

# “Apocalypse Now”

## 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

### I. “Real Imitation” – 2:14

*“...you became imitators of the churches in Christ Jesus in Judea...”*

A. Not an exceptional case with a unique problem – 1 Peter 4:12

B. Their \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ that the Word was at work in them.

C. Their imitation was not \_\_\_\_\_. What happened to other believers 1500 miles away was happening to them too: it was meant to \_\_\_\_\_ the Thessalonian believers.

D. An allusion to the \_\_\_\_\_ Church and to the \_\_\_\_\_ church.  
*“...in Christ Jesus in Judea...”* See Ephesians 4:5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Galatians 3:27

### II. “Top It Off”

*“...fill up the measure of their sins, but wrath has come upon them...”* – 2:15-16

A. Writers are not anti-Semitic, but saw essence of all persecution: the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Messiah, Jesus Christ the Lord.

B. Death of Christ is a question of \_\_\_\_\_. Mark 15:15-16, 20, 24; John 19:10-15; 18:30-31, 35; Mark 14:43, 55, 63-64; 15:1-3; Luke 23:10, 13-18; Mark 15:8-15, 29-32; Acts 2:23.

C. Emphasis is on “the Lord” which heightens the enormity and anticipates 1 Corinthians 2:8, *“...if the rulers of this age had understood, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory...”*

1 Thessalonians 1:1, “...the Lord Jesus Christ...”

Jesus – a common name \_\_\_\_\_; the Divine linked with the common

Lord – “Kurios” – the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), used in Jesus’ day – used for the Divine Name of God –

Jehovah or Yahweh – deeply significant that it is applied to Jesus – Exodus 3:14-15; Philippians 2:13

Christ – Greek word for the Hebrew Messiah, the Anointed One – King who was subject of prophecy has actually come – popular thought was expecting a deliverer to conquer Rome – for Jesus, Messiahship involved the cross, the supreme service – Jesus linked the Messiah to the Servant – Psalm 2:2; Acts 4:26; Mark 8:29; 14:61-62; Mark 1:11; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 42:1

- D. “...drove us out...displeasing to God...oppose all men...” - A typical, hostile act of a “nation at war;” Jews in opposition to their own covenant God; hindering evangelism harms mankind. Paul not bitter or vindictive, but balanced, passionate anger. Romans 9:1-5; 10:1-4
- E. “...fill up the measure of their sins...” - A Divine Sentence Against How is it possible for a Holy God to use the sinful deeds of men for His purpose? See Acts 2:23. The meaning is that the “cup” was already partly full and all their sins “filled up the top half” of the “cup.”
- F. “...God’s wrath has come upon them to the utmost...” - Present fact and Prophetic anticipation – “has come” = “to do something before someone else does; to anticipate; brings out the sureness” = the certainty of the wrath of God. Rom 1:18 – “is being continuously revealed”

***“Wrath of God”** – “God has an attitude which is and which will be expressed in action. Attitude and action; this is what is meant by ‘the wrath of God.’ It is not emotion, temper, irascibility, spite, malice, or malignity. It is the reaction of a Holy God to all evil. Evil is an invasion of God Himself. It says in effect, ‘You are not valid.’ It is thus an affront to utter goodness, and God will not finally tolerate it. In the end goodness is left on the throne. This is what is meant by ‘the wrath to come.’ In the mercy and long-suffering of God it is dammed up in order to give men the opportunity to repent, believe, and receive salvation. But in a sense God’s wrath is ‘on its way’ and is anticipated (Romans 1:18). It is from the love in the cross of Christ that we derive salvation from wrath.” – by Ronald A. Ward*

**Application:** It is a matter of desperate seriousness to reject Jesus Christ Messiah, and equally serious to spurn His legitimately appointed messengers (Matthew 10:14-15; John 13:20).

1. How can suffering for Christ bind believers together in unity?
2. What should the names “Lord, Jesus, Christ” mean to believers?
3. Are you helping or hindering evangelism? Why is this important?
4. How does God’s wrath display is love and magnify His glory?

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In Greek grammar - 1 long sentence  
In Paul's writing style, this means  
full of strong emotion.

# Paul's Balance

Passionate, emotional anger, but  
balanced by deep love

Romans 9:1-5

Romans 10:1-4

Ephesians 4:26

# Real Imitation

Suffering was proof of genuine faith  
Imitation was not deliberate  
Meant to encourage them

# “*in Christ in Judea*”

Allusion to *universal* and *local* church

“Spiritual and Physical Geography”

Reminder of the higher hidden life of  
believers - Colossians 3:3

# The Persecutors

The essence of all persecution is the rejection of Messiah Jesus.

Who killed Jesus?

# Question of Responsibility

Roman soldiers killed Jesus. Judas killed Jesus. Pilate killed Jesus. Caiaphas killed Jesus. The Scribes, Priests, Rulers, Pharisees killed Jesus. The Jewish people killed Jesus.

# John 19:8-11

Even the worst evil cannot escape the sovereignty of God.

When confronted with opposition and evil, Jesus found solace in His Father's sovereignty.

John 6:43-44, 65; 10:18, 28-29

# What's in a Name?

“Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1; 2:15)

Jesus - common name Joshua

Lord - name of God applied to Jesus

Christ - Messiah, Anointed One, King

*“...drove us out...”*

Typical action of the nation.

National hostility, opposition to their own covenant God! God's cause was not their cause, hence their attitude toward Messiah and His messengers.

Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21

*“...contrary to all men...”*

Attempting to thwart salvation of man!

Didn't believe Jesus was Messiah.

Rejected justification by faith alone.

Needs of Gentiles no concern to them.

Unenlightened zeal.

“...*hindering us*...”

Was deliberate, with purpose

Was only partially successful; “trying to”

Parallels Saul’s efforts in Acts 26:9-11

Salvation is the great act of God and cannot be stopped! It was objectively completed in the death of Christ.