

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 Commentary

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1Thessalonians 2:14 For you, [brethren](#), [became imitators](#) of the [churches](#) of [God](#) in [Christ Jesus](#) that are in [Judea](#), for you [also endured](#) the [same sufferings](#) at the [hands](#) of your [own countrymen](#), [even](#) as they did from the [Jews](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [humeis gar mimetai egenethete](#), (2PAPI) [adelphoi, ton ekklesion tou theou ton ouson](#) (PAPFPG) [en te loudaia en Christo lesou, oti ta auta epathete](#) (2PAAI) [kai umeis upo ton idion sumphuleton kathos kai autoi upo ton loudaion](#).

Amplified: For you, brethren, became imitators of the assemblies (churches) of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea, for you too have suffered the same kind of treatment from your own fellow countrymen as they did [who were persecuted at the hands] of the Jews, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: And then, dear brothers and sisters, you suffered persecution from your own countrymen. In this way, you imitated the believers in God's churches in Judea who, because of their belief in Christ Jesus, suffered from their own people, the Jews. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: When you suffered at the hands of your fellow-countrymen you were sharing the experience of the Judean Christian churches, who suffered persecution by the Jews. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: For as for you, you became imitators, brethren, of the assemblies of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus, because as for you, you also suffered the same things at the hands of your own countrymen even as also they themselves suffered at the hands of the Jews,

Young's Literal: for ye became imitators, brethren, of the assemblies of God that are in Judea in Christ Jesus, because such things ye suffered, even ye, from your own countrymen, as also they from the Jews

FOR YOU, BRETHREN, BECAME IMITATORS OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS THAT ARE IN JUDEA: [humeis gar mimetai egenethete](#), (2PAPI) [adelphoi, ton ekklesion tou theou ton ouson](#) (PAPFPG) [en te loudaia en Christo lesou](#):

- 1Thes 1:6
- Acts 9:31; Galatians 1:22
- 1Thes 1:1; 2Th 1:1
- [1 Thessalonians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 11:1+ **Be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **imitators** of me, just as I also am of Christ. (**NOTE:** See the related great truth - [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#))

Ephesians 5:1+ Therefore **be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **imitators** of God, as beloved children;

IMITATORS OF GOD, GODLY CHRIST EXALTING CHURCHES

For ([1063](#))(*gar*) is a conjunction which introduces an explanation (see value of observing and querying **terms of explanation**) and in the present context explains that the clear evidence of the Thessalonians' acceptance of the Gospel as the Word of God and that Word performing its supernatural work in their hearts (note 1Thess 2:13) is demonstrated by their willingness to endure sufferings for the sake of the Gospel. Their willingness to suffer for the Gospel is added authentication of the veracity of their conversion to God from idols.

THOUGHT - In simple terms **for** is a [term of explanation](#) and its occurrence should always prompt one to pause and ponder the text and context, always asking at least one **5W/H** question "*What is the text explaining?*" which will force you to examine the preceding passages, which in turn will hone or refine your skill of **observation** and help you establish the **context**, which will lead to a more accurate **Interpretation**, which is essential for valid **Application** of the text.

While not every "for" in the Bible is a [term of explanation](#), most are and since there are over 7500 uses of *for* (NAS), you will have ample opportunity to observe and interrogate the text. Two clues that the *for* is a term of explanation - (1) It is at the beginning of the sentence or clause or (2) you can substitute the word "because" and it makes good sense. As you practice this discipline of pausing to ponder, you are establishing the **context** (which leads to more accurate [interpretation](#) and thus more apropos [application](#)) and you are in effect engaging in the blessed activity of [Biblical Meditation](#) (See Ps 1:2⁺, Ps 1:3⁺ and Joshua 1:8⁺ for the blessed benefits of [meditation](#) = I like to call it a "mini-meditation".)

The Word (the Gospel) was operative in their lives as demonstrated by their imitation of other believing churches in Judea.

Brethren ([80](#)) (**adelphos** from collative **a** = denoting unity + **delphús** = womb) is literally one born from same womb and so a male having the same father and mother as reference person.

