

1 Thessalonians 2:12-16

1 Thessalonians 2:12-13 - ...who **calls** you into his own kingdom and glory 13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

- Paul thanks God because it's God who allowed them to hear his words as God's Word

1 Corinthians 1:22-24 – For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are **called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

- To some who hear it, the calling is the moment the power of God takes a hold of them, and makes them alive bringing them out of darkness into light
- The same words others hear as foolishness, you hear as the wisdom of God being imparted to you
- This is a repetition of **1 Thessalonians 1:2-5**

1 Thessalonians 2:14 - For you, brothers, became **imitators of the churches** of God in Christ Jesus that are **in Judea**. For you **suffered** the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews,

1 Thessalonians 1:6- And you became **imitators of us and of the Lord**, for you received the word in much **affliction**, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

- The Thessalonians have probably never been to Judea (Jerusalem) to have the chance to actually imitate what they do and how they worship
- They “imitated” the same enduring of suffering that the churches around Jerusalem had to endure
- “For” - The reason Paul knows they’re called is because they accepted the Word in affliction (Jews hated them/Gentiles hated them)
- And it seems the Jews (God’s chosen people) are the very people leading the persecution

1 Thessalonians 2:14-15 - For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from **the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out,...**

- Why did the Jews kill Jesus, kill the prophets, and drive out the apostles?

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- Why did the Jews kill Jesus, kill the prophets, and drive out the apostles?

Ephesians 2:11-21 - Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles...were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ... 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,...**

- The church's foundation is built on Jesus, the prophets, and the apostles

1 Thessalonians 2:14-15 - ...the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out,...

- Did the Jews kill Jesus?

Matthew 27:1 - When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

Acts 4:10 - let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified,...

- Yes, the Jews were the human instrument that God used to sentence Jesus to death
- But...

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- Did the Jews kill Jesus?

Romans 3:24-25 – ...Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood,...

Acts 4:27-28 - ...in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

- God used Romans, Gentiles, and Jews to carry out His will
- For our purposes here, the Jews were the human, driving force behind killing Jesus

1 Thessalonians 2:14-15 - ...the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out,...

- We don't tend to think of the category of prophets much, but they are important
- Prophets are simply someone who speaks God's truth to others
- In the Bible, prophets often have a teaching and a revelatory role
- They declare God's truth and at the same time reveal details about the future
- We generally think of prophets as in the Old Testament, but there are quite a few in the new Testament
- Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist - Luke 1:67 - And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied,
- They can be men or women – Luke 2:36 - And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.
- The best known prophets of the New Testament are probably John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, and John who wrote Revelation

1 Thessalonians 2:14-15 - ...**the Jews, 15 who killed** both the Lord Jesus and **the prophets**, and drove us out,...

- Paul has been teaching us that we are to recognize false prophets
- In the end times, there will be THE false prophet

Revelation 16:13 - And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet,...

- There will also be two witnesses for God that are prophets

Revelation 11:3 - And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.

- So there's probably a lot we can learn and study about prophets

1 Thessalonians 2:14-15 - ...the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out,...

Matthew 23:34-38 - Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, 35 so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. 36 Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! 38 See, your house is left to you desolate.

- These are New Testament prophets that God sends, some of which the Jews will kill because they reject Jesus

1 Thessalonians 2:14-15 - ...**the Jews, 15 who killed** both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and **drove us out,**...

- Once Jesus is killed, two groups go out to declare the gospel
- So the Jews begin killing the prophets and the persecution of the apostles in an attempt to destroy the churches in Judea (Jerusalem)

Acts 8:1-3 – And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day **a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem**, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles...³ But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

- Then Paul gets saved on the road to Damascus so the Jews turn on him

Acts 9:28-29 - So he was staying with them, associating openly with them in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 He was speaking and debating with the Greek-speaking Jews, **but they were trying to kill him.**

Acts 14:4-6; 19 – But the population of the city was divided; some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. 5 When both the Gentiles and the Jews (together with their rulers) made an attempt to mistreat them and stone them, 6 Paul and Barnabas learned about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding region... But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and after winning the crowds over, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, presuming him to be dead.

Acts 18:1-6 - After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth...4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks...6 And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.

1 Thessalonians 2:15-16 - who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and **displease God** and **oppose all mankind 16 by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved**—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But **God's wrath has come upon them** at last!

- The effect of the Jews killing Jesus and the prophets and driving out the apostles is that God is not pleased
- In fact, it brings God's wrath on the Jews
- The other effect is it opposes mankind by hindering them from hearing the gospel, the only way they can be saved

Romans 10:14-17 - How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?...17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Acts 13:46-51 - Both Paul and Barnabas replied courageously, “It was necessary to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we are turning to the Gentiles...48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began to rejoice and praise the word of the Lord, and all who had been appointed for eternal life believed. 49 So the word of the Lord was spreading through the entire region. 50 But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high social standing and the prominent men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and threw them out of their region. 51 So after they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them, they went to Iconium.

- The shaking of the dust off their feet is saying “the Jews have judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, so we will leave them in their beliefs”
- The Jews hindered the spread of the gospel so the Gentiles couldn't be saved
- The result is **1 Thessalonians 2:16** -...so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But God's wrath has come upon them at last!

1 Thessalonians 2:16 - hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; **with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins.** But wrath has come upon them to the utmost. *(NASB)*

- In God's great plan, the killing of Jesus and the prophets and the driving away of the Apostles which leads to God being displeased with the Jews and a hindering of the Gentiles from getting saved, has a purpose in it
- The purpose seems to be to allow the Jews to fill up their sins to a specific amount
- It's a bringing to fullness their sins
- Once it fills up to a certain point, it triggers God's wrath

Matthew 23:29-32 - Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, 30 saying, If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets. 31 Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 **Fill up, then, the measure of you fathers.**

Genesis 15:13-16 – Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign country. They will be enslaved and oppressed for 400 years. 14 But I will execute judgment on the nation that they will serve. Afterward they will come out with many possessions...16 In the fourth generation your descendants will return here, **for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its limit.**”

- God will wait until the Amorites are fully deserving of judgment before he annihilates them and gives the land to Israel

Deuteronomy 9:5 - Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, **but because of the wickedness of these nations** the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

- The wickedness is now full
- They have filled up the measure of their sins

1 Thessalonians 2:16 - hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they **always** fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost. *(NASB)*

- It's been going on for awhile

Acts 7:51 - "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are **always** resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

Hebrews 3:7-10 - Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts...10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, They **always** go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.

- There's a generation after generation recurring pattern with the Jews of hardening their hearts towards God

1 Thessalonians 2:16 - by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. **But God's wrath has come upon them at last!**

Matthew 21:33-43 - Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard...and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. 34 When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. 35 And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. 37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, They will respect my son. 38 But when the tenants saw the son,...they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants? 41 They said to him, He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons...43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.

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Luke 21:20-24 - But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near...24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

- In Matthew Jesus says the Kingdom of God will be taken away from the Jews and given to another people, the church
- Mostly Gentiles
- “until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

1 Thessalonians 2:16 - by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. **But God's wrath has come upon them at last!**

Romans 11:25-31 - Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way all Israel will be saved,...30 For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you **they also may now receive mercy.**

- This season of wrath has come upon Israel for the benefit of the Gentiles
- God has turned the Jews over to their sins because the fullness of their rejection has filled up, causing God to give them a partial hardening to the Gospel
- But this wrath has an end
- In the end, the Jews will again **receive mercy**