

Receivers and Rejectors of God's Word
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Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

1 Thessalonians: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th Edition Paragraph Topic: Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica

Central Idea of Message: Receivers of God's word demonstrate marked change in their lives. Rejectors of God's word become the objects of God's judgment.

Introduction: Receivers of God's word demonstrate marked change in their lives. Rejectors of God's word become the objects of God's judgment. This passage of Scripture outlines for us certain results associated with receiving God's word. It also expresses the end result of disbelieving God's word.

I. Believing God's Word Brings Performance (v. 13)

- A. Paul and his companions thanked God that the Thessalonians received their words as from God
 - 1. Accept the words of biblical apostles as from God
 - a) First, delivered orally
 - b) Last, delivered in writing in order to guard against the encroachment of error
 - 2. It can be confusing deciding what is from God and what is from man
 - a) What is from God will harmonize with Scripture
 - b) What is from man will conflict with Scripture
 - c) What is from God will have objective verification
 - d) What is from man will frequently be subjective
 - 3. **People who reject God's messengers are rejecting God's word**
- B. The word of God performs its work in those who believe
 - 1. God's word does not simply sit there idle
 - 2. It will not just go away
 - 3. God's word produces fruit in those who believe
 - a) This is its work
 - b) **A changed life is proof of receiving God's word**

4. **Where there is no fruit, there is no faith**

II. **Believing God's Word Brings Suffering (v. 14)**

- A. Christian experiences are similar throughout the world
 - 1. These churches were geographically in Judea (cf. Faussett)
 - 2. These churches were spiritually in Christ (cf. Faussett)
 - a) **"In Christ Jesus" is an unambiguous, exclusive position that every person must enter in order to avoid God's wrath**
 - (1) Jews claim to be in God
 - (2) New Agers claim to be god
 - b) You better be in Christ Jesus
 - c) It matters not where one is geographically; it matters greatly where one is spiritually
- B. Expect rejection and persecution when you are imitating the people of God in Christ Jesus
 - 1. Jewish believers had suffered persecution at the hands of Jewish unbelievers because of their faith in Christ
 - 2. Gentile believers had suffered persecution at the hands of Gentile unbelievers because of their faith in Christ

III. **Believing God's Word Brings Persecution (v. 15)**

- A. Unbelievers
 - 1. Killed the Lord Jesus
 - a) Sovereign creator
 - b) Specific person
 - 2. Killed the prophets: God's spokesmen
 - 3. Drove Paul and his companions out of cities: apostles and missionaries
 - 4. Are not pleasing to God: what is your primary objective in life?
 - 5. Are hostile to all believers
 - a) Anger bolstered by stubbornness
 - b) Contrary to the light of nature (cf. Henry 6:778)
- B. Why?
 - 1. **People like these individuals killed the prophets because they preached against their sin**
 - 2. They killed Jesus because he reminded them of their guilt in killing the prophets (Matt. 23:29ff)

3. They persecuted the prophets, Jesus, and his messengers because they held people accountable
4. They drove Paul and his companions out of cities because their message of salvation necessitated repentance, included Gentiles, exalted Jesus, and excluded all other religions as roads to heaven
5. People wrongly think they are pleasing God by persecuting Christians, when they are not
6. Persecutors were sincere, but were sincerely wrong
7. Sincerity saves no one; only Jesus saves

IV. **Disbelieving God's Word Brings Wrath (v. 16)**

- A. Unbelievers hinder the preaching of God's word
 1. It is through the foolishness of preaching that God has chosen to communicate the gospel
 2. "That they might be saved"
 - a) Infers that those without Christ were lost
 - b) Many Jewish leaders had distorted the means of salvation for hundreds of years
 - c) These same Jews did not want Gentiles told that they, too, could be saved (Acts 22:21)
 - d) There is no salvation without personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord
 - e) **All religions are not headed to the same heavenly destination**
- B. Unbelievers fill up the measure of their sins
 1. Their sins are accumulating to the point of filling the bucket, heaping sin upon sin
 - a) God draws his lines too
 - b) The Jews had been opposing God nearly from the start to Paul's day, from the prophets to Jesus to the apostles
 - c) Some people have been opposing God from the moment they understood gospel truth
 - d) They were at or near the stage of being fully ripe for judgment
 - e) **How far will God let you go before announcing that you are ripe for judgment?**
 2. Not believing is one sin, hindering others from hearing in order that they might believe is more sin
 3. Hindering the word makes one an agent of the destruction of humankind (cf. Larson 27)
 4. Are you hindering the word of God?
 - a) By distorting it
 - b) By resisting it

- c) By denouncing it
- d) By blocking its transmission
- 5. God's wrath is coming upon unbelievers
 - a) It was about to arrive upon the Jews with the destruction of Jerusalem
 - b) His just vengeance, not an angry outburst (cf. Larson 27)
 - c) Aside from repentance, they have no hope of escaping the coming judgment of God

Conclusion: Hymn #510, "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory." **Are you a receiver or a rejector of God's word?**