Figuratively, **adelphos** as in this verse refers to a close associate of a group of persons having well-defined membership, specifically here referring to fellow believers in Christ who are united by the bond of affection and the "brotherhood of suffering"

The term **brethren** appears nineteen times in 1 Thessalonians (more than any other epistle except 1 Corinthians) and is employed generically, referring to both male and female believers who, like Paul, have been adopted into the eternal family of God. In other contexts brethren can refer to those of the same nationality but not necessarily believers as Peter does in Acts 3...

And now, **brethren**, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. (Acts 3:17)

Spurgeon calls our attention to these...

new converts exhibiting the family likeness, turning out to be very like the believers of older churches. Born many miles away from Judaea, with a sea dividing them from the first country where the gospel was preached, yet these Thessalonian Gentiles, when converted, looked wonderfully like the converts from among the Jews .
([Sermon](#))

Became ([1096](#))(*ginomai*) means to come into existence.

Spurgeon writes...

I only call your attention to the fact that the apostle says, "Ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of

God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus." Here are people converted in Judaea, and they are of a strongly Jewish type; quite another set of people over at Thessalonica become converted to Christ, and though they are thoroughly of the Greek type, they are very like the converts in Judaea. They know nothing about the law of Moses, they have been heathens, worshipping idols; and yet, when they are converted, the strange thing is, that they are exceedingly like those Jews over yonder, to whom idolatry was an abomination. Greek believers are like Hebrew believers. They have never spoken to one another, and nobody has been there to tell them the peculiarities of Christians, and yet a family likeness is distinctly visible. Were you never startled with this, that if, in the preaching of the gospel to-day, we were to bring to the Lord Jesus a person of high rank, and another of the very lowest extraction, they have the same experience, and upon the greatest of subjects they talk in the same way? "Oh, but," you say, "they pick up certain phrases." No, no! They differ in speech: the likeness is in heart and character. I frequently meet with converts who have not attended this place of worship more than half-a-dozen times, but they have been converted, and when they come to tell the story of their inner life you would suppose that they had been born and bred among us, and had learned all our ways; for, though they do not use the phrases which we use, yet they say the same things. The fact is, we are all alike lost and ruined, and we are born again in the same way, and we find the Savior in the same way, and we rejoice in him when we do find him after much the same fashion, and express ourselves very much after the same style. Believers differ in many things, and yet they are alike in the main things. There are no two exactly alike in all the family of God, and yet the likeness to the Elder Brother is to be seen more or less in each one.

It is to me one of the evidences of the truth and divine nature of the work of grace in the heart, that if you take a Hottentot in his kraal, and he is converted, and you take a university man, who has won all the degrees of learning, and he is converted, yet you would not know Sambo from the Doctor when they begin to talk about the things of God. The Hottentot's English may be broken, but his theology is sound. The uneducated man's words may limp, but his heart will leap. Ruin, redemption, and regeneration are the chief subjects in every case. When I am talking sometimes with young converts, and they put their statements oddly and ignorantly, I am reminded of Father Taylor, when he was getting old. The old man sometimes lost the thread of his discourse, and whenever he did so, he used to say, "There, I cannot find the end of that sentence, but I am bound for the kingdom! Brethren, I am bound for the kingdom!" Off he went to something else; for though he could not complete the paragraph he was bound for the kingdom. Some brethren and sisters cannot see to the end of their own experience, but they are bound for the kingdom. They cannot put this and that together to make it ship-shape: but you can see that they are bound for the kingdom. There is the same tear of repentance, the same glance of faith, the same thrill of joy, the same song of confidence: each one according to his measure enjoys the same life, if he is indeed bound for the kingdom. The babe is like the man, and the man reminds you of the babe. We are one spirit in Christ Jesus.

I will not enlarge, except to say that it makes us sing for joy when we can see in ourselves a likeness to the children of God. We, too, resemble the early saints in our experiences. Opposition and tribulation come to us in our measure as they did to them. There are the same afflictions, the same persecutions, the same trials, wherever the work of Christ goes on; but there is the same mighty God to carry on the work of grace, and the same promises of grace to be fulfilled to every believer. ([Sermon](#))

You brethren became imitators - In the first chapter they had become imitators also, Paul recording... You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit (see note 1Thessalonians 1:6)

Obviously this imitation was hardly their choice but instead was a reflection of that the power of the gospel had worked itself out in their lives so that they were willing to suffer for the gospel. This was striking proof of the energizing power of the gospel in their lives and it clearly demonstrated that they were not among the superficial hearers Jesus described...

