

**The proposition that the 2 Thessalonians was forged in 132AD
by a Thessalonian priest.**

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There have been lot of arguments discussing the authenticity of the 2 Thessalonians. Many Scholars concluded (due to many observations) that it is a forgery. I am going here to add one more observation into the list by highlighting an angle that was probably missed.

I need to give credit to Joseph Turmel (1859 - 1943) who probably was the first to link this letter to Bar-Kokhba revolt, and the model that I am presenting here is not very far from his model.

[Reference: Introduction by Neil Godfrey, <https://vridar.org/2011/05/31/identifying-the-man-of-sin-in-2-thessalonians/>]

The Second Thessalonians is a letter that is attributed to Paul for the Thessalonian Christians. The main objective of this letter is a discussion about the return of Jesus in 2.1: “Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him”, and the narratives related to the antichrist: the “man of sin”.

So, the explicit objective of the letter is: Jesus will not return until the arrival of the antichrist. However, it does feel that the implicit objective is to affirm that Jesus didn't return back; because the antichrist didn't appear yet. This imply that some Thessalonians thought that Jesus have already returned back. This is the assumption that we will examine here.

This letter has been mentioned by many of the early church fathers including Justin and Polycarp. Therefore, this letter was compiled before 155AD.

If we assumed that this letter was compiled about 100AD then this letter makes no sense; what is the true objective of the forger!

If we looked at the main events of Christianity from the First Thessalonians until 155AD then we can highlight the following:

#60AD: The chasm between Paul and James the Just.

#70AD: The destruction of the Temple.

#132AD: The revolution of the Jewish people under the leadership of Simon Bar-Kokhba, and the declaration of Bar-Kokhba to be the Messiah (Christ).

#135AD: The failure of the Bar-Kokhba revolt and re-building the temple for worshipping Jupiter the supreme God of the Romans.

1\$ Now ... it is hard to accept that the 2 Thessalonians is related to the first event (60AD) because this would imply that the antichrist is none other than James the Just. And even if Paul and his followers at 60AD were very angry from James, still, it is hard to accept that they would regard James to be the “man of sin”: They might regard him as foolish, irrational, and stubborn, but I don’t think they would regard him the “man of sin”.

2\$ We cannot really fit the letter objective (Jesus will not return until the arrival of the antichrist) with the second event (70AD), because the temple was left there without being used. If the letter was forged for this event, then it would probably highlight that Jesus will be returning back after the destruction of the temple.

3\$ Let us jump to the fourth event (135AD) which is the model of “Joseph Turmel”: Turmel model highlight that the forgery was aimed to boast the Christians for the cruelty of Bar-Kokhba against them. Also, there is another possible model which is to say that the antichrist is Hadrian (the Roman emperor) as he entered the temple as a God.

But there is no need to forge a letter for this event: The end of Bar-Kokhba revolt was actually a triumph for the Christian faith as they can clearly demonstrate that this revolt verifies the covenant has been ended between God and the Jewish people and a new covenant has been initiated between God and the Christian people. Therefore, there was no need to forge a letter for this particular event.

4\$ Let us return to the third event (132AD) which I think represents the best model. This model does follow Turmel’s thoughts but from a different angle, which I am presenting here through the following proposed scenario:

In 132-133AD, the Jewish revolt against Rome was at its zenith, and it seemed that the Jews are going to be victorious against the Romans the same as they did against the Greeks 270 years ago. As Bar-Kokhba declared himself to be the Messiah and as he was gaining a lot of victories, then I can assume that many of the Jewish Christians thought that Simon Bar-Kokhba is the true Messiah, and he is the king like David. They might have probably thought that he was the incarnate of Jesus (even if Bar-Kokhba himself didn’t know about it), and this shouldn’t be surprising: when simplistic people chat between themselves on hectic times about hectic events then we should expect some weird claims and thoughts. I can also assume that some of them might have started to question if Jesus was the true Messiah.

So, in order to maintain the unity of the church (as best as possible), a Thessalonian priest forged a letter in the name of Paul, probably using the same method described in 2 Kings 22 were Jewish scholars about 620BC suddenly discovered some missing laws of Moses in the Temple.

[For more details about the 2 Kings 22, return to the post of Dennis Folds at: <https://ehrmanblog.org/a-major-forgery-in-the-hebrew-bible-guest-post-by-platinum-member-dennis-folds/>].

I assume that this priest was certain that Bar-Kokhba will win, and the Jewish people will prevail over the Romans, and the Temple will be rebuilt, and then Jesus will return back. But history didn't follow as he thought.

However, the 2 Thessalonians has already been accepted as authentic, therefore, many believed (and many still do) that the temple needs to be rebuilt and the antichrist needs to appear before Jesus return.

The end of the proposed scenario

Examining all the serious events between about 50AD to 155AD and looking for a fit between the 2 Thessalonians and these events, then I think the event that has the most fit with this letter is the event in 132AD as described in the proposed scenario.