

4. The Body of the First Letter to the Thessalonians

I. Introduction

A) The Body of the Letter responds to Thessalonians' lack of knowledge and their situation.

B) The structure has a nice rhetorical arrangement (a chiasm):

- 1) A wish prayer (3:11 -13), a transition to the body of the letter (A)
- 2) An exhortation (4:1-12) (B)
- 3) A bit of eschatology, an instruction about the Coming of the Lord (4:13-18) (C)
- 4) Another bit of eschatology, living in expectation of the Coming of the Day of the Lord (5:1-12)

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- 5) Another exhortation (5:12-22) (B')
- 6) A wish prayer (5:23) (A')

ii. An Exhortation on Holiness and Sibling Love (*Philadelphia*) (4:1-12)

A) Holiness (4:1-8)

- 1) Paul's pastoral attitude (4:1-2)
- 2) God's will and call, the holiness of believers lived out in the sexual aspect of their lives (4:3-7)
- 3) God's enabling gift of the Holy Spirit

B) Sibling love (4:9-12)

- 1) The importance of kinship language: love for one another and the outreach of love (4:9-12)
- 2) Self-reliance (4:13)

Hi. An Eschatological Instruction on the Coming of the Day of the Lord

A) The issue: A concern for those who have died (4:13a)

B) Paul's Response (4:13b-17)

- 1) Apocalyptic language
- 2) A socio-political metaphor 3) An exhortation

IV. Living in Expectation of the Coming of the Day of the Lord (5:1-11)

A) The suddenness and inevitability of the Coming of the Day of the Lord (5:1-3)

- 1) The metaphors
- 2) A critique of an imperial slogan 3) The Day of the Lord

(a) A prophetic motif

(b) The Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ

B) The Exhortation to Vigilance (5:4-8)

C) Believers are destined for salvation (being with the Lord, 5:9-10)

D) An exhortation (5:11)

v. A Community Exhortation (5:12-22)

A) Respect for leaders (5:12-13)

B) Concern for one another (5:14-22) **VL The Final Wish Prayer**

(5:23)

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1. What does Paul mean by the Thessalonians' call to holiness?
 2. How does Paul respond to the Thessalonians' concern for those who have died?
 3. What are believers to do until the Coming of the Day of the Lord?