions of the possibility of a change of the fate of the damned (2 OrSib 330–333).

Another eschatological motif discussed in this chapter is *deceiving*, which is the action directed against both Christians and non-Christians. Neither of these groups is free from deception, but each group reacts differently to it, and it affects the future fate of the group. An aim of the author of 2 Thess was to show the inaccuracy of the false thesis that the day of the Lord had already come. The wide spreading of this thesis caused confusion in the community. We are not told directly how it happened or who was a false teacher using Paul's authority. Christians, instructed by the apostle in 1 Thess about the equality of

the living and the dead on the day of the parousia, believe that the day will find them prepared for the Lord's coming. They were convinced that on the day they will not be an object of the wrath of God, but suddenly were taught that the day of the Lord had already come. They did not recognize it because they were unprepared. In addition, persecutions, which the community suffered, in the context of false teaching, could be recognized as signs of God's wrath. The author, in order to prove that the preached thesis is false, points to two motifs, which are necessary to confirm the truth of the thesis that the parousia had come. The first one is a universal apostasy, which is related to attitudes of non-Christians against the gospel of Christ. The second one is the revelation of the man of lawlessness, who in every possible way will seek to deceive people. According to the author neither of these motifs has yet occurred, thus proving the falseness of the thesis.

In the Qumran writings and the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, a motif of deceiving the sons of the light by Belial or by Satan is present. According to teaching of the Essenes, some of the sons of the light will be deceived and will join to people of Belial, but those who persevere will rule the earth and will live in peace. The pseudepigraphal literature emphasizes the severity of deception at the end of time, but sometimes, authors of the pseudepigrapha believe that deceptive actions will not be able to harm the believers.

The objects of deception are also non-Christians who follow a false teaching that causes the wrath of God at the day of judgement. God allows the deception non-Christians because it is a consequence of their unbelief and rejection of Christ. The person who is doing the deceiving is the man of lawlessness, whom God will allow to work to fulfil the wickedness of those who do not believe. In the Qumran writings, only the unjust are deceived by God. The aim is to show the wickedness of the sons of darkness and make a fair test of them. In the pseudepigraphal literature, Satan or Belial deceives sinners, which is a consequence of their stubbornness and unwillingness to be converted.

The second event, which will precede the parousia is revelation of the man of lawlessness. He is the tool of Satan on the earth. He opposes Christ, and therefore can be called Antichrist, although the

term appears only in writing of the apostle John. The man of lawlessness is committed to do evil by breaking the law and doing all wickedness. The purpose of his actions is to declare himself god and deceive people who do not believe in Christ. Sometimes the figure of the man of lawlessness is identified with historical figures who tried to divinize themselves. It seems that the figure of the man of lawlessness in 2 Thess 2 should not be identified with any of these individuals. It would be better to define it as an unknown being or as a man endowed with supernatural strength. The man of lawlessness, despite his great power and support from the devil, will be cut off easily and immediately at the time of revelation of Christ. In the Qumran writings, the term *the man of lawlessness* is present but it is a term synonymous with the term *the sons of darkness* and does not contain any similarities close to the meaning of the term in 2 Thess. In the pseudepigraphal literature written before the first century AD, the term and the concept of the man of lawlessness are absent. However, in the pseudepigraphal apocalyptic, written after the first century AD, which are strongly influenced by 2 Thess 2, concepts referring to the man of lawlessness are included.

The most mysterious character in an eschatological description of events preceding the parousia is the enigmatic figure of *the restrainer*. Use of the term once in the masculine gender and another time in the neuter causes great difficulty with its interpretation. In this study, we propose (similar to J. Callow) to interpret the term as “the personal nature of the impersonal action”. Consequently, we propose that this term means the divine plan of salvation, which sets a certain time and place for all events necessary to fulfil the history of salvation. In the Qumran writings and the pseudepigraphal literature, the figure of the restrainer is not present.

Chapter III

Events Connected with the Parousia

Following on from our discussion in chapter II of eschatological motifs, which are a part of the description of events preceding the coming of the Lord, we will analyse in this chapter eschatological motifs used by the author to create an apocalyptic picture of the final day. In the first part of this chapter, we will present the motif of surprise associated with the parousia. A separate discussion of this issue for Christians and non-Christians will accurately show the difference in the presentation deliberately chosen by the author. In the second part of this chapter, we will discuss various other motifs associated with the parousia. Analysis of the eschatological motifs contained in the Letters to the Thessalonians will help us to establish a degree of similarity between the apocalyptic picture presented in 1–2 Thess and the apocalyptic imaginary found in the pseudepigraphal literature of the Second Temple period. In the third part of the chapter, we will analyse Paul's teaching concerning the equality between the living and the dead on the day of the Lord.

1. Motif of Surprise

The motif of surprise connected with the day of parousia (1 Thess 5, 1–4) is usually understood as the sudden and unexpected return of the Lord, which is strongly influenced by Paul's conviction that the parousia will occur during his lifetime. Another traditional approach to the problem is to compare the apocalyptic picture of 2 Thess 2, 1–12 with the eschatology of 1 Thess and use it as an argument in the debate concerning the authenticity of 2 Thess.

Our discussion of this issue is based on the contrast between Christians (*You* – 1 Thess 5, 1–2. 4) and non-Christians (*They* – 1 Thess 5, 3). The Apostle’s intention seems to be to draw the readers’ attention to the clear differences between the two groups. A separate presentation of the relationship of each group to the motif of surprise associated with the parousia will help us to see the generalized approach of traditional interpretations¹.

1.1. *Christians*

As in many other places, so also in 1 Thess 5, 1–11 the apostle calls Christians ἀδελφοί. In contrast with 1 Thess 4, 13–18 where he corrects and complements the knowledge of the recipients concerning the fate of the dead at the day of the parousia, in 1 Thess 5, 1 he presents them as people possessing right knowledge about the way that the parousia will occur². Furthermore, he is convinced that the day of the parousia will not surprise them as “a thief in the night” (1 Thess 5, 4).

1.1.1. “*Times and dates*”

The two nouns χρόνος and καιρός in classical Greek had different meanings, but this seems to have disappeared since they are treated in the New Testament as synonyms (Ac 3, 19–21)³. Most exegetes interpret its meaning synonymously in 1 Thess 5, 1⁴. They occur in

1 J. F. Walvoord, *Posttribulationism Today*. Part IX: Rapture and the day of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 5, *BS* 134: 1977, p. 11.

2 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 174.

3 B. R. Moore, *Doublets*, p. 53; R. H. Stern, *A Semantic*, p. 116. About χρόνος see: G. Dellling, χρόνος, in: *TDNT*, vol. IX, pp. 581–584. About καιρός see: G. Dellling, καιρός, in: *TDNT*, vol. III, pp. 455–456. Although Dan 2, 21 is usually considered a source of this phrase, Lucchesi thought that it has its own non-biblical source in the writings of Philo (E. Lucchesi, Précédents non-bibliques à l’expression néo-testamentaire: „Les temps et les moments“, *JTS* 28: 1977, pp. 537–540).

4 See: E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 203–204; F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 108–109; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, pp. 131–132; Ch. A. Wanamaker,

the plural (Dan 2, 21; 4, 34; 1 Thess 5, 1) as well as in the singular (Dan 7, 12), without a change in the meaning⁵. The presence of articles with both nouns may indicate that they are being used as technical terms, well understood both by the author and by the recipients⁶. They define the end-time events and are parallel expressions to ἡμέρα κυρίου⁷. In contrast to 1 Thess 4, 13–18 where the apostle uses the term *parousia* and omits the term Day of the Lord the situation is reversed in 1 Thess 5, 1–11. This is probably a deliberate action of the author. In the context of the problems outlined in 1 Thess 4, 13–18, Paul emphasizes only the joyous aspects of the *parousia*. He does it in a way, which would not create new doubts and concerns (which could happen if he had used the more specific technical term *the day of the Lord*) but to solve the problem. The apostle makes very specific use of these terms and uses them consistently and accurately. In relation to the Christians he uses the term *parousia*, and in relation to non-Christians he uses the term *day of the Lord*. The aim of 1 Thess 5, 1–11 is not to comfort or instruct, but to strengthen the motivation of Christians to persevere in the good until the coming of the Lord, regardless of whether it will happen in their lifetime or after their death (1 Thess 5, 5–10)⁸. The Apostle does not indicate a specific date, but clearly emphasizes the motif of surprise, with a

The Epistles, pp. 177–178. Morris considers that there is a difference between the two terms. L. Morris, *The First and Second*, pp. 148–149.

5 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 179.

6 In Ac 1, 7 a similar expression for the Parousia occurs without an article. E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 204.

7 R. F. Collins, Tradition, Redaction, and Exhortation in 1 Tes 4, 13–5, 11, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovanensium* 53: 1980, p. 163. See: R. H. Sterner, *A Semantic*, p. 116. Some exegetes believe that the term refers to coming of the Lord (Best, Marshall, Frame). Others believe that the term refers to circumstances surrounding the coming of the Lord (Morris, Wanamaker) or events that must take place before coming of the Lord. (W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, pp. 54–55; B. Rigaux, *Les Épîtres*, p. 555;).

8 About Paul's expectations concerning the near coming of the *parousia*, exegetes' opinion are different. See: J. Stepien, Time of the Parousia in the Letters of St. Paul, in: *RBL* 14: 1961, nr 6, pp. 291–298.

particular consideration for those who remain in the darkness and who do not watch (1 Thess 5, 3).

1.1.2. “*You know very well*”

A phrase αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἴδατε – *You know* is a way often used by Paul of expressing his conviction concerning the knowledge of recipients about some matters (1 Thess 1, 5; 2, 1; 2, 5; 3, 3; 4, 2). In 1 Thess 5, 2 this expression is modified by the addition of the adverb ἀκριβῶς – *well, accurately*, which occurs only five times in the New Testament and only two twice in Pauline writings (Mt 1, 8; Lk 1, 3; Ac 18, 25; Eph 5, 15; 1 Thess 5, 2)⁹. The connection of ἀκριβῶς with οἴδατε is unusual for the apostle, and does not occur in any of his other letters¹⁰. The phrase αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἴδατε emphatically indicates the state in which the recipients now are. Paul during his brief stay in Thessalonica offered to the local community teachings concerning the parousia, which he later, when he was already in Corinth, supplemented because of new questions and doubts which had occurred (1 Thess 4, 13–18). One of the issues referring to the parousia is the motif of a sudden and surprising coming of that day, which had already been preached to Thessalonians by the apostle during his stay in the city. The teaching to which the apostle refers in 1 Thess 5, 2 does not concern a specific date, the day of the parousia or signs which should occur before that day, but the fact that the day will come suddenly and surprisingly. It is also likely that in face of the death of some members of the community and the possibility that believers could die before the parousia would occur, a question concerning the exact day of the parousia could rise from the side of the recipients¹¹. In this case, his reference to the truth which the apostle had already taught about and which was known to the recipients, suggests that pointing to an exact date of the parousia is as equally deceptive as the Roman empire slogan “peace and security” (1 Thess 5, 3).

9 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 204.

10 G. G. Findlay believes that Paul quoted from a letter addressed to him by the Thessalonians (See: J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 180).

11 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, p. 250.

1.1.3. "Like a thief in the night"

The expression ὡς κλέπτης ἐν νυκτὶ is the only explanation referring to the parousia which the apostle gives in this passage. It indicates the motif of surprise, which is connected with the coming of the Lord¹². As it is impossible to predict the appearance of a thief who breaks in to rob (and his coming is always a surprise), so the day of coming of the Lord will surprise man, because the date of the parousia is unknown. This comparison occurs in the teaching of Jesus (Mt 17, 24; Lk 12, 39; 2 Pet 3, 10), and in prophecies (Rev 3, 3; 16, 15) to indicate the motif of surprise and the necessity of watching¹³. The use of the present tense of the verb in the expression οὕτως ἔρχεται is interpreted differently by commentators. L. Morris and J. Eadi believe that this expression indicates the certainty of the statement¹⁴. R. H. Sterner suggests that, because of the context, the present tense should be regarded as an expression referring to the future¹⁵. However, it seems that the best interpretation is as an expression indicating a general

12 G. Förster believes that this picture, just like the whole concept in the fragment 1 Thess 5, 1–10 was known in the ancient world both Jewish and Hellenistic. If the concept *thief in the night* comes from the Judaic tradition, it emphasizes, according to Förster, the destructive power associated with the day of the parousia. However, if the source of inspiration can be found in Hellenistic literature, it highlights the element of darkness during the day of the Parousia. Förster accepted the Jewish tradition as the source of inspiration for Paul (G. Förster, 1 Thessalonicher 5, 1–10, ZNW 17: 1917, pp. 169–177). Some exegetes believe that this metaphor indicates something more than just the motif of surprise:

- a) Thessalonians expected punishment for persecutors (J. M. G. Barclay, Conflict in Thessalonica, CBQ 55: 1993, p. 527);
- b) Paul uses the motif of fear to enforce obedience in the community (J. Plevnik, 1 Thess 5, 1–11: Its Authenticity, Intention, and Message, Bib 60, 1979, p. 78; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 180–181);
- c) the term refers to the kingdom of evil and points out the lack of preparation (C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, p. 53).

13 A similar expression is found in Job 24, 14 and many other biblical and non-biblical texts (see: W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, pp. 60–77).

14 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 176; L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 151.

15 R. H. Sterner, *A Semantic*, p. 117.

truth¹⁶. The day of the parousia will be a surprise for many, but not for Christians in Thessalonica, because they know the truth about the unexpected coming of the Lord and because of that they are watching (1 Thess 5, 4). They are not in darkness and they do not place their hope in earthly security (1 Thess 5, 3).

It seems that in the Qumran writings the motif of surprise, both in relation to the children of the light and to the sons of the darkness, is absent. This is probably because they accepted the principle of dividing the world into two groups: the children of the light and the sons of the darkness. Each of these groups has a different attitude toward the Law, which determines their fate on earth and at the end of time. The sons of the light are required to observe the Law, protect it and obey it. They cannot let themselves be deceived by the sons of the darkness or to obey them during time of persecution. As a people who remain faithful to the covenant, the sons of the light are going to join the sons of heaven (1Q col. 11, 8). However, the sons of the darkness do not obey the Law. They are deceive and oppress the children of the light, and because of that, they will receive an eternal punishment. Their breaking of the Law determines their destiny and it will cause their condemnation on the Day of Judgement. For both groups the judgement scenario is already established. A decision concerning the time of the judgement belongs to God. The Qumran writings do not see this decision in terms of God's surprising action toward man, but in terms of the fulfilment of the history of the world (1QS col. 4, 18–19; 1QpHab col. 7, 6–13)¹⁷. Although the Qumran writings do not represent a single, compact system referring to the end of time¹⁸, it is common to their systems to divide the history of the world into two periods:

16 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 180.

17 J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism*, pp. 64–68.

18 Various manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls provide different models of the end of time or emphasize different aspects of the event. 11Q Malc 2, 13 refers to the 10 years preceding the jubilee of grace and God's judgment, but completely ignores the messianic aspect of history. In turn, 1QS contains the motif of messianic expectation, but does not have a concept of time being divided into periods.

- a) the period to the end of the time characterized by oppression and the constant struggle to preserve the covenant.
- b) the period at the end of the time containing salvation and restoration of the Temple.

The sons of the light who obey the Law, who are constantly watching and are faithful to God, are prepared for the time of judgement, which will not be a day of surprise for them, but a day of glory. However, in the Qumran texts the fate of the sons of the darkness on the Day of Judgment is clear, and the question of whether that day will surprise them or not is not a matter of reflection for the Essenes.

Although there are no texts examining the motif of the end of time in the context of surprise, this does not mean that some elements, such as determination of the times and seasons, do not appear in the Essenes' teaching. Some of them, consistent with the motif of surprise in 1 Thess 5, 1–4, also appear in the Qumran writings. However, they do not form a coherent concept and they are used in a completely different context. In the apocryphal Book of Enoch, known and used by the Essenes, there is the concept of weeks, indicating the various stages of the history of the Chosen People¹⁹. Enoch says that he was born in the first week, at a time when there was still justice, but the next period (second week) will be a time of lawlessness:

“I Enoch was born as seventh in the first week, and up to my time a righteousness still existed. After me there will be a second week, in which rape and lie will grow [...]” (4Q212 col. 3, 23–24).

The period of the last events on the earth falls between the eighth and tenth weeks, and it will be a time when justice will prevail and the

19 P. W. Flint, *Noncanonical Writings in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Apocrypha, other Precisely Known Writings, Pseudepigrapha*, in: P. W. Flint (ed.), *The Bible at Qumran. Text, Shape, and Interpretation*, Cambridge/Michigan 2001, pp. 96–100. A similar approach was probably in 11Q13. The text is corrupted, and fragments, which can be read, contain a description of events taking place in the tenth anniversary and refer to the Last Judgement. At that time, Melchizedek, who is a head of the sons of God, will deliver the sons of the light from the power of Belial. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 163–164.

judgment will be done. After that, there will be several weeks, which will have no end:

“With the end of this, will be selected chosen ones on the testimony of justice, from eternal justice seedlings, to whom will be given great wisdom and knowledge. They will uproot the foundations of rape and work of lies in him in order to make a judgement. Then comes the eighth week of justice, in which a sword will be given to all fair in order to make a fair judge on all the wicked who will be surrendered into their hands. With his end, they will become wealth in righteousness, and the royal palace will be built to the Great, in his excellent majesty, for all the generations of eternity. And after him will be the ninth week. Justice and fair judge will be revealed to all the sons of the earth. All the servants of iniquity will pass away from whole the earth and will be cast into eternal valley. All people will see the eternal way of justice. After that will be the tenth week in which the seventh part will be eternal judgement. The period of great judgement will be for revenge among the saints. The first heavens will pass away and it will be a new heaven. All forces of heaven will rise for all eternity, shining seven times strong. After that will be several weeks, which numbers will have no end, forever, in which goodness and justice will be done” (4Q212 col. 4, 12–26).

According to the Book of Enoch, the time of judgement and period of eternal justice will come one after another and they will be a continuation of God’s works. The conviction concerning the arrival of each period is extremely strong and gives an impression of an almost finished scenario concerning the end of times. However, in the scenario there is a lack of the motif of surprise, because everything seems to be naturally going to the end.

Another example of the similarity of motifs, but not a concept, in the Letters to the Thessalonians and the Essenes’ writings is the image of “a woman giving birth”, which is often used to emphasize immensity of pain. In 1 Thess 5, 3 the motif underlines urgency and the inevitable prospect of what is expected. However, in the writings of Qumran, especially in Hodayot, the motif determines magnitude of suffering endured by the author:

“Anguish [seizes me] like the pangs of a woman in travail, and my heart is troubled within me” (1QH col. 13, 30–31);

“[and] like a woman in travail with her first-born child, upon whose belly pangs have come and grievous pains, filling with anguish her child-bearing crucible. From the children have come to the throes of Death, and she labours in her pains who bears a man. For amid the throes of Death she shall bring forth a man-child and amid the pains of Hell there shall spring from her childbearing crucible a Marvellous Mighty Counsellor; and a man shall be delivered from out of the throes. When he is conceived all wombs shall quicken, and the time of their delivery shall be in grievous pains; they shall be appalled who are with child (1QH col. 11, 7–12)²⁰.

Both passages quoted above show that similarity of motifs does not mean similarity of eschatological concept.

Although the Qumran writings clearly indicate the coming of the end of times and events preceding or accompanying the day of judgement, they do not talk about the sudden coming of the day. That means that the motif of surprise coming on the day of judgement is absent in the Essenes' literature.

The concept of the end of times which surprises people, seems to be absent also in the pseudepigraphal literature. A characteristic feature of the apocalypse derived from Jewish circles is a belief that God sets up the time of the end of the world. This idea is presented in books, which were written BC, as well as books written much later:

“Let not your spirit be troubled by the times, for the Holy and Great One has designated (specific) days for all things. The Righteous one shall awaken from his sleep; he shall arise and walk in the ways of righteousness; and all the way of his conduct shall be in goodness and generosity forever” (1 En 92, 2–3)²¹;

“And God said, “O my elect prophet, no man will know that great day and the manifestation which prevails to judge the world. For your sake, o my prophet, I told you the day, but the hour I told you not”. And the prophet said, “Lord, tell me also the years”. And God said, “if I see that the justice of the world has

20 Some commentators consider this passage as an allusion to Is 9, 6 (see: P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, p. 172). Suffering, which the author maintains is comparable to the suffering of a woman in labour, and he recognizes it as a kind of purification, leading to conversion. See 4Q428 frg. 2nd.

21 The composition of 1 En is dated to the period between the second century BC and year 50 AD. See: R. Rubinkiewicz, *Introduction to the Old Testament Apocrypha*, Lublin 1987, pp. 82–85.

become abundant, I will be longsuffering toward them. If not, I will stretch out my hand and I will grasp the inhabited world from its four corners and I will gather them all together to the walleve of Jehoshaphat and I will wipe out the human race and the world will be no more” (GrApEz 3, 3–6)²².

The last day is determined by God and is fully known only to Him. Human suppositions about the day of judgement are different and are often opposed to each other. In 1 En the end of time is seen by the author as the event which will occur in the long distant future:

“And he took up his parable and said-Enoch a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by God, saw the vision of the Holy One in the heavens, which the angels showed me, and from them I heard everything, and from them I understood as I saw, but not for this generation, but for a remote one which is for to come” (1 En 1, 2)²³.

However, for the author of the Second Book of Baruch the end of the world is a near event:

“For the youth of the world is past, And the strength of the creation already exhausted, And the advent of the times is very short, Yea, they have passed by; And the pitcher is near to the cistern, And the ship to the port, And the course of the journey to the city, And life to (its) consummation (2 Bar 85, 10)²⁴.

Inability to determine the precise date of the end of time causes various historical and cosmic events that were seen as signs or warnings prior to the coming of that day. They often take the shape of natural disasters or events affecting the natural course of life (2 OrSib, 154–166; 2 Bar 1–4; 27, 1–15). Another sign preceding the day is the coming of Elijah (2 OrSib 187–195) and the Messiah:

“For behold the days come, and it shall be when the signs which I have foretold unto thee shall come to pass, Then shall the city that now is invisible appear, and the land which is now concealed be seen; and whosoever is delivered from

22 The dating of the book is not certain. Possibly the earliest dating is the late second century AD.

23 Similar 2 OrSib 182–186.

24 2 Bar was written at the end of first century AD in the Jewish community (see: J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic*, pp. 170–186).

the predicted evils, the same shall see my wonders. For my Son the Messiah shall be revealed, together with those who are with him, and shall rejoice the survivors four hundred years. And it shall be, after these years, that my Son the Messiah shall die, and all in whom there is human breath. Then shall the world be turned into the primeval silence seven days, like as at the first beginnings; so that no man is left. And it shall be after seven days that the Age which is not yet awake shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish” (4 Ezra 7, 26–31)²⁵.

In all passages quoted above three apocalyptic motifs are presented: the end of the world; unawareness of the time of the day; unawareness of the signs that will occur before the day. However, the motif of surprise is always missing. Only in the writing called Questions of Ezra there is a phrase referring to a sudden and unexpected coming of the end of times:

“The angel replied and said, “Do not wait until the day of the end, but like a flying eagle hasten to do good deeds and mercy. For that day is fearsome, urgent, and exacting. It does not permit care of children or of possessions. It comes and arrives suddenly like someone merciless and impartial, it takes a captive unexpectedly, surely. Whether he weeps or mourns, it will have no mercy” (QEz 11–13)²⁶.

25 It is assumed that 4 Ezra was written at the end of the first century AD. It is a Jewish book written most probably in Palestinian circles. It contains seven visions of Ezra. The first vision (3, 1–5, 19) describes a history of sin and proclaims an imminent the end of the world. The second vision (5, 21–6, 34) concerns the fate of Israel and gives signs preceding the end of time. The third vision (6, 35–9, 25) contains a description of the Last Judgement. The fourth vision (9, 26–10, 59) describes a woman mourning the loss of her only son. The fifth vision (11, 1–12, 39) shows an allegory referring to future of the world. The sixth vision (13, 1–58) concerns the person of Messiah. The seventh vision (14, 1–48) contains an order given by the angel to Ezra to write the visions he saw. See: J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic*, pp. 156–169; R. Rubinkiewicz, *Introduction*, pp. 99–102, S. Medals, *Introduction*, pp. 147–173.

26 The time, place and original language of the writing are unknown. Literary criteria allow for the possibility that this is a Christian writing composed on the model of 4 Ezra. The writing has the form of a dialogue between Ezra and an angel. The dialogue concerns the fate of the human soul after death. See: M. E. Stone, Questions of Ezra, in: J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament*, pp. 591–595.

Many eschatological motifs present in this writing show its Christian origin²⁷. Although it uses and develops a number of topics already presented in 4 Ezra, the writing is an example of the formation of a Christian eschatology based on Jewish eschatology. Therefore, it cannot be used in an argument for the existence of the motif of surprise in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period.

1.2. *Non-Christian*

In 1 Thess 5, 1–4 non-Christians are compared with Christians in order to point out the difference in their way of life and its consequences. While Christians are aware that the parousia can occur at any time and they should be prepared for the coming of the Lord, non-Christians live under the illusion of “peace and security”.

1.2.1. “Peace and security”

In 1 Thess 5, 3 the motif of surprise on the day of parousia, is discussed but the focus changes to non-Christians²⁸. Although the expression ὅταν λέγωσιν – *while people are saying* does not indicate a recipient of the expression, 1 Thess 5, 4, which refers to Christians, clearly suggests that 1 Thess 5, 3 relates to non-Christians²⁹. The recipients are used to saying εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια – *peace and security*. Exegetes variously interpret the meaning of this expression. J. E. Frame and B. R. Moore thought that the differences in the meaning of both nouns are so small that they should be treated as synonyms³⁰. L. Morris believes that this

27 See QEZ 10, where the term *parousia* refers to the last day.

28 Because of absence of a conjunction, verse 3 can be combined with the preceding sentence and with following the sentence. The occurrence in 1 Thess 5, 4 of the conjunction δέ and noun ἀδελφοί, which are characteristic to Paul's elements showing the beginning of a new them, speaks in favour of connecting 1 Thess 5, 3 with preceding sentence. See: R. H. Sterner, *A Semantic*, pp. 117–118.

29 L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 152. J. F. Walvoord, *Posttribulationism Today*, p. 11.

30 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 180; B. R. Moore, *Doublets*, p. 53. For meaning of εἰρήνη see: W. Forster, εἰρήνη, in: *TDNT*, vol. II, pp. 400–401; W. Klassen,

expression shows an internal reaction to external circumstances. Peace in the sense of certainty is a result of safety and lack of danger³¹. R. H. Sterner is convinced that both nouns express external circumstances. Peace points to peacefulness, and security points to absence of risk and/or danger³². Because of the context of 1 Thess 5, 1–4 (motif of surprise) and lack of references to the emotional state of the recipients, the expression probably determines external circumstances. It indicates a conviction concerning external security, which causes certainty about the present and future. In trying to identify the source from which Paul could take the expression, exegetes have suggested the Old and New Testaments apocalyptic, imperial propaganda, proverbs or general observation.

- a) the apocalyptic literature. B. Rigaux, pointing to the characteristics of apocalyptic literature motifs (unusual phrases different from Paul's style, and impersonal forms presented in 1 Thess 5, 3) thinks that apocalyptic literature is a source of inspiration for the apostle³³.
- b) the Old and New Testaments. Most exegetes see a source of the expression in texts of the Old Testament relating to false prophets (Jer 6, 14, Ezra 13, 10; Mic 3, 5) or in the words of Jesus (Mt 24, 27–39; Lk 21, 34–36)³⁴.
- c) imperial propaganda. H. L. Hendrix, in analyzing the text of 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 18 and based on archaeological evidence, concludes that the phrase was part of Roman propaganda, announcing order and peace in the Empire³⁵.

Peace, in: *ABD*, vol. V, pp. 207–212. For the meaning of ἀσφάλεια see: K. L. Schmidt, ἀσφάλεια, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, p. 506.

31 J. E. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 177; L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 152.

32 R. H. Sterner, *A Semantic*, p. 118.

33 B. Rigaux, Tradition et rédaction dans 1 Thess 5, 1–10, *NTS* 21: 1974/75, pp. 325–326.

34 E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 207–208; F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 110; J. Plevnik, *Paul and*, pp. 103–105.

35 H. L. Hendrix, Archaeology and Eschatology at Thessalonica, in: A. Birger (ed.), *The Future of Early Christianity. Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester*, Minneapolis 1991, pp. 112–114; H. Koester, From Paul's Eschatology to the Apocalyptic

- d) proverbs or general observation. E. Best believes that Paul is referring to his own experience or to some proverb current in society, in order to create a general conclusion containing apocalyptic images³⁶.

Searching for sources of inspiration for Paul's expression in the Old and New Testaments is best justified because of the eschatological context and the nature of the expression. C. R. Nicholl believes that the term *peace and security* refers to the days immediately preceding the coming of the Lord³⁷. In 1 Thess 5, 3 the expression εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια defines false belief and the wrong attitude, leading to tragic consequences.

1.2.2. "Destruction will come on them suddenly"

The term ὄλεθος in classical Greek means *destruction, deterioration, loss of life or property*. In the LXX the term appears in the context of death (1 Kings 13, 34; Judt 11, 15; 2 Macc 6, 12; 13, 16; Ps 6, 14; Ezra 6, 14; 14, 16), and in an eschatological context (Wis 1, 12; Jer, 48, 3). In the New Testament the term is used four times. Once it refers to people who are getting rich (1 Tim 6, 9) and three times it appears in an eschatological context (1 Cor 5, 5; 1 Thess 5, 3; 2 Thess 1, 9)³⁸.

The expression καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν at the end of verse 3, describes the term *destruction* as an inevitable reality³⁹. This is indicated by using the past tense of the verb in an active voice and the strong negation οὐ μὴ with the conjunction καὶ, which gives the expression an emphatic character. However, the adjective αἰφνίδιος emphasizes that the destruction will come suddenly when it is believed that "peace and security" are certain and unchangeable. This is also underlined by the

Schemata of 2 Thessalonians, in: R. F. Collins (ed.) *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, Leuven 1990, pp. 449–450; T. R. Y. Neufeld, *Put on the*, pp. 81–82.

36 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 206.

37 C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, pp. 53–55.

38 J. Schneider, ὄλεθος, in: *TDNT*, vol. V, p. 168.

39 W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, p. 56.

use of the verb ἐπίστημι, which in the New Testament occurs only twice (Lk 21, 34; 1 Thess 5, 3) but in the LXX it is often used to define sudden misfortune⁴⁰. Further defining of the character of the destruction is impossible due to lack of information in 1 Thess 5, 1–4. R. H. Sterner describes the destruction as a sudden, temporary disaster similar to those presented in Luke 21, 20–24. 34–36 and Mt 24, 15–22⁴¹. This interpretation of the term ὄλεθρος completely ignores the entire context of eschatological statements.

Reference to other passages from the New Testament makes it possible to specify more the character of the destruction presented in 1 Thess 5, 4. The expression occurring in 2 Thess 1, 9 ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου – *with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord* describes the destruction as eternal and points to its character. The destruction is not the annihilation of existence, but it is time spent away from God, which is demonstrated by the use of construction with ἀπό. In this sense, the destruction is opposite to σωτηρία⁴². Those who will be subject to destruction, Paul describes as αὐτοῖς. This clearly indicates that the expression refers to the proverbial “*peace and security*” and it applies to non-Christians but the term does not apply to Christians, described in 1 Thess 5, 1–4 as ὑμεῖς. The destruction, which will come suddenly upon non-Christians, is compared with the image of a woman in labour.

In the pseudepigraphal literature, there is no concept of a surprise coming of the day of judgement. It applies to both the righteous and to sinners. 2 OrSib contains a text indicating suddenness and violence of the punishment imposed by God rather than the motif of surprise. Unjustified is an attempt to see the motif of surprise in this fragment:

“All these at once, the angels of the immortal, everlasting God will punish terribly from above with whips of flame, having bound them around with fiery chains and unbreakable bonds. Then, in the dead of night, they will be thrown

40 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, p. 251.

41 R. H. Sterner, *A Semantic*, p. 118.

42 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 182; L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 153.

under many terrible infernal beasts in Gehenna, where there is immeasurable darkness” (2 OrSib 286–292).

The motif of surprise in 1 Thess 5, 1–4 is inextricably linked to lack of awareness or illusory beliefs about unchangeable situations of man. The authors and editors of the pseudepigraphal literature do not deal with these issues, because a factor, which determines the fate of man, was not a consciousness but obtaining the Covenant.

1.2.3. “As labor pains in a pregnant woman”

The destruction, which comes to non-Christians, is compared by the apostle to the pain of childbirth of a pregnant woman⁴³. This comparison is often found in the Bible in a positive context (sometimes a messianic context) indicating a good effect or effort to achieve an aim, which is however preceded by suffering and sacrifice (Is 66, 6–9; Mic 4, 10; Jn 16, 21; Gal 4, 19; Rev 12, 1–6)⁴⁴. However, in 1 Thess 5, 3 this comparison is not used in this way. It refers to destruction, and points to a lack of hope. Another context, frequent in the Old Testament, in which this comparison is used, is the day of judgement. This day will be for the enemies of God, a time of pain and lack of hope (Is 13, 4–8; 26, 27; 42, 13–14; Jer 6, 22–26; 48, 41; Job 13, 13)⁴⁵. Another context where the comparison is found is the continuity of events or misfortune accompanying the imminent end of the world, (2 Kings 19, 3; Ezra 16, 37–39; Mk 13, 8). Both of these contexts allow the reading this metaphor in 1 Thess 5, 3 as indicating a lack of hope of escaping the destruction (inevitability) and as an expression pointing to the permanent state of the situation (existence in the reality of destruction)⁴⁶.

43 Used in the phrase ὡς περ ἡ ὄδιν τῆ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσῃ a noun in singular ὄδιν has a collective character. See: G. Bertram, ὄδιν, in: *TDNT*, vol. IX, p. 672.

44 C. Gempf, The Imagery of Birth Pangs in the New Testament, *Tyndale Bulletin* 45: 1994, pp. 124–126.

45 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 180.

46 F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 110; L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 153. This interpretation is justified by the phrase *and they will not escape* which ending verse 3.

The eschatological context of the passage 1 Thess 5, 1–11 justifies the reading of this metaphor also as determining the suddenness of the impending destruction⁴⁷. If the phrase “*peace and security*” is taken into account, it would be possible to read this metaphor as a form of speech stressing a motif of surprise⁴⁸. However, due to the occurrence of this metaphor in a variety of contexts, it is impossible to determine the meaning of the expression, and consequently all the interpretations presented above can be defended.

In the pseudepigraphal literature images of a woman giving birth and the pain of childbirth serve to illustrate situations concerning both human life and eschatological events. In the Testament of Job, this metaphor is used to show the fatigue of Job because of his suffering:

“I was unable to utter a thing; for I was exhausted – as a woman numbed in her pelvic region by the magnitude of birth pangs – remembering most of all the battle foretold by the Lord through his angel and the songs of victory which had been told to me” (TesJob 18, 4–5)⁴⁹.

The author of 4 Ezra uses this metaphor to explain God’s wisdom, which established the right time for all men, living and dead:

“He said to me: ask a woman’s womb, and say to it ‘if you bear ten children, why one after another?’ Request it therefore to produce ten at one time. I said: of course it cannot, but only each in its own time” (4 Ezra 5, 46–47)⁵⁰.

47 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 182; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 180. In this case the metaphor accents an adjective αἰφνίδιος.

48 J. Eadie, *A Critical*, pp. 178–179; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 135.

49 The Testament was written in the period between the first century BC and first century AD. A sect called therapists, whose members were Jews living in Egypt created it. It may contain Christian additions, but generally, it is a Jewish writing. Content refers to the Book of Job. The main subjects of the writing are the divine world and dignified burial. See: R. P. Spittler, Testament of Job, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 829–838.

50 4 Ezra is a work created in the Jewish community at the end of first century AD. This is proved by the mention of a vision received by a prophet in the thirteenth year since the destruction of the city. It is clear that, despite inclusions related to

In another place, the metaphor of a woman in labour is used to indicate the event when Sheol will return all dead at the time set by God:

“So he answered me and said: Go and ask the woman who is pregnant, when she has completed her nine months, if her womb can keep the birth any longer within her? Then said I: No, Lord, it cannot. And he said to me: The underworld and the chambers of souls are like the womb: for just as she who is in travail makes haste to escape the anguish of the travail; even so do these places hasten to deliver what has been entrusted to them from the beginning” (4 Ezra 4, 40–42).

In the Ethiopian Book of Enoch the picture of a woman giving birth is used to show the enormity of the suffering of the wicked, which they will suffer at the time of fair judgement:

“And there shall stand up in that day all the kings and the mighty, and the exalted and those who hold the earth, and they shall see and recognize how he sits on the throne of his glory, and righteousness is judged before him, and no lying word is spoken before him. Then shall pain come upon them as on a woman in travail, [and she has pain in bringing forth] when her child enters the mouth of the womb, and she has pain in bringing forth” (1 En 62, 3–4).

The metaphor of a woman giving birth, because of its suggestiveness and expressiveness was used by the authors of the pseud-epigraphal literature as an image perfectly describing both human suffering and the inevitability of events, which will occur on the day of judgment.

the days of Nebuchadnezzar, the text refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The form of the Book is typical of Jewish apocalyptic. It contains seven visions, which the prophet received and which refer to the doctrine of God, salvation and to the chosen nation. See: S. Medals, *Introduction*, pp. 151–173; B. M. Metzger, *The Fourth Book of Ezra*, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 517–524; E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ*, vol 3, Hendrickson, 2003, pp. 93–114.

2. Description of Events Associated to Coming of the Lord

After analysis of terms referring to the day of the Lord and analysis of the relationship existing between two groups, we will analyse motifs used to create an image of the coming of the Lord and events, which will occur in its aftermath (1 Thess 4, 16–17). The scenario of that day consists of the following motifs⁵¹:

- a) an order.
- b) the voice of an Archangel.
- c) the sound of the trumpet of God.
- d) descent from heaven.
- e) rising from the dead.
- f) “be taken up in the clouds”.
- g) “to meet Lord in the air”.

2.1. *An Order*

The meaning of the noun κέλευσμα – *call, command* in Hellenistic literature is clear and is used to express three kind of actions:

- a) making a specific order (e.g. military orders).
- b) making brief and concise commands and orders (eg. a command addressed to a dog).
- c) making a meaningless cry (e.g. a child during sleep).

In everyday language this term was often replaced by κέλευσις⁵². Josephus and Philo use the term κέλευσμα with a similar meaning. In the LXX, the term occurs once (Prov 30, 27) in the military sense. In the New Testament the term appears only in 1 Thess 4, 16 in the phrase ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ – *with a loud*

51 Zob. A. Jankowski, *Eschatologia*, pp. 67–76.

52 L. Schmid, κέλευσμα, in: *TDNT*, vol. III, p. 656; κέλευσμα, in: *L-S*, p. 936.

command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, whose meaning remains unclear. Therefore, to determine the form of the order, its subject and object, its functions and time, has resulted in many variant interpretations. The first problem that is encountered is the difficulty in determining whether ἐν κελεύσματι is one of the components of the picture of the coming of the Lord or whether it is determined by ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ. While a complement occurs in the phrase ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ and there is a conjunction between the two expressions, it seems that the absence of a complement before ἐν κελεύσματι, points to the fact that ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ specifies ἐν κελεύσματι⁵³. In this case, the order would take the form of an angel's voice and the [sound] of the trumpet of God. If so, the description of the parousia in 1 Thess 4, 16–18 consists of five, not seven apocalyptic themes⁵⁴.

Another difficulty is to identify the subject who gives the order. If ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι describes ἐν κελεύσματι, the one who make the command would be an archangel⁵⁵. However, taking into account the proposal of Ch. A. Wanamaker that ἐν κελεύσματι and αὐτὸς κύριος are in apposition, we should assume that the one who makes the order is the Lord⁵⁶. E. Best thinks that the order will be made by God himself or by the Lord⁵⁷. Depending on the person who makes the order, the person who receives the order could be different. Assuming that the Lord or an archangel makes the command, the recipients of the order would be the dead. When God makes the order, the recipient is Christ. In the context of 1 Thess 4, 14 where the

53 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 174; E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, p. 229; L. Schmid, κέλευσμα, p. 657.

