

2 Thessalonians 1:1–2

Introduction and Background

Paul's Admiration for the Thessalonians · 2 Thessalonians 1
Small Group Bible Study Series

Source: Dr. C. Norman Sellers ThD (SellersBibleInstitute.com; used by permission)
Editor: The Gospel Vault

① TEXT	② DEVOTIONAL	③ COMMENTARY	④ SELF-STUDY GUIDE
Foundation	Personal preparation	Teacher / Leader preparation	Group meeting
<i>Everyone</i>	<i>All group members</i>	<i>Teacher / Leader</i>	<i>Small group</i>

⑤ Application closes each study and draws from all sections above, plus FGR.docx.

① THE BIBLICAL TEXT

2 Thessalonians 1:1–2 · New King James Version (NKJV)

1 *Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

2 *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

② DEVOTIONAL

Personal preparation · Drawn from the teaching and outline

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” — 2 Thessalonians 1:2

The road to Thessalonica was not a straight one. A partnership broke apart. The Spirit said no to the south and no to the north. A midnight jail cell turned into a hymn-sing, and an earthquake turned a jailer’s despair into one simple question and one simple answer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Every closed door was steering the gospel toward a city that needed it.

And when Paul writes back to the church born on that road, he signs himself simply “Paul” — not the apostle giving orders, but the friend they loved, standing beside Silas and young Timothy.

Then he tells them where they live: “in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” That address gives security, love, and strength. Before a word about trouble, he hands them grace — favor in spite of demerit — and peace, the wholeness only God can give.

For Reflection

1. Where has God closed a door in your life that later turned out to be guidance?
2. What does it mean to you today that your life is “in God our Father”?
3. Which do you need most this week — to receive grace, or to rest in peace?

You are not first a problem to be corrected; you are a child to be greeted with grace.

③ COMMENTARY

Teacher preparation resource · Full text organized under outline headings

PROPOSITION

Before Paul says one word about persecution, prophecy, or correction, he reminds a young, suffering church where it came from and who it is. Born out of a winding missionary road and a gospel of simple faith, the church of the Thessalonians lives “in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” — and from both it receives grace and peace.

Outline: Paul's Admiration for the Thessalonians — 2 Thessalonians 1:1–12. This study develops the Introduction (1:1–2); I. A Word of Praise (1:3–4), II. A Word of Promise (1:5–10), and III. A Word of Prayer (1:11–12) follow in the coming studies. Shaded Study Notes are supplemental material drawn from the FGR resource library; all other text is the teacher's.

Introduction — Background to the Letter and the Greeting (1:1–2)

A. What Is So Attractive About the Thessalonian Church?

So what is so attractive about the Thessalonian church? Let me read — we're not going to do this section today; next Sunday. But here's what he says about them. In verse 6 of chapter 1 [1 Thessalonians 1:6–8], he says, “You became followers of us and the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all of Macedonia and Greece who believed. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Greece, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.”

Keep that in mind as we look at these verses. And we're going to look at the background today — the background in geography and the background in the text.

B. The Background Geographically — Acts 15:36–18:11

1. Paul and Barnabas Part Ways — Acts 15:36–41

Background geographically. Paul's first contact with the city was right after he came out of Philippi, as you remember. We'll talk about that. Paul was planning the second missionary trip when there arose a problem between him and Barnabas. You remember Barnabas went with him on the first missionary journey. And they had a problem, so large that they split up. And Paul chose Silas. And Barnabas took John Mark, but they went different directions. Still missionaries, but in different ways.

2. Timothy Joins the Team — Acts 16:1–3

Anyway, while visiting the churches of the first journey, South Galatia, Paul heard about one of his converts from the first time. It's great to do that. You go back to a place where you were, and there's one of your converts. There's somebody you helped, somebody you taught. And they're going on — they're going great. Well, he

learned about Timothy there, and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. Well spoken of. He's a young man, maybe even a teenager, late teens. But he was there, and so Paul said, "Oh, I'll add you. Why don't you go along?" So he went along.

