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## Article 53: Second Thessalonians at a Glance

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## SECOND THESSALONIANS AT A GLANCE

This book previews those momentous events associated with the return of Christ and the punishment of the antichrist, closing with the admonition to faithfully occupy the time until that day.

### BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

THE SIN OF MAN AND THE MAN OF SIN.

In 2 Thessalonians Paul writes of both.

- General facts concerning the sin of man (1:8-9; 3:6-15)
- Specific facts concerning the man of sin (2:1-12)

### FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Paul**. He was known as Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:11). This relentless enemy of Christians (Acts 8:3; 22:5, 19; 26:11; Gal. 1:13) would, following his conversion (Acts 9:3-9), become the greatest missionary, church planter, soul winner, and theologian in church history, authoring nearly half of the New Testament books!
2. What? The books of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.
3. When and where? Written in A.D. 52 from Corinth.
4. Why and to whom? To explain the Day of the Lord and the ministry of the future antichrist. Addressed to the church at Thessalonica.

### KEY EVENTS

1. Paul's praise and prayer for the Thessalonian church
2. Facts concerning the Day of the Lord and the antichrist
3. Rules in dealing with the disorderly

### KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Paul**, author of 2 Thessalonians and at least 12 other New Testament books, church planter, evangelist, missionary, and perhaps the greatest of all the apostles
2. **Man of sin**, Paul's title for the coming antichrist

### KEY PLACES

1. **Thessalonica**: a city in Macedonia, visited by Paul during his second missionary trip at which time he established a church there and would later write two epistles (1 and 2 Thessalonians) to that church

## UNIQUE FEATURES

1. This book is the shortest of Paul's epistles to local churches.
2. The book of 1 Corinthians was his longest to a local assembly.
3. The New Testament's two most extended passages dealing with the coming antichrist are 2 Thess. 2:1-12 and Rev. 13:1-14.
4. We learn the following facts regarding this evil man from these two passages:
  - His names and titles: the man of sin, the sin of perdition, the wicked one, the seven headed, ten horned beast (2:3, 8; Rev. 13:1).
  - His source of power: Satan himself (2:9; Rev. 13:2).
  - His blasphemy against God and the temple (2:4; Rev. 13:6, 12).
  - His ability to deceive (2:10; Rev. 13:14).
  - His power to work miracles (2:9; Rev. 13:14).
5. Many believe a passage in this epistle helps explain Jesus' mysterious prophecy made during His Mt. Olivet discourse:
  - Jesus' prediction  
*"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)"*  
(Mt. 24:15).
  - Paul's clarification  
*"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"* (2 Thess. 2:3, 4).
6. Second Thessalonians refers to the first of two evil "mysteries" in the Bible:
  - The mystery of iniquity (2 Thess. 2:7) referring to the appearance, godless activities and eventual destruction of the antichrist.
  - The mystery of Babylon (Rev. 17:5) referring to the organization, corruption, and eventual destruction of a false church.
7. In his writings Paul predicts on two occasions that angels will accompany Jesus' return.
  - During His pre-tribulation return (1 Thess. 4:16) **IN THE AIR!**
  - During His post-tribulation return (2 Thess. 1:7, 8) **TO THE EARTH!**
8. This marks the 8<sup>th</sup> time where Paul exhorts his readers to follow him as he followed Christ. These references are:
  - 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1
  - Gal. 4:12
  - Phil. 3:17; 4:9
  - 1 Thess. 1:5, 6; 2:10
  - 2 Thess. 3:7-9
9. Merrill Tenney summarizes both 1 and 2 Thessalonians: "Practically every major doctrine in the catalogue of faith is represented in these two small epistles. Although they were not written as doctrinal treatises, nor primarily to present the author's general theological views, they contain a well-rounded body of theological teaching. Paul and those who received his epistles believed in one living God (1 Thess. 1:9), the

Father (2 Thess. 1:2), who has loved men and has chosen them to enjoy His salvation (2 Thess. 2:16; 1 Thess. 2:4). He has sent deliverance from wrath through Jesus Christ, His Son (1 Thess. 1:10), and has revealed this deliverance through the message of the gospel (1 Thess. 1:5; 2:9; 2 Thess. 2:14). This message has been confirmed and has been made real by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 1:5; 4:8). The gospel concerns the Lord Jesus Christ, who was killed by the Jews (1 Thess. 2:15). He rose from the dead (1 Thess. 1:10; 4:14; 5:10). He is now in heaven (1 Thess. 1:10), but He will come again (1 Thess. 2:19; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1). To Him is ascribed deity, for He is called Lord (1 Thess. 1:6), God's Son (1 Thess. 1:10), and the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 1:1, 3; 5:28; 2 Thess. 1:1). Believers (1) receiving the word of God (1 Thess. 1:6), (2) turn from idols, serve God and wait for the return of Christ (1 Thess. 1:9-10). Their normal growth is in sanctification (1 Thess. 4:3, 7; 2 Thess. 2:13). In personal life they are to be clean (1 Thess. 4:4-6), industrious (1 Thess. 4:11-12), prayerful (1 Thess. 5:17), and cheerful (1 Thess. 5:16). Theoretically and practically the Thessalonian letters embody all the essentials of Christian truth" (*New Testament Survey*, p. 283).

## COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

### 1. **Second Thessalonians:**

- Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians to tell his converts they had not missed the rapture. He now writes this epistle assuring them they were not enduring the great tribulation.
- First Thessalonians emphasizes the return of Christ for His church!
- Second Thessalonians emphasizes the return of Christ with His church!

### 2. **Galatians:**

Both epistles warn believers against receiving so-called "additional" revelations from God (Gal. 1:8; 2 Thess. 2:8).

## TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS

1. Lord Jesus Christ. This full title for the Savior is found more times in Second Thessalonians (for its size) than in any other New Testament book, for a total of ten times! (1:1, 2, 9, 12; 2:1, 14, 16; 3:6, 12, 18)
2. Christ (3:5)
3. Lord of peace (3:16)