54 Wanamaker thinks that αὐτὸς κύριος is in apposition with ἐν κελεύσματι. In this case, the order would be commanded by the Lord and would be one of the four motifs describing the Parousia. Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 173. See: L. Morris, *The First and Second*, pp. 142–143.

55 J. F. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 174.

56 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 100; Ch. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 173.

57 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 196.

subject is God, the second possibility that God makes the order seems to be more likely⁵⁸.

Determination of the function of the command depends on whom we accept as its recipient. If the recipients are the *dead in Christ*, the function of the order is to raise them from the dead. By contrast, if God makes the order and Christ is the recipient, the function of the order is to make Christ descend to the earth at the beginning of the day of parousia. One of the natural consequences of the coming of the Lord on the earth is the resurrection of the *dead in Christ*⁵⁹.

The last issue remaining to be solved is the time relationship between the motifs describing the parousia. We assume that the description of the parousia consists of seven motifs (order, voice of the archangel, sound of the trumpet of God, descent of the Lord, raising from the dead, caught up in the clouds, being with you). In this case, it is necessary to clarify whether ἐν should be understood in a temporal sense (first order, then voice of the archangel, then sound of the trumpet of God, etc.) or as defining circumstances (without a temporal succession). While both interpretations are possible, most exegetes favour the second possibility. In this case ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ are the circumstances in which the Lord will come to the earth. If the possibility that ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ are describing ἐν κελεύσματι is admitted, the problem of ἐν, which occur three times, does not create any difficulties. When the order, expressed by voice of the archangel and sound of the trumpet of God, is given, the Lord shall descend from heaven. Considering the possibility of different interpretations of ἐν κελεύσματι here we will assume that it means the command of God addressed to Christ, which takes the form of the voice of the archangel and the sound of the trumpet of God, in order to begin the parousia.

58 Same.

59 Another consequence is destruction of the man of lawlessness. See: 2 Thess 2, 8.

For the authors of the Qumran writings, the concept of God's coming to the earth is natural⁶⁰. It results from the Old Testament concept of the end of time accepted by the Essenes⁶¹. One of the motifs is judgement upon the sons of the darkness. Compared to 1 Thess 4, 13–18 where Paul goes beyond the Old Testament schema and present a concept of the coming of the Lord in order to resurrect the dead and catching up all believers in the clouds, the Qumran writings does not go beyond the framework of Judaic eschatology, which contains motifs of judgement, punishment and award. The basic text concerning the coming of God to earth in order to judge all people is in the Community Rules:

“But in the mysteries of His understanding, and in His glorious wisdom, God has ordained an end for injustice, and at the time of the visitation He will destroy it forever” (1QS col. 4, 18–19)⁶².

More information about the coming of God and events associated with this are presented in the Book of Enoch, used also by the Essenes⁶³. The Book of the Guardian, which was written before the foundation of the Qumran community describes the coming of God in this manner:

“Great Saint comes from his seat, the Eternal God will descend to the earth, will walk on Mount Sinai, will be with his great army, will appear in His force of power from highest heaven. All guardians will be terrified and will be punished in hidden places at ends of the earth. All ends of the earth will shake, embrace their great fear and trembling, to the ends of the earth. Mountains will shake, will fall and will break. High mountains will fall down...” (4Q201 col. 1, 5–8)⁶⁴;

60 Similarity in the Qumran texts refers only to the fact of the coming of God. Regarding the details of the coming of God and the day of judgement, the Qumran texts differ.

61 J. J. Collins, *The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, in: G. A. Evans, P. W. Flint (eds), *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Michigan/Cambridge 1997, pp. 74–78.

62 See: CD col. 19, 10.

63 J. C. Vanderkam, *The Interpretation of Genesis in 1 Enoch*, in: P. W. Flint, *The Bible at Qumran. Text, Shape and Interpretation*, Combridge 2001, pp. 129–148.

64 The text is a subset of the Book of Enoch (4Q201–4Q212). The text was written in the first half of the second century BC. It contains material corresponding

“When He will come with his holy myriads, to make the judge over all, will destroy all wicked, and He will prove to everyone all evils deeds, all evils which they have committed in word and deed, all words, many and heavy, that wicked sinners have spoken against him (...)” (4Q204 col. 1, 15–17)⁶⁵.

Similarly, the Book of Giants describes the coming of the Lord of heaven to judge the world⁶⁶:

“Behold the Rule of heaven descended to earth and thrones were set and the great Holy One sat. [Hundreds and hundred]s were ministering to Him. Thousands and thousands... stood before Him. And behold, [book]ks were opened and judgement was pronounced and the judgement... [was writ]ten and a signature was signed” (4Q530 col. 2, 16–19)⁶⁷.

Description of the end of times and the coming of God to earth, presented in texts of Qumran, shows a much greater resemblance to the Old Testament concept of the day of Lord (the motif is also dominant in 2 Thess 2, 1–12) than to the concept of the parousia presented in 1 Thess 4, 13–18. This similarity is primarily attributable to a very strong emphasis of motifs of judgement, punishment and destruction of the sons of darkness:

to Chapters 1–12 of the Ethiopian Book of Enoch, which is part of the Book of Watchers. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscripts*, pp. 294–296.

- 65 The text comes from one of ten manuscripts of the Ethiopian Book of Enoch found in Qumran. The text was written at the end of first century BC and includes part of the Book of Dreams.
- 66 The Book of Giants (1Q23–24; 2Q24; 2Q26; 4Q203; 4Q206; 4Q530–4Q532; 4Q556; 6Q8) was written probably in the first century BC, but this is not certain. It is an independent composition probably inspired by the Book of Watchers. Originally, it was part of the Book of Enoch, which was later removed and replaced by the Book of Proverbs (1 En 37–71). It develops the theme from Gen 6, 1–4. Manuscripts of this Book from cave 4 contain material different from the Book of Enoch.
- 67 The text is part of the Book Giants (1Q23; 1Q24; 2Q26; 4Q203; 4Q206; 4Q530–4Q532; 4Q556; 6Q8) and it was written probably in first half of first century BC. It contains material of unknown neither in Ethiopian version nor in Greek version of the Book of Enoch. See: P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, pp. 289–292.

“And now, o you foolish hearts, what good is to (someone) who is not... [what] is silence for someone who does not exist, and what is judgement if it has no foundation? Why do the dead groan over their you have been shaped and your return is to eternal destruction. For it shall wake up (...) your sin darkness will roar against your dispute. And all those search truth will be aroused for your judgement [and then] all the foolish harts will be aroused for your judgement [and then] all the foolish hearts will be destroyed, and the sons of injustice will be found no more” (4Q418 frg. 69 col. 2, 4–9).

Due to the existence in Qumran texts of a clear distinction between the sons of the light and the sons of the darkness, placing the motif of judgement at the centre of an eschatological concept seems to be very natural:

“Gates of Sheol are opening for all works of snake. And gates of perdition are shutting behind the offspring of lawlessness and eternal bolt behind all spirits of snake” (4Q432 frg. 4 col. 1, 5–7)⁶⁸;

“Establish all his deeds in righteousness, and as it pleases Thee to do for the elect of mankind, grant that the son of thy handmaid my stand before thee forever” (1QS col. 11, 16–17).

Despite the fact that 1 Thess 4, 13–18 presents concepts of the final day in a totally different manner from the Qumran texts, motifs used by the apostle to create a concept of the coming of the parousia are also found in the Qumran texts referring to the end of time. The first of these motifs is the order. In 1 Thess 4, 16–18 the subject making the order is God, and the object of the order is Christ who will descend to the earth on the day of parousia. In the Qumran texts, any expression of the will of God when proclaimed to angels or men always has a normative or imperative character. The subject issuing the order is God. The order is directed to angels who serve as messengers of God and at the same time as guardians of the children of light:

“(...) Lord said to Gabriel: go to orphans and children of fornication, kill children of watchers from people, send them to a fatal war. (...) And the Lord said to Michael: go Michael and tell the Shemihaz and all of his comrades who have

68 The text is classified as *Hodayôt*.

joined with women (...) bind them to the seventy generations in valleys of the earth, until the great day of judgement ...” (4Q202 col. 4, 5–6. 8–10)⁶⁹.

Although the motif of order is not too often encountered directly in the pseudepigraphal literature, it is implicitly present in all kinds of orders made by God to angels. God is the Lord of the universe and everything is an object to His will. He watches over everything and nothing happens without His will. The will of God is performed by angels and is concerned with the fate of the world and individual persons:

“And cleanse thou the earth from all oppression, and from all unrighteousness, and from all sin, and from all godlessness: and all the uncleanness that is wrought upon the earth destroys from off the earth. And all the children of men shall become righteous, and all nations shall offer adoration and shall praise Me, and all shall worship Me” (1 En 10, 20–21);

“(...) The Lord said to Michael: go down onto the earth to Nir the priest, and take my child Melkisedek, who is with him, and place him in paradise of Edem for preservation!” (2 En 72, 1)⁷⁰.

In the opinion of the authors of the pseudepigraphal writings, the will of God is proclaimed either to angels or to people, and always takes an imperative form. The duty of angels is to do what God requires. Nothing that happens in heaven or on earth happens without the will of God. In this sense, the concept of order present in the literature of the Second Temple period is similar to the concept contained in 1 Thess 4, 16.

2.2. *The Voice of an Archangel*

A noun ἄγγελος in classical Greek means *messenger* and it is found in the following meanings:

69 See: 1 En 10, 8–12.

70 See: TestAbr 1, 4.

- a) sacred – as the chosen one being under the care of gods or as a messenger of the gods (Hermes).
- b) secular – as courier with a message.
- c) an emissary.
- d) a messenger of the underworld.

In Hellenistic times the understanding of the term ἄγγελος significantly changed because of the influence of Judeo-Christian thought. Greek-speaking inhabitants of Palestine used the term in the sense of a *messenger* and an *angel*⁷¹.

Used in the Old Testament terms מַלְאָךְ means *messenger* of God or sometimes the messenger of man (2 Chron 3, 15; Is 44, 26; Hag 1, 13). The term, which has a strong religious significance, is מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה – *an angel of God*, has a meaning that extends far beyond one functioning as a messenger and becomes the personification of God's care for Israel. Sometimes an angel of God acts and speaks as God (Gen. 16, 7–9; 21, 17–19; 22, 11–13; Ex 3, 2–4; Judt 2, 1–3). Apart from the term *angel of God*, there are other terms, such as מַלְאָכִים or בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים (Gen. 6, 2, 4; Job 1, 6; 2, 4)⁷². In the pre-Babylonian period, reflections concerning angels were few and took the form of folk tales. After the Babylonian period, probably under the influence of Babylonian and Persian culture, interest in celestial beings becomes much stronger and more popular. Angels appear in the prophecies and visions of Ezekiel (Ezek 8–11; 40–48) and Zechariah (Zech 7–17; 6, 1–8). The Book of Job defines them as sacred beings (Job 4, 18), praising the work of creation with songs of joy (Job 38, 7), helpful in time of need (Job 5, 1), a defender of man (Job 33, 23)⁷³. Further development of reflection concerning angels, will occur during the Second Temple period.

In 1 Thess 4, 16 the voice of angels openly proclaims to the world the coming of Christ. In this passage, angels play the role of

71 W. Grundmann, ἄγγελος, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, pp. 74–76.

72 For other terms used in the pseudepigraphal literature see: C. A. Newson, ἄγγελος, in: *ABD*, vol. I, pp. 248–253.

73 G. Von Rad, ἄγγελος, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, pp. 76–79.

God's heralds. By contrast, in the Qumran writings, teaching concerning angels is much more extensive, and the functions of angels goes far beyond the framework of the proclamation of God's coming⁷⁴. The Essenes writings, diverse and originating in different periods in the development of the community, present a colourful world of angels and a range of functions, which they perform in the heavenly world:

“Since in the first day He created the upper sky, the earth, water and all spirits who are before Him: angels of faces, angels of holy, angels of spirits of fire, angels of spirits of wind, angels of spirits of clouds, darkness, rime, frost, dew, snow, hail and ice, angels of sounds, angels of winds of storms, angels of spirits of cold and heat, winter and summer, and all spirits of His creatures which he made in heaven, which He did on the earth and everywhere, in deep, in dark, in dawn, in dusk and in light, which are set by His knowledge” (4Q216 frg. 1 col. 5, 4–9)⁷⁵.

Angels are present before God, and their first and primary goal is to bring glory to God and to perform the heavenly liturgy:

“When the gods of knowledge enter by the doors of glory, and when the holy angels depart towards their realm, the entrance doors and the gates of exit proclaim the glory of the King, blessing and praising all the spirits of God when they depart and enter by the gates” (4Q405 frg. 23 col. 1, 8–9);

“When the wheels advance, angels of holiness come and go” (4Q405 frg. 20 col. 2, 9)⁷⁶.

74 M. Mach, *Angels*, in: *EDSS*, pp. 24–27; Y. Yadin, *The Scroll Of The War*, pp. 229–242.

75 The text is a part of the Book of Jubilees. Probably it was written in period between second half of second century BC and middle of first century BC. The text contains material similar to Jub 2, 1–4.

76 Both texts are classified as liturgical and cultic texts. They are a part of group called the Songs of Sabbath Day (4Q400–4Q407; 11Q17). They were written around 50 BC. They are part of the collection of liturgical songs used in first quarter of the solar year. They contain extensive Jewish traditions concerning the heaven, celestial beings and the Divine Liturgy. P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, pp. 193–194.

Another task to which angels are called is waiting on God and fulfilling His commands. The main tasks of the angels are observation of the earth, care for the Chosen People and the presentation of human affairs to God:

“(…) Then Michael, Ariel, Raphael and Gabriel looked from the divine sanctity at the earth and saw a lot of blood spilled on the ground” (4Q201 col. 4, 6).

In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, angels often act as mediators between God and man and as God’s messengers to people:

“[At] that time Michael shall say to Zedekiah (...) I will make with you a covenant before the assembly to practise (...)” (4Q470 frg. 1, 5)⁷⁷;

“I had a vision at night. Here is an angel of God came down from heaven, carrying seven boards in his hand and said to me: God has blessed you, you and your offspring” (4Q537 frg. 1, 1)⁷⁸;

“[...] flames and sent first angel [...]” (4Q458 col. 1, 8)⁷⁹.

A special task entrusted to angels by God is constant care for the children of the light⁸⁰:

77 This passage comes from a song conventionally called the Text Consider Zedekiah, and belongs to a group of pseudo-biblical texts. The main topic of the passage is the covenant, which is made by God through the archangel Michael with the king Zedekiah. P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, p. 248

78 This fragment is called the Vision of James. It belongs to a group of Testaments and contains a number of apocalyptic themes. The quoted passage is the beginning of a vision in which James learns about God’s will against Bethel. P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, p. 329.

79 The quotation comes from the text belonging to a group of narrative texts (4Q458; 4Q462–4Q464a). The fragment is preserved in poor condition, making its interpretation difficult. Presumably, the composition has an apocalyptic character. P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, p. 246.

80 H. Ringgren, *The Faith*, pp. 81–93.

“(…) For God is with you and His a holy angels shall be present in your congregation, and His holy name shall be invoked upon you” (11Q14 frg. 1 col. 2, 13–14)⁸¹;

“He adjures all His angels and all the seed of holiness who stand before Him, and makes all the heavens testify and the whole earth against those who sinned against all men and acted wickedly against every human” (11Q11 col. 3, 5–8)⁸².

The Qumran writings describes minutely the world of angels, giving many details which are not found in the Old Testament. Angels have their names, and among them, there is a hierarchical system:

“Words of the book which Michael addressed to the angels ... He said: I found there divisions of fire (...) I saw there the angel Gabriel (...)” (4Q529 col. 1, 4)⁸³.

Just as with human life on earth, the existence of angels in heaven too is subject to numerous rules, of which the best example is, the need to preserve the Sabbath:

“(…) because we, all angels of face and all angels of holiness, these two categories, He said, to keep Sabbath with Him in heaven and on the earth (...)” (4Q218 frg. 1 col. 7, 8–9)⁸⁴.

Angels have their own will and can follow their own desires. This aspect is shown in the Book of Watchers in a story of Szemihazah and other angels, who are called sons or guardians of heaven and

81 The text is a subset of the Rule of War. It was written in first half of first century AD. It contains material parallel to the 1QM. It refers to themes of the end of eschatological war and a blessing uttered by the High Priest after a fair trial. P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscript*, pp. 77–78.

82 The text called the Liturgy for Healing the Sick is part of the pseudo-biblical hymns. It was written probably at the beginning of first century AD. The text presumably had been used for liturgical purposes during the rituals to heal people consumed with evil spirits. P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, pp. 213–214.

83 The text called the Word of Angels Michael contains a teaching concerning angels. The text points to the guiding role of the Archangel Michael among the angels. P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, p. 328

84 The text is part of a manuscript the Book of Jubilees discovered in Qumran and contains material parallel to the Jub 35, 8–10.

who have left heaven, and come down to the earth teaching people all evil:

“It happened that people multiplied in those days, were born to them beautiful and comely daughters. Then watchers, the sons of heaven, saw them and wanted them. They said to one another, let’s go and choose a wife from daughters of men, so that our children were born. But Shemihazah, who was their leader, told them I’m afraid that you do not want to do this deed, and only I will be guilty of great sin. They said to him, all of them, saying: Let us take oath and pledge, each of us, that none of us will not go away from this board before we do not act this deed...” (4Q202 col. 2, 2–8).

The Book of Dreams (4Q204–4Q207) contains names of the sons of heaven who united with the daughters of men and begot giants. In this way, they introduced any misfortune on the earth:

“(…) And these are the names of their chiefs. Shemihazah who was their head, Arataqoph, his second; Ramtael, third to him; Kokabel, fourth to him; ...el, fifth to him; Ramael, sixth to him; Daniel, seventh to him; Ziqiel, eighth to him; Baraqel, ninth to him; Asael, tenth to him; Hermoni, eleventh to him; Matarel, twelfth to him; Ananel, thirteenth to him; Stawel, fourteenth to him; Shamshiel, fifteenth to him; Shahriël, sixteenth to him; Tummel, seventeenth to him; Turiel, eighteenth to him; Yomiël, nineteenth to him; Yehaddiel, twentieth to him. These are the chiefs of the chiefs of tens...” (4Q204 col. 2)⁸⁵.

Because they opposed the will of God and they betrayed his own mission, angels became an object of God’s wrath and punishment:

“(…) And the Lord said to Michael: Go Michael and tell to Szemihazah and all his associates who have joined with women, and become unclean by their uncleanness, that their sons will die and will look at the destruction of their

85 The text belongs to the Book of Dreams and is part of the Book of Enoch. The text includes instruction given by Enoch to his son. Because of the allegorical form of instruction (eg. nations are presented in the form of animals) sometimes 4Q204–4Q207 are called the Animal Apocalypse. The content of instruction refers to history of Israel from Babylonian period to times to the author. An eschatological part refers to reconstruction of Jerusalem Temple and to sudden coming of eschatological times. P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, p. 297; J. C. Vanderkam, *The Interpretation of Genesis*, pp. 143–146.

beloved. Tie them into seventy generations in the valleys of the earth, until the great day of the judgement ... (4Q202 col. 4, 8–11).

In this way, the Essenes using the Book of Enoch transformed the dualistic conception of the world on a cosmological level. Separate groups of angels are associated with the fate of people on the earth. Angels of the light support the sons of the light, and angels of the darkness support the children of the darkness. The sons of the darkness struggle against the sons of the light and angels are also involved in it:

“(...) and he will send eternal succour to the company of His redeemed by the mighty of the princely angel of the kingdom of Michael. With everlasting light He will enlighten with joy the children of Israel; peace and blessing shall be with the company of God” (1QM col. 17, 6–8).

Angels of the darkness and the sons of the darkness are acting against the children of the light, oppressing them and deceiving them. Therefore, the Qumran texts name them angels of hostility and destruction:

“On the day when a man undertakes to conversion to the Law of Moses, an angel of hostility will roll away from him, if the man will keep his words” (CD-A col. 16, 4);

“I will expel men and leave a country in the hands of the angels of destruction” (4Q387a frg. 3 col. 3, 3–4);

“I will give them into the hand of the angels of Persecutions, and they will rule over them and they will not know and understand that I am furious with them because of their transgressions by which they will have forsaken Me (...)” (4Q390 frg. 2 col. 1, 6–7)⁸⁶.

A detailed description of the eschatological war between the sons of the light and the sons of the darkness is presented in the Rule of

86 Both 4Q387 and 4Q390 are apocryphal texts and were placed in the set of Pseudo-Moses (4Q385a; 4Q387a; 4Q388a; 4Q389; 4Q390). Texts were written in second half of the first century BC. They contain the history of Israel told in form of divine revelation given to Moses. P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, pp. 323–324.

War (1QM). It contains a detailed plan for the war, a description of a signalling system, a description of weapons, a discussion concerning military tactics, religious rituals associated with war and support of the celestial forces⁸⁷. Divine powers are involved in this war because it is an eschatological war, which ultimate goal is to overcome the dark spirit and all who follow them. The heavenly army, led by the Archangel Michael is present as an ongoing support to the children of the light and greatly contributes to their victory (1QM col. 17, 6–8):

“[...] In the seventh lot when the great hand of God is raised in an everlasting blow against Belial and all the Hosts of his kingdom, and when Assyria is pursued amidst the shouts of Angels and the clamour of the Holy Ones, the sons of Japheth shall fall to rise no more. The Kittim shall be crushed without remnant, and o man shall be saved from among them” (1QM col. 18, 1–4).

In the pseudepigraphal literature, as in the Qumran writings, the teaching concerning angels is very complex and contains a number of elements showing a keen interest in this issue. The authors provide a wide range of information concerning the life of angels, from their origin to final destination. The Book of Jubilees states that God created the angels:

“For on the first day He created the heavens which are above and the earth and the waters and all the spirits which serve before him—the angels of the presence, and the angels of sanctification, and the angels [of the spirit of fire and the angels] of the spirit of the winds, and the angels of the spirit of the clouds, and of darkness, and of snow and of hail and of hoar frost, and the angels of the voices and of the thunder and of the lightning, and the angels of the spirits of cold and of heat, and of winter and of spring and of autumn and of summer, and of all the spirits of his creatures which are in the heavens and on the earth, (He created) the abysses and the darkness, eventide and night, and the light, dawn and day, which He hath prepared in the knowledge of his heart (Jub 2, 2).

87 All the elements of the weapons of the war between the sons of the light and the sons of the darkness were thoroughly discussed by Y. Yadin, *The Scroll*. See also: J. Duhaime, *The War Scroll from Qumran and the Greco-Roman Tactical Treatises*, *RQ* 13: 1988, pp. 133–151.

As a creation of God, angels are spiritual, holy and destined for eternal life. They reside in heaven:

“And though ye were holy, spiritual, living the eternal life, you have defiled yourselves with the blood of women, and have begotten (children) with the blood of flesh, and, as the children of men, have lusted after flesh and blood as those also do who die and perish. (...) But you were formerly spiritual, living the eternal life, and immortal for all generations of the world. And therefore I have not appointed wives for you; for as for the spiritual ones of the heaven, in heaven is their dwelling. (...) [As for the spirits of heaven, in heaven shall be their dwelling, but as for the spirits of the earth which were born upon the earth, on the earth shall be their dwelling” (1 En 15, 4. 6–7. 10).

A group of the angels created by God betrayed his will and chose to live among people, teaching them the secrets of God and in this way bringing to them all evil (1 En 12, 4–6; 16, 2–3). Fallen angels were subject to judgement (1 En 10, 4–6; 13, 4–6; 18, 7; Jub 5, 6–7; 10–11), and did not receive forgiveness, rather they were thrown into a prison prepared for them (1 En 18, 12–19, 3; 21, 10). The pseudepigrapha literature gives the names of both the fallen angels and the angels faithfully serving God:

“And these are the names of their leaders: Szemyaz their leader, Arakeb, Rame’el, Tam’el, Ram’el, Dan’el, Ezeqel, Baraqyal, As’el, Armaros, Batr’el, Anan’el, Zaqe’el, Samsiel, Sasomaspwe’el, Kestar’el, Tur’el, Yamayol and, Arazyal. These are their chiefs of tens” (1 En 6, 7–8)⁸⁸;

“And then Michael, Uriel, Raphael, and Gabriel looked down from heaven and saw much blood being shed upon the earth, and all lawlessness being wrought upon the earth” (1 En 9, 1)⁸⁹.

Angels and the heavenly court have their own language (TestJob 48–50; ApZoph 8, 1–5; Dan 7, 9–10; 1 En 14, 19–23; 4 Ezra 8, 21–22).

88 See: 1 En 8, 1–3; 69, 2–14. For more about the rebellion of angels see: P. D. Hanson, *Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch* 6–11, *JBL* 96/2: 1977, pp. 195–233.

89 See: 1 En 20, 1–8; 2 En 21, 3; 33, 10–11; 2 OrSib 227–255; 2 Bar 55, 3; GrApEz 1, 3–4; 6, 1–2.

Among living in heaven angels, there is a hierarchical system, dividing angels into categories and choirs⁹⁰:

“Its ceiling was like the path of the stars and the lightning, and between them were fiery cherubim, and their heaven was (clear as) water. (...) and I looked and saw therein a lofty throne: its appearance was as crystal and the wheels thereof as the shining sun, and there was the vision of cherubim. (...) None of the angels could enter and could behold His face by reason of the magnificence and glory, and no flesh could behold Him” (1 En 14, 11. 18. 21)⁹¹.

The Ethiopian Book of Enoch lists seven groups of angels (1 En 61, 10), while the Slavonic Enoch lists ten groups of angels and seven heavens (2 En 20). The highest group are archangels, the head of which – according to Dan 12, 1 – is the archangel Michael⁹². The angels as created heavenly beings are the only link between the eternal God and the created material world. Similar to the Old Testament, angels are often presented as messengers of God’s revelation:

“And he took up his parable and said-Enoch a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by God, saw the vision of the Holy One in the heavens, which the angels showed me, and from them I heard everything, and from them I understood as I saw, but not for this generation, but for a remote one which is for to come” (1 En 1, 2)⁹³.

Angels are messengers of God, often acting in a way which was reserved only to God in the pre-Babylonian period (Jub 10, 22–23; 38, 10). Angels guard the faithful, bring their prayers before the throne of God (1 En 100, 5; TestJud 3, 10; TestDan 6, 5) and carry out punishment (TestNaph 8, 6; 1 En 56).

90 An aspect of hierarchies of angels is developed especially in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha with Christian reworking.

91 See: 1 En 61, 10; 2 En 19, 3–6; 20, 1–7; Jub 1, 27; 4, 15; 4 Ezra 4, 1. 36; ApAbr 10, 3–4. 11; TestAd 2, 1–7; 4, 1–8.

92 The name of the Archangel Michael also appears in QM col. 13, 10; 17, 6–8. In the Dead Sea Scrolls there are also other terms referring to the archangel, such as *the angel of truth* (1QS 3, 20), *the prince of Light* (1QS col. 3, 20).

93 See: 1 En 52, 32; 2 En 33, 6; Jub 17, 11; 27, 21; 2 OrSib 247–249; 4 Ezra 8, 20; 2 Bar 6, 4–8; 7, 1–8, 2.

Another task set by God for angels is to take care of the world and its elements:

“And the spirit of the hoar-frost is his own angel, and the spirit of the hail is a good angel. And the spirit of the snow has forsaken his chambers on account of his strength-There is a special spirit therein, and that which ascends from it is like smoke, and its name is frost. And the spirit of the mist is not united with them in their chambers, but it has a special chamber; for its course is glorious both in light and in darkness, and in winter and in summer, and in its chamber is an angel” (1 En 60, 17–19)⁹⁴.

Angels are not regarded merely as performers of God’s will but also as spirits that may reside in the presence of God. They form the heavenly court, praise God, serve Him and have access to Him:

“And after that I saw thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand, I saw a multitude beyond number and reckoning, who stood before the Lord of Spirits. And on the four sides of the Lord of Spirits I saw four presences, different from those that sleep not, and I learnt their names: for the angel that went with me made known to me their names, and showed me all the hidden things. And I heard the voices of those four presences as they uttered praises before the Lord of glory. The first voice blesses the Lord of Spirits forever and ever. And the second voice I heard blessing the Elect One and the elect ones who hang upon the Lord of Spirits. And the third voice I heard pray and intercede for those who dwell on the earth and supplicate in the name of the Lord of Spirits. And I heard the fourth voice fending off the Satans and forbidding them to come before the Lord of Spirits to accuse them who dwell on the earth. After that I asked the angel of peace who went with me, who showed me everything that is hidden: Who are these four presences which I have seen and whose words I have heard and written down? And he said to me: This first is Michael, the merciful and long-suffering; and the second, who is set over all the diseases and all the wounds of the children of men, is Raphael: and the third, who is set over all the powers, is Gabriel: and the fourth, who is set over the repentance unto hope of those who inherit eternal life, is named Phanuel. And these are the four angels of the Lord of Spirits and the four voices I heard in those days” (1 En 40, 1–10)⁹⁵.

94 See: 1 En 65, 8; 75, 3; 2 En 6, 1; 12, 1.

95 See: 1 En 60, 1–2; 71, 7–10; 2 En 8, 8; 20, 4–21; 2 Bar 67, 2.

The authors of the Ethiopian Book of Enoch and the Slavic Book of Enoch as well as the author of the Book of Jubilees provide the most important information concerning angels. Other pseudepigraphal literature develop and modify motifs contained in these three works, sometimes however adding new information. A characteristic feature of the pseudepigraphal literature, particularly books written in a later period, is to provide details of the life and work of angels. The Slavonic Book of Enoch provides information concerning the wings of angels and the way in which they move (2 En 4, 2; 12, 1). The author of the Testament of Abraham, writing about the crying of the archangel Michael, indicates an emotional sphere in the life of angels (TestAbr 3, 11). Much of the new information is related to functions exercised by angels. They are secretaries writing down the good and bad deeds of people (TestAbr 12, 12–14; ApZaph 3, 6–9), they are the guardians of Hades (GrApEz 1, 3–4), they have the keys to heaven – Archangel Michael- (3 Bar 11, 2), and they come for the souls of men destined for heaven (TJac 1, 6). The Testament of Levi provides us with information about the concept of seven heavens and the prayers of angels (TestLev 3).

Speculation concerning angels and their world was one of the most vital topics in the literature of the Second Temple period. This had a great influence on the New Testament, particularly on writings of the apostle John⁹⁶. In 1 Thess 4, 16–18 Paul the used concept concerning angels only peripherally. The only motif Paul uses is the proclamation of the day of parousia by the angels.

In the New Testament the term ἀρχάγγελος appears twice, once in 1 Thess 4, 16 and the second time in Jude 9 referring to the apocryphal book the Assumption of Moses, where the name of the archangel Michael is mentioned.

In 1 Thess 4, 16 Paul does not mention the name of an archangel, focusing only on its function expressed by phrase ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου – *voice of the archangel*. Many exegetes believe that this is the archangel

96 More about angels see: J. Daniélou, *Teologia judeochrześcijańska [Judeo-Christian Theology]*, Cracow 2002, pp. 148–154; J. Plevnik, *Paul and*, pp. 50–57; D. F. Watson, ἄγγελος, in: *ABD*, vol. I, pp. 153–154.

Michael, who is often mentioned in the pseudepigraphal literature as one of the archangels (1 En 61, 10) and the one who is their leader (Dan 10, 13)⁹⁷. The singular dative used by Paul might suggest that he meant a specific archangel, but a more precise determination of the archangel's name is impossible, and any attempt to determine the name of the archangel, remains in the sphere of assumption⁹⁸. More important than giving a name to the archangel is to determine his function in the description of the parousia. Is the voice of the archangel the message inviting the dead to rise from their graves, and to gather all people on the day of the coming of the Lord, or is it one of the two motifs which are parts of the command with which the day of the parousia begins?⁹⁹

We previously assumed that the voice of the archangel and the sound of trumpet of God are components of the order. Now it is necessary to consider the meaning of the expression *with the voice of the archangel*. Assuming that Paul knew Judaic tradition concerning angels, we can say that the archangel is the highest of celestial beings, who proclaims God's command to the whole world¹⁰⁰. Sometimes the voice of angel was described by the term φωνῆ μεγάλῃ (Rev 5, 12; 14, 7; 18, 2). The voice of God was often described as the *roar of a lion* (Rev. 10, 3; Hos 11, 10), the *sound of many waters* (Rev 1, 15) or the *sound of the trumpet* (Rev 1, 10). All these terms indicate the power and authority of the speaker¹⁰¹. The voice of the archangel announcing the order of God is the motif emphasizing the majesty and power of Christ at the beginning of the day of parousia¹⁰².

97 See: J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, pp. 162–163; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, pp. 174–175.

98 F. F. Bruce thinks that this phrase does not contain reference to a particular archangel. F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 100). L. Morris argues that presence form of a noun *archangel* without an article does not allow us to refer the term to a specific archangel. L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 143.

99 J. F. Frame believes that “the voice of an angel” is a command issued by the Archangel Michael directed to the dead in order to raise them. J. F. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 174; Theodoret, *Commentary*, pp. 113–114.

100 On the usage in different apocalyptic traditions by Paul see: E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, pp. 244–245.

101 O. Betz, φωνῆ, in: *TDNT*, vol. IX, p. 292.

102 J. Plevnik, *Paul and*, p. 56.

2.3. *The Sound of the Trumpet of God*

Terminology related to a *trumpet*, the function of this motif and its use in the Bible is very diverse. In Greek, there are several terms associated with this instrument. The first one is *σάλπιγξ* and it indicates a trumpet mouthpiece made of metal or brass and located at the end of tube, so making it possible to modulate sound. It also means the *sound of the trumpet, the signal, thunder*. The second term *σαλπιστής* means *trumpeter*. Another term is the verb *σαλπίζω* – *I trumpet*, indicating the activity of emitting a sound or tone.

In the Old Testament there is many terms which distinguish between many types of wind instruments¹⁰³:

- a) *שׁוֹפָר* means a horn, made mostly from horn of ram¹⁰⁴. In the LXX it is usually translated by *σάλπιγξ* which, however, has another meaning¹⁰⁵. Another Greek term used in the LXX, better related to the idea of *שׁוֹפָר*, is *κεράτινη* – horn.

הַצִּצְרָה is a thin, long, straight, instrument made of silver with a shrill, sharp sound. It is more similar to the Greek *σάλπιγξ* than to the Hebrew *שׁוֹפָר*. Although *הַצִּצְרָה* was a cultic instrument (1 Chron 13, 8; 15, 4; 2 Chron 5, 12; 29, 26–28; 23, 13) there is no clear distinction in the Old Testament between it and *שׁוֹפָר*. In descriptions of the same events they appear interchangeably (1 Chron 13, 8; 15, 24; 2 Sam I 6, 15).

- b) *קָרְן* – instrument made from animal horn similar to *שׁוֹפָר* (Josh 6, 5; Dan 3, 5. 7. 10. 15).
- c) *יוֹבֵל* – a general description of a horn found only in Ex 19, 13.
- d) *תְּרוּעָה* – not a musical instrument, but a term describing noise and tumult (Josh 6, 5; 1 Sam 4, 5–6) or alarm (Num. 10, 5). In the LXX translated as *σάλπιγξ*, only in Num 19, 1 and Lev 23, 24 there is following by the term *σημασία* – *sign, tip*.

103 G. Friedrich, *σάλπιγξ*, in: *TDNT*, vol. VII, pp. 71–87.

104 *שׁוֹפָר* does not mean horn. In Ex 19, 16; 2 Sam 6, 15; Josh 6, 20; Jer. 4, 19 a sound of horn is describe as *שׁוֹפָר קוֹל*.

105 Although *σάλπιγξ* means trumpet and not horn, it appears more than 40 times in the Old Testament, while the more correct term *κεράτινη* appears only 20 times.

- e) שִׁבְרָה means not an instrument, but the act – *blowing* (Num 10, 7). The LXX in Ezek 7, 14, translate this term by the noun σάλπιγξ.

In the Second Temple period, שִׁבְרָה – straight or curved horn, was used in the temple and synagogues together with שִׁבְרָה, which was used by priests and ordinary people. In this period, שִׁבְרָה is an instrument used by priests only during temple worship. There is also a new term שִׁבְרָה, which is borrowed from Greek (σάλπιγξ).

The sound of the trumpet is another motif, which is part of the description of the parousia in 1 Thess 4, 13–18a. This motif appears also in the Qumran texts. In the text, the Rules of War, a trumpet appears very often as an instrument for signalling. The sound of trumpets is a sign to start or to end a battle or war operation:

“The first Priest shall advance before the men of the formation to strengthen their hand for battle, and the six other Priests shall hold in their hands the trumpets of Summons, and the trumpets of the Reminder, and the trumpets of Alarm (for massacre), and the trumpets of Pursuit, and the trumpets of Retreat. And when the Priests advance to the place between the formations, seven Levites shall accompany the bearing in their hands seven rams’ horns; and three officers of the Levites shall walk before the Priests and Levites” (1QM col. 7, 12–15)¹⁰⁶.

Trumpets inform the various formations of the army regarding the time of their action. It is indicated by passwords written on trumpets¹⁰⁷:

- “On the trumpets of battle formations they shall write, *Formations of the Divisions of God for the Vengeance of His Wrath on the Sons of Darkness*” (1QM col. 3, 6);
- “On the trumpets of ambush they shall write, *The Mysteries of God Undo Wickedness*” (1QM col. 3, 8–9);
- “On the trumpets summoning the foot-soldiers to advance towards the enemy formations when the gates of war are opened

106 See: 1 QM col. 7, 12–16; 1 QM col. 16, 3–14; 1 QM col. 17, 12; 4 Q 491 col. 1, 1–3, 17.

107 See: 1 QM col. 7–9.

they shall write, *Reminder of Vengeance in God's Appointed Time*" (1QM col. 3, 7–8);

- “On the trumpets of pursuit they shall write, *God has Smitten All the Sons of Darkness; His Fury shall not End until They are utterly Consumed*” (4Q496 col. 4 frg. 11, 1)¹⁰⁸.

A trumpet serves as an instrument of communication not only during war but also in the everyday life of the Qumran community (eg. proclaiming the beginning of a meeting):

“And at the sounding of the trumpets for assembly, he shall go there before or after (the meeting), and shall not cause the whole service to stop, for it is a holy service” (CD-A col. 11, 22).

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, a trumpet is only a signalling instrument. Writings placed on trumpets contain not only military orders, but also some passwords proclaiming God's will. Because of that, it can be assumed that the expression *sound of the trumpet* could be understood in terms of a signal proclaiming the will of God.

In the pseudepigraphal literature, the trumpet motif is not used very often. It appears only a few times, mostly in books written in a later period. The trumpet motif in a military context appears in the Sibylline Oracles. In 3 OrSib 491 the sound of the trumpet in a fallen city is an evil sign. Author of 4 Ezra uses the trumpet motif in the context of oppression and in the context of exceptional events preceding the end of time (4 Ezra 6, 23). No sound of the trumpets of war is a sign of peace in eschatological times (5 OrSib 253; 8 OrSib 117). In the eschatological context the trumpet motif was used as a signal, which will open the depths of the earth (8 OrSib 239), as a signal proclaiming the coming of the *chosen one* (ApAbr 31, 1) and as a signal of the resurrection of dead (GrApEz 4, 36). Particularly interesting is the use of the trumpet motif in the Apocalypse of Zephaniah. On the first occasion, the trumpet motif is used to proclaim to prophet news brought by an angel:

108 The text is a subset of the Rule of War. It contains material parallel to the 1QM col. 1–5.

“Then a great angel came forth having a golden trumpet in his hand, and he blew in three times over my head, saying (...)” (ApZeph 9, 1)¹⁰⁹.

