

## **“An Overview”**

### **2 Thessalonians 1:1**

*Theme:* Believers are urged to remain purposefully occupied in serving Christ until Jesus comes.

#### **I. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE AUTHOR**

##### **A. His Identity - “Paul [and Silvanus and Timothy] ...”**

1. This book begins with the author identifying himself as **“Paul”** - a clear reference to Paul, the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ - cp. **Acts 17:1-4**
2. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey undertaken by the Apostle Paul as he identifies **“Silvanus”** or “Silas” and **“Timothy”** as two leaders who had been endeared to the Thessalonian believers.
  - a) **“Silvanus”** had been chosen by Paul as his traveling companion prior to his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey - cp. **Acts 15:40** - cp. **Acts 17:4, 10**.
  - b) **“Timothy”** likewise joined Paul and Silas at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey - cp. **Acts 16:1-3** - cp. **1 Thessalonians 3:2, 6**.
3. **“Paul”** is clearly the author as he refers to himself again in **1 Thessalonians 2:18** and provides 1<sup>st</sup> hand information of what transpired in his interaction with them - cp. **1 Thessalonians 2:1-2**.

##### **B. His Influence**

1. The 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey began with Paul & Barnabas disagreeing on the role of John Mark who had deserted them on their 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey at Pamphylia - **Acts 15:36-39**.
2. Paul replaced Barnabas with Silas (also called Silvanus) and they left and traveled through Syria and arrived in Derbe & Lystra and discovered Timothy who also went with them - **Acts 16:3**.
3. They wanted to head to Asia, but they were forbidden by the Lord - **Acts 16:6**
4. Then they wanted to head to Bithynia, but the Lord wouldn't let them - **Acts 16:7**
5. They then had what is called the “Macedonian Vision” - **Acts 16:9**
6. Thus, they headed to Macedonia landing in Neapolis and then heading to Philippi - **Acts 16:11-12**
  - a) Lydia is saved - v. 14

- b) Paul is beaten & imprisoned because of the hostility of the merchants who made their living off a demon possessed girl who Paul freed - vv. 18-19
  - c) Paul was freed from prison by means of an earthquake, but having refused to flee, led the Philippian jailer to Christ and taught those in his household who were old enough the Gospel, baptizing all who believed - vv. 31-33.
  - d) The officials of the city discovered that Paul was a Roman citizen and began begging him to forget about everything and leave the city.
7. They left and went to Thessalonica where there was a great response to the Gospel - mostly by Greeks and some "leading women" - **Acts 17:3-4**
  8. The Jews became jealous and gathered a mob to do away with Paul, but couldn't find him - v. 6
  9. The brothers sent Paul away to Berea where there was an even greater response to the Gospel, but the Thessalonian Jews found out that Paul was there, came to Thessalonica and stirred up a mob again - v. 13
  10. Paul was forced to leave, but Silas and Timothy remained behind as Paul went to Athens - v. 14-15
  11. After ministry in Athens, Paul proceeded to Corinth which is where he was when he received word from Timothy that the Thessalonians believers were remaining faithful - cp. **Acts 18:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:6**
  12. It was from Corinth that Paul wrote both 1 & 2 Thessalonians in AD 51 - making it among Paul's *first epistles*, about a year after the very first NT book of James and about 3-4 years before the next NT book of Galatians

## **II. THE IDENTITY OF THE AUDIENCE**

### **A. The Special Believers - "... to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ ..."**

1. Clearly, the "**church**" [ἐκκλησίᾳ]<sup>1</sup> in any location is the local manifestation of the Body of Christ - those "called out" of the world and to assemble as the manifestation of the redeemed saints in worship and service to God.

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<sup>1</sup>Eberhard Nestle et al., *The Greek New Testament*, 27th ed. (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, 1993), 1 Th 1:1.

2. This particular **“church”** was **“... of the Thessalonians”** - a reference to those who were saved initially through the ministry of Paul, then through Silvanus and Timothy’s ministries, and finally through the evangelistic efforts of the believers themselves.
3. The marvelous work of grace that enables one to have a relationship with God through the mediator, Jesus Christ is referenced in a somewhat unusual reference - **“... in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”**
  - a) The use of one preposition “in” to applied to both **“God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”** is an emphasis on the inextricability between the two and the equality of the two - cp. **Colossians 3:3**.
  - b) He uses the full name and titles of **“... the Lord Jesus Christ”** to convey His majesty, authority, and work:
    - (1) **“Lord”** [κύριος] - emphasizes Jesus as the Sovereign ruler to Whom all authority has been given.
    - (2) **“Jesus”** [Ἰησοῦς] - emphasizes the One who saves and emphasizes His humanity that qualified Him to take our place as a sacrifice for our sin.
    - (3) **“Christ”** [Χριστός] - emphasizes the Messianic role of Promised Redeemer who fulfilled His plan of redemption through His death, burial, and resurrection.
4. Hence, these Thessalonian believers were “genuine” - saints who had known the grace of God in redemption and reconciliation through faith in Christ Jesus.

## **B. The Spiritual Blessings - “... grace to you and peace.”**

1. This is a common greeting provided in various epistles, yet this is the first time that Paul wrote them.
2. **“Grace”** [χάρις] - refers to God’s favor, that which is undeserved yet granted generously through Christ Jesus in the forgiveness of sins.
3. **“Peace”** [εἰρήνη] - refers to the harmony and well-being that results from the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God - both the peace **with** God and the peace **of** God.
4. Paul’s expression of these blessings is descriptive of what He knows God wills for them as well as what God has given them already.

5. However, their peace had been disturbed by the assertions and false teaching by those claiming that they were already in the Day of the Lord; missing the Rapture and entering directly into the "Time of Jacob's Trouble."
6. Only several months after having sought to straighten out the Thessalonians eschatological confusion, he had to write again to correct not only their errant perspectives, but their reckless practices in light of those perspectives.
7. The essential theme of 2 Thessalonians is: Believers are urged to remain purposefully occupied in serving Christ until Jesus comes.

### **III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARGUMENT**

#### **A. Perseverance in Waiting for the Day of the Lord - 1:1-12**

1. The Progress in Perseverance - **vv. 2-5**
2. The Promise of Justice - **vv. 6-10**
3. The Priority in Perseverance - **vv. 11-12**

#### **B. Poise in Waiting for the Day of the Lord - 2:1-17**

1. The Timing of the Day of the Lord - **vv. 1-5**
2. The Tribulation in the Day of the Lord - **vv. 6-12**
3. The Trust re: the Day of the Lord - **vv. 13-17**

#### **C. Productivity in Waiting for the Day of the Lord - 3:1-18**

1. The Steadfastness of Christ - **3:1-5**
2. The Scandal of Laziness - **3:6-15**
3. The Supply of Grace - **3:16-18**