3. The Spirit Closes Doors and the Macedonian Call — Acts 16:6–10

And then Paul traveled west to Asia Minor, modern Turkey, and went through there. Didn't need a passport at the time. And he traveled; he was trying to go minister somewhere in there. He hadn't been there before. And the Holy Spirit kept saying, "No, you don't go that way. Don't go south. Don't go north. Just keep going west." So he went west. And he came to Troas. And when he got to Troas — well, the water is there; the Aegean Sea is in front of me. What do I do now? And he had a dream. And in that dream, he saw a man from Macedonia saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." So they took that as being from the Lord and went over there. And Paul went to Philippi. Philippi was one of the chief cities in Macedonia. And he began to preach the gospel.

4. Philippi: The Slave Girl, the Jail, and the Gospel — Acts 16:16–34

a. The Demon-Possessed Girl

There was a demon-possessed girl. Do you remember this from Acts, probably? There was a demon-possessed girl that followed them around. And she kept saying, "These men are from the Most High God." Well, that's great. That's what they were. But Paul said, "No, we don't want that kind of publicity." And so he expelled the demon from her. And now she could no longer do what she was doing. And they hauled him into court, and they threw him in jail.

b. Midnight Songs and an Earthquake

Now, we remember while he was there in jail, with his feet in the stocks, an earthquake came. They were singing — singing praises to the Lord. Somebody said, "Let's sing." "Okay, somebody pass out the hymnbooks. I've got to have the hymnals. You can't sing without hymnals." No, no. They knew the hymns. They knew probably the Psalms, and they knew that, and they sang them. And while they did, an earthquake came.

c. The Jailer's Question and Paul's Gospel

And the jailer was responsible for all those people. The doors of the jail came open, and there they were. He assumed that everybody was gone. Why wouldn't they be? And we found out: oh no, they're still there. Paul said, "Do yourself no harm; we are all here." Well, and then the jailer asked Paul a question. You knew where I was going with this. "What must I do to be saved?" he said.

Remember, Paul in his first epistle said, if anybody brings you any other doctrine, any other gospel than that which we have delivered to you, let him be accursed [Galatians 1:8–9]. Well, what is Paul's gospel? Well, I'm going to follow around and find out what he says when somebody says, "How can I be saved?" What's Paul

going to say? Let's listen. This is it. This is the true gospel. And Paul said, "You don't." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, and your household." If they believe, they'll be saved.

So that was the gospel. And that's the gospel that we preach. And that's the gospel he preached when he went into Thessalonica. There it was. So he left there, because it was better for him to go than to stay there and be a problem for the church. So he left there and went to a couple of other places, but he wound up in Thessalonica — traveling west on the Egnatian Way, and that's the main highway between Rome and the east. So he went down that road to Thessalonica.

5. Thessalonica: Three Sabbaths — and More — Acts 17:1–9

Now, when he got there, he ministered the Word as usual. And it says [Acts 17:2], as his custom was, he preached three Sabbaths in the synagogue. Now that's only three weeks. And for that reason, some people would have said, "Oh, he was only there three weeks." I don't think so. He was in the synagogue three weeks. And so he taught both Jews and Gentiles, because Gentiles were there as proselytes in the synagogue. So Scripture says in Acts 17:4, "And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas."

Well expansion, growth, can be a problem. And the next thing you know, the Jews — the synagogue — became antagonistic to him. They moved the meetings to Jason's house right next door to the synagogue. That wasn't good enough, and so they still made problems for him while he was there. And he wasn't there long, but he was there more than that three weeks.

He taught them prophecy. "Can't have prophecy in church. People don't understand that. Why should we have prophecy in Sunday school? What are you doing?" Well, these people had just come to know the Lord, and Paul was telling them Jesus is coming, and preaching that to them, and it strengthened them — we'll see.

6. Berea, Athens, and Corinth — Acts 17:10–18:11

So Paul had to exit again. And he left — all of them, Paul, Silas, and Timothy — went on to Berea. Remember them? They were more noble than anywhere else, because they searched the Scriptures to see if the things that Paul said were true. That's a great thing to do. I'd like nothing better than somebody coming to me and saying, "What you said was this. I don't understand that. Is that true? Can you show me?" I don't say anything up here that I can't show you in the Bible. I would not do that. And that's what they were saying to him: "Paul, this is —" "Oh, yeah, that's right. You're right, Paul." Reading the Scriptures.