In this passage, the trumpet motif is used in the context of a personal revelation. However, in the next passage it is used as a signal opening the heavens and proclaiming teaching concerning the souls of the dead:

“Then the great angel came to me with the golden trumpet in his hand, and he blew it up to heaven. Heaven opened from the place where the sun rises to where it sets, from the north to the south” (ApZeph 10, 1–2).

In a third, fragment the trumpet motif functions as an audible sign:

“And again the great angel comes forth with the golden trumpet in his hand blowing over the earth. They hear (it) from the place of the sunrise to the place of the sunset and from the southern region to the northern region. And again he blows up to heaven and his sound is heard” (ApZeph 12, 1–3).

Excerpts from the Apocalypse of Zephaniah perfectly illustrate the use of the trumpet motif in the pseudepigraphal writings. It does not have a specific connotation. It is used both in the context of military signals and in the context of eschatological signs. However, it always precludes something important that is to come and that will change the current state of affairs.

In the New Testament *σάλπιγξ* is used as the name of an instrument (1 Cor 14, 8; Rev 1, 10; 4, 1) but also has the meaning of the *sound of the trumpet* and *signal* (Mt 24, 31; 1 Cor 15, 52; 1 Thess 4, 16). A trumpet as an instrument appears in many contexts in the Old Testament and the New Testament, as well as in Hellenistic literature:

109 The apocalypse of Zephaniah was probably written between 100 BC and the middle of the second century AD but to determine the date exactly is impossible. Presumably, it was written in Greek. It contains a number of motifs found in other apocalypses (1 En, 2 En, 3 Bar). The main themes of the Apocalypse of Zephaniah are a trip to the celestial sphere, life of angels and saints, and Hades. See: O. S. Wintermute, *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 487–507.

a) The trumpet as a military instrument. In the Hellenistic literature, a trumpet is used to give signals, which in fact are precise commands or orders¹¹⁰. Similarly, in the Old Testament, but often a motif of trumpet appears also in a religious context (2 Sam 15, 10; 20, 1; Num 10, 9; 2 Chron 13, 14; 1 Macc 3, 50)¹¹¹. In the Qumran writings, especially in the text “the War of the sons of the light with the sons of the darkness” the motif of the trumpet appears very often as an instrument for indicating the next stages of fighting (1QM 3. 7. 8. 9)¹¹². In the New Testament *σάλπιγξ* in military terms is used only in 1 Cor 14, 8.

b) The trumpet in peacetime. In the Hellenistic literature, the sound of a trumpet was a signal to start or to end activities (eg. gathering a flock by shepherds, or being silent before a prayer meeting). A trumpet was used during a special ceremony (eg. funeral), official holidays or triumphal marches. In the Old Testament a trumpet rang out during the coronation of a king (2 Sam 15, 10; 1 Kings 1, 34; 2 Kings 9, 13; 2 Chron 23, 13), the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron 5, 12), building a foundation for the new Temple (Ezra 3, 10), and solemn processions (1 Chron 13, 8; Neh 12, 35). In Judaic literature, a trumpet rang out during holidays and during threats of natural disasters.

c) The trumpet as a musical instrument. In Dan 3, 7; 10, 15 a trumpet is mentioned as one of the instruments in the orchestra of Nebuchadnezzar. In 2 Chron 5, 13 the sound of a trumpet is a voice which praises God. In Judaic literature, a trumpet is not used as a musical instrument. In the New Testament trumpet exists in such a role only in Rev 18, 22 in the context of the judgement upon Babylon. In Hellenistic and Judeo-Christian world, a trumpet was not used as a musical instrument.

d) The trumpet as a cultic instrument. The sound of trumpets sounded during sacrifices (Num 10, 10), before a battle in order to

110 I. H. Jones, *Musical Instrument*, in: *ABD*, vol. IV, p. 936.

111 V. H. Mathews, *Music and Musical Instruments*, in: *ABD*, vol. IV, p. 932.

112 M. Bockmuehl, *The Trumpet Shall Sound. Sofar Symbolism and Its Reception in Early Christianity*, in: W. Horbury (ed.), *Templum Amicitiae. Essays on the Second Temple Presented to Ernst Bammel*, Sheffield 1991, pp. 208–210.

support (2 Kings 5, 13), and for proclaiming seasons and periods during the year (Lev 23, 24)¹¹³. In Judaic literature, a trumpet has numerous functions in the daily activities of the Temple¹¹⁴. The sound of trumpets accompanied the opening and closing of the gates of the Temple, the starting of sacrifices and prayers, and the announcing of holidays, periods and seasons. Sometimes the sound of a trumpet is an act of prayer and a way of praising God.

e) The trumpet as an element of theophany. In Ex. 19, 16–18, and Zach 9, 14 the sound of a trumpet accompanies the theophany of God¹¹⁵. It does not announce the coming of God, but it symbolizes the speech of God. In the New Testament in Heb 12, 19 the sound of a trumpet is one of the motifs of the theophany. In Rev 1, 10, a voice talking to John is compared to the sound of a trumpet. This comparison shows the power and strength of the voice that comes from God or Christ (Rev 1, 1; 22, 16).

f) The trumpet in eschatological descriptions. In the Old Testament a trumpet sounds on the last day, announcing the day of judgment (Joel 2, 1; Zeph 1, 16), as well as at the beginning of the era of salvation and the re-gathering of Israel in Zion (Is 27, 14). According to Zech 9, 14, God Himself will blow a horn and will bring liberation to His people. Also in Judaic literature, a trumpet will announce the final day. According to 4 Ezra 6, 23 the sound of a trumpet is so loud and powerful that everyone around the world must hear it. ApMos 22 indicates that the archangel Michael is the one who blows a trumpet. In addition, angels with trumpets will follow in the procession of God (ApMos 38). The sound of trumpets announces both destruction and the beginning of salvation. PsSol 11 speaks about a trumpet, which will sound to announce to the residents of Jerusalem the coming of Israel and their return home. In the Midrash literature, at the sound of a trumpet the dead will rise from their graves¹¹⁶.

113 J. B. Towner, Horn, in: *NBD*, p. 481.

114 G. Friedrich, σάλπιγξ, in: *TDNT*, vol. VII, p. 82.

115 A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters*, p. 274.

116 G. Friedrich, σάλπιγξ, in: *TDNT*, vol. VII, p. 84.

In the New Testament eschatology, the trumpet motif also occupies an important place. Seven angels with seven trumpets announce seven plagues, which affect the earth (Rev 8, 2). In 1 Cor 15, 52 the last trumpet will announce the end of time, the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of the living. In 1 Thess 4, 16 the trumpet motif is a part of God's command to Christ to descend from heaven. In Mt 24, 31 the powerful sound of a trumpet reaches all corners of the world¹¹⁷.

Due to the loud and penetrating sound of trumpets and horns, they were used in different contexts, both secular and religious. They were primarily signaling instruments¹¹⁸. Their sound announced daily things, holidays, special events and the final events. Sometimes an expression *a sound of trumpet* was used to express the power and majesty of divine revelation.

As found in 1 Thess 4, 16 the expression ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ is with ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου a component defining ἐν κελεύσματι¹¹⁹. The genitive θεοῦ points to the owner of the trumpet¹²⁰. The trumpet occurs in 1 Thess 4, 16 in an eschatological context. Its sound is an audible sign for all. Many exegetes think that the function of the trumpet of God is to give a signal to all the faithful for the resurrection of the dead or the assembly of chosen¹²¹. The sound of the trumpet of God is therefore a second motif, which specifies the order of God. The motif points to the fact that the order proclaimed by the angel of God is heard everywhere, and reaches out to all people. The trumpet motif emphasizes the universality and the transparency of the coming of the parousia.

The phrase ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ can be interpreted in various ways and all of them have their

117 M. Bockmuehl, *The Trumpet*, pp. 216–218.

118 D. M. Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonian*, p. 151.

119 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 197; C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology*, Cambridge 1977, p. 42.

120 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 164. A different opinion takes R. H. Sternem, *A Semantic*, p. 110.

121 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 175; H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 129; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 174.

merits. Accepting one of the interpretations depends on which of the motifs present in 1 Thess 4, 16–18 an interpreter chooses to accent.

2.4. *Descent from Heaven*

Καταβήσεται ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ is another motif describing the coming of the parousia. Christ will descend from heaven on the order of God, which will be revealed in the voices of archangels and the sound of God’s trumpet. A verb καταβαίνω – *I descend, I go down, I go out* is the opposite of the verb ἀναβαίνω – *I enter* and has both geographic and religious meanings¹²². In the geographical sense, it means to leave Jerusalem, Palestine or any other place of residence (Lk 2, 51; 10, 30, Ac 7, 15; 25, 6)¹²³. It also has a local significance, such as the descent from the top of roof of a building (Mt 14, 29; 17, 9; 27, 40; Mk 9, 9; Ac 10, 20). It is used in the context of rain, hail and fire falling from the sky (Mt 7, 25; 28, 2; Mk 1, 10; Lk 8, 23; 9, 54). In a religious sense it means coming by someone or something from heaven (Mt 3, 16; Rev 10, 1; 18, 1; 20, 1). From heaven comes every good and perfect gift (Jam 1, 17), and bread that gives eternal life (Jn 6, 33. 58). Jesus in the tradition of John many times refers to His coming to the world in the flesh (Jn 3, 13; 6, 33. 35). In the eschatological context, the term is used four times. Three times it refers to the heavenly Jerusalem coming down from heaven (Rev 3, 12; 21, 10. 12) and once it refers to Christ descending from heaven on the day of parousia (1 Thess 4, 16)¹²⁴. God himself will choose a time for this event (Mt 24, 36). The descent of Christ from heaven will be the last of God’s saving acts. Its aim is to raise the dead and bring them together with the living for a meeting with the Lord. The event will have a universal and open character (1 Thess 4, 16; Mt 24, 27. 31). The place where events of the end will

122 LXX uses this term for translating the Hebrew core **נָּזַד**.

123 J. Schneider, βαίνω, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, p. 522.

124 H. Traub, οὐρανός, in: *TDNT*, vol. V, p. 522.

begin is heaven¹²⁵. God himself will begin it by the order issued to Christ. The way of Christ's descent from heaven is not described in 1 Thess 4, 16¹²⁶.

In the pseudepigraphal literature, the idea of descent from heaven to earth usually occurs in relation to angels who are messengers of God, fulfilling the will of the Lord on the earth. This clearly connects to a descent to the earth¹²⁷. This idea occurs in the Old Testament and the authors of pseudepigraphal literature accepted it. The author of the Book of Jubilees took from the Old Testament a story about Jacob, which mentions his dream:

“And he saw in a vision of the night, and beholds an angel descended from heaven with seven tablets in his hands, and he gave them to Jacob, and he read them and knew all that was written therein which would befall him and his sons throughout all the ages” (Jub 32, 21).

The Ethiopian Book of Enoch, describing the fate of the Watchers who have left heaven and united with women, tells about their leaving heaven without any possibility to return:

“Called me, Enoch the scribe, and said to me: Enoch, thou scribe of righteousness, go, declare to the Watchers of the heaven who have left the high heaven, the holy eternal place, and have defiled themselves with women, and have done as the children of earth do, and have taken unto themselves wives” (1 En 12, 4);

“And from henceforth you shall not ascend into heaven unto all eternity, and in bonds of the earth the decree has gone forth to bind you for all the days of the world” (1 En 14, 5).

In contrast, the Testament of Solomon presents a conversation of Solomon with the demon Orniase, which explains how demons can ascend to heaven (TestSol 20, 12–17).

125 For the meaning of the term *heaven* in Hellenistic literature see: H. Traub, οὐρανός, pp. 497–501. For more detail concerning the term *heaven* see: G. Von Rad, οὐρανός, in: *TDNT*, vol. V, pp. 502–508.

126 Dan 7, 13 and Mt 24, 30 are fragments saying that the Son of Man will come from heaven on the clouds.

127 See: 1 En 100, 4.

The pseudepigraphal literature speaks much less, about God's descent to the earth. The Book of Enoch speaks of this always in the context of judgement and punishment, which will be imposed by God on the unjust:

“And when sin and unrighteousness and blasphemy and violence in all kinds of deeds increase, and apostasy and transgression and uncleanness increase, a great chastisement shall come from heaven upon all these, and the holy Lord will come forth with wrath and chastisement to execute judgment on earth” (1 En 91, 7)¹²⁸;

“For a heavenly eternal destruction will come upon you, Babylon, one day, from above, and on the children of wrath, (but it will come down upon you from heaven from the holy ones)” (3 OrSib 3, 307–309).

In two cases, the descent of God to earth is associated with Mount Sinai:

“Concerning the elect I said, and took up my parable concerning them: the Holy Great One will come forth from His dwelling, and the eternal God will tread upon the earth, (even) on Mount Sinai, [and appear from His camp] and appear in the strength of His might from the heaven of heavens. And all shall be smitten with fear, and the watchers shall quake, and great fear and trembling shall seize them unto the ends of the earth. And the high mountains shall be shaken, and the high hills shall be made low, and shall melt like wax before the flame. And the earth shall be wholly rent in sunder, and all that is upon the earth shall perish, and there shall be a judgment upon all (men). But with the righteous He will make peace, and will protect the elect, and mercy shall be upon them. And they shall all belong to God, and they shall be prospered, and they shall all be blessed. And He will help them all, and light shall appear unto them, and He will make peace with them. And behold! He comes with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all, and to destroy all the ungodly: and to convict all flesh. The works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (1 En 1, 3–9)¹²⁹.

128 Sometimes this idea is linked to the Messiah, who will come and will raise the dead on judgement day (1 En 51, 1–4). See: 1 En 61, 5.

129 See: 1 En 25, 3.

It is notable that some texts speaking of God's descent to the earth come from the pseudepigrapha with early dating, but the idea is absent in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha dated in the first and second centuries AD. This can be explained by the development of Judaic and Christian angelology. In later periods, angels had taken over many activities previously attributed to God.

2.5. *Rising from the Dead*

A natural consequence of Christ's descent from heaven will be the resurrection of "the dead in Christ" – καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον¹³⁰. A verb ἀνίστημι in the transitive form can mean: *I lift* someone, *I wake up* someone, *I establish* someone (Heb 7, 11), *I move* people or goods, *I build* or *I repair* something. In the intransitive form the verb can mean: *I wake up* (Ac 12, 7), *I heal*, *I arise* to speak (Lk 10, 25; Ac 5, 34), *I agree* (Ac 5, 17), *I start* a work (Gen 21, 32), *I raise* offspring (Mt 22, 24), *I present* people (Jer 23, 4; Ac 3, 22; 7, 37). Particularly important is the meaning of this verb in the transitive form *rising from the dead*, and in intransitive form *arising from the dead*.

The idea of resurrection from the dead as a universal act, which will occur at the end of time was rejected by Greek philosophical systems. The Greeks spoke about resurrection only in two cases: as an impossible thing or as an individual, occasional or supernatural phenomenon¹³¹.

In the Old Testament, individual cases of resurrection are present in 1 Kings 17, 17–19; 2 Kings 4, 18–20; 13, 20–21. The concept of universal resurrection occurs in Is 26, 19 and Dan 12, 1–3, and gave birth to an apocalyptic movement, which more and more strongly emphasized a motif of universal resurrection (Ezra 37, 1–4; Is 53, 10; Ps 73; Jub 19, 25–27)¹³². Popularisation of the idea of resurrection reached a peak during the Maccabean revolt. In late Judaism, belief

130 The phrase οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ will be discussed in section 3.2.

131 A. Oepke, ἀνίστημι, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, p. 369.

132 R. M. Achard, Resurrection. Old Testament, in: *ABD*, vol. V, p. 682.

in the resurrection was already widespread, but the Sadducees and Samaritans rejected this doctrine. In Hellenistic Judaism, the idea is spiritualised and resurrection is understood as liberation and rebirth (*Bell.* 2, 163)¹³³.

Another apocalyptic motif that describes the eschatological motif of the coming of the Lord in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 is the motif of resurrection. In the Essenes' writings, the concept of life after death seems to be clear. Many texts speak of eternal punishment imposed on the sons of darkness and eternal reward given to the sons of light¹³⁴:

“God’s wrath and His zeal for His precepts shall consume him in everlasting destruction. All the curses of the Covenant shall cling to him and God will set him apart for evil. He shall be cut off from the midst of all the sons of light, and because he has turned aside from God on account of his idols and his stumbling-block of sin, his lot shall be among those who are cursed forever” (1QS col. 2, 15–17)¹³⁵;

“[The sons of righteousn]ness shall shine over all the ends of the earth; they shall go on shining until all the seasons of darkness are consumed and, at the season appointed by God, His exalted greatness shall shine eternally to the peace, blessing, glory, joy, and long life of all the sons of light” (1QM col. 1, 9)¹³⁶.

Less obvious is the conviction of the Essenes concerning the resurrection of body¹³⁷. Did the Essenes believe in a return to bodily existence? Did they really accept the Greek dualism of body and soul? Hippolytus in *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 27 wrote that the Essenes believed in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the

133 A. Oepke, ἀνίστημι, in: *TDNT*, p. 369.

134 P. K. McCarter, Eternal Life, in: *EDSS*, pp. 270–272.

135 See: P. K. McCarter, Eternal Life, in: *EDSS*, p. 271.

136 Cf. 1 QS col. 4, 7–8.

137 J. J. Collins, The Essenes and the Afterlife, in: F. G. Martínez, A. Steudel, E. Tigchelaar (eds), *Resurrection. Mélanges qumraniens en hommage à Émile Puech*, Leiden/Boston 2006, pp. 35–53; É. Puech, Messianism, Resurrection, and Eschatology At Qumran and in the New Testament, in: E. Ulrich, J. Vanderkam (eds), *The Community of the Renewed Covenant*, Notre Dame 1994, pp. 235–256.

body (*Haer.* 27)¹³⁸. However, Josephus in “The Jewish War” states that the Essenes like the Greeks believed in the immortality of the soul but did not believe in the resurrection of the body (*Bell.* 2.8.11 §§ 154–56)¹³⁹. Although it cannot be determined with certainty whether the Essenes believed in the resurrection of the body or not¹⁴⁰, based on several texts mainly inspired by the Book of Daniel and the Book of Enoch, it can be assumed that they knew about the concept of the resurrection of the body¹⁴¹. Other Qumran texts seem to suggest at least the knowledge of this idea by the Essenes. Texts concerning resurrection of body are found in the writings called Teachings:

“And now, O you foolish hearts, what good is to (someone) who is not... [what is silence for someone who does not exist, and what is judgement if it has no foundation? Why do the dead groan over their ... you have being shaped and your return is to eternal destruction. For it shall wake up ... your sin darkness will roar against your dispute. And all those who will exist for ever, those who search truth will be aroused for your judgement [and then] all the foolish hearts will be destroyed, and the sons of injustice will be found no more, [and a]ll the supporters of wickedness will be put to shame” (4Q418 frg. 69 col. 2, 4–9)¹⁴².

The statement “seeking the truth will wake for the judgement” seems to suggest resurrection of the sons of light. 4Q521 leaves no doubt that the idea of resurrection was present in the thinking of the Essenes:

138 J. J. Collins believes that Hippolytus confused the Essenes with the Zealots (J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic*, pp. 171–172). He is convinced that the Essenes did not believe in the resurrection of the body. His opinion differs from that of E. Puech (J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism*, pp. 110–129).

139 This type of approach is characteristic for the following texts: the Rule of War, the Community Rule, the Damascus Document.

140 Most scholars accept the opinion of Josephus. See: J. J. Collins, *Apocalypticism*, p. 115.

141 See: H. C. C. Cavallin, *Life after Death*, Gleerup Lund Sweden 1974, pp. 60–68. The presence of the idea of bodily resurrection in 1 En and Dan will be discussed later.

142 The text belongs to a group called Teaching. It was written in the period between mid-first century BC and middle of first century AD. It talks about different fates of the sons of light and the sons of darkness on the Day of Judgment. See: P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, p. 221.

“For He will heal wounded, and revive the dead and bring good news to the poor. . . . He will lead the uprooted and make the hungry rich . . .” (4Q521 frg. 2 col. 2, 12)¹⁴³.

A. Chester observes that this text together with 4Q385–388, are the only ones, which prove the existence of the concept of bodily resurrection in the consciousness of the Essenes. According to him, 4Q521 refers to Is 61, 1 and Ps 146¹⁴⁴. Pseudo-Ezekiel interprets the vision of the prophet Ezekiel in terms of resurrection:

“[And He said] son of man, Prophesy concerning the bones, and say, [come together, a bone to its bone, and a bit [to its bit. And] s[o it came to pas]s. And he said a second time, Prophesy, and let sinews come on them, and let skin spread over them above. [and] s[o it come to pas]s. And He said again, Prophesy concerning the four winds of heaven and let the win[ds of heaven] blow [on them and they shall live]. And a great crowd of men revived and blessed the Lord of hosts wh[*o* made them live]” (4Q385 frg. 2, 5–10)¹⁴⁵.

A. Chester believes that the text of Ezra 37 can be interpreted both figuratively and literally in the sense of a physical resurrection. However, it is not certain that it is possible to interpret 4Q385 in a literal sense¹⁴⁶.

143 The text is classified as a Messianic Apocalypse. It was written between beginning of the first century BC and year 80 AD. It has a character of eschatological prophecy and it speaks about events of the coming of the messianic era. P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, pp. 326–327.

144 A. Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation. Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology*, Tübingen 2007, pp. 152–156.

145 The text is classified as Pseudo-Ezekiel. It was written in mid of first century BC. The text takes the form of a Midrash on the biblical text. In this respect, it is similar to the Apocryphal Ezekiel, however the contents are not the same. See: D. Dimant, Resurrection, Restoration, and Time-Curtailing in Qumran, Early Judaism, and Christianity, in: *RQ* 76: 2000, vol. 19, pp. 526–546; P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, pp. 320–322; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, Resurrection, in: *EDSS*, pp. 764–767.

146 A. Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation*, pp. 151–152.

Particularly interesting are quotes from Hodayot, in which, together with the idea of resurrection, appears the idea of the existence of people raised together with angels in heaven¹⁴⁷:

“Hoist a banner, O you who lie in the dust! O bodies gnawed by worms, rise up an ensign for [the destruction of wickedness]!” (1QH col. 14, 33–34);

“For the sake of Thy glory Thou hast purified man of sin that he may be made holy for Thee, with no abominable uncleanness and no guilty wickedness; that he may be one [with] the children of Thy truth and partake of the lot of Thy Holy Ones; that bodies gnawed by worms may be raised from the dust to the counsel [of Thy truth], and that the perverse spirit (may be lifted) to the understanding [which comes from Thee]; that he may stand before Thee with the everlasting host and with [Thy] spirits [of holiness] to be renewed together with all the living and to rejoice together with them that know” (1QH col. 19, 10–14);

“I thank Thee, O Lord for Thou hast redeemed my soul from the Pit, and from the hell of Abaddon Thou hast raised me up to everlasting height. I walk on limitless level ground, and I know there is hope for him whom Thou hast shaped from dust for the everlasting Council. Thou hast cleansed a perverse spirit of great sin that it may stand with the host of the Holy Ones, and that it may enter into community with the congregation of the Sons of Heaven” (1QH col. 11, 19–22).

Although the above texts do not prove that the Essenes believed in the resurrection of the body, they confirm that the Essenes knew about the concept. It can be assumed that the Essenes knew about the idea

147 M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to*, p. 49. However, there is no agreement between scholars concerning these passages. It is not certain whether they must be interpreted in terms of belief in the resurrection of body, or metaphorically as a statement that to be a member of the Qumran community is like going from death to life. See: G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, in: EDSS, p. 766. J. J. Collins, on basis of 1QH col. 3, 19–23 believes that the Essenes were convinced that they have already made their transition from death to life and are living in communion with the angels (J. J. Collins, *Apocalyptic eschatology as the Transcendence of Death*, in: P. D. Hanson (ed.), *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses*, London / Philadelphia 1983, pp. 72–74). See also: L. R. Bailey, *Biblical Perspectives on Death*, Philadelphia 1979, pp. 82–85.

of resurrection, but it was not a part of their eschatological beliefs. One fragment (4Q521), whose literal interpretation is in doubt may not constitute a convincing argument for this thesis that the Essenes believed in the resurrection of the body. A lack of this eschatological motif in basic texts of the sect suggests that the motif of resurrection was not an important theme in the eschatological expectations of the Qumran community.

In the pseudepigraphal literature the idea of the resurrection of the body occurs only in late writings and contains clear Christian influence¹⁴⁸. In the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha derived from Jewish circles the idea of the resurrection is present, but it refers only to the soul, or it is not clearly defined, which leaves the existence of the idea of bodily resurrection open to speculation.

This interpretation presupposes the existence of the influence of Greek dualism in Jewish literature, where monotheism is clearly maintained¹⁴⁹. This problem seems to disappear when we abandon Greek dualism of body and soul, and accept the Jewish concept of man, in which soul and body are one. In this case, however, searching for the idea of resurrection of the body in the pseudepigraphal literature created in Jewish circles would be neither possible nor appropriate. A. Chester believes that the Ethiopic Apocalypse of Enoch represents the earliest stage of development of eschatological thinking referring to the idea of resurrection of the body in Judaic literature. Analysing three fragments of 1 En (1 En 21–27, 83–90, 91–105) he concludes that these imply indirectly a possibility of bodily resurrection although these passages concern the concept of judgement upon the righteous¹⁵⁰. Despite the fact that most of the texts of 1 En do not speak directly about the resurrection of body, we can accept the opinion of Chester¹⁵¹:

148 See: TestAd 3, 4; ApEl 4, 24–26; QuesEzra B 11–14; 2 OrSib 221–222; 8 OrSib 170.

149 See: G. Stemberger, *Der Leib der Auferstehung. Studien zur Anthropologie und Eschatologie des palästinischen Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter (ca. 170 v. Chr.-100 n. Chr.)*, Rome 1972, pp. 65–71.

150 A. Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation*, pp. 1144–150. See also: H. C. C. Cavallin, *Life*, pp. 40–53.

151 See: 1 En 90, 30. H. C. C. Cavallin sees in this passage a reference to bodily resurrection (H. C. C. Cavallin, *Life*, p. 40). This passage does not speak directly

“And the righteous shall arise from their sleep, and wisdom shall arise and be given unto them” (1 En 91, 10);

“The Righteous One shall awaken from his sleep; he shall arise and walk in the ways of righteousness; and all the way of his conduct shall be in goodness and generosity forever. He will be generous to the Righteous One, and give him eternal uprightness; he will give authority, and judge in kindness and righteousness; and they shall walk in eternal light. Sin and darkness shall perish forever, and shall no more be seen from that day forevermore” (1 En 92, 3–5)¹⁵².

Both texts concern the resurrection, but it is not certain if they refer to the resurrection of the body or only to the resurrection of the soul. Their common feature is to put the motif of resurrection in the apocalyptic context of the day of the Lord. However, the reference to the idea of the eternal life of the soul in 1 En is clear and unambiguous:

“And the spirits of you who have died in righteousness shall live and rejoice, and their spirits shall not perish, nor their memorial from before the face of the Great One Unto all the generations of the world: wherefore no longer fear their contumely” (1 En 103, 4)¹⁵³.

The unity of soul and body seems to be something presupposed by the author of the Apocryphon of Ezekiel, who presents the idea of the judgement of soul and body, but does not refer to the idea of the resurrection¹⁵⁴:

“In the same way the body is connected to the soul and the soul to the body, to convict (them) of (their) common deeds. And the judgment becomes final

about the resurrection of the body but it can be deduced from a fact that the dead will assemble in one house.

152 There is a lack of precision in the meaning of the term *resurrection* in most the pseudepigraphal writings. See: TestSim 6, 7; TestJud 25, 4; TestBen 10, 8; ApMos 13, 3–6; JA 15, 3–4.

153 Similarly: 1 En 103, 1–3; TIss 7, 28; 8, 5; 4 Ezra 7, 32; TestAs 1, 3–6, 6.

154 The Introduction, which is preserved in the work of Epiphanius “Against Heresies 64, 70, 5–17” testifies that ApEz has been interpreted in the light of the concept of bodily resurrection.

for both body and soul, for the works they have done whether good or evil” (ApEzra 2, 10–11)¹⁵⁵.

In the pseudepigrapha, which have Christian influences the motif of the resurrection of the body is already clear:

“Fire will burn up land, heaven, and sea, pursuing the hunt, and will break the gates of the confines of Hades. Then all the flesh of the dead, of the holy ones, will come to the free light. The fire will torture the lawless forever” (8 OrSib 225–229)¹⁵⁶.

The Questions of Ezra already contained the typically Christian idea of bodily resurrection (Mt 24, 31; 1 Cor 15, 51; 1 Thess 4, 16) with a direct reference to Christ (ApEzra B 11–14). Christ will come when the trumpet of the Archangel Gabriel will sound, to free souls from the hands of Satan. However, the author of the Greek Apocalypse of Ezra points to the sound of trumpet as a sign of resurrection from the dead:

“And after these a trumpet, and the graves will be opened and the dead will rise up uncorrupted” (GrApEz 4, 36).

The author of Four Sibylline Oracles not only accepts the resurrection of body, but he also talks about resurrection to earthly life (4 OrSib 180–181). In the pseudepigraphal written in a later period, the idea of bodily resurrection is always linked with the conception of the last day.

In addition, an ambiguity remains as to whether resurrection refers only to the righteous or also to sinners. While resurrection in

155 The Apocryphon of Ezekiel is a letter that has survived to modern times in only a few small passages quoted by early Christian writers. Probably it was written in period between 50 BC and 50 AD. It contains the teachings on the resurrection and God’s judgement at the end of time. H. C. C. Cavallin, *Ljfe*, p. 98; J. R. Mueller, S. E. Robinson, The Apocryphon of Ezekiel, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament*, pp. 487–490.

156 See: 4 Ezra 7, 26–38; 2 Bar 30, 1–5; Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum 3, 10; 19, 12. The pseudepigraphal LAB includes not only the idea of the resurrection but also the idea of a separation of soul from the body.

1 En was associated only with Israel or saints (1 En 22, 13; 46, 6; 51, 1–2) in the later Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, the motif already refers to saints and to sinners (4 Ezra 4, 41–43; 7, 32–38; TestBen 10, 6–9; 2 Bar 49, 2–51, 12; 85, 13; 1 OrSib 349; 4 OrSib 176–191; 8 OrSib 413–416)¹⁵⁷.

In conclusion, it should be noted that in the pseudepigraphal apocalypses, the idea of bodily resurrection occurs only in a few writings, which are clearly influenced by the Christian idea of resurrection of the dead (with the possible exception of ApEzra 2).

In the New Testament the term ἀνάσθημι – *resurrection* occurs in three different contexts:

- a) Individual resurrection (Mt 5, 42; 9, 27; Ac 9, 40). Typically, in the context of Jesus' deeds proving his messianic dignity.
- b) The resurrection of Jesus (Mk 8, 31; 9, 1; 10, 34; Ac 1, 22; 2, 24; 4, 33; Rom 1, 4; 1 Cor 15, 1–3).
- c) A general resurrection (Ac 26, 23; 1 Cor 15, 20; Col 1, 28; 1 Thess 4, 14–16). This doctrine is one of the basic elements of Christian teaching (Rom 4, 24; Gal 1, 1; Eph 1, 20; Col 2, 12; 1 Pet 1, 21) based on the belief in the resurrection of Jesus and His coming (Rom 2, 16; 1 Cor 1, 7–8; 2 Cor 5, 10; 1 Thess 1, 10; Phil 3, 20)¹⁵⁸.

In 1 Thess 4, 16 the idea of resurrection is closely connecting with the parousia of the Lord. The doctrine of the resurrection preached by the apostle and based on faith in the death and the resurrection of Jesus, finds its final fulfilment in His coming at the end of time. The apostle says only that the dead in Christ will rise. This implies that a teaching about resurrection of the dead was preached to the Thessalonians by the apostle during his stay in the city. At this time, Paul wants to teach and inform the community about two other subjects. First, the apostle teaches that the first consequence of the coming of the Lord, as it is evidenced by the Greek καὶ, will be the resurrection of the dead. It is also indicated by the adjective πρώτου which should be understood

157 See: G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism*, Cambridge 1972, pp. 138–143.

158 Ibid, Resurrection. Early Judaism and Christianity, in: *ABD*, vol. V, pp. 686–688.

in a temporal sense¹⁵⁹. The phrase *the dead in Christ* suggests that Paul refers only to those who at the time of death believed in Christ. The Apostle does not specify what kind of body the raised will have¹⁶⁰. He also says nothing about the dead who did not believe in Christ. The statement of the apostle is a part of a specifically designed response to doubts and questions of believers concerning the situation of the dead on the day of parousia. Therefore, the teaching contains only necessary information and not an entire doctrine of the parousia. The second theme of “ascending into heaven and being with the Lord” is related to the aim of the resurrection. Paul emphasizes only the first and last motif, completely overlooking the motifs of judgement, reward or punishment¹⁶¹.

2.6. “Be taken up in the clouds”

The expression ἀρπαγησόμεθα ἐν νεφέλαις shows how the resurrected and the living will encounter the Lord. This event contains two apocalyptic motifs: ἀρπάζω and νεφέλη.

Ἀρπάζω defines a sudden, violent action, which could mean: *stealing* (*Ant* 20, 214), *taking into captivity* (Mt 12, 25; Jn 10, 28), *quick action to protect* someone or something (*Ant* 6, 238; Jude 23; Rev 12, 5), *seizure* (*Diatr.* 4, 7 22), *capture by force, abduction by force* (Mt 13, 19; Ac 23, 10), *a receipt of vision* (Ezra 3, 14)¹⁶². In Greek and Latin culture the term appears frequently on gravestones and in lamentation writings stressing the idea of death, which takes (ἀρπάζω) a man from his family (*Dial. mort.* 13)¹⁶³. In Jewish literature the term is present only in

159 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, p. 228; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 174.

160 Based on 1 Cor 15, 52 we can assume that the dead do not return to bodily life, but adopt a new form, just as the living also will be transformed.

161 In section 3.1, we will attempt to prove that the apostle consciously disregarded this motif, speaking about the parousia to Thessalonians, but he used this motif when he was speaking about the end of the world and the fate of non-Christians.

162 W. Foerster, ἀρπάζω, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, p. 472.

163 A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters*, p. 276.

4 Ezra 6, 26; 14, 9 and refers to Ezra. In the New Testament the term ἀρπάζω usually expresses the power of God (Ac 8, 39; 2 Cor 12, 2–5. 24; 1 Thess 4, 17; Rev 12, 5). In Ac 23, 10 it refers to the sudden and rapid reaction of military troops.

In 1 Thess 4, 17 the term ἀρπαγησόμεθα is accompanied by the three expressions: *we are still left alive; at the same time with them, on the clouds* and *to meet the Lord in the air*¹⁶⁴. The first of these expressions defines the people to be raised up. There are resurrected Christians as well as living one. The event of the raising up of both groups will be done simultaneously, which indicates their equality¹⁶⁵. The subject who raises up the Christians is not precisely defined. In the light of 1 Thess 4, 14, where the subject is God, and in 1 Thess 4, 16b, where the object of being raised up to meet with the Lord are Christians, we can assume with a high degree of probability that the one who raises them up is God himself¹⁶⁶.

A difficult issue to resolve is why Paul used the verb ἀρπάζω which carries the nuance of a violent act¹⁶⁷. O. D. Vena, rejecting the possibility of the use by Paul of this term in the sense *steal, seize* or *use of force*, points to two other possible interpretations. In his opinion, this term means *being caught without resisting* or *being caught* – to be protected – *from danger* (Jude 23, Rev 12, 5)¹⁶⁸. Following the second proposal, it is necessary to consider the question: from what kind of danger or enemy would God liberate believers in Thessalonica? In relation to living members of the community it could be the persecutors (1 Thess 2, 14; 2 Thess 1, 5–7) or the problem of deception concerning the time of the parousia (2 Thess 2, 2–3). However, from what or whom would God protect the dead members of the community? The only possible answer is from eternal death. God, who is mighty and sovereign in His actions, will save from the power of death those who are destined for salvation (1 Thess 4, 14. 16–17). This is likely in the context of the

164 Two other expressions will be examined later in this work.

165 D. M. Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, p. 152.

166 R. H. SterneR, *A Semantic*, pp. 110–111.

167 Most commentators have ignored this problem and point out the analogy to Gen 5, 24 and 2 Kings 2, 12.

168 O. D. Vena, *The Parousia*, p. 119.

instruction which in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 Paul gives to the Thessalonians about the fate of the dead.

The expression ἐν νεφέλαις defines the verb ἀρπαγησόμεθα and it indicates the means of doing something, a tool¹⁶⁹. However, in Greek and Hellenistic culture, clouds were not an object of worship, but they were only a divine attribute. Clouds are tents, which accommodate the gods; they are a place where the gods are watching the earth; they are a place of gathering; or again they are the chariots of the gods.

In the Old Testament, clouds are often present in the following four contexts¹⁷⁰:

- a) Theophany. Clouds are God's tent (Ps 18, 11; 2 Sam 22, 1), God assists and helps from clouds (Ezra 1, 4), clouds fill the temple (1 Kings 8, 10; 2 Chron 5, 3; Ezra 10, 3), clouds are God's chariots (Is 19, 1; Ps 104, 3) and clouds are the dust of His feet (Neh 1, 3). Clouds also appear in an eschatological context (Joel 2, 2; Ezra 30, 3; 2 Macc 1, 8; Wis 5, 21)
- b) Assumption. Clouds appear in the Old Testament in two passages, which speak about the assumption of Enoch (Gen 5, 24) and the assumption of Elijah (2 Kings 2, 1–3).
- c) A covenant. In descriptions of covenants, God reveals himself in a cloud: the departure from Egypt (Ex 13, 21; 14, 19, Num 14, 14), during individual revelation (Ex 16, 10; Num 11, 25), during the making a covenant (Ex 19, 16; Deut 5, 19), during the renewing of a promise of salvation (Is 4, 5; 2 Macc 2, 8).
- d) Descriptions relating to God as Creator and ruler of the world. God disposes of clouds according to His will: gathering them (Jer 10, 13; 51, 16) or separating them (Job 36, 24; 37, 16).

In the works of Jewish writers, the motif of clouds occurs frequently, but with a distinctly rationalist influence (*Mos.* I, 118. 120. 123. 166. 178. 203; *Ant* 2, 207. 320–322; 3, 203; 4, 326). However, in apocalyptic literature, the motif of clouds is not often used, but it has great importance in communication between heaven and earth. The literature

169 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, p. 169.

170 A. Oepke, νεφέλη, in: *TDNT*, vol. IV, p. 905.

introduces the idea that the Messiah will come on the clouds (Dan 7, 13; 4 Ezra 13, 1–3) and the idea of the Israelites being taken on clouds to the seventh heaven (Is 60, 8).

A cloud as one of the motifs describing God coming to the earth occurs both in Paul and in the Qumran writings. Although the motif is not frequently found in the basic texts of the sect (1QS; 1QM; CD; 1QH), it is present in texts used by the Essenes. As in the Old Testament literature, so in the Qumran texts too, a cloud is a sign of God's presence¹⁷¹:

“(…) Glory of YHWH resident at Mount Sinai and a cloud covered it six days (…)” (4Q216 frg. 1 col. 1, 7–8)¹⁷²;

“(…) Moses came into middle of a cloud and ascended to the top (…)” (4Q364 frg. 15, 1)¹⁷³;

“[And all] the assembly ... and trembling seized them at a distance. And Moses the man of God (was) with God with God in the cloud and the cloud covered him. For ... when he was hallowed and out of His mouth he spoke like and angel” (4Q377 frg. 2 col. 2)¹⁷⁴.

God's presence among the fighting troops of the sons of light in the eschatological war is compared to the clouds that surround the earth:

171 See: Fire, in: *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, (eds) L. Ryken, J. C. Wilhoit, T. Longman III, Warsaw 1098, pp. 615–616.

172 The text belongs to the Book of Jubilees and contains material parallel to Jub 1–2.

173 The text belongs to the group called the Rewritten Pentateuch. It was written in the second half of the first century BC. It contains a reedited version of the Pentateuch (in most cases there are exegetical additions, omissions, or textual transposition). See: P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, pp. 239–242.

