

WHICH  
MESSIAH  
WILL YOU  
MEET?



# WHICH MESSIAH WILL YOU MEET?

*Spiritual Survivor Man Series*  
*1 & 2 Thessalonians*

Johnny A. Palmer Jr.



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# INTRODUCTION



I remember watching a TV show when I was just a small boy called *To Tell the Truth*. There were three persons, each claiming to be the same person. Of course only one of them was who he claimed to be. There was a panel that asked various questions to each of the three, seeking to identify who was really the person in question. Then that moment of truth—“Will the real \_\_\_\_\_ please stand up!” They would take a few minutes fidgeting around and then it happened, the real \_\_\_\_\_ stood up, and as a result, the others were exposed for the frauds they were.

History is littered with those claiming to be Israel’s long awaited Messiah, but one came along who was not forgotten; that was the Lord Jesus Christ. He came, lived a perfect life, died on the cross for the sins of the world, rose from the dead, and then ascended back to glory with a promise that He would return again. How exciting is that?

Before He does, another will come forth claiming to be the Messiah and will be so successful that he will end up deceiving the entire world. Now, we can never ever set dates, because that is not in accordance with the Word of God. But I do believe that this messiah is likely alive somewhere on planet earth, waiting to be revealed in God’s good time. There are many messiahs but only two worth mentioning. There are two Christs—the Lord Jesus Christ and the Antichrist.

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A choice is now set before you; you can receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior today or be deceived by the Antichrist tomorrow. As the song goes, “Which way will you choose? Which way will you choose! You’ve got everything to gain; you’ve got everything to lose.”<sup>1</sup>

This book is divided into two sections; the first one has to do with waiting for the real Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is taken from a study of 1 Thessalonians. The last section has to do with waiting for the false messiah, the Antichrist, which is taken from a study of 2 Thessalonians. The only way to really benefit from this book is to set it aside, open your Bible, and read 1 Thessalonians over and over and over again. Then begin reading the first part of this book. When you’re finished reading part one, then set this book down again and go to 2 Thessalonians and read, read, read, and re-read! Then read part two of this book and be prepared for a blessing!

I have several guns for which I have had to sight the scopes. It is a matter of windage and elevation. This book is a matter of alliteration and illustrations! Sorry, I just can’t help myself! I love alliteration, it helps me remember things. And as for illustrations, a message without illustrations is like a house without windows! I believe they help us see and understand God’s truth. So, enjoy! My only prayer is that this book will bring all the glory where it belongs—to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

PART ONE  
**MEETING THE CHRIST**



## CHAPTER 1

# THE PERSON WE ARE WAITING FOR



Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

—1 Thessalonians 1:1

### Jesus' Authorized Authority

One of our Lord's spokesmen was the apostle Paul, he and the Twelve were authorized as God's spokesmen in a special way. They were used by God's spirit to write the New Testament; this authoritative Word is vital because the phony messiahs will also have their phony spokesmen. I remember reading something Erma Landis wrote. It seems people living in the vicinity of a hat factory in Denver, Pennsylvania had set their timepieces by the factory sirens. These sirens were eventually retired, but someone asked the man who sounded the sirens how he knew the exact time to sound them. He pulled out a Mickey Mouse watch from his pocket and they both had a good laugh.<sup>1</sup> Many so-called experts today are not the experts that they claim to be. But such was not the case with the apostle Paul and others who wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit (2 Peter 1:20–21; 2 Tim. 3:16–17). Therefore, their authority was not related to personal eloquence or handsome appearance or some other human attribute (2 Cor. 10:10).

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Then we have His spokesmen's *men*, easy for you to say! These were men who accompanied Paul and were involved with him in, ministering to those at Thessalonica—men like Silvanus, a man who was by Paul's side through thick and thin. He was there singing with Paul from a dark damp prison at Philippi.

Of course there was Timothy, one of Paul's chief disciples who had been with Paul almost from the beginning to the end. Always faithful to go and do as directed, he can rightly be compared to a postage stamp, in that its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing till it gets there.

Next, there is the spokesman's mission. His mission was to establish local churches, then helping them to grow and get the gospel out. What is missing in our world today is a sense of meaning and purpose—a mission if you will. You can make money, become successful, and live in the best of health, but without a mission in life it all seems so empty. Ronald Reagan lacked that sense of purpose until his close encounter with death in 1981. He told his son Michael, "I believe God spared me for a purpose. I want you to know that I've made a decision to recommit the rest of my life and the rest of my presidency, to God."<sup>2</sup>

### Jesus' Deity

The Lord Jesus is seen in His equality with the Father; Paul uses only one preposition followed by the two nouns. His identity is seen in the words *the Lord* which is a translation of the Old Testament word *Yahweh*. In Paul's day the world was dominated by Caesar worship. Rome allowed people to worship about any god they wanted to, as long as they confessed Caesar as Lord. Christians refused to do this, as that title was reserved for the only one worthy of it—the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is God, the second person of the Trinity, and all others are counterfeit, false messiahs (2 Cor. 11:4).