So Paul had trouble there too. And so Paul went on alone, because the Thessalonians came down to Berea — it was more south there — and they said . . . Paul left there. And they took him down, and took him to a ship, and he went on down to Athens. And from Athens he went to Corinth. All that you see in chapter 17.

And then in 18 he was there, and they joined him — Timothy and Silas joined him. And it was there that Paul wrote both epistles. And we don't know how long, but he was there probably more than a year in Corinth. That's the background of the book. That's how Paul came to Corinth and decided to write back to these Thessalonians.

Study Note — The Letter Behind the Letter: Why 2 Thessalonians Was Written

The teacher's geography brings Paul, Silas, and Timothy to Corinth, where Acts 18:11 records that Paul stayed "a year and six months." Most conservative scholars in the DTS tradition place both Thessalonian letters in that stay — 1 Thessalonians first, and 2 Thessalonians only a few months later, around A.D. 51 — which makes the two letters among the earliest of Paul's epistles.

Three new circumstances seem to have prompted the second letter. First, the persecution had not let up; it had intensified (1:4–7). Second, someone had unsettled the believers "either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us," claiming that "the day of Christ" — the Day of the Lord — had already come (2:1–2). Third, some in the church had stopped working and were living off others (3:6–12). So the same team that taught them prophecy in person (2:5, "when I was still with you I told you these things") now writes to steady them with more of it.

That is why the background matters: the believers who were told "Jesus is coming" in their first weeks of faith are now suffering, confused, and in need of the same patient, grace-centered teaching — and the letter opens, before any correction, with grace and peace.

Sources (FGR): Thomas L. Constable, Expository Notes on 2 Thessalonians (Plano Bible Chapel); Thomas L. Constable, "2 Thessalonians," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983); Charles R. Swindoll, Insights on 1 & 2 Thessalonians (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2022).

C. The Background in the Text — 1:1–2

So now we come to the text.

1. Paul and His Companions — 1:1a

And the text — we see, first of all, Paul and his companions.

a. Paul — Not "the Apostle," Just Paul

Now I find it very interesting that Paul says "Paul." What? Not Paul the apostle, not Paul the one God sent to you at all. No, just Paul. He writes "Paul the apostle" when he writes to the Galatians — they have some doctrinal errors. And to the Corinthians — they had some personal errors, some errors in conduct. And Paul wrote, "Paul the apostle. I'm going to tell you what to do, and you'd better do it. I'm an apostle." Not here. Here, it's Paul. Paul, their friend. Paul, the one they loved.

b. Silvanus — The Senior Member

And then also Silvanus — that's Silvanus, or Silas. He was the senior member of the church — of the group.

Study Note — Who Was Silvanus?

"Silvanus" is the Latin form of the name Luke shortens to "Silas" in Acts. Acts 15:22 calls him one of

the “leading men among the brethren” of the Jerusalem church; Acts 15:32 adds that he was a prophet; and Acts 16:37 shows that, like Paul, he was a Roman citizen. Years later Peter used him as the courier or secretary of 1 Peter (“By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him,” 1 Peter 5:12). He was with Paul in the Philippian jail (Acts 16:25) and in the Thessalonian synagogue (Acts 17:4), so the Thessalonians knew him as one of their own founders.

Sources (FGR): Constable, Expository Notes on 2 Thessalonians; Walvoord and Zuck, eds., The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament.

c. Timothy — The Leader in Training

And I like this one: Timothy. He was a leader in training. He was a very AWANA-like person. Later, he was dispatched by Paul to Philippi to help them. And then later on, he was pastor — pastor at Ephesus. But here, he’s in training. And Paul — remember, Paul wrote the pastoral epistles; two of those letters went to Timothy at Ephesus, First and Second. Oh, Timothy. So that’s Paul’s companions; that’s who they were. First part of verse 1.

Study Note — Timothy’s Report from Thessalonica

Timothy had a particular tie to this church. After Paul was forced out of Thessalonica, he sent Timothy back “to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith” (1 Thessalonians 3:2), and Timothy’s good report of their “faith and love” (1 Thessalonians 3:6) is what first moved Paul to write. His mother was a Jewish believer and his father a Greek (Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:5). When his name stands in the opening line of 2 Thessalonians, the readers would hear the name of the young man who had come back to stand with them in their trouble.

