



## The Word of God or of Man? (I Th. 2:13-20)

### Another Day; Same Story

“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, **you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God**, which also effectively works in you who believe. For **you, brethren, became imitators** of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For **you also suffered** the same things **from your own countrymen**, just as they did from **the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles** that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but **wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.**” I Thessalonians 2:13-16 NKJV

### I Thessalonians 2:13-16

☑ *“**For this reason** we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, **you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth,***

*the word of God, which **also effectively works in you** who believe.” I Thessalonians 2:13 NKJV*

☑ **For what reason?**

☑ “as you know how we **exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you**, as a father does his own children, **that you would walk worthy** of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” I Thessalonians 2:11-12 NKJV

☑ For what is Paul thoroughly thankful? He urged and even persuaded this young church to live in such a way that looked deserving of God’s calling and he entrusted them with being excellent witnesses of the Gospel.

☑ **How did they respond?**

☑ They took in Paul’s message and they accepted his words **as the word of God**, not as if the words were coming from Paul.

☑ And that is the only way that the words of anyone in ministry can be truly effective.

☑ **The word of men or the word of God?**

☑ It was never better said than by Paul himself when he gave us the quintessential instructions on how to minister effectively to those being introduced to Christianity.

- ☑ *“And my **speech** and my **preaching** were **not with persuasive words of human wisdom**, but in **demonstration of the \*Spirit and of power**, that your faith should **not** be in **the wisdom of men** **but** in **the power of God**.”* I Corinthians 2:4-5 NKJV
- ☑ And if you remember from our first lesson in I Thessalonians, [Disciples Doing What Disciples Do](#), Paul depended on his witness and God working through him, not just fancy words, to bring the truth of Christ to these people.
- ☑ *“For our gospel **did not come to you in word only**, but also in **\*power, and in the Holy Spirit** and in much assurance, as **you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake**.”* I Thessalonians 1:5 NKJV
- ☑ The power of God via the Holy Spirit, not the words of men, is what draws men to the faith!
- ☑ When we let the Holy Spirit do the work, then we can be certain the conversion is real.
- ☑ If we depend on the fancy persuasive words of charismatic teachers, then we are not sure to what people are responding!
- ☑ **Because it’s the word of God and not the word men...**
- ☑ It “also effectively works in you!” Why?

- ☑ It is filled with God's grace—His supernatural power. It is His grace that is so constructive and bears true and lasting fruit, not man's inspiring words.
- ☑ It is impossible for God's word to be ineffective!
- ☑ *“‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, **So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.** ‘For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But **water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.**” Isaiah 55:8-11 NKJV*
- ☑ *“For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please*

***God and are contrary to all men,” 1 Thessalonians 2:14-15***

NKJV

☑ **Imitators: suffering by the hands of your own people**

- ☑ Remember in our introduction to this letter. Paul First ministered in synagogue in Thessalonica and used the scriptures to prove that Y’shua was the long-awaited Messiah.
- ☑ Many new converts came to the faith, but, as had become so common, it was not without controversy. Jews who did not believe became jealous and caused trouble for those who did.

☑ **Betrayed by your own...Y’shua predicted this would happen, and it still does today!**

- ☑ “Now ***brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.***” Matthew 10:21  
NKJV

- ☑ What did their countrymen (the unbelieving Jews) do!

- ☑ They had Y’shua crucified and they had a history of executing their very own prophets—basically murdering anyone who said anything convicting or contradictory to their sclerotic religiosity!

✓ In this case they accused Paul and Silas of defying Caesar by saying there was “another king.” It caused such a great uproar and they barely escaped with their lives—also thwarting Paul’s message to the Gentiles...

✓ “**forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always *to fill up the measure of their sins*; but *wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.*”** 1 Thessalonians 2:16 NKJV

✓ **As if resisting Jewish conversions was not enough!**

✓ They had to perfect their sins by interfering with the gospel getting to the Gentiles. But, God’s wrath will take care of these hard-hearted religious zealots!

✓ This was an ongoing controversy that followed Paul throughout his three missionary journeys. He had visited Thessalonica on his second trip (Acts 15:36-18:22).



## Absent in the Flesh but Not in the Heart

“But we, brethren, having been **taken away from you for a short time** in presence, **not in heart**, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore we **wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us**. For what is **our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?** Is it not even you **in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?** For you are our glory and joy.” I Thessalonians 2:17-20 NKJV

### I Thessalonians 2:17-20

☑ *“But we, brethren, having been taken away **from you for a short time in presence, not in heart**, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but **Satan hindered us**.” I Thessalonians 2:17-18 NKJV*

#### ☑ Paul’s visit to Thessalonica (a quick review)...

☑ *“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they **came to Thessalonica**, where there was a **synagogue of the Jews**. Then Paul, as his custom was, **went in to them, and for three Sabbaths** reasoned with them from the Scriptures, **explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead**, and saying, “**This Jesus whom I preach to you is***



**the Christ.**” 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. **But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious,** took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and **gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar** and attacked the house of Jason, **and sought to bring them [Paul and Silas] out to the people.** But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, **“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. Jason has harbored them,** and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus.” And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.” Acts 17:1-9 NKJV

- ☑ On his visit to Thessalonica, Paul went into the synagogue (on three consecutive Sabbaths) and he explained and demonstrated (using the Scriptures) that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead.
- ☑ And the dagger...” “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ!”



- ☑ So, when he writes in I Thessalonians 2:15 that they killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us—it's for that very reason—he proved that Y'shua was the Messiah and they did not like it!
- ☑ **Having been taken away from you...**
  - ☑ Paul had to leave Thessalonica before he wished; he was sent away prematurely for his own protection...
  - ☑ *"Then the brethren **immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea**. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews." Acts 17:10 NKJV*
  - ☑ Paul left Thessalonica, but his heart never did.
  - ☑ Many times since he left he tried to return, but the enemy (Satan) kept getting in the way!
- ☑ *"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? **Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?** For you are our glory and joy." I Thessalonians 2:19-20 NKJV*
- ☑ **It was all worth it!**
  - ☑ No matter the cost, all I could ever want, anything that could possibly bring me joy, any reward that might be

offered for having come and introducing you to Jesus can be wrapped up in this single statement:

- ☑ *“Your eternity in the presence of the Lord is all the payment I could ever want. It brings me complete and utter fulfillment and satisfaction.”*

### **NEXT TEACHING**

Faith That Inspires (I Thessalonians 3:1-13)