174 The text is classified as the Apocryphon of Moses (2Q21; 4Q374; 4Q377). It comes from the early period of development of the community, what is indicated by use of the Tetragrammaton. It includes instruction encouraging people to obtain the law. See: P. Muchowski, *Comments on Manuscripts*, pp. 299–300.

“For our Sovereign is holy and the King of Glory is with us; the [host of his spirits is with our foot-soldiers and horsemen. They are as clouds, as clouds of dew] covering the earth, and as a shower of rain shedding righteousness on [all that grows there]” (1QM col. 19, 1–2).

In the Qumran writings, the motif of clouds does not describe a vehicle, which God will use descending from heaven to the earth, or as a tool to raise up people into the air. Such a role, in the Book of Enoch, is fulfilled by the wind:

“In this vision I was shown: This is a cloud, in a vision, calling out to me, shouting to me clouds, lightning and thunder pushed me and ... me, the winds in the vision coughed me and lifted up, moved me, and brought to heaven (...)” (4Q204 col. 6, 19–21).

Based on these texts, we can conclude that in the Qumran writings the motif of a cloud is not used as a vehicle for descending from or ascending to heaven.

Just as in the Qumran writings, the motif of the cloud appears also in the pseudepigraphal literature, but it is not used in the way similar to 1 Thess 4, 16–18. In the Ethiopian Book of Enoch in the vision of Enoch, clouds evoke him, but he is raised up to the heaven by the wind:

“And the vision was shown to me thus: Behold, in the vision clouds invited me and a mist summoned me, and the course of the stars and the lightning sped and hastened me, and the winds in the vision caused me to fly and lifted me upward, and bore me into heaven” (1 En 14, 8)¹⁷⁵.

Similarly, the author of the Testament of Abraham uses the motif of a cloud as a destination, the place to which Abraham was taken by the archangel Michael on the chariot of the cherubim:

“And the archangel Michael went down and took Abraham on a chariot of cherubim and lifted him up into the air of heaven and led him onto the loud, as well as sixty angels” (TestAbr 10, 1)¹⁷⁶.

175 See: 1 En 70, 2.

176 The text was written at the end of first century or at the beginning of second century AD in a Jewish community (perhaps the Diaspora in Egypt). It was

In chapter 10, the author describes a journey of Abraham across the world on a cloud (TestAbr10, 2–15).

In the Old Testament pseudepigrapha written later, only angels function as the “vehicle” carrying people to heaven:

“It came to pass, when Enoch had told his sons that the angels took him onto their wings and bore him up onto the first heaven and placed him on the clouds” (2 En 3, 1)¹⁷⁷.

Although in the pseudepigraphal literature, there are many ways to transfer a man from the earth into the heaven, the motif of clouds is not used for this purpose.

In the New Testament, the motif of clouds appears in contexts similar to those of the Old Testament. It is used in comparisons (Lk 12, 54; 2 Pet 2, 17; Jude 12) and narrations (1 Cor 10, 1–2). An angel descending from heaven is clothed in a cloud (Rev 10, 1). In addition, Jesus, Elijah and Moses on Mount Tabor are covered with a cloud (Mt 17, 5; Mk 9, 7; Lk 9, 34–35). When Jesus ascended to heaven, a cloud takes Him from the apostles (Ac 1, 9). In the eschatology of the New Testament the motif of a cloud is closely associated with the coming of Jesus on the day of judgement (Mt 26, 30. 64; Mk 13, 26; 14, 62; Lk 21, 27; Rev 1, 7; 14, 14–16).

It also appears in the context of a man ascending into the heaven, which is very important for our discussion. In the vision of John (Rev. 11, 12), the figures of two witnesses ascending on clouds into heaven are symbolic. However, it indicates the glory, which they received after their resurrection as a reward for their faithful witness.

probably written in Greek. There are two versions (A and B). The content of text refers to events accompanying the death of Abraham. The author used this background to present a universal conception of salvation. J. J. Collins, *The Testamentary Literature in Recent Scholarship*, in: R. A. Kraft, G. W. E. Nickelsburg (eds), *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, Atlanta, 1986, pp. 277–278; E. P. Sanders, *Testament of Abraham*, in: J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament*, pp. 871–880.

177 Similarly: 3 Bar 2, 1; ApEl 5, 2–4; TIss 5, 4.

In 1 Thess 4, 17, those who will be raised up on clouds are Christians from Thessalonica¹⁷⁸. In contrast to the description of Rev 11, 12, Paul's statement in 1 Thess 4, 17 refers to people living in the real world. The phrase *you will be raised in the clouds* is not merely an image or metaphor but a statement referring to a specific truth. Does the motif of cloud serves in the statement as vehicle, which will be used to transfer people from earth to heaven, or does it determines a way in which the gathering of believers with Christ will be done? Although in several passages (Ex 16, 9; 19, 16–25; Ps 97, 2; Is 4, 5; Mk 9, 7), a cloud does not serve as a vehicle, it indicates the presence and glory of God (especially in the texts describing the covenant), however in passages relating to the eschatological theophany, the motif of clouds usually serves as a vehicle. Therefore, the motif in 1 Thess 4, 16 should be interpreted in the same way.

2.7. “To meet Lord in the air”

The phrases εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου εἰς ἀέρα καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα – *to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever* – are in Paul's description of the parousia (1 Thess 4, 13–18) and form the final motif determining the purpose of the previous events (1 Thess 4, 13–16).

The first of the two phrases εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου indicates an aim. Meeting with the Lord is the goal of all previous events. The phrase εἰς ἀπάντησιν and cognate expressions (συνάντησις, ὑπάντησις) in the LXX (2 Sam 19, 16; Ex 19, 17; Rom 14, 17) and in the New Testament (Mt 25, 6; 27, 32; Jn 12, 13; Ac 28, 15;) are used in the sense of a casual meeting as well as in the context of the theophany. This expression was well known in the Hellenistic world and means an official welcome of an important guest such as a high-ranking official or an emperor¹⁷⁹. At the beginning of the twentieth century in the exegesis of 1 Thess 4, 17, there appeared an argument (taken into account

178 In a broader sense, these are all members of the Church.

179 E. Peterson, ἀπάντησις, in: *TDNT*, vol. I, p. 380.

by many contemporary exegetes) that Paul used the term *meeting* in the Hellenistic sense¹⁸⁰. If so, then the meaning of the expression would be as follow: Christians taken up in clouds will meet the coming Lord in order to welcome him, to escort and to accompany him on his arrival to His destination. This interpretation assumes that the Lord comes to the earth¹⁸¹. However, this is not confirmed either in 1 Thess 4, 17 or in 1 Cor 15, 23–28. 51–57; Phil 3, 20–21¹⁸². Based on the text, it is not clear whether the Lord comes to the earth, or he comes only to take the faithful, living and dead, into heaven. The context of 1 Thess 4, 13–18, and the meeting place identified as εἰς ἄερα suggest rather the latter possibility¹⁸³.

The second aim of the phrase is expressed by οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα which can be seen as the culmination of Paul's teaching concerning the fate of the living and the dead on the day of parousia. The apostle, saying nothing about judgement and punishment, states that Christians will always be with the Lord. This statement emphasizes two aspects: a stability of the state (*and always*) and a close relationship (*with Lord*)¹⁸⁴. The apostle, as in many other apocalyptic phrases in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 does not specify what it really means “to be together with the Lord”¹⁸⁵. Indeed, the accent is put on an aim, which believers seek.

180 A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East. The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Greco-Roman-World*, London 1927; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 131; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 177; E. Peterson, Die Einholung des Kyrios, *ZST* 7: 1930, pp. 682–702. For a different opinion see: A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters*, p. 277; J. Plevnik, *Paul and*, p. 90.

181 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, pp. 169–170; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 131.

182 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 102–103; A. B. Malherbe, *The Letters*, p. 277.

183 For more information concerning the debate on the term *meeting*, see: M. R. Crosby, Hellenistic Formal Receptions and Paul's Use of ἀπάντησις in 1 Thessalonians 4, 17, *Bulletin of Biblical Research* 4: 1994, pp. 15–34; R. H. Gundry, A Brief Note on “Hellenistic Formal Receptions and Paul's Use of ἀπάντησις in 1 Thessalonians 4, 17”, *Bulletin of Biblical Research* 6: 1996, pp. 39–41; J. Plevnik, 1 Thessalonians 4, 17: The Bringing in of the Lord or the Bringing in of the Faithful, *Bib* 80: 1999, pp. 537–546.

184 J. Eadie, *A commentary*, p. 170.

185 For other possible interpretations, see: E. Best, *The First*, pp. 200–202.

Christians taken up on clouds by the Lord will meet Him in εἰς ἄερα – *in the air, in space*. According to Jewish cosmology, it is the space between the earth and the heaven, what means that it is not the place, where Christians will live with the Lord¹⁸⁶. This implies that the Lord together with Christians should go after their meeting in one of two directions: either to the earth, which implies a Hellenistic understanding by Paul of the expression εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ κυρίου, or to the heaven, which implies that the apostle used this expression according to Jewish tradition. As it is difficult to clearly define the sense in which εἰς ἀπάντησιν was used, it is also difficult to firmly say what will happen after the meeting of Christ with the Christians. Commentators have put forward many possible interpretations, all of which, however, are no more than possibilities, and are based on theological assumptions¹⁸⁷. The description of the parousia in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 contains many elements of apocalyptic language, which is characterized by ambiguity and a descriptive character. This makes it impossible to give an interpretation with any degree of probability. The intention of the apostle was more to establish certain truths rather than to give a detailed explanation. It is necessary to remember that Paul is responding to questions and to the concerns of a particular group of people, and he does not draw a precise and complete picture of the events of the parousia. Using apocalyptic language, Paul provides a simple and compact (which does not mean a full, clear and closed) picture of events connected with the coming of the Lord, in which living and dead members of the Thessalonians community will participate¹⁸⁸.

The Qumran writings, not only in the matter of the resurrection of body, but also in the matter of the place where the faithful will stay, present diverse approaches. On the one hand, the children of the light, after their victory in the eschatological war against the children of the darkness, will continue to inhabit the city of Zion and Judah (1QM

186 E. Best, *The First*, p. 200; E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, p. 247.

187 See: G. L. Green, *The Letters*, p. 228; L. Moriss, *The First and Second*, pp. 14–146; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 175–176.

188 W. Marxsen, *Der Erste*, pp. 67–68.

col. 19). In addition, references to the participation of the sons of the light in temple worship suggest that the Essenes understood an eternal life in sense of a perfect earthly life:

“In accordance with the mercies of God, according to His goodness and wonderful glory, He caused some of the sons of the world to draw near (Him) ... to be counted with Him in the com[munity of the god]s as a congregation of holiness in service for eternal life and (sharing) the lot of His holy ones ... each man according to his lot which He has cast for ... for eternal life ...” (4Q181 frg. 1, 3–5)¹⁸⁹.

In the Old Testament, there are numbers of texts indicating that heaven is a place where the sons of the light will stay with the angels:

“Righteousness shall rejoice on high, and all the children of His Covenant, be strong in the ordeal of God” (1QM col. 17, 8);

“The s[ons of] heaven whose inheritance is eternal life, will they indeed say: we have labored in the works of truth and we exhausted ourselves in all the ages. Will they not walk in eternal light [and inherit g]lory and great splendor” (4Q418 frg. 69 col. 2, 12–13);

“Safely in the holy place, in peace and quiet with eternal angels, in tents of glory and salvation. They will praise your name, among those who feel fear before you” (4Q428 frg. 8 col. 2, 8–9).

Considering the fact that eschatological thought in the Qumran community underwent evolution, we can conclude that at some stage of its development the concept emerged of residence in heaven with the angels. Such a concept of eternal life shows parallels with Paul’s idea: being taken up in clouds and a joint presence with the Lord forever.

189 This text refers to joining the community, but mention of the Temple allows us to interpret it in light of eschatological expectations. The Essenes had not maintained contact with the Temple of Jerusalem. However, their eschatological expectations clearly imply the hope of an earthly paradise theme and of the renewal of the Temple and worship.

Both in the Qumran writings and in the pseudepigraphal literature there is a lack of agreement concerning a place of existence of the just after the just judgment. Often, this place is presented in terms of an earthly paradise. Such a concept is found primarily in the Syrian Apocalypse of Baruch. It speaks about a world that comes after this world, but still it will be the earthly world, in which man will live with God:

“And the hour comes which abides forever. And the new world (comes) which does not turn to corruption those who depart to its blessedness, and has no mercy on those who depart to torment, and leads not to perdition those who live in it. For these are they who shall inherit that time which has been spoken of, and theirs is the inheritance of the promised time” (2 Bar 44, 12)¹⁹⁰.

In some pseudepigraphal writings, a picture of the future world is presented in messianic terms:

“And then indeed he will rise up his kingdom for all ages over men, he who once gave a holy law to godly men, to all of whom He promised to open out the earth and the world, and the portals of the blessed, and all joys, and everlasting sense and eternal gladness. And from every land they shall bring frankincense and gifts to the house of the great God: and there shall be no other house for men even in future generations to know but only that which He has given to faithful men to honor. For mortals call that alone (the house) of the great God. And all the paths of the plain and the sheer banks, and the lofty mountains and the wild sea waves shall become easy to travel over by foot or sail in those days. For naught but peace shall come upon the land of the good: and the prophets of the Mighty God shall take away the sword. For they are judges of mortal men and just kings. Even wealth shall be righteous among men: for this are the judgment and the rule of the Mighty God. Rejoice, O virgin, and exult: for to thee the Creator of heaven and earth has given everlasting joy. And in thee shall he dwell, and thou shall have eternal light. And wolves and lambs together shall crop grass upon the mountains, and leopards shall feed with kids. Prowling bears shall lie with calves, and the carnivorous lion shall eat hay in the manger like the ox, and the tiniest infants shall lead them in bonds, for He shall make the beasts upon the earth incapable of harm. Serpents and asps shall sleep with babes, and shall not harm them: for God’s hand shall be stretched over them” (3 OrSib 4, 767–795)¹⁹¹.

190 Similarly: 2 Bar 14, 12–13; 15, 7–8; 73–75.

191 Similarly: 8 OrSib 205–213.

Although this passage presents a vision of the messianic kingdom, it does not mention that God will be present in it. The 5th Book of the Sybilline Oracles presents the future world of the righteous as a place only for the faithful of the chosen people, whose center is the city of God (5 OrSib 247–255). However, in this description the theme of God’s presence in the new world is missing. The only exception is the Book of Jubilees, in which the author says that the Lord will stay forever with His people in a renewed world:

“And do thou write down for thyself all these words which I declare unto thee on this mountain, the first and the last, which shall come to pass in all the divisions of the days in the law and in the testimony and in the weeks and the jubilees unto eternity, until I descend and dwell with them throughout eternity. And He said to the angel of the presence: Write for Moses from the beginning of creation till My sanctuary has been built among them for all eternity. And the Lord will appear to the eyes of all, and all shall know that I am the God of Israel and the Father of all the children of Jacob, and King on Mount Zion for all eternity. And Zion and Jerusalem shall be holy” (Jub 1, 26–28)¹⁹².

In the Old Testament, we can find many texts testifying to beliefs that the place where people will stay will be paradise or heaven, where they will stay with the angels in the presence of the Lord:

“And he was taken from amongst the children of men, and we conducted him into the Garden of Eden in majesty and honor, and behold there he writes down the condemnation and judgment of the world, and all the wickedness of the children of men” (Jub 4, 23)¹⁹³;

“And the archistrateges Michael lifted me up, and led me to before the Lord’s face. And the Lord said to his servants tempting them: Let Enoch stand before my face into eternity, and the glorious ones bowed down to the Lord, and said: Let Enoch go according to Thy word. And the Lord said to Michael: Go and take Enoch from out his earthly garments, and anoint him with my sweet

192 See: “And the righteous and elect shall be saved on that day, and they shall never thenceforward see the face of the sinners and unrighteous. And the Lord of Spirits will abide over them, and with that Son of Man shall they eat, and lie down and rise up forever and ever” (1 En 62, 13–14).

193 Similarly: 2 Bar 51, 7–13; ApAd 8, 4; TJac 5, 13; 2 En 65, 3–7.

ointment, and put him into the garments of My glory. And Michael did thus, as the Lord told him. He anointed me, and dressed me, and the appearance of that ointment is more than the great light, and his ointment is like sweet dew, and its smell mild, shining like the sun's ray, and I looked at myself, and was like one of his glorious ones" (2 En 22, 6–10)¹⁹⁴.

Although the idea of being with God occurs in the pseudepigraphal literature, it is not the subject of detailed consideration. Teachings regarding this issue are rather general statements and sometimes contradictory, due to the different concepts of the future world.

3. Equality of Living and the Dead on the Day of Parousia

For analyzing this aspect we have grouped into four semantic fields the motifs and phrases that are used¹⁹⁵:

- a) The coming of the Lord.
- b) Those who have fallen asleep.
- c) Those who remain.
- d) "Together with them".

3.1. *The Coming of the Lord*

The term *παρουσίαν* τοῦ κυρίου occurs in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 only once (1 Thess 4, 15). In 2 Thess 2, 1–11 it appears three times: twice in relation to Jesus – ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (2 Thess 2, 1) and τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ (2 Thess 2, 8); and once in relation to *the wicked* – ὁ ἄνομος¹⁹⁶. In addition, the expression ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου

194 Similarly: 4 Ezra 14, 9–10; TJac 7, 28.

195 In analyzing a term or a phrase, we will explore all these places and contexts in which it occurs.

196 In the LXX the term occurs 5 times (Neh 2, 6; Jer 10.18; 1 Macc 8, 12; 15, 21; 3 Macc 3, 17). In the New Testament it occurs 24 times: in the Pauline letters

(1 Thess 5, 2; 2 Thess 2, 2) is used twice, which in the opinion of many exegetes is used interchangeably with the expression *παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου*¹⁹⁷.

The term *ἡ παρουσία* in its primary sense refers to the active presence of persons or things¹⁹⁸. It also means *coming, arrival, revelation*¹⁹⁹. In the Hellenistic period, the term was used to denote the visit of a ruler or high-ranking official. A visit of a ruler was a major event, which was carefully prepared for and which was usually connected with the minting of special coins or with the start of a new era²⁰⁰. Because of a trend in the ancient world to confer divine qualities on rulers, a term, which originally had a secular meaning, could take on a religious sense²⁰¹. In a narrow sense, this term referred to the deities. Typically, it was used in the context of help granted by the deities or in the context of their effective (not physical) presence during fortune telling and mysteries. In this sense, the term also had a religious significance in Hellenistic culture. In Greek philosophy, the term was always used in the secular sense (Plato and the Stoics). However, in Neo-Platonism the term appears in a religious sense in the context of a polemic concerning the relation between mind and justice.

14 times, including 6 times for the coming of Paul, 7 times referring to the Lord and once referring to the wicked.

197 B. Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul*, pp. 147–151. The phrase *ἡμέρα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* occurs in Lk in places in which Mt uses *παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* (Mt 24, 27–Lk 17, 24; Mt 24, 37–Lk 17, 26; Mt 24, 39–Lk 17, 30). Paul also used the term *ἀποκαλύπτω* three times in reference to the man of lawlessness and once *ἡ ἐπιφάνεια* in the context of the coming of the Lord. On the importance of these terms, see: J. Stepien, *Thessalonians*, pp. 245–247.

198 A. Oepke, *παρουσία*, in: *TDNT*, vol. V, pp. 858–71; W. Radl, *παρουσία*, in: *EDNT*, vol. III, col. 98–101.

199 *παρουσία*, in: J. R. Harrison, *Paul and The Imperial Gospel at Thessalonica*, *JNT* 25.1: 2002, pp. 82–83; R. H. Mounce, *Pauline Eschatology and the Apocalypse*, *The Evangelical Quarterly* 46: 1974, p. 164; R. Popowski, *The great Dictionary*, pp. 471–472.

200 J. R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Gospel*, pp. 82–84; J. Stepien, *List do Tesaloniczan*, p. 245.

201 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 57.

The term ἡ παρουσία – *coming, presence* has no equivalent in Hebrew. In the LXX, it occurs only 5 times, only in Greek texts and always in a secular sense. As found in the Old Testament, ideas of coming and presence are not in a nominal but a verbal form (ἔρχομαι, ἔστη) and refer both to the spheres of the *profanum* and the *sacrum*. These ideas are found in the context of the coming of end of time (Lam 4, 18), the day of redemption (Is 63, 4), the day of retribution (Deut 32, 35), the coming of the devil (Prov 1, 27). In the sense of the arrival and presence of God, the terms occur in the context of the confirmation of God's presence in places of worship (Gen 16, 13–14; 28, 18; 2 Sam 24, 25) and in the Book of Exodus (Ex 20, 24). God can come in a dream (Gen. 20, 3), in a storm or clouds (1 Kings 19, 12–13), in word or spirit (Num. 22, 9; 24, 2), and by his own account (1 Kings 18, 46). God comes when the ark is placed in the camp of Israel (1 Sam 4, 6–7), when Israel is defeated by Sisera (Judg 5, 4–5), and when He comes to free Israel from slavery and exile (Ex 3, 8; Is 35, 2–4). God comes as king of the world (Deut 32, 2–4) and as an eternal king (Ex 15, 18). He is coming to establish a new heaven and new earth (Is 66, 15), and to bring to the world peace and joy (Is 2, 2–4; 65, 21; 66, 10–12). The verb is also used in context of the Messiah sent by God (Gen 49, 10) to set up peace on the earth (Zech 9, 9–10). His arrival is an historic event, which has an eschatological significance (Dan 7, 13).

In the New Testament, the term ἡ παρουσία appears 24 times, including 14 times in letters of the apostle Paul, 4 times in Mt, 3 times in 2 Pet (1, 16; 3, 4. 12), once in 1 Jn (2, 28) and twice times in the letter of James (5, 7. 8)²⁰².

In the Gospel of Matthew the term appears once in a question concerning the coming of the Lord and the end of the world (Mt 24, 3), and three times in a description of the coming of the Lord. In Mt 24, 27 the term indicates the open character of the Lord's coming.

202 Although the term *parousia* does not appear in other New Testament writings (there are other terms which Paul uses interchangeably with the term the *parousia*, for example: ἡμέρα κυρίου; ἀποκάλυψις), it is clear that the meaning similar to the meaning of the term *parousia* is present in NT. (Mt 24; Lk 21). See: M. Bednarz, *1–2 List*, pp. 690–694.

Mt 24, 37. 39 points to an aspect of surprise at the time of coming of the Lord, and it is presented in a way similar to the case of the flood in Genesis²⁰³. The evangelist uses the term *parousia* in a technical sense, which means *the coming of the Lord* in order to exercise judgment. Matthew gives the Greek term *parousia* a Semitic meaning equivalent to a יום יהוה.

In 2 Pet 1, 16 the author confirms the orthodoxy of the teaching concerning the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” which was given to the Thessalonians. The term *parousia* is used here in a technical sense and means the coming of Christ combined with the manifestation of His power. Once again the term *parousia* is used as a technical term in a context of doubts concerning delaying the coming of the Lord. In 2 Pet 3, 4 the term refers to the person of Christ, and occurs in the rhetorical question “Where is the promise of his coming?” However, in 2 Pet 3, 12 the term *parousia* relates to the coming of the day of God. It is the only case in the New Testament where the term does not refer to a person who comes but to the day which comes and which will be the end of this world²⁰⁴.

In 1 Jn 2, 28 the term *parousia* announces the coming of Christ, but it is not used either in the context of judgment or in the context of a manifestation of Christ’s power. The author encourages the recipients to persevere until the coming of the Lord. However, the aim of His coming is not specified here²⁰⁵.

In Jam 5, 7–8 the term *parousia* appears in a technical sense in the context of waiting for the coming of the Lord. The author, encouraging recipients to wait patiently and actively, stresses that *the coming of the Lord is near* – ὅτι ἡ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἤγγικεν. The use of the perfect form of the verb ἤγγικεν indicates that the coming of the Lord

203 J. Homerski, *The Gospel according to Matthew. Introduction – Translation from the original – Commentary*², Poznan 2004, pp. 314–317; J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC, Michigan/Cambridge 2005, pp. 954–1001.

204 E. Johnson, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of 2 Peter*, Dallas 1988, p. 106; O. D. Vena, *The Parousia and Its Rereading*, pp. 244–249.

205 G. E. Sherman & J. C. Tuggy, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of the Johannine Epistles*, Dallas 1994, p. 55.

is getting closer and also shows the author's conviction concerning an imminent coming of the *parousia*²⁰⁶.

In 1 Cor 15, 23 Paul uses the phrase τῆ παρουσία αὐτοῦ in the context of the resurrection of the dead. Focusing on those who belong to Christ, he says that they will all be raised at His coming. After that the kingdom of Christ will come²⁰⁷. By contrast, in other parts of the Letters to the Corinthian, Paul uses the term *parousia* four times in its original Greek sense. In 1 Cor 16, 17 it refers to three messengers from Corinth. In 2 Cor 7, 6. 7 the term refers to the arrival of Titus. In 2 Cor 10, 10 the term relates to the presence of the Apostle among the Corinthians.

Similarly, in Phil 1, 26; 2, 12 the term appears in the original Greek sense – *presence* – and concerns the presence of the apostle among the Philippians²⁰⁸.

In the letters to the Thessalonians the term *παρουσία* occurs seven times. Six times, the term refers to the Lord (τῆ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ in 1 Thess 3, 13; τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου in 1 Thess 4, 15; τῆ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 1 Thess 5, 23; 2 Thess 2, 1) and once, the term refers to ὁ ἄνομος – *lawless one* in 2 Thess 2, 8. Certainly, Paul took the term from Greek culture, but the meaning and use of the term differs. Outside the Letters to the Thessalonians the term *parousia* is used only once by Paul in a religious sense and it refers to “His coming” – 1 Cor 15, 23. Another six times the term is used in a secular sense and refers to the *coming of someone* or *presence of someone*. In the Letters to the Thessalonians, the situation is reversed, because the term *parousia* appears six times in a technical sense and refers to the coming of the Lord, and it is used only once in a secular sense to describe the coming of the lawless one. In other New Testament writings, the term is used only

206 G. Hart & H. Hart, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of James*, Dallas 2001, pp. 144–145.

207 A. Robertson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of the St. Paul to the Corinthians*², ICC New York 1929, p. 354; A. C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC, Michigan/Cambridge 2000, pp. 1229–1230.

208 J. Banker, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Philippians*, Dallas 1996, pp. 90–91; P. T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, NIGTC, Michigan 1991, pp. 280–281.

in a religion sense. Therefore, a question arises. Does the term *parousia* belong only to the ordinary vocabulary used by Paul, and does its meaning depend on the context, or whether it was a technical term that contains a precise religious idea?²⁰⁹ Many authors believe that in the New Testament writings the term *parousia* was a technical term used to denote the coming of Jesus in messianic glory to fulfil history by the judgment and eternal reign of God²¹⁰. On the other hand, some authors believe that this term is used in the letters of Paul as a technical term to denote only the coming of Jesus²¹¹. The fact is undisputable that the first time Paul used this term *παρουσία* was in the context of the coming of the Lord. At the same time, it is impossible to indicate a source from which the term could be taken as a technical term. Rather, it appears to be likely that the use of this term in the Epistles to the Thessalonians in reference to Christ affected its use as a technical term in later writings of the New Testament. Any further specification of the way it could have happened is impossible. Similarly, we cannot go beyond speculation concerning the reason why Paul used the Greek term *parousia* instead of an existing and already well-known idea of the *coming of the Lord*²¹². It seems likely that due to the social conditions of the community and the subject under discussion (especially in 1 Thess 4, 13–18), Paul decided to use this term, which in the Hellenistic world was associated more with a holiday, splendour, manifestation of power and joy, than with a day of judgement and destruction. It is also possible that the apostle consciously used the term differently from the term *the day of the Lord* to indicate a difference between the Christian and the Judaic concept of the end of times.

This assumption refers only to the impact of the Letters to the Thessalonians on other NT writings. However, it does not refer to

209 J. Plevnik, *Paul*, pp. 4–5.

210 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 123; A. Oepke, *παρουσία*, in: *TDNT* vol. V, pp. 870–871; J. Stepien, *The Letters to Thessalonians*, p. 245; CH. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 125.

211 E. Peterson, *Die Einholung*, pp. 682–702; H. Koester, *From Paul's Eschatology*, pp. 45–54; J. Plevnik, *Paul*, pp. 4–10.

212 E. Best, *The First*, pp. 359–71; B. Rigaux, *Les Épîtres*, pp. 196–208.

other letters of Paul, because in 1 Cor, which is later than the Letters to the Thessalonians, he uses this term also in a secular sense²¹³. Moreover, the assumption that the apostle used it as a technical term in 1–2 Thess would create a problem that is not easy to solve, because in 2 Thess 2, 9 the term *παρουσία* refers to *ἀνομία* and that would be a strong counter-argument against the technical meaning of the term. Use of the term in 2 Thess 2, 9 seems to support the non-technical use of it in the letters to Thessalonians as well as in the letters to the Corinthians. For this reason, it is necessary to analyse closely all the contexts in which this term appears.

The term *παρουσία* first appears in 1 Thess 2, 19. Paul expresses his hope that the Thessalonians will be his pride and glory on the day of coming of the Lord. This term is used here in a technical sense, which is confirmed by the prior context of 1 Thess 2, 16 concerning God's wrath. The term occurs also in a technical sense in 1 Thess 3, 3, when the author encourages the recipients to persevere and grow in faith until the coming of the Lord and His angels²¹⁴.

In 1 Thess 4, 15 the term *parousia* means the coming of the Lord in the context of teachings concerning a similar fate of the living and the dead on the day of *parousia*. The next verse is a description of the *parousia* given in apocalyptic language. It stresses the open character and majesty of Christ's coming and also it points to the fact of all believers gathering around the Lord (1 Thess 4, 17). In 1 Thess 5, 23 the term *parousia* appears again as a technical term in the context of Paul's prayer.

In 2 Thess 2, 1 the term *parousia* appears in close connection with the assembly of the faithful around the Christ. The use of the term (2 Thess 2, 8) in the context of destruction of the lawless one through Christ's coming emphasizes the power of Christ. In both cases it is used in a technical sense. However, in 2 Thess 2, 9 the term *parousia* is

213 Some exegetes try to explain this problem by a theory according to which the change in eschatological views occurring in the thinking of Paul is a result of the problem of the delay of the *parousia*. B. Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul*, pp. 153–169.

214 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 143–145.

used in the context of the revelation of the lawless one, accompanied by an action of Satan with all his available strength and intensity. The power is sufficient to deceive, but it is too weak to match the power of Christ who is about to come. The term *parousia* is not used here in a technical sense, but in its original Greek sense²¹⁵.

In many studies concerning the motif of *parousia* scholars say that this term means the second *coming of the Lord*. Analysis of the term and its use in the Letters to the Thessalonians and in the New Testament, however, does not allow such a meaning. The term *parousia* does not have the meaning *second coming of the Lord* anywhere in the New Testament. This understanding of the term appeared only in the mid-second century AD in the writings of St. Justin (Apology 52. 3)²¹⁶.

It seems that the term ἡ παρουσία belonged to the ordinary vocabulary of the apostle and did not have a specific connotation. Through the addition of nouns in the genitive, such as; *our Lord, His, Christ, our Lord Jesus Christ*, this term became part of technical phrases eg. *coming of our Lord*. In this form it takes on an eschatological meaning, indicating the coming of the Lord in glory, and it is semantically related to another expression used by Paul – ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου²¹⁷.

Paul also applies the term ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου – *day of the Lord*, by which the LXX translates the Old Testament phrase יוֹם יְהוָה²¹⁸. Both in the Old Testament and in the LXX, it has many variants (יִום אֶרְיָהּ יְהוָה; – a great day of the Lord – Zph 1, 14); יוֹם יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל –

215 In 2 Thess 2, 9 the term *parousia* occurs in an eschatological context.

216 B. D. Ehrman, *After The New Testament. A Reader In Earrly Christianity*, Oxford 1999, p. 63; L. J. Kreitzer, Eschatology, in: G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, D. G. Reid (eds), *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, Leicester 1993, pp. 259–260; A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters*, p. 272.

217 R. H. Gundry, The Hellenization of Dominical Tradition and Christianization of Jewish Tradition in the Eschatology of 1–2 Thessalonians, *NTS* 33: 1987, p. 169; O. D. Vena, *The Parousia*, pp. 116–117.

218 G. Deeling, ἡμέρα, in: *TDNT*, vol. III, pp. 459–60; H. Schlier, *Der Apostel und Seine Gemeinde. Auslegung des Ersten Briefes and die Thessalonicher*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1972, p. 85; W. Trilling, ἡμέρα, in: *EDNT*, vol. II, col. 296–302.

day of the Lord's wrath – Zeph 2, 3, Ezra 22, 24; יום נקם – the day the judgement – Is 34, 8; יום הילף – the day of your power – Ps 110, 3; אֵהְיֶה אִתְּךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא – on that day – Is 4, 2). All of them show the uniqueness of that day on which God will involve Himself in the affairs of the world. This intervention includes an aspect of the almighty power of God, salvation and judgement. In these context motifs of wrath, punishment, rewards, and God's reign appear²¹⁹.

Before the period of the prophets, the expression refers to expectations of Divine intervention in order to defend the Israel²²⁰. From the time of the prophet Amos, the expression is a technical term used to describe the coming of the Lord on the last day, although sometimes it also refers to a specific historical event. Depending on the actual historical situation of Israel, as well as the development of the prophetic movement, the meaning of this phrase evolved from understanding it as a day of wrath and punishment for sinners and salvation and blessing for righteous²²¹, to an understanding of the expression in messianic terms (Dan 7, 13–28; 12, 1–12)²²².

The expression ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου is the technical term that both Paul and other authors took over from the Old Testament tradition. In Paul's writings and in the Old Testament, the expression

219 P. Briks, *Koniec świata czy apokatasta? Pozytywne aspekty koncepcji eschatologicznych w Biblii Hebrajskiej* [The end of the World or Apocastasis? Positive Aspects of the Eschatological Concept in the Hebrew Bible], Warsaw 2004, pp. 98–119; J. Plevnik, *Paul*, p. 13.

220 G. Von Rad, The Origin of the Concept of the Day Yahweh, *JSS* 4: 1959, pp. 97–108.

221 Amos 5, 18–20; 9, 8–11; Mic 2, 7; Is 1, 26; 5, 19; Jer 5, 12–13; 30, 8–11; Ezra 7, 7 – only in relation to Israel.

Is 19, 1–18. 21; Zeph 3, 9–10 – in relation to Gentiles.

Is 2, 2–4; 11, 6–9 – in relation to whole creation.

222 Some works in Polish concerning this topic: P. Briks, *The End of the World*, Warsaw 2004; L. Stachowiak, *Dzien Jahwe* [The Day of Jahwe], *EK*, vl. IV, Lublin 1985, pp. 590–591; R. Rubinkiewicz, *Biblia i zbawienie* [The Bible and Salvation], Lublin 2000; J. S. Synowiec, *Oto twój król przychodzi. Mesjarz w pismach Staroego Przymierza* [Here, Your King is coming. Messiah in the Old Testament Writings], Cracow 1992.

appears in different variants (ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ in Phil 1, 6; ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ in Phil 1, 10; 2, 16; ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς in Rom 2, 5; ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σωτηρίας in 2 Cor 6, 2; ἐκέλευν τὴν ἡμέραν in 2 Tim 1, 12. 18; 4, 8) but always in an eschatological context, whether in its negative or positive aspects. In the Letters to the Thessalonians, it appears four times always as a technical term referring to the day of judgement. Paul presupposes knowledge of the meaning of the term by the readers (1 Thess 5, 2. 4; 2 Thess 2, 2). The authors of the synoptic Gospels use similar terms such as: *day of the Son of Man* in Lk 17, 24–30, the day of judgement in Mt 10, 15; *a day* in Mt 7, 22. According to A. J. Malherbe, the Old Testament term *the Day of Yahweh* was first related to Jesus as the day of the Lord in 1 Thess 5, 2²²³. This means that the term *day of the Lord* understood as the day of judgement is equivalent to the term *parousia of Christ*. In this case, for Paul, the coming of the Lord would be the day of judgement. It seems that such an understanding of the term *parousia* is contrary to the intention of the apostle, who consciously introduces a new term in all texts relating to Christians. It is significant that Paul uses the term *the day of Lord* in the context of correction, instruction and moral precepts (1 Thess 5, 1–11), but applies it (in an affirmative sense) only to non-Christians. This term refers to Christians but only in the negative sense (1 Thess 5, 4). In the affirmative sense, the term *parousia*²²⁴ refers to Christians and seems to be used by the apostle in a slightly different context than the term *the day of the Lord*²²⁵. The use of two different terms to define the same reality creates a strange impression. The apostle uses various terms in different contexts that suggest that the semantics of these terms are not identical. A further analysis will allow us to determine more closely the differences between the

223 A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters*, p. 291.

224 The exception is 2 Thess 2, 9, where the term applies to *the man of lawlessness*.

225 A term *parousia* does not appear in 1 Thess 5, 1–11. Also a phrase the day of Lord does not appear in 1 Thess 4, 13–18. Some exegetes consider 1 Thess 5, 1–11 as an the interpolation. See: G. Friedrich, 1 Thessalonicher 5, 1–11, der apologetische Einschub eines Späteren, *ZTK* 70: 1973, pp. 288–315.

terms *parousia* and *the day of Lord* and present accurately the relationship between them.

3.2. *Those Who Fall Asleep*

A verb κοιμάω – *I sleep, I fall asleep* was regularly used in Greek, especially in literature since Homer, as a euphemism denoting death²²⁶. The metaphor of sleep was not used in the context of beliefs concerning life after death²²⁷. In the LXX it reflects a Hebrew root שכב – which has an idea of lying down and has many further meanings, including the idea of death – Is 43, 17; 1 Kings 2, 10–11; 43, 22. 40²²⁸. However, it usually occurs outside the context of life after death. The exception is 2 Macc 12, 44–45 where the term κοιμάω is used in the context of a future resurrection. In the same context we find another term καθεύδω (Dan 12, 2–3) which is synonymous with κοιμάω. The idea of *falling asleep* presented in the sense of future resurrection is also present in the pseudepigraphal literature: – 1 En 51, 1; 91, 10; 92, 3; 4 Ezra 7, 32; 2 Bar 21, 24²²⁹.

In the New Testament the verb κοιμάω appears 18 times, including nine times in its primary sense (Mt 28, 13; Lk 22, 45; Jn 11, 12; Ac 7, 60; 12, 6; 13, 36; 1 Cor 7, 39; 11, 30; 15, 6) and 9 times in a metaphorical sense (Mt 27, 52; 1 Cor 15, 6. 18. 20. 51; 1 Thess 4, 13. 14. 15; 2 Pet 3, 4²³⁰). The verb κοιμάω appears for the first time in 1 Thess 4, 13 in the form of present participle middle τῶν κοιμωμένων – *fall asleep*. However, it also occurs in this form in 1 Cor 11, 30 but not in the context of resurrection. Exegetes, who believe that κοιμάω is an euphemism for death, propose to interpret the fact of using the present tense as a general expression concerning those who are dead, or as a technical term describing

226 See: Homer, *Iliad*, 11. 241; Sophocles, *Electra* 509.

227 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 167.

228 שכב, *BDB*, p. 1011.

229 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, pp. 166–167; B. Rigoux, *Saint Paul Les Épîtres*, pp. 529–532.

230 M. Völkel, κοιμάομαι, in: *EDNT*, vol. II, col. 745–746.

ongoing activity²³¹. E. J. Richard argues that a use of the present tense is intentional and serves to point out the topic about which the author intends to speak²³². C. R. Nicholl believes that the term in 1 Thess 4, 13 is a technical term having a specific Christian meaning. The term does not just mean sleeping activities or dying, but contains the idea of future resurrection, even if it is not the primary meaning of the term²³³. These metaphoric terms *fall asleep* – 1 Thess 4, 13 or *sleeping* – 1 Thess 4, 14. 15 do not speak about the state of the dead before the coming of Lord. Any conclusions about an intermediate stage in which the body remains in the grave, and the soul continues to live in another place, are in opposition to the thinking of the author and are absent from Paul's theological concepts as found in 1 Thess²³⁴.