Sources (FGR): Constable, Expository Notes on 2 Thessalonians; Swindoll, Insights on 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

2. Paul and the Congregation — 1:1b–2

And then Paul and the congregation, in the rest of verse 1 and verse 2. He starts off with a very proper reading. He says, “To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

a. The Church — 1:1b

The church. That’s a special term, “church.” Do you know that it’s really a secular word? It’s been used even in the Old Testament. It’s used of any assembly of people. In fact, in Acts 19:32, it referred to the worshipers of Diana of the Ephesians — that those heathen worshipers got together, and it was called a church: an *ekklēsia*.

Well, how did it get to be used as the church? Jesus did it. Jesus took this secular word, and He said, “I will build My congregation; I will build My church.” In Matthew 16:18 He says — remember — “On this rock I will build My church,” the church universal. That includes every believer from Pentecost to the Rapture. “I will build My church” — universal. But then later, in Matthew 18:17, He said — remember, if a

person has a problem, the last thing we do is take it to the church. What church? Not the universal, not worldwide. No — to the local church. So there's that church.

And he says this is the church in Thessalonica. This is called a local church — the church that was there in Thessalonica.

b. In God Our Father — 1:1b

So he describes the church this way: in God the Father. This church is in God the Father. And that gives it security. It gives it love — the love of the Father. It gives it the strength of the Father. That's "in God the Father."

Study Note — "The Father" Becomes "Our Father"

Placed side by side, the two openings differ by one small word. In 1 Thessalonians 1:1 the church is "in God the Father"; in 2 Thessalonians 1:1 it is "in God our Father." Writing to believers whose suffering had deepened, Paul adds the family word. The security, love, and strength the teacher describes are not a distant theological fact; they belong to "us." This fits the Free Grace emphasis that a believer's standing in God's family is settled and personal from the moment of faith (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26), and is not reopened by hardship.

Sources (FGR): Constable, Expository Notes on 2 Thessalonians; Charles C. Bing, Simply by Grace: An Introduction to God's Life-Changing Gift (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009).

c. And the Lord Jesus Christ — 1:1b

But it's also in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the Son is also divine. He's called the Lord. This is a term for Jehovah, a term for God in the Old Testament. He's called *Kyrios* — the title of deity. So He's the Lord.

But He's also Jesus. It's the Old Testament word Joshua, which means salvation, deliverer — deliverer. And that's His human name. So He is God, He is man, but He also has a Messianic name, which is the Christ. He is Lord Jesus Christ. And "the Christ" means Messiah, and it means the Anointed One. And He is the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament to come to the Jewish people and to the world. So that's who the church is.

d. The Greeting: Grace and Peace — 1:2

He gives them the greeting: "Grace to you." Sounds like a radio program. "Grace to you." Unmerited favor — or, I think probably better, favor in spite of demerit. It isn't just that we don't deserve His grace. It's that we deserve His fury. We deserve His judgment, and He gives us grace.

And then there's the peace. The Greek word *eirēnē* — we get our name Irene from that. Irene should be a very peaceful lady. *Shalom*, of course, is the Old Testament word for peace. It means wholeness, prosperity, welfare. That's the word peace. So "grace to you and peace to you," he's saying.

e. The Source of the Greeting — 1:2b

Study Note — "From God Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"

Verse 2 names the source of the grace and peace: “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” In the Greek a single preposition, *apo* (“from”), governs both persons. Paul does not say grace comes from the Father through a lesser agent; he places the Lord Jesus Christ beside the Father as the one fountain of the blessing. The teacher’s point about *Kyrios* as “the title of deity” is confirmed by the grammar of the greeting itself.

The order matters too: grace first, then peace. Peace with God — the settled end of hostility — is received once for all the moment a person believes (Romans 5:1). The peace Paul wishes on these already-saved believers is the daily, experienced peace that guards the heart in trouble (Philippians 4:7). Fittingly, the letter closes the same way it opens: “Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way” (3:16) and “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all” (3:18). Grace and peace frame everything in between — the persecution of chapter 1, the prophecy of chapter 2, and the correction of chapter 3.

