

**FROM ROMAN POLITICS TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY:
THE TRANSFORMATION OF CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL
TERMINOLOGY INTO A NEW THEOLOGICAL TERMINOLOGY
IN ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS**

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Abstract. This article presents certain aspects of the theological manner in which St. Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians deals with the political theology and terminology of the Roman officials of Thessaloniki. The terms to which we refer are: "Lord", "presence", "appearance", "response" and "wreath-bearing". These terms relate, in the Greco-Roman world, especially in the writings of Josephus and in the Greek Inscriptions, to the religious life of the citizens and mainly to the visit of kings and leaders of a certain town. St. Paul does not merely allude to the political terminology in Thessaloniki, but also clearly takes a stand, by contrasting the Roman "lords" with the Lord Jesus Christ, the "presence" of the Roman officials to the Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ as Judge, anticipated by the faithful, the "response" of Roman citizens with the meeting of the resurrected Christians, the "wreath-bearing" during the meeting with the Emperor with his own "wreath of glory", which is his pride about the Thessalonians on the Presence of the Lord..

Keywords: Political theology and terminology of the Roman officials in St. Paul's time, First Letter to the Thessalonians, "Lord", "Presence", "Appearance", "Response", "Wreath-bearing".

In this brief article, I shall present certain aspects of the theological manner in which St. Paul deals with the political theology and terminology of the Roman officials of Thessaloniki. I shall do that on the basis of the First Letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, which is the first text of the New Testament, and generally the first Christian document.

In this way, it will be shown that the first Christian sample of writing does not constitute a convenient system of ethics or morality, or an agreeable and soothingly tranquilizing ideology, nor is it an utopian philosophy referring to future events. On the contrary, it is a text full of nerve and courage dealing with topics of the everyday life of the citizens of a city of the Roman Empire who had become ardent believers in the new faith, and who were at the same time daily affected by the challenge of the terminology - and not only by the terminology - of the Roman political atmosphere which enveloped all aspects of life at that time.

The message, which St. Paul, along with Silvanos and Timothy, conveys to the first European towns and cities, Philippi and then to Thessaloniki, refers not merely to the expected Son of God, „who rescues us from God's anger that is coming", but also to the service of „the true and living God" (I Thess. 1,9) in the