In 1 Thess 4, 14 the term κοιμάω appears as a past participle in the passive voice κοιμηθέντας – *who have fallen asleep*. It is part of a longer phrase κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἔξει σὺν αὐτῷ – *(those) who have fallen asleep in Jesus, will bring with him*, and specifies the class of “*who fall asleep*” (1 Thess 4, 13). It indicates the moment of their death, namely the fact of belonging or not to Christ at the time of death. The condition, in which the dead were at the time of death, reflects their future salvation, because God through Christ will not rise everyone, but only those who belong to Him²³⁵. An interpretation of this passage requires us to connect κοιμηθέντας with διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. However, using διὰ with genitives is an unusual way to express such an idea²³⁶, which makes

231 The majority of scholars take the term κοιμάω as an euphemism for dead. See: E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 184–185; F.F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 95–96; J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, pp. 146–147; G. Friedrich, *Der Erste Brief*, p. 242; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 166–167.

232 E. J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, pp. 224–225.

233 C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, pp. 22–23. See also: J. MacArthur Jr, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary 1&2 Thessalonians*, Chicago 2002, pp. 125–126.

234 R. E. Bailey, Is “sleep” the proper biblical term for the Intermediate State?, *ZNW* 55: 1964, pp. 161–167; E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 185.

235 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thesalonians*, p. 98; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 169.

236 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 169.

possible various interpretations of the expression *who have fallen asleep in Christ*. It may refer to²³⁷:

- a) Martyrs;
- b) Christians;
- c) Relationship between dead believers with Christ;
- d) Dead Christians belonging to Christ;
- e) Death of Christian, which contains an element of hope.

J. E. Frame believes that κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ is a logical counterpart to the phrase occurring in 1 Cor 15, 18 – οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ. Despite the lack of grammatical equivalence of the two phrase he is in favor of connecting κοιμηθέντας with διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ²³⁸.

Some exegetes combine διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ with a verb ἄξει – *guides* and translate the whole passage as: *so that through Jesus, God will lead with Him those who have fallen asleep*²³⁹. In this case, Jesus would be a mediator, by whom the work of resurrection will be done. The whole phrase refers not only to dead Christians, but also to all the dead. However, in this interpretation διὰ would take the meaning of ἐν²⁴⁰. In addition, the verb ἄξει would have two prepositional phrases, which would considerably blur the distinction between them and would result in an imbalance in the structure of the sentences²⁴¹. The majority of exegetes are in favor of connecting διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ with κοιμηθέντας. They think that the use of the preposition διὰ points to a specific relationship between the Risen Jesus and Christians, both living and dead²⁴².

237 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 189.

238 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 169.

239 E. Best, *The First and Second*, pp. 188–189.

240 G. Lüdemann, *Paul, Apostel to the Gentiles*, Philadelphia 1984, pp. 217–220; P. Sieber, *Mit Christus Leben: Eine Studie zur paulinischen Auferstehungshoffnung*, *AThANT* 61, Zürich 1971, pp. 26–29.

241 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 97–98.

242 A. Lindemann, *Paulus und die korinthische Eschatologie: Zur These einer „Entwicklung“ im Paulinischen Denken*, *NTS* 37: 1991, pp. 377–378.

The participle τοὺς κοιμηθέντας which appears in 1 Thess 4, 15, does not offer new information to help towards our understanding of the term.

Alongside the term κοιμάω in this fragment there are three other synonyms which indicate death. The first of these ἀποθνήσκω – *I died* appear in 1 Thess 4, 14 and 1 Thess 5, 10 always in relation to the death of Jesus. In the New Testament, the term is used to indicate the natural death of man: (Mt 9, 24; Lk 16, 22; Jn 4, 47). It may also be related to the violent death of a person or animal (Mt 8, 32; Ac 21, 13; 1 Pet 3, 18), the transience of things (Rev 8, 11) or the withering of plants (Jude 12). In a metaphorical sense, it can refer to eternal death (Jn 6, 50) or moral death (Rev 7, 10)²⁴³. In 1 Thess 4, 14 occurs the phrase Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἀνέστη – *that Jesus died and rose*, which F. F. Bruce considers to be a formula of faith which was in use even before the Letters were written²⁴⁴. However, in 1 Thess 5, 10 the words τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν – *He died for us* relates to the voluntary giving of life by Jesus. In both cases, the term ἀποθνήσκω appears in its primary sense.

Another synonymous term occurring in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 10 is καθεύδω – *I sleep* (1 Thess 5, 6. 7. 10). In classical Greek, it has a literal meaning and refers to man, gods and heroes²⁴⁵. In philosophical debates, death was considered as a deep sleep. In the Old Testament, the term concerns humans and it was understood in many different ways:

- a place of rest and recovery of forces – Jer 31, 26,
- the place of meeting and revelation of God's will – 1 Sam 3, 1–3,
- in a figurative sense the term means laziness – Num 3, 18, and death – Dan 12, 2.

The term *dream* is not used in relation to God²⁴⁶, but it is used in relation to gods (1 King 18, 27).

243 J. H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, pp. 61–62; R. Bultmann, θάνατος, in: *TDNT*, vol. III, p. 24.

244 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 97.

245 A. Oepke, καθεύδω, in: *TDNT*, vol. III, p. 431.

246 An exception is the poetic expression in Ps 44, 23 and Ps 78, 65, which is not a theological concept.

In the New Testament, the term *dream* appears 20 times and it is used in a literal sense (Mt 8, 4; 26, 40. 43. 45; 13, 25; 25, 5; Mk 4, 27. 38; 13, 36; 14, 37. 40. 41; Lk 22, 46) and in a metaphorical sense (Mt 9, 24; Mk 5, 39; Lk 8, 52; Eph 5, 14; 1 Thess 5, 6. 7. 10). During sleep, God reveals his will to Joseph (Mt 1, 20; 2, 13.19. 22), to the Magi (Mt 2, 12), and to Pilate (Mt 27, 19). The motif of a dream, however, in the New Testament is not a main motif of revelation, and sometimes has a negative meaning as in the expression “prophets of dreams” where it refers to false prophets (Jude 8). In the letters of St. Paul, the term appears four times, including once in Eph 5, 14 and three times in 1 Thess. In 1 Thess 5, 10 it is used as a euphemism to refer to dead Christians²⁴⁷. In two other cases (1 Thess 5, 6. 7) *καθεύδω* is present in its typical Christian sense to designate the wrong spiritual attitude of believers²⁴⁸.

The last synonym occurring in 1 Thess 4, 16 is *οἱ νεκροὶ* – *the dead*. Both in classical Greek, as well as in the LXX *νεκρός* occurs as a noun or an adjective denoting death or a dead body. It may also apply to animals or things. In the LXX, it reflects the Hebrew term *תָּמָּ* – *died, dead body* and it applies to false gods²⁴⁹. In the New Testament, it appears as a noun or adjective, relating to both animate and inanimate objects²⁵⁰. It also appears in a figurative sense²⁵¹. In the Letters to the Thessalonians, it occurs twice: in 1 Thess 1, 10 and 1 Thess 4, 16. In 1 Thess 4, 16 it appears in the phrase *οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ* – *the dead in Christ*. The term specifies a group of people who at the time of their death believed in Christ. It highlights the affiliation of Christians to Christ, not only during the lifetime, but also after death. However, it does not indicate the form, which they will take after death²⁵².

247 T. L. Howard, *The Meaning of “Sleep”*, p. 347.

248 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 185; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 137; J. Phillips, *Exploring 1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 133–134; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 189.

249 R. Bultmann, *νεκρός*, in: *TDNT*, vol. IV, pp. 891–893; R. Dabelstein, *νεκρός*, in: *EDNT*, vol. II, col. 1128–1136.

250 Ac 5, 10; 28, 6; Rev 1, 18; 2, 8; Jam 2, 26.

251 Mt 8, 22; Lk 15, 24. 32; Jn 5, 25.

252 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, pp. 166–167; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 175.

3.3. *Those Who Remain Alive*

Occurring in 1 Thess 4, 15 the phrase ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου – *we who are living, who are remaining till the coming of the Lord*, which in 1 Thess 4, 17 was repeated in slightly abridged form ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι, indicates a group of Christians, who will be found alive on the day of Lord's coming²⁵³. A personal pronoun ἡμεῖς shows, that in the group are the author and the recipients of the letter. It can be taken to mean that the Thessalonians and Paul expected a sudden coming of the parousia²⁵⁴. Exegetes agree about this statement here, and also in 1 Thess 2, 19, and 1 Thess 3, 13, where the motif of the coming of the Lord is presented in the context of judgment, and also in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12, where the parousia is a subject of instruction and correction²⁵⁵. The Apostle explains that the parousia has not yet come (2 Thess 2, 1–12), because the signs preceding it had not yet occurred. He teaches that the day of the Lord will be a surprise event for the unprepared (1 Thess 5, 1–11). He teaches also that Christians, who will be alive on the day of parousia, should not worry about the fate of the dead, because they will be raised from the dead at the coming of the Lord and, will participate fully and equally with the living in the encounter with Him (1 Thess 4, 13–18)²⁵⁶. The fact that Christians living in Thessalonica did not worry about their own the fate, but the fate of the dead during the coming of the Lord, attests to their own conviction concerning the imminent coming of the parousia. It seems that the fate of dead Christians during the parousia was not just a theoretical problem for the living but a real, serious and practical problem which concerns more the imminent rather than distant future²⁵⁷.

253 The verb ζῶω is used here in its literal sense, defining the natural life of man.

See: R. Bullmann, ζῶω, in; TDNT, vol. II, pp. 832–874; ζῶω, in: *L-S*, p. 758.

254 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 171–172.

255 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, p. 177.

256 J. Plevnik, *Paul*, p. 82.

257 This is proved by the friendly and warm tone of instruction contained in 1 Thess 4, 13–18.

While exegetes agree that Christians in Thessalonica expected a sudden coming of the Lord, they do not agree if Paul expected a near and sudden coming of the parousia or not. Most modern exegetes consider that Paul himself believed in an imminent coming of the Lord²⁵⁸. In his thought Paul was not alone, because we find traces of similar expectations in other NT writings (1 Pet 4, 7; Heb 10, 25; Jam 5, 8; 1 Jn 2, 18), which could suggest that the first generation of Christians expected a sudden and imminent coming of the Lord. If so, Paul shared the same conviction as contemporary Christians²⁵⁹. Christians did not create the idea of ‘the generation of the end-time’. The idea already existed in contemporary Judaism, as is demonstrated by a few surviving texts (Dan 12, 12–13, 4 Ezra 13, 24; PsSol 17, 50)²⁶⁰. An argument confirming Paul’s expectation of a sudden coming of the Lord is the use of the personal pronoun of the first person plural ἡμεῖς, which in an emphatic way points to the fact that the author shares the same beliefs as the recipients²⁶¹. If the author did not share these views, we would expect him to use the pronoun in the third person plural αὐτοῖς. The use of the pronoun (the first person plural in 1 Thess 4, 15, 17) and the use of the verb ἀνίστημι (1 Thess 4, 16) in the third person plural as well as the use of the pronoun in the third person plural (1 Thess 4, 17), clearly confirms the fact that Paul distinguishes between two groups. The first group consists of those who will be found alive (including himself) on the day of parousia and the second group consists of those who will be found dead on the day

258 E. Best, *The First And Second*, pp. 194–196; F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 99; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, pp. 172–173; G. L. Green, *The Letter To The Thessalonians*, p. 222; F. S. Gutjahr, *Zwei Briefe*, p. 72; D. A. Hayes, A Study of a Pauline Apocalypse 1Thess, 4, 13–18, *Biblical World* 37: 1911, pp. 164–166; T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, EKK VIII, Zürich-Einsiedeln-Köln 1986, pp. 196–198; MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament*, pp. 131–133; B. Rigaux, *Saint Paul*, pp. 539–540; R. H. Sterner, *A Semantic*, p. 108; H. Schlier, *Der Apostel Und Seine Gemeinde*, p. 79; Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, pp. 171–172J.

259 J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 173.

260 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 195.

261 Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 172.

of the parousia²⁶². Both in 1 Thess 4, 15 and 1 Thess 4, 17 the term ἡμεῖς is defined by the phrase οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι consisting of two participles which are not linked by a conjunction, which allows us to interpret the second of them as the equivalent of the first²⁶³. The present tense of the active participle οἱ ζῶντες is a direct statement indicating a living person²⁶⁴. The present tense of the passive participle οἱ περιλειπόμενοι, occurring in the New Testament only twice, refers in this fragment to those who will be alive at the time of parousia²⁶⁵. The use of the passive participle in conjunction with εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου confirms the thesis that Paul expected an imminent Parousia.

Many exegetes, however, believe that Paul did not expect to be alive at the time of parousia. This belief is present in both early Christian writings, as well as the theological and exegetical teaching of the Church²⁶⁶. Exegetes, who hold the view that Paul did not expect to be among the living at the time of coming of the parousia, provide a number of interpretations of the pronoun ἡμεῖς occurring in 1 Thess 4, 15, 17:

- a) The pronoun *we* should be treated as the so-called “preaching we”, which introduces a general statement referring to both the speaker and the audience²⁶⁷.
- b) The pronoun *We* is a quotation taken from the views of the Christians in Thessalonica, which is not similar to Paul’s thoughts²⁶⁸.

262 A. Veldhuizen represented another view. He believed that the use of the plural pronoun does not authorize conclusions that Paul expected an imminent coming of the day of the parousia. Analyzing the participle περιλειπόμενοι, he concludes that it means *deliverance*, but he does not suggest this with complete confidence. (A. Van Veldhuizen, 1 Thessal. 4, 15, 17, *ThSt* 29: 1911, pp. 101–106).

263 W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz*, p. 27; R. H. Sterner, *A Semantic*, p. 108.

264 Interpreting this phrase as relating to the future or referring only to the human soul is inconsistent with its literal and philological meaning.

265 J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, pp. 156–157.

266 Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary of the Letters*, p. 113. See: J. Eadie, *A Commentary*, pp. 156–157; J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 173.

267 H. Marshall, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 127; F. Tillmann, *Die Wiederkunft*, p. 55.

268 E. M. B. Green, A Note on 1 Thessalonians 4, 15, 17, *ExT* 69: 1957, pp. 285–186.

- c) The pronoun *We* refers generally to a group of Christians who will be alive on the day of the parousia²⁶⁹.
- d) The pronoun *we* is used in order to encourage the Thessalonians and does not show the apostle's beliefs²⁷⁰.
- e) Paul distinguished between two categories of Christians on the day of parousia – the living and the dead. By using the pronoun *we*, he is identifying himself with the group of alive Christians but that does not indicate his belief that he would not die before the coming of the Lord²⁷¹.

The interpretations mentioned above have one weak point: they are based more on word speculation (showing the influence of theological beliefs) rather than on solid philological arguments.

Another argument, confirming the view that the apostle did not expect to be alive on the day of the parousia, is the phrase – εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδομεν – *whether we are awake or asleep* (1 Thess 5, 10), which serves as the background for the interpretation of οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι – *alive, left* (1 Thess 4, 15. 17). A. L. Moore believes that the use in 1 Thess 5, 10 the verbs γρηγορέω and καθεύδω in the first person plural indicates that Paul expected his own death before the day of parousia²⁷². In his opinion, 1 Thess 5, 10 makes baseless an assertion that 1 Thess 4, 15. 17 contain the apostle's beliefs concerning the imminent and sudden coming of the parousia²⁷³.

A. L. Moore's arguments are based solely on a convergence of the person and number of the verbs used in 1 Thess 4, 15. 17 and 1 Thess 5, 10. However, he neglects the fact that the verbs in 1 Thess 5, 10 occur in a conditional mood and refer to instructions contained in 1 Thess 5, 5b, 10a, but they do not refer to 1 Thess 4, 15. 17. The first person plural used in the entire passage 1 Thess 5, 5b–10 gives the

269 F. S. Gutjahr, *Zwei Briefe an Die Thessalonicher*, pp. 72–73; A. L. Moore, *The Parousia in The New Testament*, Leiden 1966, pp. 109–110. A metaphorical understanding of the pronoun *we* is characteristic of the early Christian writers.

270 Calvin's view is quoted from J. Eadie, *A Commetary*, p. 157.

271 J. Eadie, *A Commetary*, pp. 158–159.

272 A. L. Moore, *The Parousia*, p. 110.

273 G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, p. 140; L. Morris, *The First and Second*, p. 141.

teachings the nature of general statements concerning all Christians. In contrast to teachings contained in 1 Thess 4, 15b–17, which attempt to solve a specific problem, the instructions in 1 Thess 5, 5b–10 are theoretical considerations, whose purpose is to strengthen the vigilance and watchfulness of the Thessalonians.

3.4. “Together with them”

The phrase ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀρπαγησόμεθα is a positive expression of the same idea presented in 1 Thess 4, 15 in a negative way: οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας - *will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep*. 1 Thess 4, 17 shows two groups in the community of Thessalonica: αὐτοῖς refers to dead Christians, while ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες οἱ περιλειπόμενοι concerns living members of the community. One issue, which troubled the community, concerned the fate of dead members of the community at the coming of Lord (1 Thess 4, 13)²⁷⁴. It probably stemmed from widespread beliefs accepted in the contemporary world about

274 Analysing 1 Thess 4, 13, some exegetes conclude that the problem of believers in Thessalonica was not doubts concerning the fate of dead members of the community but it was the result of a lack of knowledge about the resurrection. In their view, Paul did not teach about the resurrection to the Thessalonians, due to his expectation of the sudden coming of the Parousia. See: F Guntermann, *Die Eschatology des Hl. Paulus*, Münster 1932, pp. 38–51, W. Marxen, *Auslegung*, pp. 23–37. In response, B. Rigaux argues that the apostle preached about the resurrection to the Thessalonians. To prove his opinion Rigaux points out three elements:

- a) The Thessalonians heard from Paul about the resurrection, but they did not connect it with the parousia.
- b) Even before the mission in Thessalonica the apostle had experienced the death of some Christians, so he could not omit the teaching concerning the resurrection if he was teaching about the parousia.
- c) In 1 Thess 1, 10, Paul teaches about the risen Jesus, who will come to judge (B. Rigaux, *Les Épitres*, pp. 526–533). Supporters of the theory of Gnostic influence on the believers of Thessalonica argue that the reason of the community’s doubt was the spiritualization of views concerning the resurrection and the parousia. See: W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische*, pp. 52–158; W. Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, Nashville 1972, pp. 123–218.

the uncertain fate of the dead²⁷⁵. This belief leads to the conclusion that only people who are alive can be taken to heaven and the dead cannot participate in this event. Christians in Thessalonica, at least some of them, shared these views, as seen in 1 Thess 4, 13. In order to correct their understanding of the parousia, the apostle in 1 Thess 4, 15. 17 authoritatively stated that the living have no advantage over the dead at the coming of Lord²⁷⁶. The dead will also participate in all events in which the living will participate. In addition, there will be no

275 A. F. J. Klijn, 1 Thessalonians 4, 13–18 and its Background in Apocalyptic Literature, in: M. D. Hooker & S. G. Wilson (ed.), *Paul and Paulinism. Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, London 1982, pp. 67–73; G. Lohfink, Die Himmelfahrt Jesu: Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrt – und Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas, *SANT* 26: 1971, pp. 32–78;.

276 It is proved by 1 Thess – “According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that”. See: J. Plevnik, *The Taking Up of the Faithful and the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Thessalonians 4, 13–18*, *CBQ* 46: 1984, p. 282. Concerning the interpretation of the phrase “in the word of the Lord”, exegetes present a number of possibilities:

- a) Paul quotes the words of Jesus, which the Gospels do not contain (L. Morris, *The First and Second*, pp. 140–142; C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, pp. 38–41).
- b) Paul quotes the words of the risen Lord given to him during his revelation (J. E. Frame, *A Critical*, p. 171).
- c) Paul speaks words, which he considers as the teaching of Jesus (B. Rigaux, *Les Épîtres*, p. 539).
- d) Paul quotes a prophecy (W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische*, pp. 39–41; G. Lüdemann, *Paul, Apostle*, p. 231; W. Marxsen, *Der Erste Brief*, p. 67).
- e) The phrase “word of the Lord” means Gospel (J. Delobel, The Fate of the Dead According to 1 Thes 4 and 1 Kor 15, in: R. Collins (ed.), *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, p. 341).
- f) Paul quotes an idea contained in Jn 11, 25–26, but not entirely, arranged in several passages in Thess 4, 15–17 (R. H. Gundry, *The Hellenization*, p. 165). Similar: J. R. Michaels (J. R. Michaels, Everything That Rises Must Converge: Paul’s Word from the Lord, in: T. E. Schmidt and M. Silva, *To Tell the Mystery. Essays on New Testament Eschatology in Honor of R. H. Gundry*, Sheffield 1994, pp. 182–195). See also: R. E. H. Uprichard, Exposition of 1 Thessalonians 4, 13–18, *Irish Biblical Studies* 1: 1979, p. 153.

For the analysis, a more important issue than the meaning of the expression is its function. This expression was intended to legitimize the teaching of Paul as a teaching of the Lord himself. Wanamaker says “Paul attributes the highest possible authority to his assertion in v. 15b”. Ch. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles*, p. 171.

difference between the two groups – whether in time or quality²⁷⁷. This is indicated by the phrase ἕμα σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀρπαγησόμεθα in which the adverb ἕμα strengthens the expression σὺν αὐτοῖς, which emphasizes the idea of equality²⁷⁸. Equality between the two groups stems from the fact that the dead members of the community will rise from the dead (1 Thess 4, 14. 16). Paul did not specify whether the dead would rise to a bodily life similar to that before their death or whether their bodies would take on a different form. The context of equality and the motif of taking up all Christian on clouds to meet the Lord suggest that the author did not mean a return to bodily life²⁷⁹. The dead Christians of Thessalonica, who will be raised by God, will join the living members of the community, and after that, the entire community will participate in the assumption. The resurrection of the dead will precede all other events of the parousia²⁸⁰. The purpose of raising the Christians of Thessalonica from the dead is not to continue an earthly life along with other members of the community, but to be united with

G. Löhr believes that the phrase “the word of the Lord” gives a special role to two motifs contained in 1 Thess 4, 15–17: the coming of the Lord and rising up to the living and the dead to meet the Lord in the air. See: G. Löhr, 1 Thess 4, 15–17: Das „Herrenwort“, *ZNW* 71. 3: 1980, pp. 269–273.

277 T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief*, p. 202. Some exegetes thought that φθάσωμεν should be interpreted as a relative disadvantage, but in a categorical rather than temporal sense (as the majority of exegetes do). See: A. F. J. Klijn, *1 Thessalonians 4, 13–18*, pp. 69–72; P. Hoffmann, Die Bedeutung von 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 für die Vorstellung des Paulus vom „Zwischenzustand“. Die Toten in Christus, Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung zur paulinischen Eschatologie, *NTA* 2: 1966, pp. 233–234. According to their opinion, although Thessalonians believed in the resurrection of the dead members of the community, they were confident that it would happen only after the coming of the Parousia. Such a belief would place the dead believers in some kind of second category of believers. For a critique of the thesis, see C. R. Nicholl, *From Hope*, pp. 33–34.

278 F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 102. About the term ἕμα, see: L-S, p. 74; J. H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English*, p. 30; F. S. Gutzjahr, *Zwei Briefe*, p. 76.

279 E. Best, *The First and Second*, p. 197; J. Plevnik, *The Taking Up*, p. 277.

The opposite view (the dead will be raised to an earthly life) is represented by G. Lüdemann, *Paul, Apostle*, p. 260.

280 1 Thess 4, 16b – “and the dead in Christ will rise first”.

them in meeting the Lord and being in His presence forever (1 Thess 4, 17). This implies an existence in heaven. However, it is impossible to live in heaven in an earthly body. Therefore, it suggests a transformation of the perishable body into an indestructible body, but this is not expressed explicitly in 1 Thess²⁸¹. The lack of any information and references on this topic suggests that the issue is not a problem for the Thessalonians or that it had not been a subject of their reflection²⁸².

The apostle Paul connects the coming of the Lord to the earth with the resurrection of bodies and with the meeting of all believers with Christ. However, the Essenes connected the end of time with the idea of the judgment and punishment of the sons of the darkness and with the liberation of the sons of the light from oppression and their eternal presence in the heaven. Salvation of the children of the light understood as the liberation of the nation of Israel from its enemies and as the liberation of the Qumran community from their opponents is associated with the messianic ideas present in the Qumran texts²⁸³. This idea has a double meaning in the teaching of the Essenes. The texts contained in the Damascus Document and in the Rule of the Community talk about anointment from Aaron and from Israel, which

281 The idea of the transformation of the body is expressed in 1 Cor 15, 51–54.

282 J. Delobel, *The Fate*, pp. 345–346.

283 The Messianic idea of the Essenes comes from the idea of Messiah presented in the Old Testament. The term *anointed* in the Old Testament referred to priests (Ex 28, 41; Lev 16, 32; Num 3, 3), kings (1 Sam 9, 9; 2 Sam 12, 7; 15–16; Ps 2, 2), and prophets (1 Kings 19, 15–16; 2 Kings 9, 1–3). Until the second century BC, however, it had no eschatological connotations. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, the term occurs in 30 texts. Approximately half of them are related to the royal Messiah. Most of texts in the Old Testament refer to the prophetic Messiah. A small number of texts mention the priestly Messiah and Moses as the Messiah. Three basic texts of the Old Testament are interpreted in the messianic writings of Qumran: (Gen 49, 10–11 in 4Q252 frg. 1 col. 5, 1–7; Num 24, 17 in 1Q28b col. 5, 27–28; 1QM col. 11, 4–9; 4Q175 col. 1, 9–13; CD col. 7, 20; Is 11, 1–6 in 4Q161 frg. 8–10 col. 3, 11–24). See: S. Talmon, *Waiting for the Messiah: The Spiritual Universe of the Qumran Covenanters*, in: J. Neusner, W. S. Green, E. S. Frerichs (eds), *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, Cambridge 1987, pp. 111–137.

suggests that the Essenes expected two Messiahs. The first came from the priestly line, and the second from the royal line²⁸⁴:

“They shall depart from none of the counsels of the Law to walk in all the stubbornness of their hearts, but shall be ruled by the primitive precepts in which the men of the Community were first instructed until there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel” (1QS col. 9, 10–11)²⁸⁵;

“Those who follow these statutes in the age of wickedness until the coming of the Messiah of Aaron and Israel shall or groups of at least ten men, by Thousands, Hundreds, Fifties, and Tens” (CD-A col. 12, 23–13, 1)²⁸⁶.

A Royal Messiah is named in the Qumran writings as *the anointed of Israel* or *the Son of God*. There is no complete description of this figure and his function. Generally, it can be described as a military leader who will restore the kingdom to his people and kill the sons of the darkness. He will possess the power of judges, but not in an eschatological meaning (1Q28b)²⁸⁷. The power of the Royal Messiah is not autonomous and absolute. It seems that the Royal Messiah is subject to the priest’s authority²⁸⁸:

284 For more about this phrase see: F. F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, London 1960, pp. 41–55; A. Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation*, pp. 205–297; C. A. Evans, *Messiahs*, pp. 539–540; F. G. Martínez, ‘Two Messianic Figures in the Qumran Texts’, in: D. W. Parry, S. D. Ricks, *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Leiden/New York/Köln 1996, pp. 14–40; S. Talmon, *The World of Qumran from Within*, Leiden 1989, pp. 273–300; G. Vermes, ‘The Qumran Messiahs and Messianism’, in: E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–135 A.C.)*, Edinburgh 1986, pp. 250–254;

285 See: 1QS col. 9.

286 See also: CD-A col. 14, 19; CD-B col. 19, 11; col. 20, 1. G. J. Brooke thinks that the CD in the time before it was redacted at Qumran may have included an idea of one Messiah, who was both a priest and a king (G. J. Brooke, ‘The Messiah of Aaron in the Damascus Document’, *RQ* 15: 1991/92, p. 229).

287 The figure of the Royal Messiah has many common features with, but is not identical to, the image of an ideal king (11Q19 col. 56, 12–59, 21).

288 J. J. Collins, *The Scepter*, pp. 74–77. See: C. A. Evans, ‘Diarchic Messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Messianism of Jesus of Nazareth’, in: L. H. Schiffman,

[This shall be the ass]embly of the men of renown [called] to the meeting of the Council of the Community. When God engenders (the Priest-) Messiah, he shall come with them [at] the head of the whole congregation of Israel with all [his brethren, the sons] of Aaron the Priests, [those called] to the assembly, the men of renown; and they shall sit [before him, each man] in the order of his dignity. And then [the Mess]iah of Israel shall [come], and the chiefs of the [clans of Israel] shall sit before him, [each] in order of his dignity, according to [his place] in their camps and marches” (1Q28a col. 2, 11–16)²⁸⁹.

The primary task of the priestly Messiah will be teaching, and not atonement for the sins of the Nation through sacrifices. While the activity of the Master of Justice will continue until the end of time, the Priestly Messiah will teach only during the end-time period²⁹⁰:

“He will atone for All the sons of his generation and will be sent to All the sons of his [peo]ple. His word is like a word of heaven, and his teaching is according to the will of god. His eternal sun will shine, and his fire will spring forth to all the ends of the earth, and will shine over darkness. The darkness will pass away [fr]om the earth, and deep darkness from the dry land” (4Q541 frg. 9 col. 1, 2–5)²⁹¹.

Both Messiahs are persons, who change and shape the course of history, but they do not end it. Their work is done within and for the community. Their aims are to form the perfect people²⁹². The Messianic

E. Tov, J. C. Vanderkam (eds), *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Fifty Years after Their Discovery*, Jerusalem 2000, pp. 558–567.

289 The text is classified as the Rule of Blessing. It contains a number of blessings for various groups, which will be pronounced at the end times, when the sons of the darkness will be defeated. See: P. Muchowski, *Comments on the Manuscripts*, pp. 68–70.

290 See: P. R. Davis, The Teacher of Righteousness and the “End of Days”, *RQ* 49–52: 1988, pp. 313–317.

291 The text is classified as the Document of Levi (1Q21; 4Q213–4Q214a; 4Q540–541) and belongs to a group of apocryphal texts. It was written around the first century BC. It has an eschatological nature and focuses on a role of priests, one of which is especially to redeem the people. See: P. Muchowski, *Commentary on the Manuscript*, pp. 182–187. Cf: 1Q28a col. 3, 23–24; col. 4, 27–28. See: A. Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation*, pp. 256–258.

292 J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic*, pp. 160–166.

idea presented in Qumran texts refers only to an earthly dimension of Judaic eschatology.

Although the Qumran texts focus more on the community to which the Messiah belongs than on the person of the Messiah, they say nothing about the fate of the dead members of the community at the time of judgment or liberation. This idea is absent in the Essenes' thought. The fate of the dead members of the community is not a subject of reflection for the Essenes. Consequently, a comparison of the fate of the dead to the fate of living members of the community at the time of judgment is not an issue to be considered. Most likely this is due to the lack of a fully developed concept of life after death as related to the idea of the resurrection of the body.

Based on texts speaking about the relationship between healthy members of the community and people physically or mentally handicapped (assuming that the Essenes believed in the resurrection of body), we can assume that the dead would not be in the same position as the living at the end of times. Any infirmity or disability is held against a man when it comes to participation in the assembly of the men of renown or in the eschatological war:

“And no Man smitten with any human uncleanness shall enter the assembly of God; no Man smitten with Any of them shall be confirmed in his Office in the congregation. No man smitten in his flesh, or paralyzed in his feet or hands, or lame, or blind, or deaf, or dumb, or smitten in his flesh with a visible blemish; no old and tottery man unable to stay still in the midst of the congregation; none of these shall come to hold office among the congregation of the men of renown, for the angels of Holiness are [with] their [congregation]” (1Q28a col. 2, 5–9);

“No Man who is lames, or blind, or cripple, or afflicted with a lasting bodily blemish, or smitten with a bodily impurity, none of these shall march out to war with them. They shall all be freely enlisted for war, perfect in spirit and body and prepared for the day of Vengeance. And no man shall go down with them on the day of battle who is impure because of his ‘fount’, for the Holy angels shall be with their hosts” (1QM col. 7, 4–6).

Considering these facts, that there is no crystallized idea of life after death of the resurrection of the body, it is clear that the idea of

equality between the living and the dead on the last day is absent in the Essenes' thought.

In the pseudepigraphal literature, the idea of the coming of the Messiah at the end of time is clearly present, especially in texts written in first century AD and later. The coming of the Messiah called the *Elect One* (1 En 51, 1–4) or the *Son of Man* (1 En 62, 13–14), is linked to the end times (2 Bar 30, 1–2; 4 Ezra 7, 112–113)²⁹³. The events, which are related to his coming, are the resurrection of the dead (2 Bar 30, 1–3) and the judgment:

“And in those days shall the earth also give back that which has been entrusted to it, and Sheol also shall give back that which it has received, and hell shall give back that which it owes. For in those days the Elect One shall arise, and he shall choose the righteous and holy from among them: For the day has drawn nigh that they should be saved. And the Elect One shall in those days sit on My throne, and his mouth shall pour forth all the secrets of wisdom and counsel: For the Lord of Spirits hath given (them) to him and hath glorified him. And in those days shall the mountains leap like rams, and the hills also shall skip like lambs satisfied with milk, and the faces of [all] the angels in heaven shall be lighted up with joy. And the earth shall rejoice, and the righteous shall dwell upon it, and the elect shall walk thereon” (1 En 51, 1–4)²⁹⁴.

The judgment will have a universal character and everyone will be present (1 En 61, 5). These events will begin the messianic times in which all the righteous and saved will feast with the Son of Man²⁹⁵:

293 See: M. E. Stone, Coherence and Inconsistency in the Apocalypses: The Case of “The End” in 4 Ezra, in: *JBL* 102/2: 1983, pp. 229–243.

294 The fragments come from the Book of Proverbs (1 En 37–71), which was written at the end of the first century AD. The discovery at Qumran proves that the book replaced the Book of Giants, preserved only in the Dead Sea Scrolls. See: H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic. Study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to the Revelation*³, London 1962, pp. 57–64; J. C. Reeves, Book of Giants, in: *EDSS*, pp. 309–311.

295 The idea of the messianic kingdom on the earth clearly dominates in the eschatological expectations of the author of 4 Ezra. See: M. E. Stone, The Question of the Messiah in 4 Ezra, in: J. Neusner, W. S. Green, E. S. Frerichs (eds), *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, Cambridge 1987, pp. 209–223.

“And the righteous and elect shall be saved on that day, and they shall never thenceforward see the face of the sinners and unrighteous. And the Lord of Spirits will abide over them, and with that Son of Man shall they eat and lie down and rise up forever and ever” (1 En 62, 13–14)²⁹⁶.

The Christian Apocalypse of Elijah speaks directly about Christ – the Messiah and about the millennium of the messianic kingdom:

“On that day, the Christ, the king, and all his saints will come forth from heaven. He will burn the earth. He will spend a thousand years upon it. Because the sinners prevailed over it, he will create a new heaven and a new earth. No deadly devil will exist in them. He will rule with his saints, ascending and descending, while they are always with the angels and they are with the Christ for a thousand years” (ApEl 5, 36–39).

In the pseudepigraphal literature we find a vision of an earthly Messiah who will kill his enemies, bring them to Zion and there he will judge them (2 Bar 39, 5–40, 4).

In the pseudepigraphal literature, as in 1 Thess 4, 13–16, the dead are described as *sleeping* (ApEl 4, 24–26), or *destined to rise from the sleep of death* (ApAd 2, 2). Their place of residence is called Sheol (2 Bar 21–23) or Hades (ApZeph 6, 11–17). This is a specially designed place (1 En 22, 12–13), sometimes described as a prison of souls (2 Bar 21, 23), in which the dead remain until the final day. Souls of the righteous are kept in a different place than the souls of the unjust and there is no relation between both groups during the wait for judgment (4 Ezra 78–101). The dead in the place of their existence present their complaints to heaven:

“And now, behold, the souls of those who have died are crying and making their suit to the gates of heaven, and their lamentations have ascended: and cannot cease because of the lawless deeds which are wrought on the earth” (1 En 9, 10)²⁹⁷.

296 The fragments come from the Book of Proverbs (1 En 37–71). See: 4 Ezra 7, 28–29; 11, 37–12, 1; 12, 31–34; 13, 3–13; 14, 9.

297 The fragments come from the Book of Watchers (1 En 6–36). The book was written probably in fourth century BC. M. E. Mills, Human Agents of Cosmic Power in Hellenistic Judaism and the Synoptic Tradition, *JSNTSup* 41: 1990,

They are not forgotten or left to themselves. God has established for them a watchful angel who takes care of them:

“Remiel, one of the holy angels, whom God set over those who will rise” (1 En 20, 8)²⁹⁸.

The dead are waiting for the end of time, which will be the day of resurrection and judgement for them (1 En 92, 3–5; Jub 5, 12–16; 8 OrSib 216–230).

In the context of eschatological events, the pseudepigraphal literature does not devote much attention to the living. The author of the Apocalypse of Syrian Baruch is convinced that the fate of the living on the Day of Judgment will be more worthy of mourning than the fate of the dead. It is because of the fact that they bear blame, since they do not know the Law because of their pride:

“But many shall then assuredly weep, Yea, over the living more than over the dead” (2 Bar 48, 41).

Based on the text from the Old Testament, the author of 2 Bar writes about the people, who will see a messianic era:

“And He answered and said unto me: Whatever will then befall (will befall) the whole earth; therefore all who live will experience (them). For at that time I will protect only those who are found in those self-same days in this land” (2 Bar 29, 2)²⁹⁹.

The author of 4 Ezra puts into the mouth of Ezra words showing a belief that the fate of the dead on the last day will be much worse than a fate of living because they do not know what will happen:

pp. 63–77; C. A. Newson, *The Development of 1 Enoch 6–19: Cosmology and Judgment*, *CBQ* 42: 1980, pp. 313–314; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Books of Enoch*, in: *EDSS*, pp. 250–251. See also: R. H. Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 213–220.

298 1 En 20 is a part of the Book of Watchers.

299 2 Bar 29 concerns the Messianic Year and it shows convincingly, that the land of Israel preserved from destruction will be a place of the righteous (earthly paradise). See: H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*, pp. 119–123.

“For as I conceive in my mind, woe unto them that shall survive in those days but much more woe unto them that do not survive. For they that do not survive must be sorrowful, knowing as they do what things are reserved in the last days, but not attaining unto them. But woe unto them also that survive, for this reason – they must see great perils, and many distresses, even as these dreams do show. Yet it is better to come into these things incurring peril, than to pass away as a cloud out of the world and not to see what shall happen in the last time. And he answered me, and said: The interpretation of the Vision I will tell thee, and I will also explain unto thee the things of which thou hast spoken. Whereas thou hast spoken of those who survive and of those who do not survive – this is the interpretation: He that shall bring the peril in that time will himself keep them that fall into the peril, even such as have works and faith toward the Most High and the Mighty One. Know, therefore, that those who survive (to that time) are more blessed than those that have died” (4 Ezra 13, 16–24)³⁰⁰.

Although the fate of the living is better than the fate of the dead on the last day, the judgement of God is like a wheel – *the latter does not delay or the first will not go ahead* (4 Ezra 5, 41–49). This passage does not speak about the equality of the living and the dead on the last day, but about the judgement of God, which will come to each at the right time. The author of the Apocalypse of Elijah mentions the people, who will go to the dead and tell them to rise from dead and to find peace with them (ApEl 2, 53). However, this text is a metaphor relating to the situation of the chosen people.

The pseudepigraphal literature contains only a few fragments, which refer to the problem of relationship between the living and the dead at the end of time. Based on those passages, we can assume that the idea of inequality between them and the privileged position of the living was a common one.

300 The fragment is the sixth chapter of the Vision of Ezra (4 Ezra 13, 1–58). It refers to the Messiah and periods before him. See: R. H. Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 337–345; H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*, pp. 115–118. See.