Sources (FGR): Constable, Expository Notes on 2 Thessalonians; Charles R. Swindoll, The Grace Awakening (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003); Charles C. Ryrie, Basic Theology, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999).

D. Closing: A Church That Stands Out

The church of Thessalonica was a great church. I think that maybe, from what we see in Scripture, it is probably the finest work that Paul did — the Lord did through Paul. We need to see that. And we’ll see a lot of things here, especially next Sunday. We’ll see how they worked and what they did. Just pagans coming to know the Lord, and then opening up and becoming the church that stands out in the New Testament.

Lord, thank You.

④ SELF-STUDY GUIDE

For use during the group meeting · Focused on the commentary text

Greek Word Study — 2 Thessalonians 1:1–2

Grammar and parsing: Blue Letter Bible. Definitions cite only the sources that add clarity (STR · THAY · VINE · LXX), with significance in context for every word.

Verse	Greek Word / English	Strong's # / Translit. / Form	Definition & Significance
v.1	Παῦλος <i>Paul</i>	G3972 <i>Paulos</i> Noun — Nom. Masc. Sg.	STR: “small, little”; Roman surname of the apostle. Significance: Paul writes his plain name with no title — he comes to this church as a friend, not as an authority enforcing correction (contrast Galatians 1:1).
v.1	Σιλουανός <i>Silvanus</i>	G4610 <i>Silouanos</i> Noun — Nom. Masc. Sg.	STR: Latin “of the forest”; the longer form of “Silas” (Acts 15:22). Significance: a leading Jerusalem believer, prophet, and Roman citizen who co-founded this church — the senior member of the team.
v.1	Τιμόθεος <i>Timothy</i>	G5095 <i>Timotheos</i> Noun — Nom. Masc. Sg.	STR: “honoring God” or “dear to God.” Significance: the leader in training, sent back to strengthen this very church (1 Thessalonians 3:2, 6).
v.1	ἐκκλησία <i>church, assembly</i>	G1577 <i>ekklēsia</i> Noun — Dat. Fem. Sg.	VINE: from ek (“out of”) and klēsis/kaleō (“a calling, to call”); used of any assembly, including the riotous crowd at Ephesus (Acts 19:32, 39, 41). LXX: regularly renders the Hebrew qāhāl, the assembly of Israel. Significance: Jesus took this ordinary word for His own people (Matthew 16:18); here it is a local church.
v.1	Θεσσαλονικεύς <i>of the Thessalonians</i>	G2331 <i>Thessalonikeus</i> Noun — Gen. Masc. Pl.	STR: an inhabitant of Thessalonica. Significance: the church is identified by its people, not a building — “the church of the Thessalonians.”
v.1	ἐν <i>in</i>	G1722 <i>en</i> Preposition (with Dat.)	Grammar: en with the dative marks sphere — the church’s sphere of life is “in” God and “in” Christ. Significance: this is the church’s true address; it gives the security, love, and strength the teacher describes.
v.1	θεός <i>God</i>	G2316 <i>theos</i> Noun — Dat. Masc. Sg.	STR: deity; the supreme Divinity. Significance: the church lives in the one true God, in sharp contrast to the many gods of pagan Thessalonica from which these believers had turned.

