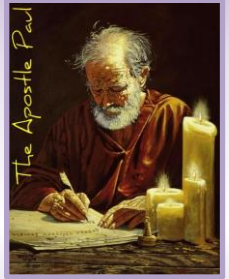


# THESSALONIANS

## There Is Hope!



### Lesson 04: Working Hope: Part II ... [1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-20]

#### PREVIEW

Paul encourages the Thessalonian believers to endure in the face of their persecution. He reminds them that God's wrath will come to their oppressors. Paul then expresses his longing to minister to them again and that he takes great joy in the hope/confidence that they will be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming - the Blessed Hope (Titus 2:13).

#### RECEIVING THE WORD OF GOD: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-16

In verse 13 Paul declares the reason for his never ending gratitude to God, namely for the Thessalonian believers proper reception of the Word of God. This proper reception involved two believer actions, (1) Hearing the Word and (2) Welcoming the Word. Once these two actions are satiated, the Holy Spirit performs the act of effectively working in the believer – bearing fruit. Notice that according to Paul, the Thessalonians recognized the message they heard, from Paul and his team as the true Word of God and not just the words of men. Paul's preaching was anointed by God.

#### IT'S ALL IN HOW YOU RECEIVE GOD'S WORD!

In Matthew 13 Jesus gives us the parable of the soils and the seed to illustrate the different types of receptions, (represented by the soils) to the Word of God, (represented by the seed).

*"That you have not perceived spiritual things is true; but it is no proof that there are none to perceive. The whole case is like that of the Irishman who tried to upset evidence by non-evidence. Four witnesses saw him commit a murder. He pleaded that he was not guilty, and wished to establish his innocence by producing forty persons who did not see him do it. Of what use would that have been? So, if forty people declare that there is no power of the Holy Ghost going with the word, this only proves that the forty people do not know what others do know."*

-- Spurgeon ... On Receiving the Word of God

In verse 14 Paul states that the Thessalonians became imitators or followers of the true churches of God (in Christ) that were in Judea because of their suffering they experienced at the hands of their own countrymen; just as the true Judean churches were experiencing. The believers in Thessalonica had properly received the Word of God, they were "born-again" and the Holy Spirit was working through them; their example was heard throughout the region. With this recognition came persecution, at the hands of the Jews and their own countrymen.

In verse 15 Paul takes it to another level, he charges the Jews (Judeans) as having (1) killed the Lord Jesus (2) killed their own prophets and (3) persecuted Paul and his missionary team (Silas & Timothy). By such actions Paul concludes (1) the Jews are not pleasing God (rhetorically understated for effect) and (2) the oppressor's action are contrary to all men.

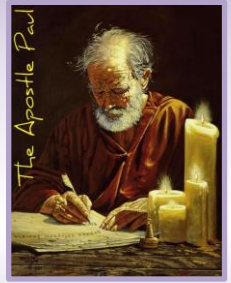
#### WHO KILLED JESUS?

The Jews had their part, the Gentiles (represented by Roman authorities) had their part, however, the truth is I killed Jesus – it was my sins that led Him to Calvary's cross; it was out of His great love for me that He remained pinned to the cross; not nails, but love held Him there.

In verse 16 Paul continues on with his indictment of the Jews who are persecuting him and his teams. In particular he states the oppressors are forbidding communication with the Gentiles, thereby preventing them from becoming saved. The oppressors are filling up their measure of sin, like the filling of a measuring cup, which will result in the unmitigated wrath of God on them. Note the "wrath" of God referenced here in this verse is not the same as the "replacement" by God, as proponents of the Replacement Theology heresy deceptively advocate (Romans 9 [Israel's Past], Romans 10 [Israel's Present] and Romans 11 [Israel's Future]).

# THESSALONIANS

## There Is Hope!



### Lesson 04: Working Hope: Part II ... [1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-20]

#### THE HOPE AND THE HINDRANCE: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-18

In verse 17 Paul expresses his eagerness and great desire to see the Thessalonian believers *“face-to-face”*. He shares that his team were taken away from them for a short time. He qualifies this absence as *“in presence”* but *“not in heart”* – Paul was always mindful of them and prayed for them without ceasing. In the Greek the expression for *“taken away”* conveys the meaning of *“being orphaned”* or *“deprived of parents”* – a deeply emotional separation. Notice that even though Paul had not spent much time in Thessalonica, he had developed deep relationships with the brethren there. Even the most casual reading of the Thessalonian epistles will reveal the great love Paul had for the brethren in the church of Thessalonica. We can learn a lot from the example of Paul and his love for the brethren; just as Jesus had commanded in John 13:35. Love for one another is the distinctive of the true believer in Christ. Are Christ’s disciple?

<sup>35</sup> By this **all** will **know** that **you** are **My disciples**, if **you** have **love** for **one another**.”

--- John 13:35 ... NKJV

Verse 18 begins with a *“therefore”*, so we must ask the question *“what is it there for”*. The *“therefore”* in this verse links to the great desire to be with the Thessalonian brethren, given in the previous verse. Paul is saying because of our great desire to see you face-to-face, we wanted to come to you. Not only did we want to come to you, but we made several attempts at doing just that, but were hindered by Satan. The word *“hinder”* in the Greek conveys the idea of *“making the way impassable by breaking up the road”*; *“the thwarting of efforts made”*.

Notice that Paul refers to Satan as a real personage – not a fable or a myth. The Bible teaches that Satan was once a powerful archangel named Lucifer who fell because of pride (Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28). Pride was the root-cause of Lucifer’s demise, and we are taught

throughout scripture that God hates pride. We are admonished that *“pride comes before a fall”*, and that *“God resists the proud, but give grace to the humble”*. God wants us to be humble and not prideful.

Notice Satan took deliberate steps to hinder Paul and his team from spreading the gospel. Understand that Satan (the devil) and his minions are the enemies of your soul. We are not to underestimate nor overestimate him as an adversary. We are to be sober and vigilant as Peter warns us in 1 Peter 5:8.

<sup>8</sup> Be **sober**, be **vigilant**; because your **adversary** the **devil walks about** like a **roaring lion**, seeking whom **he may devour**.

--- 1 Peter 5:8 ... NKJV

#### THE JOY OF CHRIST’S COMING: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:19-20

In the final two verses of the chapter, Verses 19-20, Paul poses, then answers the question...

#### WHAT IS OUR HOPE, OR JOY, OR CROWN OF REJOICING?

The answer is knowing the Thessalonian believers will be in the presence of Christ at His second coming. Knowing this leads Paul to the concluding statement of the chapter, *“For you are our glory and joy.”*

Paul had a heart for people to *receive the gospel*. Paul had a heart for believers who *accept the gospel*. Paul had pure motives for *ministering the gospel* to all people regardless of their current relationship with God. Paul was a true ambassador for Christ.

#### ARE YOU AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST?

<sup>20</sup> Now then, **we** are **ambassadors** for **Christ**, as though **God** were **pleading** through **us**: **we implore you** on **Christ’s** behalf, be **reconciled** to **God**. <sup>21</sup> For **He** made **Him** who knew no **sin** to be **sin** for **us**, that **we** might become the **righteousness** of **God** in **Him**.

--- 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 ... NKJV