4. Conclusion

Having analysed in Chapter III eschatological motifs concerning events directly associated with the coming of the Lord, we can now sum up the main results. In the motif of surprise (which usually is placed in the major studies in the context of the sudden coming of the parousia and referring in the same way to both Christians and non-Christians) Paul presents a different view in relation to Christians and in relation to non-Christians. The fact is that the day of the Lord will come suddenly and no one knows the time of its coming. The apostle shows his conviction that this general truth is well known to the Thessalonians, therefore, he teaches them about a different matter, which is the preparation for the coming of the Lord (1 Thess 5, 1–11). The purpose of this section is not to convince the readers about the sudden coming of the parousia, but to convince them that, on that day, they should be and they will be prepared. This is why the day will be for them the day of salvation and not the day of judgement or punishment (1 Thess 5, 8–10). Such an argument should encourage the Christians in Thessalonica to practice consistently and faithfully virtues, which are prized by the apostle (1 Thess 1, 6–10).

In the literature of the Second Temple period, the motif of surprise does not refer to the sons of the light. This follows from the general belief that time and history have a beginning and tend towards a natural end. The last day will come. It will be a time of judgment and a time of destruction of any injustice. At the same time, the last day will be the time of reward for those who follow God's Law. No one knows the date of the coming of that day, but for the faithful of God, it will be the day of glory. The end of time will be preceded by a wide variety of signs, after which man will be able to recognize that the day is drawing near.

Paul does not bind the motif of surprise with knowledge concerning the date of the parousia, but with the fact of preparing for this day. While for Christians, the apostle believes that they will be prepared for the coming of Lord, in relation to non-Christians, he

states that, that day will surprise them because they will be unprepared. Non-Christians place their trust and faith in the conviction that the world they live in will always be peaceful and safe, and because of that, they are unprepared for the coming of the Lord. It manifests itself in the ignorance concerning the day of the parousia and in the lack of self-control shown in their socio-ethical behaviour. The metaphor used by the apostle in order to present the idea of surprise referring to non-Christians is the picture of a woman in labour. The picture has often been used in Jewish writings to point to the continuity and irreversibility of the situation (the Qumran writings), as well as to describe the magnitude of human suffering (the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha).

The analysis of the apocalyptic description of the Parousia presented in 1 Thess 4, 16–18, allows us to determine the meaning of each of the motifs used. This passage contains many ambiguous expressions, which makes several different interpretations possible. The first problem is the interpretation of a term *order*. From among many acceptable interpretations, in this study it was accepted that ἐν κελεύσματι means an order directed to Christ, which takes the form of the voice of an angel and the sound of God's trumpet. In the Old Testament and Jewish literature, the one who issues the order is always God. Angels fulfill the order of God (God's will). The order issued by God will take the form of the voice of angels and the sound of the trumpet. Both motifs point to the transparency, universality and majesty of the event, which is the coming of the Lord. Angels – both in the Bible and in Jewish literature – act as heralds of God's will. The motif of angels points to the supernatural and the majesty of the event. Jewish literature has widely expanded the teaching concerning angels. Its characteristic feature is to present angels engaging in actions that in the Old Testament were reserved for God himself. The phrase *voice of angels* indicates the transparent character of the event. The phrase the *sound of the trumpet of God* points to its universality and the transparency of the event. From many different contexts in which the motif of the trumpet appears in the New Testament, in interpreting 1 Thess 4, 16–18 we opt for seeing its function as a signal. In the Qumran writings, the sound of a trumpet serves as a

signal, which is used in the context of an eschatological war and in the context of daily duties. In the pseudepigraphal apocalypses, the motif of the trumpet occurs always as a signal in a military and eschatological context.

The order, which takes the form of the voice of angels and the sound of trumpets, will start on the day of the parousia. Then Christ will descend from heaven in order to rise the dead and lead all believers to meet together in the air. The coming of Christ will have a universal and transparent character. The Lord will come from heaven to take believers to a place of eternal presence with Him. In the pseudepigraphal literature, those who descend from heaven are angels, although in the early Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, there are motifs of God's descending to the earth in order to judge.

The coming of Christ is closely related to the resurrection of the dead, which will be the first of event taking place on earth on that day. The resurrection of the dead is a consequence of the resurrection of Christ, and refers in 1 Thess to those who believe in Christ at the time of their death. In the description of the resurrection in 1 Thess the lack of apocalyptic motifs like judgement, reward or punishment is significant. Both raised and living Christians will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. In the Qumran writings, there are elements demonstrating the knowledge of the Essenes concerning the idea of resurrection, but this does not allow us to say that the Essenes believed in the resurrection of the body. External witnesses do not agree on this point. In the pseudepigraphal apocalypses, the idea of the resurrection of the body is present only in writings created later, and which show strong Christian influence.

The purpose of a violent taking up of Christians in the clouds is to save them from eternal death, from damnation³⁰¹. The motif of clouds indicates the method or a way in which the rising of Christians will be done. In theophanies, clouds function as a vehicle. It allows us to presume that also in 1 Thess 4, 17 clouds perform the same function. In Jewish literature, a cloud is a sign of God's presence, and does not function as a vehicle between heaven and earth.

301 This point is taken up and further explained by Paul in 1 Thess 5, 1–11.

The purpose of the coming of Lord and all activities associated with this event in 1 Thess is the meeting with the Lord and eternal presence with Him. These two motifs represent the culmination of the joyous picture of the parousia presented in 1 Thess 4, 16–18. The description of the parousia has an apocalyptic character, and contains Hellenistic motifs deliberately used by Paul, but does not contain any motifs of judgment or the wrath of God. A lack of these two motifs in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 and their presence in 1 Thess 5, 1–11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12 demonstrates the subordination of the use of eschatological motifs to achieving a pursued aim. The abode of the righteous at the end of time is not explicitly mentioned in the pseudepigraphal literature. Sometimes this place is the earth (the concept of an earthly paradise), and at other times the place is heaven.

The last issue discussed in this chapter is the problem of the equality between the living and the dead on the day of the parousia. The apostle drew from the Greek language the term used to describe the coming or presence of an important person. In 1 Thess however, the term takes on a strictly religious meaning. Therefore, it refers to the coming of Christ at the end of time. Once in 2 Thess 2, 8 it refers to the coming of the man of lawlessness. This term was not used as a technical term referring to the coming of Lord. The term takes on a technical meaning only when used with a genitive phrase, like *of His coming* or *coming of Christ*, it is added to the term. In the context of teaching concerning the fate of the dead on the last day, the apostle used a Greek term that contains the idea of an expected meeting with a person who will come, which stressed joy, glory and splendour of the event. In this way, Paul in relation to Christians omitted a Hebrew term *the day of the Lord*, which contains a strong connotation of the judgement and the wrath of God. The aim of the author was in fact to teach and not to warn the community.

The Apostle, as well as believers in Thessalonica, expected the sudden coming of the parousia. The apostle solved the problem of the anxiety of the Thessalonians community concerning the fate of the dead on the day of the parousia, by teaching that between the living (called by him *still alive and are left*) and dead (called *who have fallen*

asleep) there is no difference either categorical or temporal. On the day of the coming of the Lord, those raised from the dead together with those still living will be taken up to meet the Lord in the air. In the context of contemporary beliefs about the fate of the dead, the statement that the living and the dead will be equal on the last day is undoubtedly a *novum* and is a contribution to the development of eschatological thought.

Qumran writings contains the motif of waiting for the manifestation of two Messiahs, one from Israel and one from Aaron. The Messiah of Israel is more a political messiah, called forth to bring about earthly liberation. The messiah of Aaron is a priestly messiah, who will be revealed in the end time. In Essenes thought, there is a lack of clear signs confirming that they believed in the resurrection of the dead, and therefore the issues of equality between the living and the dead on the last day were not a subject or topic in their discussions. The same problem concerns the pseudepigraphal literature. Although there was a strong belief in life after death, judgement, punishment and reward, relatively little attention was devoted to the relations between the living and the dead. Few texts suggest that the situation of the dead in the end times was considered worse than that of the living.

Chapter IV

Paul's Eschatological Concept in the Thessalonians Correspondence

The analysis of eschatological motifs used by the apostle in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12, allow us to draw important conclusions. In the first part of this chapter, we will look at the relationship between eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, which appear in the Letters to the Thessalonians, and similar motifs, which are found in the intertestamental literature¹. This comparative analysis aims to determine the extent to which Paul used existing eschatological and apocalyptic motifs to contribute to the development of Christian eschatology. Another goal is to show the way in which the apostle used the various eschatological and apocalyptic motifs in order to achieve his desired effect². Pointing up the instrumental use of numerous eschatological and apocalyptic motifs by the apostle, we will offer proofs supporting the thesis that the Second Letter to the Thessalonians does not contain a compact and comprehensive eschatology. Then we give a reason for the different presentation of eschatological and apocalyptic motifs in 1 Thess 5, 1–4 and 2 Thess 2, 1–3.

1 In the intertestamental literature, there are many more apocalyptic motifs than in the Letters to the Thessalonians. We will only discuss those that occur also in these letters.

2 From the beginning of this chapter we introduce a terminological distinction between apocalyptic motifs and eschatological motifs, as well as between eschatology and apocalyptic.

1. Eschatological and Apocalyptic Motives in the Letters to the Thessalonians and in the Intertestamental Literature

Concepts relating to eschatology, as presented in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, appear to be the result of several factors. These are his comprehensive knowledge of the Old Testament eschatology; his knowledge of non-biblical eschatological trends; his contacts with eschatological concepts in the Hellenistic world; and his private revelation from the risen Christ³. Paul's eschatological views contain both similarities and differences in relation to the intertestamental literature, which in the present study form the primary sources for comparison. Thus, we will discuss the problem of similarities and differences between eschatological motifs in the Letters to the Thessalonians and in the intertestamental literature. The last chapter will be a summary of the results of the previous sections.

Because there is no agreement among scholars concerning the understanding of the terms eschatology, apocalyptic, eschatological motifs and apocalyptic motifs, it is necessary to present our understanding of these terms⁴. Methodological clarification of motifs, which are contained in the Letters to the Thessalonians, is necessary for presenting the conclusions made in this chapter. In addition, by determining the meaning of the terms we can put some necessary order into the discussion.

a) Eschatology. In this study, we accept the definition of eschatology presented by D. Aune: "The term eschatology, deriving from the

3 P. Garnet, Qumran: Light on Pauline Soteriology, in: D. A. Hagner, M. J. Harris (eds), *Pauline Studies. Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce*, Devon 1980, pp. 19–32; J. Stepic, *Teologia św. Pawła* [The Theology of Paul], Warsaw 1979, pp. 141–144.

4 See: T. W. Willett, *Eschatology in the Theodicies of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra*, Sheffield 1989, pp. 35–49; L. L. Grabbe, Prophetic and Apocalyptic. Time for New Definitions – and New Thinking, in: L. L. Grabbe, R. D. Haak (eds), *Knowing the End from the Beginning. The Prophetic, the Apocalyptic and their Relationships*, London/New York 2003, pp. 107–133.

Greek adjective *eschatos*⁵, was created by theologians at the beginning of the 19th century in order to define the part of systematic theology that refers to Christian faith in the matters of death, life after death, judgement and resurrection. Today this term is used essentially with regard to the entire set of convictions and conceptions concerning the end of history and transformation of the world, which are mainly characteristic of the early period of Judaism, the early period of Christianity, and the thought of Islam. The central point of these convictions is judgement for the sinful and salvation for the righteous⁶. We would like to underline two points of the definition. First, eschatology is a part of systematic theology. This means that material found in 1–2 Thess can be considered as eschatology only if it contains a systematic teaching concerning the end of the times. Consequently, material that is used for another purpose (arguing, correction) should not be considered as eschatology. The second point is the necessity of “the entire set of convictions”. This means that to talk about eschatology, it is necessary to include a comprehensive and coherent presentation of all motifs connected with matters of the last day. Consequently, in this study, the presentation of only some motifs (but not all of them) will not be considered as eschatology, but only as a presentation of some eschatological or apocalyptic motifs in order to reach some purpose, which is different from a presentation of a coherent eschatological concept.

b) The eschatological motifs. By this term, we understand a single idea or motif relating to the end of time⁷. In discussing fragments from the Letters to the Thessalonians, we distinguish the following eschatological motifs: resurrection, dualism, the day of the Lord, the parousia, salvation, judgement, times and seasons. These motifs are integral elements of Pauline eschatology as found in the Letters to the

5 G. Kittel, ζσχατος, in: *TDNT*, vol. II, pp. 697–698.

6 D. E. Aune, Early Christian Eschatology, in: *ABD*, vol. II, p. 594. See: J. G. Klausner, E. Davis, *Eschatology*, EJ vol. 6, Jerusalem 1971, col. 860–880.

7 Choice of the term *eschatological motifs* instead of the term *eschatological concept* results from practical considerations. In our view, the term eschatological motifs will help to provide more clearly the complex nature of eschatology, and show the relationships between eschatological motifs and apocalyptic motifs.

Thessalonians. In our opinion, it is possible to talk about Paul's eschatology only in case when all the motifs are present. The appearance of one or several motifs does not give grounds to conclude that the author intends to present a comprehensive eschatology. Each of the eschatological motifs also contains a number of apocalyptic motifs by which it is closely determined.

c) Apocalyptic and apocalypse. The term apocalyptic is difficult to define⁸. There are several definitions, and discussion concerning the understanding of the term is still an ongoing matter. Definitions of the term can be divided into two groups. The most characteristic element of the first of them is to understand the term as a literary genre, which is used to describe more precisely eschatological events concerning the end of times. In such an approach, the apocalyptic would be a way of expressing thoughts relating to the end of the world. The second trend recognizes apocalyptic as a theological concept. In this case apocalyptic is a part of eschatology⁹. The apocalyptic is an eschatological perspective, which accents the omnipotence of God in relation to human history¹⁰. In this work, we understood the term apocalyptic as a part of eschatology.

The term apocalypse comes from the Greek noun ἀποκάλυψις – *discovery* and from the verb ἀποκαλύπτω – *I discover*¹¹, which in classical literature had no religious significance¹². The term took this meaning

8 A detailed discussion and presentation of a history of interpretation of this term is presented in: R. E. Sturm, Defining the Word “Apocalyptic”. A Problem in Biblical Criticism, in: J. Marcus, M. L. Soards (eds), *Apocalyptic and the New Testament. Essays in Honor of J. L. Martyn*, JSNT Sup 24, Sheffield 1989, pp. 9–48.

9 R. E. Sturm, *Defining*, p. 26.

10 Very often in relation to the writings of St. Paul the term “apocalyptic eschatology” is used, which is semantically close to our understanding of the term “apocalyptic”. See: M. C. De Boer, Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology, in: J. J. Collins, *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism, vol. I*, p. 348; P. O’Callaghan, *The Christological Assimilation of the Apocalypse*, Dublin 2004, pp. 63–102.

11 A. Oepke, ἀποκαλύπτω, in: *TDNT*, vol. III, pp. 563–591; T. Holtz, ἀποκαλύπτω, in: *EDNT*, vol. I, col. 312–317; M. Smith, On the History of ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΩ and ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ, in: D. Hellholm (ed.), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, Tübingen 1983, pp. 9–20.

12 See: P. D. Hanson, *Apocalypses and Apocalypticism*, *ABD*, vol. I, pp. 279–282.

only in Judaic literature and in this sense has been taken up by the New Testament writers. In the New Testament the noun ἀποκάλυψις refers to the following three events¹³:

- revelation of the supernatural mystery of God (Lk 2, 32, Rom 16, 25, Gal 1, 12),
- revelation of charisma or prophecy (1 Cor 14: 6)
- eschatological revelation (Rom 8, 9; 1 Cor 1, 7; 2 Thess 2, 7).

In the context of the Letters to the Thessalonians, it is particularly important to understand the term as ‘an eschatological revelation’. Putting it simply, the term apocalypse can be defined as a revelation of divine mysteries relating to the final things¹⁴. Revelation has an individual character, which means that a mystery is given to one person in order to transfer the message to a particular community or to all people. The diversity and varied mysteries of revelation make it necessary to speak separately about each revelation, and this makes it difficult to point to one form of apocalypse. Klaus Koch lists eight motifs characteristic of apocalyptic¹⁵:

- conviction of the impending end of the world;
- the end of the world seen as a cosmic catastrophe,
- periods and times,
- activity of angels and demons,
- a new salvation,
- the manifestation of God’s Kingdom,
- the agent,
- the test of victory and glory.

Although this specification is not complete, it correctly recognizes the most important motifs of apocalyptic writings. In Jewish literature and in the early Christian period, there were a lot of apocalyptic events, which created an impressive number of writings called the pseudepigraphal apocalypses. With the exception of the Book of

13 J. Stepien, *Theology*, pp. 147–149.

14 J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic*, p. 8.

15 K. Koch, *Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, *SBT* 2/22: 1972, pp. 28–33.

Daniel in the Old Testament and the Apocalypse of John in the New Testament, this trend was functioning very strongly outside the canonical tradition¹⁶. Apocalypses written in different times and in different places, with various apocalyptic and eschatological motifs, show a very rich legacy of ideas concerning the end of times¹⁷.

d) The apocalyptic motifs. In this work, the term “apocalyptic motif” means concepts and expressions used to describe eschatological motifs. Each of the eschatological motifs has a general character and must be described by using several apocalyptic motifs. For example to define the eschatological motif of the parousia, the following apocalyptic images were used: command, the voice of angels, the sound of the trumpet, descent from heaven, etc. To describe all the eschatological motifs, which appear in 1–2 Thess, the author used the following apocalyptic motifs: descent from heaven, the order, the voice of angels, the sound of the trumpet of God, cloud, catch up in the air, surprise, gathering around him, apostasy, the man of lawlessness and destruction, the restrainer, the mystery of lawlessness, equality of living and dead, being with the Lord, destruction, wrath, deception, vigilance and preparedness.

1.1. *Similarities*

The similarities between eschatological and apocalyptic motifs of the intertestamental literature and the Letters to the Thessalonians will be discussed in order to answer the question as to whether in this case we have to deal with certain similarities or with dependency.

16 D. Flusser, *Apocalypse*, *EJ* vol. 3, Jerusalem 1973, col. 179–181.

17 See: J. Bergman, Introductory Remarks on Apocalypticism in Egypt, in: J. G. Griffiths, *Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Era*, in: D. Hellholm (ed.), *Apocalypticism*, pp. 273–293; D. Hellholm (ed.), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, Tübingen 1983, pp. 51–60; G. MacRae, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in Gnosticism*, in: D. Hellholm (ed.), *Apocalypticism*, pp. 317–325; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic. Some Reflections on Method*, in: D. Hellholm (ed.), *Apocalypticism*, pp. 295–316.

The question of similarities between the intertestamental literature, especially the Qumran writings, and the letters of Paul is the subject of debate where extremely different views are presented¹⁸. Depending on how eschatological motifs were used and how they were presented, the eschatological concept changed in each work. Both, conscious and unconscious using or omission of certain motifs, determined whether we are approaching the coherent eschatological concept or only certain eschatological motifs, which in fact do not create a coherent eschatology.

1.1.1. *Similarities of Motifs*

In the Letters to the Thessalonians, the apostle uses 26 different motifs, of which seven are eschatological and the others are apocalyptic¹⁹. The eschatological motifs are resurrection (1 Thess 4, 14), dualism (1 Thess 5, 5), the Parousia (1 Thess 4, 15; 2 Thess 2, 1), the day of the Lord (1 Thess 5, 2; 2 Thess 2, 2), salvation (2 Thess 2, 10), judgement (2 Thess 2, 12), times and seasons (1 Thess 5, 1). The apocalyptic motifs are equality of the living and the dead (1 Thess 4, 15), descent from heaven (1 Thess 4, 16), order (1 Thess 4, 16), the voice of archangel (1 Thess 4, 16), the sound of the trumpet of God (1 Thess 4, 16), catch up in the air (1 Thess 4, 17), clouds (1 Thess 4, 17), being with the Lord (1 Thess 4, 17), surprise (1 Thess 5, 2. 4), the annihilation (1 Thess 5, 3), vigilance and preparedness (1 Thess 5, 6. 8), wrath (1 Thess 5, 9), gathering around Him (2 Thess 2, 1), to be deceived (2 Thess 2, 2. 3. 9. 10. 11), apostasies (2 Thess 2, 3), the man of lawlessness and his destruction (2 Thess 2, 3. 8), the restrainer (2 Thess 2, 6), the mystery of lawlessness (2 Thess 2, 7), activity of Satan (2 Thess 2, 9).

18 See: R. Eisenman, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians*, Shaftesbury 1996; J. Murphy O'Connor, J. H. Charlesworth (eds), *Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York 1990.

19 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 present all the motifs necessary to talk about eschatology. In the letters of the apostle, there are no new eschatological motifs, which are not found in 1 Thess. However, with regard to the apocalyptic motifs, in other letters of Paul there are motifs that are absent in 1–2 Thess.

In the group of 26 eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, there are 8 motifs used in an identical or very similar manner in 1–2 Thess and in the intertestamental literature. These include the following motifs: destruction, wrath, to deceive, the day of the Lord, apostasy, acting of Satan, the mystery of lawlessness, the judgement. Another fifteen motifs are also found in the Letters to Thessalonians, but their use is significantly different from their use in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Qumran writings. They include: dualism, descent from heaven, command, voice of the archangel, God's trumpet, clouds, catch in the air, the resurrection, being with the Lord, the preparation and vigilance, gathering around Him, times and seasons, the parousia, the man of lawlessness and his destruction, salvation. Three eschatological motifs (equality of living and the dead, the restrainer, surprise) do not appear in the intertestamental literature²⁰.

A common feature of all eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, which are similar in 1–2 Thess and in the intertestamental literature, is their close relationship with the negative aspect of the Old Testament's idea of *the day of the Lord*, understood as a Day of Judgement and destruction²¹. In Jewish literature, this motif relates to the children of the darkness or sinners. They are those who are deceived by Belial or Satan, who break God's covenant. All these lead to the anger of God on the Day of Judgement and to destruction. Although, the pseudepigraphal literature used this motif differently, they always used it in reference to people who break the God's law and the covenant²². Similarly, Paul in the Letters to the Thessalonians used this motif. This eschatological motif is used by the apostle always with reference to non-Christians, in order to emphasize their future fate. When the motif refers to Christians, it refers to a reality that does not apply to those who believe in Christ. In relation to non-Christians, the apostle does not develop and does not modify motifs already existing and

20 Out of practical considerations, the subject of our research does not include all the intertestamental literature, but only those parts (apocalypses and other works) which contain numerous eschatological and apocalyptic motifs.

21 J. Stepien, *Teologia*, pp. 149–151.

22 This issue was discussed in section 1.1.2. of Chapter II.

functioning in Jewish eschatology in relation to the term *the day of the Lord*. Paul takes it and uses it in unchanged form or meaning. Therefore, for those reasons there is a correspondence between the terminological and semantic meaning of motifs, which appear in the Letters to the Thessalonians, in the Qumran writings and in the pseudepigraphal apocalypses²³. 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12, focus on Christians, their lives, and faith and current issues that the apostle wants to solve. Some of them came from ignorance and some from non-Christian motifs concerning the fate of the dead. For this reason, modifications, which were made, refer only to those motifs that relate to the current situation of Christians. Motifs, which from Paul's point of view did not refer to Christians, have not been modified.

Half of the eschatological and apocalyptic motifs used by Paul in the Letter to the Thessalonians, also appear in the intertestamental literature, and show the differences and far-reaching modifications in relation to the Qumran writings and the pseudepigraphal literature²⁴.

1.1.2. *Similarity or Dependence?*

Before we proceed to discuss eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, which were significantly modified by Paul, we will devote some attention to the relationship between the Letter to the Thessalonians and the Qumran writings. Before the Qumran writings were discovered and published, the only material in Judaic literature to which the letters of the apostles could be compared, were rabbinical writings²⁵. After the Essenes' writings were discovered a new chapter in the debate on the relationship between the letters of Paul and literature of the Second

23 In the pseudepigraphal literature, an idea of the day of the Lord is connected with more apocalyptic motifs than it is in the Letters to the Thessalonians. Use of some of them in relation to non-Christians shows Paul's conviction concerning the condemnation of those who do not believe in Christ. In this point, views and opinions of Paul and the Old Testament or the intertestamental literature are similar.

24 They will be discussed below.

25 W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, Philadelphia 1980; H. J. Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*, Philadelphia 1961.

Temple period was opened. Comparative analysis led to the discovery of terminological and conceptual similarities of certain elements of Paul's theology and the doctrine of the Essenes. This provoked scholars to further exploration, which could prove the inspiration or even dependence of Paul's theology on the writings of Qumran. In extreme cases, some scholars concluded that Paul was a member of the community in Qumran.²⁶ Also it has been conjectured that he first met the Essenes during his studies in Jerusalem²⁷, and this influenced his religious and ethical asceticism²⁸. Exegetes, who are more moderate, point only to similarity of ideas and theological terminology. Most often, they focus on similarity in terminology, which is most characteristic for Pauline theological issues like justification, God's justice or deeds of Law²⁹. The Letter to the Thessalonians indicates the following similarities with the Qumran writings³⁰:

- strong emphasis put on the end of the world
- belief in being chosen by God
- necessity of sanctification
- contrast between the sons of the light and the sons of the darkness
- contrast between wrath and salvation
- expression *God's church*
- ethical precepts.

Apart from the last two points that do not relate to eschatology, other similarities have been classified above in the group of eschatological and apocalyptic motifs identical or very similar to each other in terms of terminology but differing from one another in semantic terms. They will be discussed in the following section. Before further analysis, we can postulate that talking about similarity between eschatological

26 See: P. Lapede, *Paulus zwischen Damaskus und Qumran*, Gütersloh 1993. Lapede argues that the three-year period between Paul's conversion and the first visit to Jerusalem was not spent in Damascus, but among the Essenes in Qumran.

27 M. Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, London 1991, p. 42.

28 C. J. Roetzel, *Paul. The Man and the Myth*, Columbia 1998, pp. 141–144.

29 See: K. P. Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica and Early Christianity*, London/New York 2002, pp. 1–20.

30 Same, pp. 7–8.

motifs of the Letters to the Thessalonians and the intertestamental literature is justified only in terms of terminology and statements, which have a general nature³¹. In terms of details and specific concepts, such similarities, with few exceptions, do not exist.

Eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, which in terms of terminology and semantics are similar to each other in the Letters to the Thessalonians and the intertestamental literature, do not prove the dependence of Paul's writings on the intertestamental writings. Rather it can be said that similarities of motifs in Jewish literature and early Christian literature are caused by the fact that both groups draw from common sources³². For example, both groups took the idea of *the day of the Lord* from the Old Testament³³. As mentioned before, referring to non-Christians in the Letters to the Thessalonians, Paul used the classic Old Testament concept of *the day of the Lord* accenting motifs of judgement and eternal punishment. This motif Paul does not use for Christians. When Paul used eschatological motifs common in eschatological teaching during the Second Temple period, he makes significant modifications or creates entirely new eschatological motifs, which already had a specifically Christian meaning, such as the motif of the parousia.

1.2. Differences

The vast majority of terms in the eschatological motifs which occur both in the Letters to the Thessalonians and in the intertestamental literature, are similar as terminology, but they differ in terms of

31 E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, London 1977, pp. 543–552.

32 M. Black, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*: in: M. Black (ed.), *The Scrolls and Christianity*, London 1969, pp. 97–106; J. Murphy O'Connor (ed.), *Paul and Qumran. Studies in New Testament Exegesis*, London 1969.

33 The thesis that the intertestamental apocalypses were inspired by the Old Testament is so obvious that it does not require comment. In the Qumran writings it is attested by the Peshers, which are the comments on the biblical writings. In the pseudepigraphal literature a very common pattern is to use well-known biblical heroes to create an eschatological story.

semantics. This issue will be discussed first. Afterwards we will investigate, the eschatological motifs present only in the Epistles to the Thessalonians

1.2.1. *Paul's Changes to Eschatological Motifs Occurring in the Intertestamental Literature.*

The apostle took many eschatological motifs occurring in the Old Testament and the intertestamental literature, but he changed and modified their meaning. The manner in which Paul uses motifs from Jewish eschatology is determined by the purpose he seeks to achieve. This instrumental approach to eschatological and apocalyptic motifs suggests that the intention of the author was to use eschatological motifs to remove doubts and resolve problems associated with the coming of the Lord³⁴. The most obvious (although it may not be the most important) example of this approach to the Jewish eschatological tradition is an apocalyptic picture of the coming of the Lord, outlined in 1 Thess 4, 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”.

This verse is the beginning of an apocalyptic description (1 Thess 4, 16–18), and it contains numerous motifs also found in the intertestamental literature that have been significantly modified by Paul.

a) Angels. As was shown in Chapter III, the teaching concerning angels plays an important role in Jewish eschatology³⁵. The teaching formed an extensive system, focusing not only on the angels as servants of God and messengers between God and humanity, but also on the internal relations among the celestial beings. The Qumran apocalyptic and the pseudepigraphal literature provide information about the origin of angels, their fall, and their function to remain before God. The literature also gives their names, mentions their leaders and

34 See: B. Witherington III, *1&2 Thessalonians. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, Michigan 2006, pp. 16–21. This issue will be discussed in section 2.1. of this chapter.

35 See chapter III, section 2.2.

choirs, and speaks about the language of angels and angelic liturgy³⁶. The world of angels is often portrayed as the place where people saved by God will stay. A characteristic feature of teaching concerning angels in the intertestamental eschatology is the belief in a very active interaction between humans and angels³⁷. This applies not only to the future fate of the redeemed people, but also to the active participation of the heavenly world in events that take place on the earth, in order to show to mortals the other side of the reality. Another characteristic feature of the intertestamental literature of the later period (from about the first century BC) is connected with angelic activities which in the Old Testament were reserved only for God himself. At this point, Paul uses the motif of angels in a different way, which is significantly modified compare to apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple period. A minimalist approach of the apostle to the motif of angels is manifested above all in omission of any considerations relating to their importance and nature, as well as the functions, which they retain in their relationship between heaven and earth. The teaching in the intertestamental literature concerning angels was reduced in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 by Paul to one expression “*voice of the archangel*”. The results of the analysis made in chapter III show that this expression has a metaphorical meaning and points to the open character of order issued by God. In the context of eschatology (and in all of Paul’s theology), we can conclude that teaching concerning angels was not a subject of particular interest on the part of the apostle³⁸. In the eleven passages in the *Corpus Paulinum* in which the apostle used the term *angel*, not even once is the term a matter of primary consideration, but the term is usually part of a comparison³⁹. In Col 2, 18, where the author, with

36 See: A. Y. Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity. The Reception of Enochic Literature*, Cambridge 2005; Ch. Rowland, *The Open Heaven. A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity*, New York 1982, pp. 78–123.

37 Y. Gutmann, E. Davis, Angels and Angelology. Apocrypha, in: EJ, vol. II, Jerusalem 1971, col. 961–966.

38 Angels are no longer presented as intermediaries between heaven and earth, but most often, they accompany Christ at his coming (1 Thess 1, 7).

39 See: Rom 8, 38; 1 Cor 4, 9; 6, 3; 11, 10; 2 Cor 11, 14; Gal 1, 8; 3, 19; 4, 14; Col 2, 18; 1 Tim 3, 16; 5, 21.

clear resentment, says about people “*who delight in false humility and the worship of angels*” may suggest a deliberate intention of the apostle to reduce speculation concerning angels in order to indicate that Christ is the only intermediary between God and man. Compared with the Old Testament, the motif of angels was greatly minimized by Paul in the Letters to the Thessalonians.

b) Trumpet. Another motif occurring in the intertestamental eschatology and used by Paul is the motif of the trumpet. In the Jewish literature the trumpet is used as a signalling tool for both everyday activities (eg. prayer or meetings of the Qumran community), as well as in an eschatological context (for example, it sets the next phase of the eschatological war between the sons of the darkness and the sons of the light). In 1 Thess 4, 16 the apostle uses this motif in a different sense. Like the expression *voice of the archangel*, the expression [*sound*] of *the trumpet of God* is used by Paul as a metaphor and points to the universality of God’s order. In relation to the Old Testament, where the motif of trumpet has a literary sense (even in eschatological context), in 1–2 Thess it has a metaphorical sense.

c) The order. The terms discussed above express a form of order, which will start the parousia. The term *order*, although not found in the intertestamental literature, is always present in the context of fulfilling God’s will⁴⁰. God’s will proclaimed to angels always has the form of order. Similarly the will of God is announced by angels to man. The subject issuing the order to angels always is God. Recipients of an order are angels who either fulfil it, or announce it to people. In the intertestamental literature, angels are performers of God’s orders. It seems that the motif of *order* is used by Paul in a slightly different way. In chapter III we assume that the subject issuing the order is God. The order, which takes the form of the voice of the archangel and the sound of the trumpet, is addressed to Christ and concerns the beginning of the parousia. In relation to the intertestamental literature, Paul minimized the function of angels in the process of completing the order. He also removes angels as recipients of God’s order. The order is in 1 Thess 4, 16 given to Christ. In the Old Testament, God

40 See chapter III, section 2.1.

issues the order. It is directed to angels who perform it or announce it to people. Sometimes the order is directly addressed to people. In 1–2 Thess the order is addressed to Christ.

d) Cloud. Another apocalyptic motif found in 1–2 Thess and the intertestamental literature is *cloud*⁴¹. In the Qumran writings and in the pseudepigraphal literature the motif of cloud is usually a sign of the presence of God or His angels. The cloud does not function as a vehicle between the heaven and the earth. Such a role was attributed to the wind (4Q204 col. 6). In the Testament of Abraham, a cloud is a destination to which Abraham is caught up by angels⁴². In 1 Thess 4, 17 the expression ἐν νεφέλαις is used instrumentally, and it means the vehicle, which moves believers from earth to heaven. Such a significant change in understanding and use of the motif of cloud by Paul results from differences between Paul and Jewish tradition, concerning the fate of the dead and living believers at the end of the time⁴³. In the Old Testament the motif of cloud appears only twice in contexts of ascent to the heaven. In most cases, it is a sign of God's presence and it is used in descriptions of theophanies.

e) Descent from heaven. The fate of the people at the end of time is linked indirectly to another apocalyptic motif, namely the descent of the Lord from heaven⁴⁴. In the intertestamental literature, the motif of descent from heaven usually refers to angels. This represents a significant modification in relation to the Old Testament, where God himself is descending⁴⁵. In the pseudepigraphal apocalypses, there is a significant evolution of this motif. In the early pseudepigrapha (eg. 1 En; 3 OrSib), the motif of descent of God to the earth is sometimes associated with Mount Sinai. This motif disappears completely

41 This motif was discussed in section 2.6 in chapter III.

42 Most modern translations of the Greek text translate ἐν νεφέλαις – *in clouds*. The fourth edition of the Millennium Bible translates the phrase ἐν νεφέλαις – *on clouds*.

43 This issue will be further discussed in this chapter in section 1.3.

44 This apocalyptic motif was discussed in chapter II, section 2.4.

45 The problem of interpretation of the Old Testament angelophany, especially in the Book of Genesis, is the lack of a distinction between JHWH and יהוה יצחק – mal'ak JHWH (Gen 22, 11). See: Ch. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, pp. 94–96.

in the later pseudepigrapha, and it is replaced by descent of angels. In 1 Thess 4, 17 the one who is descending is the Lord himself. He will come to the earth to catch up all believers in the clouds in the air. The purpose of the coming of the Lord is not to judge but to save believers from the wrath of God. God sent Christ, not to judge or to remain on the earth, but to bring Christians to heaven where they will stay with Him. It is significant that Paul presents Christ's acts and His coming to the earth in terms of a special mission⁴⁶. The omission of the juridical aspect of the Lord coming to the earth clearly underscores salvation as a purpose of His coming. This is, in our view, an argument that confirms the supposition of various concepts concerning the final day for Christians and non-Christians. For non-Christians, the last day is *the day of the Lord*. And for Christians, the last day is the day of the parousia. Compared with the use of this motif in the Old Testament, Paul in 1–2 Thess stressed only the redeeming aspect of the motif of the descent the Lord to the earth.

f) Catch up in the air. Another apocalyptic motif presents in the Letters to the Thessalonians but different from the pseudepigraphal apocalypses is the motif of *catch up in the air*. In the pseudepigraphal apocalypses a motif of human transmission from the earth to the heaven, whether awake or asleep, is very often used to provide instructions regarding events of the end of the time⁴⁷. Most often, people who are caught up into the heaven in order to receive certain secrets are figures from the Old Testament, especially patriarchs (TestXII). This literary treatment, which has historical reasons, serves to confer status and authority on the writing, as a writing proclaiming the revealed truth.

The second element (alongside the element of patriarchs) characteristic of the pseudepigraphal literature concerning the motif of *catch up in the air* is a blurring of the boundary between reality and fiction. Usually the context of the ascent to heaven is a dream or vision, although the authors emphasize the full awareness of the protagonists (2 En 1, 1–6). They are picked up by angels on a journey through the afterlife world, where various secrets are revealed to them in order to pass on

46 B. R. Gaventa, *First and Second Thessalonians*, Louisville 1998, p. 72.

47 See chapter III, section 2.6.

the revelation to people, after they return to the earth. Ascent to heaven or travel to the afterlife world has a didactic character. However, there is present also the idea of being caught up into the heaven as a final destination (2 En 67). Enoch at the end of his days did not die but he was taken to the heaven. The action of taking Melchizedek to heaven is an act of protection against danger and does not bear the character of final destination (2 En 71). In comparison to the didactic aspect of travel through the afterlife world, the last two contexts appear occasionally in the pseudepigraphal literature⁴⁸. However, in the context of the motif of *to catch up in the air* presented by the apostle in the Letters to the Thessalonians, these two motifs take on a special significance. Paul presents the motif of *catch up in the air* as the last action of the Lord toward believers on this earth. The purpose of Christ's coming to the earth in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 is to catch up in the air all believers in order that they may always be present with the Lord. This goal seems to be the main motive for the coming of Christ, who by the will of God will free all Christians from the wrath of God. This apocalyptic image contains an element of violence (which is also suggested by use of a verb) and points to the definitive nature of that action. According to 1 Thess 4, 13–18 Christians will be taken to a place that is prepared for the redeemed, that is for those who are not subject to God's wrath. In this place, their situation will not change because they will always be present with the Lord. In the Old Testament the motif of the catching up of believers (in a collective sense) into heaven to meet God does not occur in the way presented in 1–2 Thess.

g) To be with the Lord. The common expectation of believers in God is the hope of staying with Him forever⁴⁹. This view is also

48 Note that the idea of travelling across the afterlife in the pseudepigraphal literature always refers only to individual cases. There is no an idea of a collective "catching up into the heaven". This confirms our view that this motif in the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period Judaism has a didactic character (with few exceptions). In 1 Thess 4, 16–18 the motif of *catch up in the air* refers to all Christians, both living and dead.

49 On the interpretation of this passage by early Christian writers, see: P. Gorday (ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, vol. IX, Downers Grove 2000, pp. 89–91.

found in 1 Thess 4, 17. This passage says that all Christians, both living and deceased, belong to the Lord. As a result, all believers will live in the presence of the Lord, who will raise them from the dead and save them from the wrath of God. The apostle does not specify a place of living together and it cannot be inferred from the context of the entire passage. The New Testament tradition points to heaven as a place where those who were saved will stay in the presence of God. In 1 Thess 4, 13–18 Paul speaks only of Christians being together with the Lord.

Concerning the place where those who were saved are present before God, the intertestamental literature does not present a single image⁵⁰. We can find many passages presenting paradise in terms of a prosperous earthly life, free from evil and disasters but without the presence of God. The exception is a passage from the Book of Jubilees, which refers to the eternal presence of God in the renewed world (Jub 1, 26–28). This is not a direct presence, but through the Temple of God⁵¹. Another idea, which appears in the intertestamental literature, is that those who were saved are in heaven with the angels of God. For the community there exists no other option of living after death. In respect to single persons, there are the intertestamental apocalyptic concepts that speak of human presence before God Himself (1 En 67). However, in relation to concepts present in Jewish literature the apostle makes two important changes in 1 Thess 4, 17. The first is a lack of any explicit reference to the location of saved Christians⁵². The second concerns the problem as to who Christians will be present with. In the pseudepigraphal literature, this refers to angels, while in the Letters to the Thessalonians there is Christ himself.

h) Vigilance and preparedness. Another apocalyptic motif common to the intertestamental literature and the Letters to the

50 This apocalyptic motif was discussed in chapter III, section 2.7.

51 This means that the presence of God with those who were saved will be the same as the presence of God with the Jewish people on the earth.