Verse	Greek Word / English	Strong's # / Translit. / Form	Definition & Significance
v.1	πατήρ <i>Father</i>	G3962 <i>patēr</i> Noun — Dat. Masc. Sg.	THAY: of God as the Father of believers, whom He has adopted. Significance: 2 Thessalonians 1:1 reads “our Father,” where 1 Thessalonians 1:1 reads “the Father” — a warmer, family word for a suffering church.
v.1	κύριος <i>Lord</i>	G2962 <i>kyrios</i> Noun — Dat. Masc. Sg.	LXX: the standard Greek rendering of the divine name YHWH (Jehovah) in the Old Testament. VINE: a title of deity when applied to Christ. Significance: calling Jesus Kyrios places Him with the Father as God.
v.1	Ἰησοῦς <i>Jesus</i>	G2424 <i>Iêsous</i> Noun — Dat. Masc. Sg.	STR: of Hebrew origin (Yehoshua, Joshua), “Jehovah is salvation.” Significance: His human name announces His mission — salvation, deliverer.
v.1	Χριστός <i>Christ</i>	G5547 <i>Christos</i> Noun — Dat. Masc. Sg.	STR: “anointed,” from chriō (to anoint); the Messiah. Significance: His Messianic title — the Anointed One promised to Israel and to the world.
v.2	χάρις <i>grace</i>	G5485 <i>charis</i> Noun — Nom. Fem. Sg.	THAY: kindness that bestows on a person what he has not deserved. Usage: the ordinary Greek letter-greeting chairein (“greetings, rejoice”) gives way in Paul to charis. Significance: favor in spite of demerit — we deserve judgment and receive grace.
v.2	εἰρήνη <i>peace</i>	G1515 <i>eirēnē</i> Noun — Nom. Fem. Sg.	LXX: the regular translation of Hebrew shālôm — wholeness, welfare, prosperity. Significance: peace with God is settled at faith (Romans 5:1); the peace wished here is the believer’s experienced peace in trial.
v.2	ἀπό <i>from</i>	G575 <i>apo</i> Preposition (with Gen.)	Grammar: one preposition governs both “God our Father” and “the Lord Jesus Christ.” Significance: Father and Son are presented together as the single source of grace and peace — a quiet witness to Christ’s deity.

Grammar Abbreviation Key

Cases: Nom. · Gen. · Dat. · Acc. · Voc. | Number: Sg. · Pl. | Gender: Masc. · Fem. · Neut.

Verb Mood: Ind. · Imp. · Subj. · Opt. · Inf. · Ptc. | Tense: Pres. · Imperf. · Fut. · Aor. · Perf. · Plpf. | Voice: Act. · Mid. · Pass. |

Person: 1st/2nd/3rd Sg./Pl.

Hebrew Word Study: not included this week. The teaching mentions shalom and the name Joshua in passing, but no Hebrew term is a developed point of the message.

Study Questions

Part 1 — From the Commentary

Outline Point	Key Truth
Background — the road to Macedonia	Paul's second journey ran through a split with Barnabas, the addition of Timothy, closed doors in Asia, and the Macedonian call (Acts 15:36–16:10).
Philippi	A demon expelled, a jail, an earthquake, and the gospel in one sentence: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).
Thessalonica	Three Sabbaths in the synagogue and more; Jews and God-fearing Greeks believed; opposition followed; Paul taught them prophecy (Acts 17:1–9).
Berea to Corinth	The Bereans searched the Scriptures; Paul went on to Athens and Corinth, where both letters were written (Acts 17:10–18:11).
Paul and his companions — 1:1a	Just "Paul" — friend, not apostle-in-authority; Silvanus the senior member; Timothy the leader in training.
Paul and the congregation — 1:1b	Ekklēsia: a secular word for an assembly, taken by Jesus for His church — universal and local; this church lives in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
The greeting — 1:2	Grace is favor in spite of demerit; peace (eirēnē / shalom) is wholeness and welfare; both come from the Father and the Son together.

Part 2 — Study Questions

1. The teacher points out that Paul writes simply "Paul," not "Paul the apostle." Why does that matter here, and how does it compare with Galatians and Corinthians?

Leader answer: When writing to the Galatians (doctrinal errors) and the Corinthians (errors in conduct), Paul used his apostolic title because he needed to speak with authority. To the Thessalonians he is "Paul, their friend. Paul, the one they loved." The plain name signals relationship and affection with a church that was doing well.

2. What is the background of the word "church" (ekklēsia), and what two senses of "church" did Jesus use?

Leader answer: Ekklēsia was a secular word for any assembly — even the worshipers of Diana in Acts 19:32. Jesus took the word for His own: the church universal in Matthew 16:18 (every believer from Pentecost to the Rapture), and the local church in Matthew 18:17. The church in Thessalonica is a local church.

3. What does it give the church to be “in God our Father,” and what small change does 2 Thessalonians make from 1 Thessalonians?

Leader answer: According to the teacher, being in God the Father gives the church security, love, and strength. 2 Thessalonians 1:1 says “our Father” where 1 Thessalonians 1:1 says “the Father” — a family word for believers whose suffering had increased (Study Note).