And the one on whom seed (the Word of God) was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who **hears** the word, and immediately **receives** (lambano) it with joy yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. (Mt 13:20-21)

And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, **receive** (dechomai) the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. (Luke 8:13)

Persecution for Christ's sake did not cause the Thessalonians to fall away.

Imitators ([3402](#)) (**mimetes**) means one who follows. **Mimetes** basically means to copy or imitate someone's behavior and has many related words in English - "mime" (one who acts out an imitation of another person or animal), "pantomime" (a theater production which originally was without words), "mimeograph" (a machine which makes many copies from one stencil).

In ancient Greek **mimetes** referred to imitation. Aristotle used the word to describe how people imitated animals, postulating that at the beginning of civilization men learnt from animals-weaving and spinning from spiders, and house-building from swallows.

Paul is saying in essence that this church's actions (specifically in regard to sufferings) spoke louder than their words.

Richison adds that...The New Testament always uses the word "imitators" in a good sense (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Ephesians 5:1; Hebrews 6:12). An imitator is a copyist, someone who mimics. The idea is more than just following any old pattern; the idea is to follow an authoritative pattern. Imitation involves responding to the principle, as well as copying the behavior. Our authority rests on the superiority of our models (1:6). Discipleship implies conformity to a standard. ([1Thessalonians 2:14](#))

W. Bauder writes that...Very early on (in Democritus of the pre-Socratics) the words were used to express ethical demands made on men. One should take as one's model the boldness of a hero, or one should imitate the good example of one's teacher or parents... The Rabbis were the first to speak of imitation of God in the sense of developing the image of God in men. In the Pseudepigrapha in addition to the exhortation to imitate men of outstanding character (Test. Ben. 3:1; 4:1) one can also find the thought of the imitation of God (i.e. keeping his commands, Test. Ash. 4:3) and of particular characteristics of God (Aristeas 188, 210, 280 f.). ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Teachers based their whole educational procedure on imitation, as students imitated the behavior of teachers. Slowly the idea developed that people should imitate the gods, and Plato emphasized this.

The basic meaning of **mimetes** is seen in a **mime**. An English woman went to France to study under the famous mime artist, Marcel Marceau. All day he taught his students how to make the movements of mime, and each evening they went to see him perform. Their performances were marked indelibly by the style of the master. This is an excellent picture of a Christian who imitates the Lord by exposure to Him.

A person who **mimes** acts a part with mimic gesture and action, usually without words. Let your actions speak louder than your words and then you will have a platform to proclaim the word of truth, the gospel. As believers in their message the Thessalonians began to pattern their lives after the example set by the missionaries. This fact rejoiced the heart of Paul as it was open evidence of the reality of the Thessalonian believers' conversion and therefore of their divine election. The Thessalonians had become third generation mimics of Christ. Christ is the first; Paul is the second; and the Thessalonians are the third. The Thessalonian believers imitated the Lord and Paul (Silvanus, Timothy) in that they responded to the gospel in spite of affliction. Note that Paul did not write what reportedly was said by one pastor "Do as I say; not as I do." Unfortunately this saying has characterized numerous preachers, many of whom have reputations as great teachers of God's Word. However, when their lives are measured by the Bible's qualifications for communication and character, such ministers come up woefully short. Make sure you mime the right model!

As an African chief once said: "A good example is the tallest kind of preaching."

Jonathan Edwards was so concerned as he was about the example which he set, that he framed the resolve to "never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life."

Here is a secular quote that has more truth in it than we would like to believe (think of "spiritual children")...Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them. They must, they have no other models. (James Baldwin)

Here's another quote worth pondering in this area of imitation...We unconsciously imitate what pleases us and approximate to the characters we most admire. Christian Nestell Bovee

In his preface to the writings of Shakespeare, **Samuel Johnson** wrote that "Example is always more efficacious than precept."