52 Although the Letter to the Thessalonians did not directly point to heaven as the place where Christians will be presented (it is suggested by context of 1 Thess 1, 10; 4, 16; 2 Thess 1, 7) it can be supposed, based on the later writings of the apostle (2 Cor 5, 1–2; Phil 3, 20; Col 1, 5).

Thessalonians is the need of vigilance and preparation for the coming of the end of time⁵³. Although these beliefs are common, their understanding and motivation are different. In the literature of the Second Temple period vigilance and preparation for the end of time is associated with strict acceptance and observing of the Law and the rules of the community. The best indicator of preparation is the degree of faithfulness and observance of the Law. Observance of the Law and preservation of the covenant is the best and the only way to achieve salvation. The way to salvation is going through obedience to the Law, the keeping of which is the real test of faith in God. Observing the Law is the last criterion of faith in God and the best way to remain true to God⁵⁴.

Completely different sources and motives form the base for the Pauline concept of being prepared and vigilant. The basis of the whole conception of the apostle is that Christians belong to Christ. Paul calls them *the sons of the light* and *the sons of the day*. They became the sons of the light by accepting “a love of truth”, which is Christ himself. Christians ought to be in a state of constant readiness because of their new dignity. This ability applies to any behaviour associated with faith and love – virtues that characterize Christians. They should also be watchful because of hope, which they put in Christ. Hope concerns the coming of the Lord, who will free them from the wrath of God on the day of judgement. In order to highlight a diametrical difference between Christians and non-Christians, the apostle uses a motif of preparation and vigilance⁵⁵. Christians rooted in Christ, guided by principles of faith, love and hope in their life, are destined for salvation at the last day. This is different for non-Christians who reject Christ. Since they lack faith, love and hope, they put their whole trust only in the slogans of this world. The consequence of this attitude is the wrath of God, which is understood as a condemnation on the day of judgement⁵⁶. In the Old Testament, the requirement of

53 This apocalyptic motif was discussed in chapter II, section 1.

54 See: R. Rubinkiewicz (ed.), *Apokryfy*, p. 261.

55 See: P. Gorday, *Ancient*, pp. 93–94.

56 See: F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, pp. 109–110.

vigilance and preparedness comes from belonging to a chosen people, and in practice requires being faithful to the covenant with God. In this sense, it differs from the concept presented in the 1–2 Thess.

i) The times and seasons. An eschatological motif indirectly linked to the motif of preparation and vigilance is the motif which in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 Paul calls *the times and seasons*⁵⁷. The question about an exact date of the end of the world was and is present in the human mind because it is associated with the human need for knowledge and security. It seems that the ancient prophets were more restrained in giving a precise answer to this question than some modern prophets are. Therefore, in the pseudepigraphal apocalypses there are no texts accurately determining the date of the end of the world. This does not mean that they did not attempt to determine the end of the world. Occasionally they tried in a symbolic and metaphorical way to point to the end of the old world and to the beginning of the new world (1 En 91, 12–17; 93, 1–10). However, a dominant trend was to point to specific events preceding the coming of the final day⁵⁸. In many the pseudepigraphal apocalypses, frequently appear motifs of natural and cosmic disasters, supernatural phenomena, intensity of lawlessness, violence and war, and above all increasing godlessness. All these events usually relate to a time in the distant future. Although the authors are completely convinced that these events will occur, without giving a specific date, they place them in an undefined future. The Qumran writings completely lacks speculation concerning an exact determination of the coming of the final day. However, there is a very strong conviction that the coming of the day will be preceded by an eschatological war between *the sons of the light* and *the sons of the darkness*. Although it is not marked explicitly, it seems that this war refers to the not too distant future. In the writings of Qumran, some passages suggest that members of the community were convinced that they were living in the end of times⁵⁹. The apostle Paul, like the authors of the pseudepigrapha, does not

57 The eschatological motif *the times and seasons* was discussed in chapter III, section 1.1.1.

58 See: J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic*, pp. 49–52.

59 See: chapter II, section 1.1.1.

suggest a date for the final day, but only shows signs that will precede the coming of that day and signs that will occur during that day (2 Thess 2, 3–12). In this respect, the views of the apostle did not differ from the intertestamental tradition. The difference relates to the nearness of the coming of the parousia. Many exegetes are convinced that Paul expected a sudden coming of the Lord⁶⁰. 1 Thess 4, 17 suggests that the apostle expected the coming of the parousia during his lifetime. In this sense, the concept presented in 1–2 Thess differs from the concept of the Old Testament, which has signs of the end times placed in an undefined future.

j) The Lord's coming (the parousia). A conviction of the coming of the Lord at the end of times is common to the Letters to the Thessalonians and the intertestamental literature⁶¹. There, however, the similarities end. In the pseudepigraphal literature, the coming of God to the earth in the end times is connected with ideas of the judgment and punishment. The day of the Lord is a day of well-deserved reward for the innocent and a day of just punishment for the guilty. From the standpoint of the righteous, the Lord's coming will be the day of liberation from violence, oppression and persecution. This will be the day of retribution for the wicked⁶², the day of the final justice of God, which will introduce the new world. Sometimes that new world is presented in terms of an earthly kingdom and sometimes in terms of a heavenly kingdom.

A completely different picture of the coming of the Lord is found in the Letters to the Thessalonians. The first essential and completely natural difference, in relation to the intertestamental literature, is to proclaim the coming of the Lord⁶³, which will be accomplished according the plan of God. This means that the decision to start the parousia remains in God's hands. A purpose of the coming of the

60 See: J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Michigan 1998, pp. 310–313; M. Shires, *The Eschatology of Paul. In the Light of Modern Scholarship*, Philadelphia 1952, pp. 63–68; J. Stepien, *Teologia*, pp. 157–163.

61 This eschatological motif was discussed in chapter III, section 3.2.

62 Concerning the concept of the day of the Lord, the intertestamental literature and the Old Testament are not different.

63 See: G. D. Fee, *Pauline Christology*, p. 51.

Lord is not to judge but to protect Christians from the wrath of God. It is indicated by the description of the coming and the action of the Lord, by the catching up of Christians into the air (1 Thess 4, 16–17), and by a strong emphasis put on Christians being destined to salvation and not to wrath (1 Thess 5, 9; 2 Thess 2, 13). Throughout the passage of 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 there are only two terms referring to the judgement. The first one ὄλεθρος – *annihilation* is used in an affirmative way in relation to unbelievers and indicates the consequences of putting hope in earthly peace and security. The second term ὀργή – *anger* is used in a negative way in relation to Christians to point to a reality that does not affect them. In 2 Thess 2, 1–12 there are also only two terms related to the motif of judgement. The first one ἀναίρω – *I strike, I kill* in affirmative sense is used in relation to the man of lawlessness. Second term κρίνω – *I judge* is used in the affirmative sense only in relation to non-Christians. In neither of the two parts, do we find Christ in the role of a judge, either in direct or indirect way. It seems that the author views both destruction of the man of lawlessness and the catching up Christians in the sky as part of the parousia and not as the end of the event. The lack of the juridical aspect of the parousia and lack of information about Christ staying on the earth prove that the mission of Christ has a preparatory nature⁶⁴.

Special attention should be given to the terminology used by the apostle, referring to the coming of the Lord. The two terms ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου and ἡ παρουσία are used in an eschatological context. Almost always (except 2 Thess 2, 9), where the apostle is speaking to Christians about matters that relate to the coming of the Lord, he uses the Hellenistic term ἡ παρουσία. This term, which contains the idea of a joyful meeting with an expected visitor, occurs in 1 Thess 4,

64 In the centre of 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 are Christians. The purpose of the letter addressed to them is to strength their faith and hope of salvation understood as a release from the wrath of God on the day of judgement. The one who will do that is a Christ. He will save belonging to Him. However, in 1 Thess the apostle provides few fragmentary information concerning non-Christians. It is certain that the saving action of Christ does not apply to them. As a result, an action, which at the end of time will apply to them, is condemnation. See: J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology*, pp. 294–298.

16–17 in the context of apocalyptic events. However, the events do not have their typical of the intertestamental literature meaning and in most cases have been reduced to that of apocalyptic symbols⁶⁵. It is significant that all characteristic motifs associated with judgement, annihilation, punishment, etc. have been omitted when the concept of ἡ παρουσία is used. The second term ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου occurs in the Epistles to the Thessalonians only in statements relating to non-Christians. The terminology used in the context of this phrase applies to the events of judgement, punishment and condemnation. In a positive sense, it always refers to those who reject Christ. When these terms are associated with wrath and condemnation, they refer to Christians only in the negative sense, to indicate the reality, which does not apply to believers. These statements suggest that semantically ἡ παρουσία and ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου are not identical⁶⁶. In the Letters to the Thessalonians, the apostle refers to non-Christians the term ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου without any modifications⁶⁷. In reference to Christians the apostle not only uses the new term ἡ παρουσία, but also makes a substantial modification to events surrounding the coming of the Lord. In contrast to the Old Testament eschatology, Paul in 1–2 Thess emphasizes the saving nature of Christ’s coming by using in relation to Christians the term *parousia*. In reference to non-Christians, the apostle used the typical Old Testament term *the day of the Lord*. This deliberate distinction shows the different fate of believers and unbelievers at the end times. In this regard, 1–2 Thess and the Old Testament are compatible. However, they differ in terms of the understanding salvation they express.

k) A meeting/gathering around Him. This expression applies to Christians who will gather around Christ. The expression begins the passage 2 Thess 2, 1–12, and together with the phrase “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” is a direct reference to the topic discussed in 1 Thess 4, 13–18. By this expression, the apostle defines two actions, which will occur at the *parousia*: “caught up in the clouds to meet

65 This creates for scholars many problems of interpretation. See: chapter III, section 2.

66 See: chapter III, section 3.2.

67 See: chapter IV, section 1.1.1.

the Lord” and “we will be with the Lord forever”⁶⁸. In the light of 2 Thess 2, 1 all events connected with the coming of the Lord, are focused on one goal, which is to gather all Christians around Him. All what will be done at the parousia and what is presented in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 lead to the gathering of all Christians (living and dead) around Christ. According to Paul, the assembly of believers around the Lord is not merely a ceremonial greeting of coming guests (2 Thess 1, 10). Rather the motif includes an aspect of gathering “a property” around “the owner”. This expression indicates that Christians belong to Christ, who is their Lord and saviour. In the Old Testament, the motif of meeting around the Lord is used in the speeches of prophets concerning messianic and eschatological times (Is 52, 12; 2 Macc 2, 18)⁶⁹. This motif does not appear in the intertestamental literature. Although, there are ideas of the saved being with angels in heaven and the presence of individuals before God and the presence of God in the earthly paradise, they do not emphasize the aspect of gathering around God. They only indicate a place of existence after death. Paul, using this motif (like other authors of the New Testament writings), does not indicate the place of existence for the saved, but he emphasizes the idea of belonging to Christ. Due to the accenting in the Old Testament of the motif of earthly salvation, it is God who at the end of time will be present forever in the midst of a renewed Israel, rather than the saved who will dwell in the presence of God or his angels in heaven. Staying with the renewed people of God is presented in terms of an earthly relationship. The presence of the saved together with Christ in the heaven in 1–2 Thess is presented in transcendent terms.

l) Salvation. Another eschatological motif, which occurs in the 1–2 Thess, as well as in apocalyptic literature, is salvation. As already mentioned, salvation in the intertestamental literature was understood in two ways: earthly salvation, i.e., deliverance from enemies, misery and violence, and supernatural salvation, i.e. reaching heaven. To achieve salvation in the earthly sense means the annihilation of the enemies of the nation and God. It will take place through God’s judgement at

68 These eschatological motifs were discussed in chapter III, section 2.6 and 2.7.

69 See: B. Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 213.

the end of time. Salvation in the supernatural sense is the presence of the faithful in heaven with the angels. The most important moment in achieving salvation in a supernatural sense is the judgement of God, which is an evaluation of human conduct. Salvation means to be recognised by God as righteous. The most frequently cited criteria of justice are observing the Law and all rules of the covenant (the Qumran writings) or respect for rights and social justice (the pseudepigraphal apocalypses)⁷⁰. Salvation, as well as condemnation, will be decided by God's judgement on the last day, and it will be irrevocable.

While the apostle's view concerning condemnation is no different from current approaches in the intertestamental literature, Paul presents salvation in a completely different way. First, Paul understands salvation in the supernatural sense (1 Thess 4, 17). The picture of the parousia (which refers only to Christians) created by the apostle, totally ignores the issues of God's wrath and condemnation. This allows us to claim on the basis of 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12, that Paul understood salvation as the avoidance of the wrath and condemnation of God on the Day of Judgement⁷¹. Standard interpretations of the material contained in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12 emphasize that:

- 1 Thess 4, 13–18 deals with the resurrection and the equality of the living and the dead in the parousia

70 See: chapter II, section 1.1.1.

71 In the Letters to the Thessalonians, there is only one passage where the apostle in a positive sense links with Christians the motif of judgement. In 2 Thess 1, 5 the apostle says that the persecution which the community is suffering is the sign of God's judgement. During the judgement Christians will be regarded as worthy of the Kingdom of God, but non-Christians who persecute Christians will be condemned and receive deserved punishment. Although passages we discussed do not relate directly the motif of judgement to Christians, it does not mean that the judgement does not affect them. While the passage 1 Thess 5, 9 contains only indirect reference to the judgement, 2 Thess 1, 5 leaves no doubt that the motif of the judgement also applies to Christians. For Christians the day of judgement will be the day of salvation and not the day of the wrath of God. For non-Christians the day of judgement will be a time of God's wrath and condemnation.

- 1 Thess 5, 1–11 concerns the sudden, unexpected and imminent coming of the Lord
- 2 Thess 2, 1–12 is an argument offered by the apostle to show that the parousia had not yet occurred.

In most cases, the passages give various reasons why the apostle takes up the topic. Although all of these opinions correspond to the literary content of the text, they are largely the results of the methodology used⁷², and in our opinion, they do not satisfactorily answer the question of a common point for all three fragments. Analysis made in this work indicates that there is such a common denominator. It is the *fear of the wrath of God*. Doubts of living Christians concerning the fate of dead members of the community (1 Thess 4, 13–18) probably resulted from a Hellenistic uncertainty over the fate of the dead. This may have contributed to the erroneous belief that the dead Christians will be subject to God's wrath. Answering this doubt, the apostle refers to the resurrection of dead Christians and to the taking up of all believers in the air.

The usual interpretation of 1 Thess 5, 1–11 points to an instruction of the apostle concerning a sudden and unexpected coming of the Lord. As was shown earlier, this interpretation does not correspond to the content of the passage. While in the light of 1 Thess 5, 1–4 the idea of sudden coming of the Lord is true in reference to non-Christians, it is not true in reference to Christians⁷³. It seems that the basis for the instruction given by the apostle was a doubt by Christians about whether they will be prepared for the day of the Lord. It could be related to a belief that only prepared Christians will be caught up in the air by Christ and avoid the wrath of God. The central element of the answer, given by the apostle, seems to be 1 Thess 5, 9.

The problem which the apostle had to face in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 was the false doctrine that the parousia had already come. Those who taught this doctrine were using Pauline authority. Some Christians in

72 Usually, each passage is treated as a separate entity concerning a specific problem.

73 This is clear when we read 1 Thess 5, 2–4 without verse 3: “*for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief*”.

Thessalonica were concerned at least about this teaching, and some of them believed it. The teaching concerned not only the coming of the Lord, but also believers gathered together with the Lord, which is clearly indicated by 2 Thess 2, 1. The result of the false claim was the possibility of the deception and intimidation of believers (2 Thess 2, 2). It seems clear that the deception relates to the motif of the coming of the Lord and to the motif of the gathering together with Him. Intimidation, on the other hand, probably concerns the fear that believers in Thessalonica will continue to be subject to God's wrath. Since Christ has come, and they are not united with Him (in the sense that they were not caught up by Him in the air), it means that there is no salvation for them in Christ, and if so, they are still subject of God's wrath just like all unbelievers. The apostle's twofold response is that the Lord's day had not yet come (2 Thess 2, 3–9), and that the preaching of the false thesis is an example of the mystery of iniquity, which is at work in order to deceive those who do not place their trust in Christ. In 2 Thess 2, 15 Paul refers to his first letter and to orally transmitted tradition, confirming the validity and accuracy of the instruction proclaimed in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11.

Compared to the Old Testament, resurrection in 1–2 Thess has a transcendent character and is focused on the release of believers from the wrath of God (condemnation).

m) The man of lawlessness. Proportionally, the apostle devotes the most space in his argument that the day of the Lord had not yet come, to the man of lawlessness (2 Thess 2, 3–4. 8–10)⁷⁴. Although the term appears only in the Qumran writings, it has also its counterparts in the pseudepigraphal apocalypses. In the intertestamental literature, we often find historical or mythical figures, who because of their hostility toward God or His people, became examples of idolatry and opposition to the will of God. In the early pseudepigrapha, they were called Belial, devil, Satan or Antichrist. In the later pseudepigrapha, the term *the man of lawlessness* appears and its meaning is strongly influenced by 2 Thess 2. In the Qumran writings, the term *the man of lawlessness* is

74 This apocalyptic motif was discussed in chapter II, section 2.1.

only one of many synonyms defining the sons of the darkness⁷⁵. In the Letters to the Thessalonians the meaning of the term is different. The man of lawlessness is someone different from the devil, because he is a tool of Satan, which in the period appointed to him by God, is acting against the people. The aim of his action is to deceive people in order that they do not believe in Christ. Therefore, he will work many wonders and signs and finally he will declare himself god. To achieve this aim he will be endowed with power and strength, which, however, do not exceed the power of Christ. The man of lawlessness will be the Antichrist. His appearance and his defeat are precisely decided. He appears in the world at the time, which will be decided by God, and his action will be finished at the time of the coming of Christ. It seems that in the thought of Paul, the man of lawlessness will be the final and the greatest test for humanity. All who do not believe in Christ will be deceived by his actions. His action is necessary in order to identify those who do not believe in Christ.

The issue of the destruction of the man of lawlessness presented in 2 Thess 2 differs significantly from concepts presented in the inter-testamental literature. In the Qumran writings and in the pseudepigraphal apocalypses, defeat of evil forces is associated with a long struggle, which often takes the form of eschatological war. Heavenly forces are often involved in this war, and the victory of the good is possible only because of divine intervention. Defeat of the forces of evil is associated with long struggle and suffering⁷⁶. In 2 Thess 2, 8 the concept of the destruction of the man of lawlessness is presented differently. The man of lawlessness will be defeated and annihilated by Christ's coming. The majesty and power of Christ's coming will be enough to defeat the Antichrist without great effort or struggle⁷⁷. This

75 It does not have any specific connotation that would enable it to be compared with the figure of the man of lawlessness in the letters of Saint Paul. The figure of the man of lawlessness was discussed in section 2.1 of chapter II.

76 Overcoming of evil is a combination of human struggle and heavenly aid. In 2 Thess 2, 8 overcoming of evil is the sole act of Christ.

77 It remains unresolved whether defeat of the man of lawlessness, who is a tool of Satan, is equal to defeat of the devil. This issue, however, goes beyond the text of these fragments.

way of presenting the defeat of the enemy shows the omnipotence and power of Christ's coming.

Paul suppose that the fear of the wrath of God is a source of problems that occurred in Thessalonica (the apostle mentions this in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12). The apostle in order to show the inaccuracy of the thesis that the parousia had already come, used as evidence the figure of the man of lawlessness. Some exegetes consider this evidence, together with the motif of apostasy, as a condition that must necessarily precede the coming of the parousia⁷⁸. In this sense, these two motifs would be a temporary succession of events concerning the end of the world. Consequently, it leads to opposing the teaching contained in 2 Thess 2, 3 to the teaching contained in 1 Thess 5, 2. These arguments are the logical conclusions arising from analysis of the text, but they assume that these two passages contain the complete eschatological concept. It seems to us that this is not true in the case of the passage 2 Thess 2, 1–12 because it does not contain a complete eschatology, but only certain eschatological motifs⁷⁹. In many cases, the use of these motifs differs from the use of the motifs found in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11. Most probably, this is due to the purpose for which the author has used the motifs. In 2 Thess 2, 1–12, Paul uses the motif of the man of lawlessness as an argument to prove that the parousia had not yet come.

In the Old Testament, all manner of breaking the law was recognized as lawlessness, and people who do so are described as wicked ones. The concept of the man of lawlessness in 1–2 Thess goes far beyond the Old Testament understanding of the terms *godless* or *wicked*.

n) Dualism. The final eschatological motif common to the intertestamental literature and the Letters to the Thessalonians is *dualism*. Although this motif is the last one presented in this group, it seems to be most important for a proper understanding of these passages. In

78 See: Ch. H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith*, p. 135. In our view, these two eschatological motifs were used as arguments in proving the thesis, and not as a part of the plan of coming of the parousia, whereby the Thessalonians will be able to recognize this day.

79 Proof of this claim will be offered in this chapter in section 2.1.

our opinion, it is the key to understanding correctly the intention of the apostle.

Dualism, which is a division into two opposing attitudes or natures, was well known in Greek and Jewish literature⁸⁰. In Greek literature there is a metaphysical dualism opposing the soul to the human body. This type of dualism does not appear in books of the Old Testament until the Babylonian exile. Dominant in the Old Testament usage is cosmological dualism that divides the world into two opposing forces: good (God) and evil (Satan). In the pseudepigraphal literature, we find two types of dualism – depending on the time and place of origin of the writings. In the Qumran writings although there is a motif of ethical dualism, cosmological dualism dominates especially in the writings from a late period. It divided the world into two groups: the sons of the light and the sons of the darkness⁸¹. Despite the fact that everything that exists comes from God, only those who preserve the Law and faithfully serve God are good. All those who break the Law and are disobedient to God are evil and belong to Belial. This applies to both humans and angels. In the opinion of members of the sect, only those who belong to the community are the sons of the light. Those who remain outside the sect are servants of Belial. The most important task of the sons of the light is obedience to the Law and respect for the Community Rules. The second important task is the fight against the sons of the darkness, which in the end times will take the form of eschatological war. In the view of the Essenes, only members of the community can be saved. The dualism of the Essenes is characterized by a high degree of exclusivity and radicalism, which is caused by a legalistic concept of the law. This means that the most important factor, which determines one's possibility of salvation, is obeying the Law. This statement is important in order to understand the difference between the dualism found among the Essenes and the dualism of the Letters to the Thessalonians.

80 J. Duhaime, *Dualistic Reworking*, pp. 33–35.

81 J. J. Enz, Origin of the Dualism Expressed by “Sons of Light” and “Sons of Darkness”, *BibR* 21: 1976, pp. 15–18.

Since the discovery and publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, there has been an ongoing discussion on the relationship between the Qumran writings and the New Testament. It recognizes more or less clear links between these writings and concepts occurring in them. Discussions concern possible links or influence of the Essenes on the persons and works of John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul⁸². In reference to the apostle, the most frequently stressed similarities are ideas of justice, mystery and dualism⁸³. The dualism of the Essenes differs significantly from the dualism of contemporary Judaism⁸⁴, but has a far-reaching convergence with the dualism contained in the Letters to the Thessalonians⁸⁵. Similar to the Qumran writings, the Letter to the Thessalonians clearly and sharply divides people into two opposing groups: those who believe in Christ and the others, who do not believe in Him. This is reflected not only in a very different presentation of the future fate of the two groups, but also in the eschatological terminology referring to them⁸⁶. The only issue of concern to the apostle is Christians. Even when he is talking about non-Christian, usually he does so in a negative context or in comparison with Christians. A clear example of this is the motif of resurrection, which in 1 Thess 4, 14

82 See: M. Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Myth*, New York 1984; M. Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, London 1961; R. Eisenman, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians*, Shaftesbury 1996; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*, Michigan 2000; G. Martínez (ed.), *Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Biblical Tradition*, Lueven 2003; J. Murphy O'Connor, J. H. Charlesworth (eds), *Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York 1990; H. Stegemann, *Esseńczycy z Qumran, Jan Chrzciciel i Jezus* [The Essenes from Qumran, John the Baptist and Jesus], Cracow 2002; B. E. Thiering, *The Qumran Origins of the Christian Church*, Sydney 1983.

83 J. D. G. Dunn, *Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 105–127.

84 D. Dimant, Dualism at Qumran. New Perspectives, in: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Caves of Enlightenment*, North Richland Hills 1998, pp. 55–73.

85 See: J. Duhaime, *Dualism*, in: *EDSS*, vol. I, pp. 215–220.

86 For example, in reference to Christians the apostle uses the term *parousia*, while in reference to non-Christians he uses the term “day of the Lord”. Using different terms and clearly presenting the motif of dualism suggests that the apostle consciously made the distinction in order to indicate a different meaning of the final day for each group.

refers only to Christians. Another example pointing to radicalism and exclusiveness of Pauline dualism is the ideas of salvation and damnation. In the Letters to the Thessalonians, salvation of Christians and condemnation of non-Christians appears to be an obvious reality for the apostle. The condemnation of non-Christians is a result of rejecting Christ, and the salvation of Christians is a result of faithfulness to Him. Just as in the Qumran writings, Paul encourages Christians to be watchful, and warns them against the deceptive action of “the mystery of iniquity”. Paul strongly emphasized an expectation of the coming of the Lord, which appears to correspond to the Essenes who believe that they live in the end of times. Do the similarities mentioned above prove that the dualism of Paul depends on writing of the Essences, or are the similarities characteristic of new groups which are forming their own identity and which are opposing a socio-religious life?

It seems that there is a fundamental difference between the dualism of the Essenes and Pauline dualism presented in the Letters to the Thessalonians. It concerns the basic criterion for determining membership to one of the groups. In the case of the Essenes it is an attitude towards the Law and adherence to the Community Rules, but in case of the Letter to the Thessalonians it is faith in Christ.

In the Old Testament dualism has a cosmological and nationalistic character (God and good versus evil and Satan). However, the dualism presented in 1–2 Thess has Christological and soteriological character, because a criterion for division is faith in Christ and it is associated with the possibility of salvation.

o) Resurrection of body. Another motif taken over from the Old Testament and modified by Paul is the resurrection of the body⁸⁷. The Essenes perhaps held this concept. However, it did not constitute a basis for their eschatological thought. In the pseudepigraphal apocalypses, the idea of resurrection of the body is almost unknown until times of the New Testament⁸⁸. The Letters to the Thessalonians are

87 This eschatological motif was discussed in chapter III, section 2.5.

88 See: W. Rakocy, *Obraz i funkcja faryzeuszy w dziele Łukasowym (Lk-Dz)* [The Image and Function of Pharisees in Writings of Luke (Lk-Ac)], Lublin 2000, pp. 151–154.

the first Christian documents, which not only take and modify the Old Testament idea of resurrection of the body, but also make it one of the major eschatological motifs of Christian eschatological belief. The resurrection of the dead is for the apostle an obvious fact. It derives directly from the resurrection of Christ, which ensures that God through Him will raise from the dead all believers in Christ (1 Thess 4, 14)⁸⁹. This passage points to the resurrection as an act of God, accomplished in Christ and through Him. It seems that a condition necessary to the resurrection is faith⁹⁰. The Apostle speaks only about those who have fallen asleep in Christ. The problem of resurrection of non-Christian is omitted in 1 Thess 4, 13–18. This does not mean that non-Christians will not rise again. The only thing that can be said with certainty is that the issue of resurrection of non-Christians is not directly presented in the Letters to the Thessalonians⁹¹. About the resurrection of Christians, based on 1 Thess 4, 13–18, it can be said that it will take place at the time of Christ's coming and it will be the first of the acts that will happen during the parousia. It seems that in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 the motif of resurrection is not an object of reflection, but it is used as an argument proving equality of the living and dead members of the community at the time of Christ coming. The apostle handles the motif of the resurrection instrumentally, rather than subjectively. This should explain an absence of other motifs necessary for a comprehensive treatment of the motif of resurrection. The apostle does not present a transformation of the bodies of living Christians, nor specify whether the dead first will rise to earthly life, and then their bodies will be transformed, or their bodies will be directly transformed⁹². This suggests that the apostle uses various apocalyptic motifs only as far as it was necessary to achieve the intended purpose.

89 It seems that the cause of teaching contained in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 was not the issue of lack of faith in resurrection of the dead, but a fear that the Thessalonians could not avoid the wrath of God. The problem of rejecting a possibility of resurrection of the body is the issue of 1 Cor 15.

90 J. Stepien, *Teologia*, pp. 207–213.

91 B. Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 142.

92 These apocalyptic motifs defining the eschatological motif of resurrection are the subject of apostolic teaching in 1 Cor 15, 35–53 and Phil 3, 21.

It was not the intention of Paul to present all details relating to each of the eschatological motifs⁹³.

Although there is no the motif of resurrection in the intertestamental literature, it occurs with certainty at least in two passages of the Old Testament (Dan 12, 1–2; 2 Macc 7, 9–14). The main difference between the Old Testament and 1–2 Thess in using the motif of resurrection is the fact that Paul connects this motif with the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and places it in the centre of his eschatological thought.

1.2.2. *Original Pauline Eschatological Motifs*

After this presentation of identical and/or similar motifs that are in some way modified by Paul, we will now discuss motifs which are contained in the Letters to the Thessalonians but are absent in the intertestamental literature. Analyses carried out in chapters II and III allowed us to identify a group of three eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, which appear in the Letters to the Thessalonians.

a) Equality between the living and the dead. This apocalyptic motif is quite a new issue introduced into the deliberations concerning the end of time⁹⁴. It should be noted that this problem was born in the minds of the Thessalonians because of doubts and fears about the fate of the dead. Since the apostle therefore was aware of this subject and sought to respond to this problem, he used the motif of equality between the living and the dead as one apocalyptic motif describing the eschatological motif of resurrection. It seems highly probable that, concerning the problem of the fate of the dead, the Thessalonians sharing the general views of that time were convinced that the fate of the dead would be worse than the fate of the living. Their anxiety about the fate of the dead was connected with the parousia. This motif goes far beyond a joyous welcome of the coming Lord. Considering that the apostle presented the coming of the Lord instrumentally, it can be assumed that the doubts of the Thessalonians refer

93 The fact that Paul in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 used all eschatological motifs does not require the use of all apocalyptic motifs in order to characterize them.

94 This eschatological motif was discussed in chapter III, section 3.

to the problem as to whether dead Christians will escape the wrath of God or not. Paul's reply is affirmative: the dead Christians will be raised from the dead and together with living Christian will be caught up into the air where they will meet the Lord⁹⁵. In 1 Thess 4, 13–18 the apostle teaches that all believers in Christ will be saved (in the sense of being free from the wrath of God). It means that both the dead and the living Christians will be saved from the wrath of God (1 Thess 5, 9–10). According to Paul, a real obstacle to reaching salvation is not death but only a lack of faith in Christ⁹⁶. This approach to the fate of the dead in the context of prevalent pagan ideas is a true revolution in eschatological thinking.

b) The motif of surprise. A motif of surprise at the coming of the final day is absent in the intertestamental literature⁹⁷. This follows from a concept of the history of the world accepted by the authors. Everything that exists is under the control of God, who sets an end to all things. One's relationship with God determines the fate of a man. Anyone who obeys the Law of God will be saved, and anyone who rejects God's law will be damned. In either case, the fate of a man goes to a particular aim, and this is determined by his choices and attitude. In this concept, there is no room for surprise, because surprise occurs only when a man meets something he never expected or when he receives something that he did not expect. In the intertestamental literature, those who observe the Law obtain salvation, which they seek for and expect. From the perspective of the authors of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Qumran writings, those who do not obey the Law can only expect condemnation because of their conduct.

Paul's motif of surprise is characterized by fact that he uses it in connection with the motif of dualism and he refers it to only one

95 This helps explain why Paul speaks only of resurrection of those who died in the Lord.

96 It is indicated by 1 Thess 4, 14 where the motif of resurrection refers to those who have died in Christ. The fact that a lack of faith in Christ is presented in 2 Thess 2, 10 as an obstacle, is proved by the statement of the apostle that non-Christians will be condemned, because they do not accept the truth of love.

97 See chapter III, section 1.

group of people. In the Letters to the Thessalonians, the motif of surprise does not apply to Christians. According to the apostle, Christians will not be surprised by coming of the Lord. Whether they are alive or dead, they will not be surprised, because the living Christians are prepared and the dead Christians have fallen asleep in the Lord, and this gives them a “guarantee” that they will be gathered around Him. The motif of surprise in 1–2 Thess refers only to non-Christians who have not accepted love of the truth (Christ), and remain in the night and darkness, trusting in the propaganda slogan: *peace and security*. On the day of the parousia, when the propaganda slogan will be found to be untrue, they will be surprised. They will find out that the slogan in which they trusted deceived them. However, they rejected a way that really leads to salvation. Important in interpreting the whole passage of 1 Thess 5, 1–11 and in the discussion concerning differences in eschatology of 1 Thess and 2 Thess is the distinction mentioned above. A failure to understand the motif of surprise, as eschatological motif, which refers only to non-Christians (and not to both Christians and non-Christians) creates a problem. It causes difficulties to understand Paul’s statement (1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11) concerning the sudden and unexpected parousia in context of the set of *prodroms* (2 Thess 2, 1–12), which will occur before the parousia. Certainly, it is clear that the motif of surprise in 1 Thess 5, 1–11 does not apply to Christians⁹⁸. In reference to Christians, this passage should not be interpreted as a text speaking about the sudden coming of the parousia, but as a text talking about the relation between the motif of preparation and the motif of surprise⁹⁹.

c) The restrainer. The last of the Pauline eschatological motifs in the Epistles to the Thessalonians is the restrainer¹⁰⁰. Interpretation

98 It should be remembered that the passages 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12 contain practical instructions, which are addressed to specific events and were written in very specific circumstances. Although, these instructions have also a universal character, they are not an abstract speculation (in the context of the reasons for writing those letters).

99 Fuller discussion of these issues in the context of a problem of eschatology in the Letters to the Thessalonians is made in section 2 of this chapter.

100 This apocalyptic motif was discussed in chapter II, section 2.2.

of this motif creates many problems for scholars, because Paul uses it sometimes in the neuter gender and other times in the masculine. Another difficult issue is the lack of any reference to him/it in other biblical books or writings of the intertestamental literature. In this form, the motif appears only in the Letter to the Thessalonians, and so one has no comparative information necessary for its accurate determination. Because of that, any interpretation of the term cannot go beyond hypothesis. It is certain that the restrainer prevents the coming of the man of lawlessness until the designated time. This motif is placed in the centre of the whole passage (2 Thess 2, 5–7), interrupting the teaching about the man of lawlessness (2 Thess 2, 3–4. 8–10). 2 Thess 2, 6 informs the reader that this motif was clear to both the author and the addressees of the letter¹⁰¹. Many works have been devoted to finding an answer to a question: who is the restrainer or what is he restraining? So far, the question remains unanswered. Recently, more and more studies indicate the Archangel Michael as the restrainer. In supporting this supposition, evidence from the intertestamental literature is often used. For example, B. Witherington, using 2 Bar 29, 4 which refers to stopping Leviathan and Behemoth until the coming of the Messiah, and juxtaposing it with numerous passages indicating that angels fulfil the will of God, accepts the hypothesis that the Archangel Michael is the restrainer¹⁰². However, based on the results of our analysis of motifs used by Paul (made in chapters II and III) in particular the motif of an angel, it seems that the Archangel Michael cannot be the restrainer. The motif of angels, which Paul took from the Old Testament and modified significantly, plays in his eschatological teaching a different role than in Jewish literature. The pseudepigraphal literature widely uses the motif of angels but Paul reduces the motif to a symbolic

101 This could suggest an allusion to a specific historical figure, but the action of the restrainer will continue until the time appointed by God. This time may be longer than a life of an individual or duration of a system. In addition, it is difficult to identify the historical figure, which at the time of Paul, could be a symbol of opposition to evil.

102 B. Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, pp. 221–222. See also chapter III, section 2.2.3.

function (1 Thess 4, 16). Many of the tasks and missions performed in Jewish literature by angels are assigned to Christ in the Letters to the Thessalonians (descent from heaven – 1 Thess 4, 16; catch up – 1 Thess 4, 17; presence of the Lord – 1 Thess 4, 17). In the writings of the apostle, there is also a lack of any trace of an extensive angelology. There is no list of names of angels or actions attributed to certain angels, as there is in Jewish literature. In the intertestamental literature the Archangel Michael does not take on the function of restraining an evil action¹⁰³. In comparison with the intertestamental literature, it seems that in the Letters to the Thessalonians the apostle does not give to angels or even to the Archangel Michael, a special task in events concerning of the parousia. In our opinion, we cannot use arguments from the intertestamental literature to offer a determination regarding the figure of the restrainer presented in 2 Thess 2, 5–7. The exact determining of the motif of restrainer remains a problem. It seems that as important as the identification of the restrainer is to identify the function of the entire passage 2 Thess 2, 5–7. The passage is located at the centre of 2 Thess 2, 1–12, and it functions as an argument for the Pauline thesis that the parousia had not yet come¹⁰⁴. The apostle, to achieve his aim, has used the eschatological motif of the restrainer as an argument.

1.3. *Paul's Use of Eschatological Motifs*

Any attempt at comparison faces the risk of making illegitimate generalizations, since it involves mainly external similarities or differences between the compared issues. Often a comparison focuses on the similarity of terms or forms without applying appropriate attention to their functions. When someone who makes a comparison based on

103 The Archangel Michael, together with other archangels and the host of heaven, is the one who, according to the will of God, actively participates in the fight against forces of evil and darkness. It is not a preventive action but a typical military action.

104 An argument referring to knowledge common for both the author and the addressees, always tends to underpin what the interpreter wishes to prove.

similarity between terms, makes a judgement about similarity of concepts, he often generalizes, because similarity of motifs is not equal to similarity of concepts. Therefore, there is considerable difficulty in comparing the intertestamental eschatology with the New Testament eschatology and in our case with the eschatological motifs used in the Letters to the Thessalonians. The most serious obstacle is diversity of eschatological concepts found in the intertestamental literature and the Qumran writings. J. H. Charlesworth in the first volume of his edition of the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* presents a collection of 19 apocalyptic works, which were written in different periods and different circumstances¹⁰⁵. The earliest were written in the second century BC and the most recent in the ninth century AD. If we focus on the period between the second century BC and second century AD, there remains a period of 400 years during, which revolutionary changes in eschatological thought took place. Even in the Qumran writings, which were written over a period of 200 years, and mostly in the same place, one encounters diverse eschatological concepts. Therefore, the only adequate method of comparison is to discuss and compare each apocalyptic work as reflecting separate sets of eschatological concepts (any other method must assume greater or lesser degree of generalization). However, the use of such a method does not lead to a summary of analysis. The solution seems to be a comparison of various eschatological motifs, their functions and the ways in which they were used in the works compared¹⁰⁶. Such an approach allows identifying real similarities and differences, which are not based only on the identity of terminology. With all the diversity of eschatological concepts, there is a specific set of eschatological and apocalyptic motifs used to create an eschatological teaching. The character of motifs, their quantity and a way of presentation, determine eschatological concepts. However, the use apocalyptic or eschatological motifs do not always lead to the creation of an eschatological concept. The best examples of such use of apocalyptic motifs can be found in the pseudepigraphal works

105 See: J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol I, New York 1983.

106 This method is used in the present study.

called Testaments¹⁰⁷. Based on the eschatological and apocalyptic motifs present, the reader can assume an eschatological concept of the author, but at the same time he must remember that the purpose of using these motifs may be something else than creating an eschatological concept. Determination of an aim is possible by analyzing the way of using individual motifs and their function in the works of the author.