4. Explain each part of the name “the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Leader answer: “Lord” (Kyrios) is the title of deity, used in the Old Testament for Jehovah. “Jesus” is the Old Testament Joshua, meaning salvation or deliverer — His human name. “Christ” means Messiah, the Anointed One prophesied to come to the Jewish people and to the world. He is God, He is man, and He is Messiah.

5. How does the teacher define grace, and what is the meaning of peace? Why does grace come before peace?

Leader answer: Grace is unmerited favor — better, “favor in spite of demerit”: we deserve His fury and judgment, and He gives us grace. Peace (eirēnē; Hebrew shalom) means wholeness, prosperity, welfare. Grace is the source; peace is the result. Peace with God is settled at faith (Romans 5:1); the peace of the greeting is the daily peace believers need in trouble (Study Note).

Part 3 — Passage Summary

Verse	Phrase	Summary
1:1a	“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy”	The founding team writes together — Paul as friend, Silvanus as senior member, Timothy as leader in training.
1:1b	“To the church of the Thessalonians”	A local assembly, called out by the gospel from a pagan city.
1:1c	“in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”	The church’s true address: security, love, and strength in the Father, and life in the divine, human, Messianic Son.
1:2a	“Grace to you and peace”	Favor in spite of demerit, and the wholeness that grace produces.
1:2b	“from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”	Father and Son together are the one source of every blessing.

⑤ APPLICATION

Closes the study · personal & corporate

1. Live at Your True Address

2 Thessalonians 1:1 — “To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Source: ③ Commentary, Introduction C.2.b–c and Study Note “The Father Becomes Our Father”; FGR — Bing, Simply by Grace.

The Thessalonians lived in a city full of idols and hostility, but their real address was “in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” That address gave them security, love, and strength. It is the same for every believer: the moment you believed in Jesus Christ, you were placed in Him, and nothing in your circumstances can move you out. Trouble may change your street; it cannot change your standing.

Reflection: *When pressure comes, do you think of yourself first by your circumstances, or by your address in Christ?*

Practical Step: Write “in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” on a card and keep it where you will see it each morning this week.

2. Receive Favor in Spite of Demerit

2 Thessalonians 1:2 — “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Source: ③ Commentary, Introduction C.2.d; ④ Greek Word Study (charis, eirēnē); FGR — Swindoll, The Grace Awakening.

Grace is not only that we do not deserve God’s kindness — it is that we deserve His judgment, and He gives us kindness instead. Eternal life is received that way: as a free gift, by faith alone in Christ alone. And the daily peace Paul wishes on believers flows from that same grace. We do not earn peace by performing better; we enjoy it by resting in what God has freely given.

Reflection: *Is there an area where you are still trying to earn what God has already given?*

Practical Step: Each day this week, thank God by name for one specific grace you did not deserve.

3. Search the Scriptures Like the Bereans

Acts 17:11 — “they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”

Source: ③ Commentary, Introduction B.6.

The teacher said he would like nothing better than someone asking, “Is that true? Can you show me?” The Bereans were called noble because they tested even an apostle’s words against the Scriptures. Healthy teaching welcomes that kind of question, and healthy learners ask it. This study is meant to send you back to your Bible, not to replace it.

Reflection: *Do you tend to accept what you hear, or do you check it against the Word?*

Practical Step: Read Acts 16:1–17:15 this week and mark each place where God guided the missionaries.

4. Trust the Closed Doors

Acts 16:6–7, 9 — “they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia . . . the Spirit did not permit them . . . ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’”

Source: ③ Commentary, Introduction B.3; ② Devotional.

Paul was not wandering when the Spirit said “no” to the south and the north. Each closed door narrowed the path until it led to Troas, the Macedonian call, Philippi, and Thessalonica. A church that would “sound forth” the word in every place came out of a series of disappointments. God’s refusals are often His directions.

Reflection: *Which closed door in your life are you still resenting, and could it be guidance?*

Practical Step: Pray this week about one closed door, asking the Lord to show you the open one He may be pointing you toward.

End of Study · 2 Thessalonians 1:1–2