Ten-year-old Lawrence Shields was picking through a bucket of dirt at a commercial gem mine in North Carolina when he found an interesting rock. "I just like the shape of it," he said. It turned out to be a 1061-carat sapphire. Lawrence and his parents say they've been told it could be worth more than \$35,000.<sup>3</sup> How many today

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walk past Jesus Christ with ignorance and indifference, viewing Him as a lump of good teacher or a lump of prophet or a lump of descent humanity. But He is gold! He is God!

### Jesus' Humanity

In Jesus' day, Jesus was a common name among the Jews. It is a name which focuses upon our Lord's humanity. The Lord Jesus is not only God but also man—fully God and fully man in one person! We see this remarkable person in the gospel who on the one hand became hungry but on the other, supernaturally feeds the multitudes with a little boy's lunch. We see one who was thirsty and yet could turn mere water into wine. He has to get into a boat to get across the lake but then walks on top of that same lake. He will experience death but will also be raised from the dead. He is the fabulous and totally unique God/man in the mystical union of one person. That is simply amazing!

### Jesus in His Expectancy

Notice He is the Lord Jesus Christ. That word *Christ* is equivalent to the Hebrew word *Messiah*, the anointed one. Jews were promised and looked expectantly for this promised Messiah for centuries. They were not looking for an event but a person; there is a vast difference between going to the airport and looking for a plane to land verses looking for a loved one to step off that plane. They were looking for *the* Messiah, and He came as promised, but amazingly, Israel temporarily missed her Messiah.

In contrast, the church which began on the day of Pentecost was made up of Jews and Gentiles who believed that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah. Believers are people who have placed their faith in His person and work (John 1:12). As a result, we are expecting Him to come again. This coming for us could happen at any moment, on any given day. We should be as excited as a Jewish bride after her betrothal.

There were two wonderful stages in a Jewish marriage. First there was the betrothal, a binding agreement to be wed. Second there was the actual day of the wedding ceremony. These two

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stages were separated by a period of time. Our betrothal to Christ has already taken place, it took place on the day we trusted the Lord Jesus as our Savior. But the wedding ceremony has yet to come. That will only happen after the Lord has taken us out of here (John 14:1–3).

### Jesus' Prosperity

The Lord gives us many things, and one of them is what we might call *location*. We are placed *in* Christ. Everything we have as believers is in the light of being in Him. We trusted in Him for salvation, we now live in Him every day of our lives, our good works are done in His power, and everything is in Christ (Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3).

And we are now referred to as “His own possession” (Titus 2:14). One way this word is translated is *peculiar*, and my wife says that is an apt description of me! But the word really has nothing to do with being weird, freaky, or a little on the strange side. No, it actually comes from three words. One is *around* like a circle. The others are *to be*.<sup>4</sup> This sounds like something from Shakespeare, I know. It might help to draw a circle on a piece of paper and then put an X in the middle of it. The circle has the X surrounded, and in the same way, we are surrounded—by God Himself! We belong to Him, we are His prosperity, and we are His possession. That was not only true for the church of the Thessalonians in God but is true of every true believer.

People are always talking about the need for the lost to invite Jesus into their lives. Salvation is not so much inviting Jesus into one's life—it is God, through Spirit baptism, placing our lives into the sphere of His life (1 Cor. 12:13). And of course, it is also wonderfully true that the Lord Jesus lives in us (Col. 1:27).

They say, give your life to Jesus, but what on earth would Jesus want with our pathetic little lives? No, the focus is on getting His life into us and placing us into the sphere of that life. Wow! Talk about a hiding place. In an interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine, Johnny Depp said, “Covering myself up in makeup, it's easier to look at someone else. It's easier to look at some else's face than



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your own, I think for everyone. You wake up in the morning, and you brush your teeth, and you're like, 'Ugh, that idiot again. You're still here? What do you want?' Hiding: I think it's important. It's important for you—for whatever's left of your sanity, I guess."<sup>5</sup>

Truth is, there is not enough makeup on the entire planet to bring meaning to our lives or to hide under. But we can find a hiding place in Christ and then, and only then, will we find a life that is really worth living (Col. 3:1–4).

“...Grace to you and peace”

(1 Thess. 1:1)

Another word that goes along with the concept of real prosperity is *allocation*—an allocation of grace and peace. We're talking about God's gift of unmerited and undeserved riches which is basically what grace is all about. As is commonly said, His grace is God's riches at Christ's expense—the result of entering into such a storehouse is peace. Knowing that Jesus' blood cleanses from all sin and that the very righteousness of Christ is placed on our account when we receive the Lord Jesus Christ, brings peace both with God and within the very depths of our souls. Life is like being tossed into the middle of a raging storm at sea, but life in Christ is like going into the very depth of the triune God! Our peace is tied to God Himself. As long as God is doing OK, we find ourselves living in the OK Corral without the gun fire!

If we are believers and are not experiencing this person, it simply means we have taken our eyes off the prize. Like the man I read about who had purchased a painting at a flea market in France shortly after WWII. He stored it in his attic, and there it sat for decades. But the day came when he decided to get it appraised, and it turned out to be an original Vincent Van Gogh worth millions.<sup>6</sup>

Every believer already has a treasure within, but that treasure has to become the focus of our attention. When that happens, you realize that He is not only in you but will one day be coming for you, and that is the person we should be waiting for, each and every day of our lives!