Taking into consideration the above arguments, we have made in section 1 of this chapter a presentation of the results and conclusions of the analysis done in chapters II and III. If our goal was to identify similarities or differences between the letters to the Thessalonians and the intertestamental literature based only on similarity of terminology and concepts, we would speak about dependence of the 1–2 Thess from the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Qumran writings. Among 26 eschatological and apocalyptic motifs which we found in 1–2 Thess, only three do not appear in the pseudepigraphal apocalypses and the Essenes writings. Such a generalization would not, however, be justified, because out of 22 common motifs, only eight are presented in an identical manner, and the other 15 motifs were substantially modified by Paul. In addition, all identical motifs used in a positive sense were used in 1–2 Thess only in reference to non-Christians. When these motifs were used in relation to believers, they were used in a negative sense in order to point to a reality, which does not apply to Christians. Most important for our research are motives, which the apostle has modified, because they clearly indicate the intention and purpose of the author¹⁰⁸. Many of the apocalyptic motifs (clouds, angels, trumpets, etc.), some of which are very complex in their expression in the pseudepigraphal literature have been minimized in Paul's writings. Due to this approach, the apostle, while maintaining a clear apocalyptic character, does not focus on the motif of angels but on the coming of Lord and the salvation of believers (1 Thess 4, 13–18). In the context of the proclamation of a false thesis

107 The pseudepigraphal literature called Testaments contain numerous apocalyptic motifs, but they have a didactic rather than an eschatological character.

108 There are examples of evolution of eschatological concepts from Jewish eschatology into Christian eschatology.

that the parousia had come, the apostle does not use only those motifs but he introduces a new apocalyptic motif of the restrainer, which is connected with events which will precede the coming of the parousia (oppression, deception and persecution). In this way, while retaining the apocalyptic character of his teaching, he removes the “folk-story” element that is typical of the intertestamental literature, and which often gives too much attention to apocalyptical details (e.g. descriptions of the overcoming of evil).

All new and modified motifs introduced by the apostle are subordinated to his specific aim, which is to resolve problems in Thessalonica closely related to eschatological issues. The apostle presented many eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, which in most cases were a standard terminology used to create eschatological images in the Hellenistic world. It seems that the manner and purpose of using eschatological and apocalyptical motifs are different in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 compared with 2 Thess 2, 1–12¹⁰⁹.

2. The Problem of the Unity of Eschatology in the Letters to the Thessalonians

Since the authenticity of 2 Thess was challenged, because some scholars pointed to the differences in eschatology between 1 Thess and 2 Thess the question of Paul’s eschatology in these letters has become one of the foremost important issues discussed by exegetes¹¹⁰. Extensive literature on this subject has given a number of arguments supporting or denying the authenticity of 2 Thess¹¹¹. Invariably, the focus remains on

109 This issue will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

110 The eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians is not the only issue remaining in the theological controversy in connection with the authenticity of 2 Thess. See: E. Richard, *Early Pauline Thought*, in: J. M. Bassler (ed.), *Pauline Theology, vol. I*, Minneapolis 1991, pp. 39–51; E. Krentz, *Through a Lens*, in: J. M. Bassler (ed.), *Pauline*, pp. 52–62.

111 The extensive literature on the issue of the authenticity of 1–2 Thess is presented in section 1 of chapter I.

the eschatology of these two letters. Authors denying the authenticity of 2 Thess, maintain that the sudden and unexpected coming of the Lord in 1 Thess and the events preceding the coming of the Lord in 2 Thess, are to two completely contradictory ideas, which cannot come from the same author. On the other hand, the authors accepting the authenticity of 2 Thess try to give a satisfactory explanation for these differences. Only on one point do both sides agree, namely the existence of differences in the eschatology of the letters. Both groups assume the existence of eschatology (coherent and comprehensive concept concerning the end of the times) in the Letters to the Thessalonians. The following section attempts to challenge this status quo. We also try to demonstrate that eschatology, in the strict sense, can be found only in 1 Thess.

2.1. Eschatology or Eschatological Motifs in 1–2 Thess

Widely accepted and until now undisputed has been a belief in the existence of “an eschatology” in the Letters to the Thessalonians. Concerning the authenticity of 2 Thess exegetes who opt for authenticity believe that both writings contain the same Pauline eschatology, or that 1 Thess contains Pauline eschatology but 2 Thess contains an eschatology that is not attributable to the apostle. Both groups are convinced of the existence of eschatology in both 1 Thess and in 2 Thess. The following analysis is an attempt to verify the validity of this axiom. Assuming distinctions between eschatology and eschatological motifs and between apocalyptic and apocalyptic motifs, we will now compare the basic eschatological motifs used by the author in 1 Thess and in 2 Thess.

2.1.1. Dualism

A natural consequence of a dualistic concept is the division of people into two opposite groups. In the case of ethical dualism, we can talk about good people and bad people. In the case of eschatological dualism, we can talk about those who will be saved and those who will be condemned¹¹². The division is a result of the accepted ethical norm in

112 The motif of dualism is presented in chapter II, section 1.1.1. A comparison of Pauline dualism and the Essenes dualism is made in chapter IV, section 1.2.2.

the case of ethical dualism, or a result of just judgment in the case of eschatological dualism. A result of the just judgment for the sons of the light will be salvation, because of their conduct during their lifetime. However, for the sons of the darkness the result of judgment will be condemnation because of lack of faith and bad conduct during their lifetime. Although in reference to the judgment the ideas of the apostle differ from Jewish teaching, the motif of dualism is very strongly accented in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12 in the same way as it is in the intertestamental literature¹¹³. In 1 Thess, Paul from the very beginning is using a dualistic concept when he distinguishes between Christian and non-Christian and when he compares many aspects of the Christian life with that of non-Christians. A basis for this distinction is the fact that belief in Christ has consequences for their life and behaviour (1 Thess 5, 5–8). For Paul, the way of life and behaviour determines the fate of the people (1 Thess 5, 9–10)¹¹⁴. In 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 Paul focuses on the fate of Christians and does not give much attention to non-Christians. Usually non-Christians are mentioned when comparing the attitudes of both groups. However, both groups are presented and their differences are clearly indicated. Because of that, it can be said that in 1 Thess the motif of dualism is fully presented. The same cannot be said about the presentation of the motif of dualism in 2 Thess 2, 1–12. Although the motif of dualism is present, the man of lawlessness and Jesus (2 Thess 2, 8) or the man of lawlessness and the restrainer (2 Thess 2, 7) become the centre of the author's argument; there is no direct comparison between these two opposing groups. In fact, the author presents only the non-Christians and this presentation is as negative as it is in 1 Thess 5, 1–11. In 2 Thess 2, the focus is put on non-Christians without any comparison with Christians. Those who accepted the love of truth, and therefore are destined for salvation, are not mentioned in this passage. Probably the reason is that the author puts his focus on those who did not believe in Jesus and at the end of

113 See: P. F. M. Fontaine, *The Light and The Dark. A Cultural History of Dualism*, vol. VII, Amsterdam 1992, pp. 129–244.

114 R. L. Thomas, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, pp. 280–287.

time they will experience God's wrath¹¹⁵. The negative aspects of events called "time and seasons" which have to occur before the parousia are used in 2 Thess 2 for a polemical purpose. The author tries to convince the Thessalonians that the thesis that the parousia had already come is false. In his opinion this is proven by the fact that the man of lawlessness was not yet been revealed.

In conclusion, it must be said that, in comparison to 1 Thess 5, 1–11, the motif of dualism in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 is reduced to the presentation of non-Christians (2 Thess 2, 10–12).

2.1.2. *The Time and Seasons*

All events which will occur before the parousia or the Day of Judgment are called by scholars *prodroms*; Paul called them *the time and seasons*¹¹⁶. This eschatological motif is widely present in both 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 in various ways. In 1 Thess 5, 1–4. 8 Paul, in talking to Thessalonians about *prodroms*, makes three important statements. The first one refers to the fullness of the Thessalonians' knowledge concerning the coming of the Lord (1 Thess 5, 1). The second one refers to the apostle's conviction that addressees are informed regarding the sudden coming of the Lord, who will come as a thief in the night (1 Thess 5, 2). The third one refers to a motif of surprise about the coming of the Lord (1 Thess 5, 4. 8) and does not contain any information concerning previous knowledge of the Thessalonians about this motif¹¹⁷. For Paul, the parousia will not surprise the Thessalonians because they are the sons of the light (1 Thess 5, 4),

115 The fragment (2 Thess 2, 1–3. 5) mentions Christians as addressees of the teaching, and not as a group whose attitude is compared to non-Christians. The context in which Christians are mentioned is the author's argumentation that the parousia had not yet occurred. All apocalyptic motifs used in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 serve as proofs supporting the author's argumentation.

116 Usually apocalyptic motifs which most often describe *prodroms* are persecution and natural and cosmic disasters. However, in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 the author accents the apocalyptic motifs of apostasy and deceiving.

117 This, in our view, is an argument confirming the hypothesis that the purpose of the instruction given in 1 Thess 5, 1–11 is to convince recipients that the Lord's Day will not surprise them.

and they are prepared for this day (1 Thess 5, 8). The apostle presents the motif of surprise in conditional terms. For those who believed and are prepared the parousia will not be a surprising event, because they belong to Christ, who will save them from the wrath of God (1 Thess 4, 16–17). However, the parousia will surprise the non-Christians who do not believe in Christ and are not prepared for His coming¹¹⁸. This distinction is essential to a proper understanding of the entire passage of Thess 5, 1–11 and should be read as a teaching of belief in and preparation for the parousia and not as an instruction regarding the sudden arrival of the Lord.

In 2 Thess 1–12 the motif of *prodroms* is the central point of the whole passage. Half of the passage (2 Thess 2, 3–4. 6–7. 9–10) refers to signs, which will occur before the coming of the Lord. Apocalyptic motifs like *apostasy*, *the man of lawlessness*, *deceiving*, *the restrainer* are used by the author to describe the eschatological motif *times and seasons*¹¹⁹. In this sense the teaching contained in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 is a more detailed explanation of the teaching presented in general terms by Paul in 1 Thess 5, 1–11. The explanation concerns the motif of *time and seasons*, which at the time when 1 Thess was written, the apostle saw as a motif, which did not need wider explanation¹²⁰.

In summary, the motif of *time and seasons* was substantially expanded in 2 Thess, and it is an essential part of the whole passage of 2 Thess 2, 1–12.

2.1.3. *Parousia / the day of the Lord*

Both terms relate to the same issue, but they contain different concepts. The parousia (for Christians) is not only a different Hellenistic term for the same reality described by the Jewish term “*the day of the Lord*”, but also it contains its own distinct idea. The Jewish term *the day of the Lord* means the coming of the end of time and is inseparably connected with motifs of judgment and punishment or rewards. The Hellenistic term *the parousia* refers in 1 Thess 4, 13–18 not only to a joyful welcome given to

118 See: I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 136.

119 See: chapter IV, section 1.1.1.

120 This issue is discussed in chapter IV, section 2.

the coming of Christ, but also points to the aim of His coming, namely the release Christians from the wrath of God at the time of judgment¹²¹. A motif of the parousia was presented by the apostle in 1 Thess 4, 16–17. A short, but almost complete picture of the parousia of Christ created by numerous apocalyptic motifs is the centre of 1 Thess 4, 13–18. The motif shows the purpose of the coming of the Lord, which is the salvation of all believers. In contrast, a motif of the day of the Lord in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 is only twice mentioned in the context of the motif of surprise.

In 2 Thess the situation is different. Both terms: the day of the Lord (2 Thess 2, 2–3) and the *parousia* (2 Thess 2, 1. 8. 9) are only mentioned. The term *day of the Lord* is used in the context of disproving the thesis that the day of the Lord had already come. The term *parousia* is used in the context of Christ's coming (2 Thess 2, 8) and also in the introduction to 2 Thess 2, 1 which refers to the passage from 1 Thess 4, 16–5, 11. Only once does the term *parousia* refer to the man of lawlessness (2 Thess 2, 9). This case does not allow us to accept the term *parousia* as a technical term¹²².

In conclusion, in 1 Thess the term *parousia* is clearly expressed and discussed, while the term *day of the Lord* is only mentioned. However, in 2 Thess both terms are merely mentioned.

2.1.4. *The Resurrection*

The motif of resurrection is the basis for Christian teaching from the time of the apostles until the present¹²³. The centre of Christian *kerygma* is the resurrected Jesus who will resurrect all who believe in Him. Paul teaches the motif as the most important one, from which come others motifs concerning eschatology. The basis for

121 Perhaps the saving aspect of the parousia is a basis for the expectation of the sudden coming of the Lord, which is so characteristic for Paul eschatological thought. See: C. F. D. Moule, *Essays in New Testament Interpretation*, Melbourne 1982, pp. 184–199.

122 This problem was discussed in chapter III, section 3.2.

123 M. Demura, *The Biblical Tradition of Resurrection in Early Christianity*, Annual of The Japanese Biblical Institute 25/26: 1999/2000, pp. 135–151; J. Stepien, *Theology*, p. 207; A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Beyond Resurrection*, Peabody 1999, pp. 103–121.

teaching presented in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 is the motif of resurrection (1 Thess 4, 13–16)¹²⁴. No teaching of Paul concerning the resurrection is an abstract speculation, but it is the result of his experience of the resurrected Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation for every teaching concerning the resurrection of Christians (1 Thess 4, 16). The resurrection is an action of God, which will be done by the resurrected Jesus who will come at the end of time. In 1 Thess this motif refers only to Christians¹²⁵. The resurrection of believers is not an aim of the coming of the Lord, but it is the first of His actions. It is the event, which will precede the salvation of Christians.

Surprisingly, the motif of resurrection is absent in 2 Thess 2, 1–12. There is no mention or suggestion of this motif. A possible reason for this could be the character of the whole passage, which is simply a more detailed explanation of the motif of *time and seasons*. This explanation solves also the problem of the use in 2 Thess of other eschatological motifs, which are usually merely mentioned. The omission of the motif in 2 Thess and its central position in teaching concerning the parousia in 1 Thess 4, 13–18, created a question concerning the character of the passage 2 Thess 2, 1–12. Is it eschatology or is it only an apocalyptic polemic concerning one of the eschatological motifs? After presenting in this chapter all eschatological motifs we will try to answer this question.

2.1.5. *The Judgment*

The whole passage 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 focuses on positive aspects of events concerning the end of time, which Paul consciously called the parousia. Hence, the motif of judgment is not widely presented in this passage. The term judgment does not appear in the whole passage. Indirectly the motif of judgment is mentioned in 1 Thess 5, 1–11 by two terms ὄλεθρος – *destruction* and ὀργή – *wrath*, which are synonyms for the term κρίσις – *judgment*. Paul uses both terms without any further explanation in the context of the fate of those who do not believe

124 This motif was discussed in chapter III, section 2.5.

125 C. F. D. Moule, *St Paul and Dualism*, p. 109; J. Stepic, *Theology*, p. 209.

in Christ¹²⁶. These terms do not appear in the context of Christians, whose fate is not destruction or the wrath of God.

Although in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 the motif of judgment is not discussed, two synonymous terms, which appear in this passage, refer to non-Christians.

The term κρίσις – *judgment* appears once in 2 Thess 1, 5 in the context of persecution which Christians will suffer at the hands of non-Christians¹²⁷. This term refers to Christians and it is the only case in the Letters to the Thessalonians where the term is used in a positive sense in the context of Christians¹²⁸. The author teaches that the Thessalonians will be saved during the judgment. The verb κρίνω – *I judge* (2 Thess 2, 12), which refers to the attitude of non-Christians, and three others verbs (ἀναιρέ, ἀπόλλυμι καταργέω) which are found in the context of the motif of the day of the Lord, are synonyms for the verb κρίνω. These verbs refer only to non-Christians and to the man of lawlessness.

In summary, in the Letters to the Thessalonians the motif of judgment, although it is strongly accented in the context of non-Christians, is not a subject of special teaching or explanation by the author.

2.1.6. *Salvation*

In 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 the motif of salvation is presented. Although the term σωτηρία is not used, the motif of salvation appears in 1 Thess

126 The problem of the fate of non-Christian is presented in chapter II, section 1.1.2.

127 See: J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology*, pp. 298–305.

128 The problem of judgment, which also refers to Christians, appears in the context of persecution, which the community is experiencing from the non-Christians (2 Thess 1, 4–10). The author sees persecution as a sign, which must occur before the parousia will come. The results of the judgment are already known and they correspond to the dualistic assumptions of the author. Christians will be saved, and non-Christians condemned. F. F. Bruce says that this passage does not provide specific Pauline doctrine, but the later views, which were developed in the Christian tradition, but have roots in early Christianity (F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 148). This passage does not allow us to say that in 1–2 Thess the motif of judgment does not apply to Christians.

4, 17 in the context of other apocalyptic motifs connected to the event of the parousia. At the time of the coming of the Lord, Christ will save Christians and they will be with Him forever. According to the apostle, all events, which are parts of the parousia, have one aim, namely the salvation of Christians¹²⁹. The motif of salvation appears once again in 1 Thess 5, 9–10 where Paul connects the salvation of Christians which frees them through Christ from the wrath of God. This passage allows us to say that Paul understood the salvation of Christians as avoidance of God's wrath at the end of times¹³⁰.

In summary: the motif of salvation in 1 Thess is the subject of the apostle's teaching and explanation. The parousia is understood by Paul as the event when Christ will save all Christians (living and dead) from the wrath of God.

In 2 Thess 2, 1 the motif of salvation appears for first time, and together with the motif of the parousia refers to the teaching contained in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11. The motif is not placed at the centre of 2 Thess 2, but rather it serves as a background for the motif of the *time and seasons*. The term refers in 2 Thess 2, 1 to Christians in an affirmative way¹³¹. The second time the motif of salvation appears is in 2 Thess 2, 10 and here it refers to non-Christians. The term points to a reality, which does not apply to non-Christians¹³². In both cases the motif of salvation is clearly indicated by it is not a subject of special explanation.

2.1.7. Conclusion

After analyzing the presence and use of each of six basic eschatological motifs, we can answer the question concerning existence of eschatology in the Letters to the Thessalonians.

129 See: F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians*, p. 103.

130 This statement is in opposition to the view of Ch. VanLandinghama, who believes that Paul in 1 Thessalonians relates the moral attitude of Thessalonians to the final result of their judgment. He accepts a possibility of condemnation of Christians because of their moral conduct. Ch. VanLandingham, *Judgment & Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul*, Peabody 2006, p. 181.

131 E. J. Richard, *First and Second*, pp. 323–324.

132 B. Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, pp. 224–226.

Analysis of eschatological motifs in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 shows that five out of six motifs have been clearly highlighted and discussed at length (dualism, times and seasons, parousia, resurrection, salvation). Only one motif (judgment) is not the subject of wider discussion, although it is indirectly mentioned. Taking into account the fact that this motif is associated more strongly with the idea of the day of the Lord than with the motif of the parousia, a lack of discussion concerning this motif is explained by the context of the entire passage¹³³.

Taking into consideration the fact that 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 is part of a *probatio* (1 Thess 4, 1–5, 22) and includes instruction and all the eschatological motifs, most of which are widely elaborated, it is clear that 1 Thess includes eschatology in the strict sense of the term¹³⁴.

In 2 Thess 2, 1–12 only one motif (time and seasons) is extensively presented, because almost half of the whole passage refers to this motif¹³⁵. Another motif is dualism, which in 2 Thess 2 is a subject of a relatively large discourse. However, it is presented only in the context of non-Christians (2 Thess 2, 10–12). Three other eschatological motifs (the day of the Lord, judgment, salvation) are only mentioned without any wider presentation. One motif, the motif of resurrection, is absent in 2 Thess 2. The lack of a motif so essential for Christian teaching as well as only the mention of others eschatological motifs, proves, in our opinion, that the aim of the author of 2 Thess is not to present eschatology but to solve a problem. That leads us to conclude that in 2 Thess the eschatology (in technical terms) is not presented. Instead, there are several eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, which are used in order to achieve the aim.

133 The terms parousia and the day of the Lord are presented in chapter III, section 3.1. Also see: J. M. Court, Paul and the Apocalyptic Pattern, in: M. D. Hooker, S. G. Wilson, *Paul and Paulinism. Essays in Honour of C. K. Berrett*, London 1982, pp. 57–66.

134 J. Plevnik, Paul's Eschatology, *Toronto Journal of Theology* 6/1: 1990, pp. 86–99.

135 A. Jankowski, in order to describe the events preceding the parousia, uses the term *prodrom*. This term was created from the Greek noun προτρέω – *I preceded in running*. See: A. Jankowski, *Eschatologia*, p. 42.

This conclusion allows us to say that it is incorrect to speak that there is one coherent eschatology in 1–2 Thess or that are differences between the eschatology of 1 Thess and 2 Thess¹³⁶. In a technical sense, the eschatology is presented only in 1 Thess. This eschatology (in technical terms) is not presented in 2 Thess. In our opinion, there is no basis for comparing “eschatology” in the Letters to the Thessalonians.

2.2. *A Different Way of Using Eschatological Motifs in 1 Thess and 2 Thess*

The statement concerning the lack of eschatology in 2 Thess does not necessarily mean a lack of relationship between 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12. The relationship between them is stronger than it might seem; however, it is not a relationship on the level of eschatology, but on the level of eschatological motifs and in particular the motif of *times and seasons*¹³⁷.

Indisputable is the difference in the tone of both letters. The reason for this may be different authorship or different circumstances surrounding the creation of the Letters¹³⁸. It seems correct to point to the differing circumstances of the community addressed in 1–2 Thess as a reason for differences in the tone of the Letters. It is extremely important to highlight also the aim intended by Paul in writing each letter. External circumstances determine the topics covered in the letter, and the purpose intended by the author

136 See: R. N. Longenecker, *The Nature of Paul's Early Eschatology*, *NTS* 31:1985, pp. 85–95; W. Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 67–95.

137 In our opinion, 2 Thess 2, 1–12 is a kind of appendix to the teaching which the apostle presented in 1 Thess 5, 1–11. The teaching concerning *prodroms* was only hinted at in 1 Thess 5, 1. This presupposes, however, knowledge of this matter by the recipients, which means that the question of events preceding the coming of the parousia had been a subject of the apostle's teaching during his stay in Thessalonica. These motifs in 2 Thess 2 are not, therefore, an introduction of something new (what was missing in 1 Thess).

138 The first reason is left without comment because in this study we have accepted Pauline authorship of 2 Thess. See: W. Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 133–158.

determines the tone. In 1 Thess, in spite of persecution, which the believers suffered from non-Christians, the situation of the community appears to be stable. Hence, there are numerous expressions of praise and encouragement, which Paul addresses to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 1–3). This letter contains no allusions to opposition toward Paul, to a split within the community, or to false teachings¹³⁹. Teachings presented in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 do not cover issues that threaten the existence of the community, but only subjects which correct their views and suggest an appropriate way to proceed. These teachings serve rather to bring forth further development than to regenerate the community. Therefore, Paul is able to devote the first three chapters of 1 Thess to deepening the relationship between him and the community (1 Thess 1–3). This also seems to be justified by his short period of stay at Thessalonica. 1 Thess does not contain polemic elements, but only didactical and motivational ones. This makes the tone of the Letter warm, characterized by kindness and acceptance. Such an atmosphere is conducive to presenting a full eschatological teaching in order to strengthen faith and hope through the clarification of matters concerning the fate of the dead during the parousia (1 Thess 4, 13–18) and the preparation of Christians for coming of the Lord (1 Thess 5, 1–11). Using numerous eschatological motifs Paul creates a Christian eschatology which, although firmly rooted in Jewish eschatology (and particularly in Jewish apocalyptic), had already been expressed in its specifically Christian character¹⁴⁰. The Christian character of Paul's eschatology is emphasized by the three motifs of the central role of Christ in the history of salvation, the resurrection of the body, and the parousia.

The situation of the community addressed in 2 Thess is quite different. The reason for writing the Letter was the appearance in the community of a false teaching concerning the coming of the Lord. This led some members of the community to feel they had been deceived and intimidated (2 Thess 2, 2). The false teaching proclaims that the

139 B. Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 21.

140 See: H. M. Shires, *The Eschatology of Paul*, pp. 31–37.

day of the Lord had already come. The Thessalonians, because of the teaching contained in 1 Thess, were expecting the parousia, and not the day of the Lord. The false teaching, which unlawfully appropriated apostolic authority, was for Christians in Thessalonica a denial of the teaching of Paul concerning the parousia. Consequently, they began to go back to the belief that Christians are also subject to God's wrath at the Day of Judgment. In such circumstances, the apostle aimed, by writing 2 Thess, to demonstrate the inaccuracy of the false preaching that proclaimed that the day of the Lord had already come. This seems to be confirmed by the central position given to 2 Thess 2, 1–12 in the construction of the whole Letter and also by the polemical and persuasive tone of the letter¹⁴¹. Before the author goes into the demonstration of his thesis, he clearly stated that the teaching concerning the parousia and gathering of all Christian around Christ, presented in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11, are constant and provide the foundation for further argumentation (2 Thess 2, 1)¹⁴². In order to demonstrate the inaccuracy of the thesis proclaimed to the Thessalonians, Paul could use only arguments related to the period preceding the coming of the Lord, since only this motif of eschatology in 1 Thess was in doubt. The author could not use the motif of dualism, because it assumed that the fate of Christians and non-Christians is different, and in the face of the false teaching, the fate of both groups is the same. He also could not use the motif of salvation and resurrection of the body, because these events are related to the concept of the parousia and not to the concept of the day of the Lord. In addition, the motif of judgment could not be used in argumentation, because it is more closely related to the motif of the day of the Lord than to the motif of the parousia. In 1 Thess 5, 1–4, 8, the author writing about the period preceding the parousia, focused on the motif of surprise (for non-Christians) and to preparation (for Christians). What in 1 Thess 5, 1 has been identified as appropriate *times and seasons*, also relates to the signs preceding the parousia (2 Thess 2, 1–4)¹⁴³. However,

141 B. Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, pp. 29–36.

142 A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters*, pp. 427–434.

143 F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, p. 109.

the apostle had not discussed this question, because he thought that it was not necessary to write about it to Thessalonians. 1 Thess 5, 2 allows us to conclude that the probable reason why Paul did not write about signs was because the Thessalonians were already fully informed concerning this issue. This suggestion seems to be confirmed also by 2 Thess 2, 5. Perhaps the apostle was too confident of the knowledge and understanding of the Thessalonians in 1 Thess 5, 1–2¹⁴⁴. It is possible that the problem which occasioned the writing of 2 Thess forced the author to recall the teaching that had already been proclaimed to the Thessalonians (2 Thess 2, 5–6)¹⁴⁵. In 2 Thess 2, 1–12 the author actually develops only one eschatological motif, which is, the *times and seasons*. To the discussion of this motif is devoted half of 2 Thess 2, 1–12. Other motifs are merely mentioned or they are only partly discussed (eg dualism). In order to present, the eschatological motif *time and seasons*, the author uses the following apocalyptic motifs: apostasy, the man of lawlessness, the restrainer, action of Satan, deceiving. Presenting and discussing of these motifs serve to prove the thesis that the day of the Lord had not yet come. This instrumental treatment of eschatological motifs in 2 Thess 2 indicates a reason for which the Letter was written and the purpose which the Letter was supposed to serve. An actual situation occurred in the community in which praise was not appropriate, but neither was it the occasion to offer a presentation of a complex eschatology. The problem, which occurred in the community, had to be solved; therefore, to reach this aim the whole focus of 2 Thess is subordinated. It should be noted that when the author is talking about events on the day of the Lord (2 Thess 2, 3b–12), he applies it only to non-Christians. This can be used to prove that, at time of writing the Letters to the Thessalonians, Paul clearly distinguished between the motif of the day of the Lord, which refers to non-Christians, and the motif of the parousia, which refers to Christians was made.

144 K. Grayston, *The Letters of Paul to the Philippians and to the Thessalonians*, Cambridge 1967, pp. 98–100.

145 B. Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, p. 220.

2.3. *An Assessment of the Validity of Claims about Differences in the Eschatology of 1 Thess and 2 Thess*

From the time of J. E. Ch. Schmidt, the theory of contradiction between the eschatology of 1 Thess and 2 Thess has permanently entered the canon of exegetical controversy concerning the authenticity of 2 Thess¹⁴⁶. The position of this thesis has been strengthened, in modern exegesis, through the work of W. Trilling, a work entirely devoted to proving that 2 Thess was not written by Paul¹⁴⁷. The consequence of Trilling's work is a tendency to deny that 2 Thess was written by Paul. The authors favouring this thesis usually point to eschatology and argue that 1 Thess and 2 Thess contain different eschatology¹⁴⁸. A characteristic feature of their argumentation is a lack of distinction between eschatology and apocalyptic. The lack of terminological precision and right use of both terms results in the overlooking the importance of the relationship between eschatology and apocalyptic. The consequence of this approach is the arbitrary and interchangeable use of these terms. While Trilling in his work clearly emphasizes the apocalyptic character of 2 Thess 2¹⁴⁹, some of the later adherents of his views are already talking about eschatology of 2 Thess 2¹⁵⁰. The thesis concerning a conflict between the eschatology 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 (including the teaching about near, sudden and unexpected coming of the parousia) and the eschatology of 2 Thess 2, 1–12 (including many signs that should precede the coming of the parousia) we consider to be unfounded. The main argument supporting this statement

146 The first contribution in the debate concerning the authenticity of the Letters to the Thessalonians was the work of Schmidt (J. E. Ch. Schmidt, *Vermutungen über die beide Briefe an die Thessalonicher*, Bibliothek für Kritik und Exegese des Neuen Testaments und Ältesten Christengeschichte 2/3: Handamer 1801).

147 The work of W. Trilling puts order into the discussion concerning the authenticity and until now is the most complete elaboration of the problem. (W. Trilling, *Untersuchungen zum zweiten Thessalonischerbrief*, Leipzig 1972).

148 See: F. Laub, *Eschatologische Verkündigung und Lebensgestaltung nach Paulus: Eine Untersuchung zum Wirken des Apostels beim Aufbau der Gemeinde in Thessalonike*, Regensburg 1973, pp. 96–119; A. Lindemann, *Zum Abfassungszweck*, pp. 35–47.

149 W. Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 128–132.

150 E. J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, p. 19.

is a lack of eschatology in 2 Thess 2, 1–12. The analysis made earlier showed that the material found in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 has a typically apocalyptic character and it is an extensive explanation of the eschatological motif called *times and seasons* and concerns events, which will occur before the coming of the Lord¹⁵¹. It is the only motif given further discussion in the passage 2 Thess 2, 1–12. Another eschatological motif discussed in the 2 Thess 2, 1–12 is the motif of judgment (2 Thess 1, 5–10)¹⁵². The main aim of 2 Thess 2 is not to present eschatology but to disprove the thesis that the day of the Lord had come. Another argument for the lack of eschatology in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 is that the author, to prove his thesis, used many eschatological and apocalyptic motifs instrumentally¹⁵³. If the author's intention was to present eschatology, he would not only use all the eschatological motifs, but also he would have put them in the context of instruction and correction, and not in the context of polemics and argument.

The statement that there is no difference in the eschatology of 1 Thess and 2 Thess (because 2 Thess 2, 1–12 does not include eschatology, but only certain eschatological motifs), does not solve the basic problem that there is a difference in presentation of the eschatological motif *times and seasons* in both letters. While we cannot talk about the difference in eschatology, it is however necessary to provide a satisfactory explanation of this problem. The commonly accepted view is that 1 Thess 5, 1–11 presents the coming of the Lord as a sudden and surprising event, while according to 2 Thess 2, 1–12 the day of the Lord will be preceded by numerous events, indicating that the time has come¹⁵⁴. The typical conclusion, which usually is drawn from this statement, is that the Letters to the Thessalonians differ in the presentation of eschatological motifs concerning events preceding the parousia. Based on the analysis made earlier, we believe that the conclusion presented above is incorrect¹⁵⁵. It is due to the fact that

151 The analysis is made in chapter IV, section 2.1.

152 The motif of judgment is discussed in chapter IV, section 2.1.5.

153 This problem is discussed in chapter IV, section 2.2.

154 H. Koester, *From Paul's Eschatology*, pp. 445–454.

155 This eschatological motif is discussed in chapter III, section 1.1.1.

the motif of dualism was not accepted as the basis for analysis of 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12 and consequently many analyses were made without any references to this context. A very strong dualistic concept lies at the heart of a Pauline presentation of the motifs of the parousia and the day of the Lord. After clearly distinguishing Christians from non-Christians, the apostle consistently uses a specific terminology and presents different views for each group¹⁵⁶. What Paul says to Christians, does not apply to non-Christians and vice versa. It is a mistake to relate everything that is said in 1 Thess 5, 1–11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12 to both groups.

The same applies to the motif of the day of the Lord, who will come suddenly and unexpectedly. Paul refers this statement specifically to non-Christians, as is evidenced by 1 Thess 5, 2. 4 (read without verse 3). The reality, which is true for non-Christians, does not apply to Christians, because in the eschatological concept of Paul, the motif of surprise and the unexpected coming of the parousia is inseparably connected with motifs of belonging to Christ and preparation for His coming (1 Thess 5, 8–10). The main topic of teaching, which the apostle refers to in 1 Thess 5, 1–11, does not consider the sudden coming of the day of the Lord, because the issue was known to the addressees (1 Thess 5, 2. 4). The teaching concerns three issues: belonging to Christ, appropriate way of life and necessity of vigilance (1 Thess 5, 5–10)¹⁵⁷. The statements contained in 1 Thess 5, 2–3 which define the eschatological motif *the day of the Lord*, are true only in relation to non-Christians who, because of lack of faith and preparation, will be surprised by that day (understood as a time of a fair judgment and punishment). However, instructions contained in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 refer to the eschatological motif of *prodroms*, which are events preceding coming of the Lord. The subjects of teaching in 1 Thess 5, 1–4 and 2 Thess 2, 1–3 are not the same. In addition, each teaching refers to a different group. The belief that the Day the Lord will come suddenly and surprisingly, refers to non-Christians who are not prepared for this day. However, the statement that

156 Both groups are presented in chapter II, section 1.

157 B. S. Gaventa, *First and Second Thessalonians*, pp. 71–72.

signs will precede the coming of the Lord is addressed to Christians who are prepared because they believe in Christ, although the false teaching alarms them. Christians believe that the coming of the day will not surprise them. When they had heard that this day had come already and persecutions are proofs of this, they must feel great concern. The acceptance of this false teaching could result in the denial of Paul's authority or in the abandonment of faith and hope. Therefore, the author had to demonstrate that the new teaching is false, and consequently the day of the Lord had not yet come. Not knowing the source of this rumour, the author was devoid of any possibility of confrontation with the person responsible for his preaching. The only way to argue that this day had not yet come was to indicate events that must precede this day, but which had not yet occurred. In our opinion, the use of such an argument does not contradict what the apostle wrote in 1 Thess 5, 1–5, because presented teaching refers to non-Christians, but the arguments used in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 apply to Christians. If the statement from 1 Thess 5, 1–4 also included Christians, it would be possible to say there is a conflict between arguments used in 1 Thess 5, 1–4 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12. However, it does not. The difference between what Paul said about Christians and non-Christians is not a surprise if we consistently pay attention to the motif of dualism, strongly accented by the apostle¹⁵⁸. A clear manifestation of dualism in 1–2 Thess serves to link the motif of the day of the Lord (in a positive sense) only with non-Christians and the motif of the parousia only with Christians.

The difference between 1 Thess 5, 1–11 and 2 Thess 2, 1–12 should not be interpreted in terms of opposing eschatological concepts, because the statements contained in each passage concern different groups.

158 Far-reaching similarity between the Letters to the Thessalonians and the Qumran writings, particularly the Rule of War, concern not only the motif of dualism, but also a way of presentation of each group. In many places, descriptions of the sons of the light are interwoven with statements relating to the sons of the darkness. See quotations presented in chapter II, section 1–2.

Summary

The Letters to the Thessalonians contains many eschatological and apocalyptic motifs that are also found in the intertestamental literature. The eight motifs (destruction, wrath, deceiving, the day of the Lord, apostasy, Satan's action, the mystery of lawlessness, the judgment) which refer to negative aspects of the day of the Lord, have been used by Paul in a manner identical to that found in the intertestamental literature. This was primarily because motifs accepted and used by the apostle concerning non-Christians are related to the Old Testament eschatological motif *the day of the Lord*, which is also not modified in the intertestamental literature. This identity of terminology can be explained by a common source from which they were derived. There is no foundation for the conclusion that the eschatology of the Letters to the Thessalonians is dependent on the eschatology of the Qumran writings.

Fifteen eschatological and apocalyptic motifs are similar on the level of terminology, but they have clear differences on the semantic level. These motifs are: dualism, descent from heaven, command (order), voice of the archangel, the trumpet of God, clouds, caught up in the air, the resurrection, being with the Lord, preparation and vigilance, gathering around Him, times and seasons, the coming of the Lord, the man of lawlessness and his destruction, and finally salvation. Paul introduced changes concerning the meaning and use of these motifs. They are used in order to show that early Christian eschatological views were rooted in the Old Testament and the intertestamental literature. However, they follow a unique path in accordance with the apostolic understanding of the resurrection of Christ. The way the apostle used these apocalyptic motifs is an example of the formation of Christian eschatological teaching.

Three eschatological and apocalyptic motifs (equality of the living and the dead at the parousia, the restrainer, surprise) appear only in the

Letters to the Thessalonians, and they are absent in the intertestamental literature. Paul's apocalyptic motifs serve to emphasize the central role of Christ in Christian eschatology. The main criterion for membership in the group of Christians and participation in salvation is faith in the risen Christ. The resurrection of Christ is a guarantee of the resurrection of all the dead and of salvation for all Christians, i.e. avoiding the wrath of God. In the Letters to the Thessalonians, the apostle distinguishes between the end of the world for Christians and for non-Christians. For Christians, it is the parousia, with its accented cheerful aspect of the meeting with the Lord. For non-Christians the end of the world is primarily the time of destruction, judgment and punishment. This image corresponds to the Old Testament eschatological motif of the day of the Lord.

In this dissertation, following a comparative analysis of 1–2 Thess with the intertestamental literature, in the second part a comparative analysis was made of the passages 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 with 2 Thess 2, 1. Assuming that an examination of all of the eschatological motifs is necessary in order to discuss Pauline eschatology fully, we found that only 1 Thess contains a comprehensive eschatology. 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 discussed quite extensively all the eschatological motifs, with the exception of the motif of judgment. The fact that the motif of judgment is merely mentioned is due to the context of the entire passage. The analysis of 2 Thess 2, 1–12 leads to the conclusion that the passage does not contain an eschatology in the full sense of the word. Most of the eschatological motifs are merely mentioned, and a major motif, the resurrection, is omitted. In fact, the entire section (2 Thess 2, 3–12) is devoted to only one motif (*the times and seasons*) which refers to a period preceding the end of the world. Hence, it may be said that 2 Thess 2, 1–12 can be considered as a kind of appendix to the teaching presented by the apostle in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11. The discussion of the eschatological motif *the times and seasons* in 1 Thess 5, 1–3 had been overshadowed by consideration of the suddenness of the coming of the Lord, and for that reason the apostle found it unnecessary to discuss the events which will precede the parousia. This conviction was reviewed in the context of a problem concerning the false doctrine

of the Day of the Lord (2 Thess 2, 1–12). The attempt to solve this problem was the primary reason for writing the Letter. Taking into consideration all the above arguments, we do not accept the conclusion that there are differences between the eschatology of 1 Thess and the eschatology of 2 Thess.

The Apostle Paul in 1 Thess used doubts arising in Thessalonica to strengthen ties between him and the community and to present his systematic teaching concerning eschatological matters. The eschatology of Paul presented in 1 Thess 4, 13–5, 11 contains all the eschatological and apocalyptic motifs necessary to create a systematic and comprehensive eschatological teaching. Eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, which appeared in the eschatological presentation found in 1 Thess, were in the later writings of the apostle supplemented or more thoroughly explained depending on the actual need of the particular Christian community. Such was the case of *prodroms* in 2 Thess 2, 1–12 and the resurrection and transformation of the body in 1 Cor 15. All the eschatological and apocalyptic motifs, described and subsequently defined in the later writings of the apostle, are already present in his earliest writing.

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