Dr. Merrill Tenney once said that...

The best advertisement for your church is not a large notice board, but rather the example that is set when the town drunk becomes a Christian and lives a godly life.

Charles Spurgeon once said that...A Christian should be a striking likeness of Jesus Christ... We should be pictures of Christ... Oh! My brethren, there is nothing that can so advantage you, nothing can so prosper you, so assist you, so make you walk towards heaven rapidly, so keep your head upwards towards the sky, and your eyes radiant with glory, like the **imitation** of Jesus Christ.

As shown in the uses of **mimetes** below Scripture always uses this word in a positive sense.

Richards writes that **mimetes** "is a call to reproduce in our own way of life those godly qualities that result from salvation and that we see in others. The idea is intimately linked with the thought that teachers and leaders ought to be clear, living examples of the practical implications of commitment to Jesus. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

Barclay wrote that "When Paul talked of imitation he was using language which the wise men of Greece could understand. Mimesis, imitation, was a main part in the training of an orator. The teachers of rhetoric declared that the learning of oratory depended on three things-theory, imitation and practice. The main part of their training was the study and the imitation of the masters who had gone before. It is as if Paul said: "If you were to train to be an orator, you would be told to imitate the masters of speech. Since you are training in life, you must imitate the Lord of all good life." (cp 1Pe 2:21-note) ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Churches (1577) ([ekklesia](#) from **ek** = out + **kaleo** = call) is literally the "called-out ones". Greeks used ekklesia for an assembly of citizens "called out" to transact city business. The church is not an organization but a living organism, Christ's body, composed of individual members (believers) joined together and in and through which Christ, the Head works, carries out His purposes and lives.

In Christ Jesus (see related topic **In Christ**) - this phrase usually denotes the fellowship which binds together believers but here is used of that same union which binds Christian churches so that their mutual life is caught up into, and sustained from, the life of the risen Christ.

Hiebert has an interesting thought regarding the phrase **in Christ Jesus** commenting that...It adds the spiritual element that distinguishes these assemblies from the Jewish synagogues. The difference between the Jewish synagogues and the Christian assemblies hinges on the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. The Jews professed to believe God's Word and claimed to be God's assemblies, but when they rejected the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, who came in fulfillment of the promises in God's Word, they showed that they did not believe God's Word. It is the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah that constitutes the vital bond uniting all true Christians. The converts' faith had brought them into vital union with Him; in Him their spiritual life had its source and center. ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

Vine rightly reminds us in the day of a plethora of denominations that...the measure of their realization of the strength of this spiritual bond may be gauged by the character of the fellowship with Judaeans Christians shown later by the church at Thessalonica, see 2 Corinthians 8:14. Churches are knit together not by any external bond, as of order, organization, history, or distinctive doctrine but by the vital relation of each to the one Lord of all, on Whom each is directly dependent, and to Whom alone each is directly responsible. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

That are in Judea - Are is the verb **eimi** which in this phrase could be more literally rendered "the being or existing churches". The idea conveyed by this phrase would be that they were still standing despite the storms of persecution, that they had prevailed against the gates of Hades and thus the work of God had not come to an end in the place of its origin and the home of its fiercest enemies. The conclusion? In the same way the persecution would avail as little at "first Baptist Church" of Thessalonica. It is interesting to recall that the writer himself (Paul) had himself persecuted the church at Jerusalem, writing to the Corinthians...

For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. (1 Corinthians 15:9)

Compare **Luke's** record...

But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. (Acts 8:3)

FOR YOU ALSO ENDURED THE SAME SUFFERINGS AT THE HANDS OF YOUR OWN COUNTRYMEN, EVEN AS THEY DID FROM THE JEWS: hoti ta auta epathete (2PAAI) kai humeis hupo ton idion sumphuleton kathos kai autoi hupo ton loudaion:

- 1Thes 3:4; Acts 17:1-8,13; 2Corinthians 8:1,2
- Acts 8:1,3; 9:1,13; 11:19; 12:1-3; Hebrews 5:7,8; 10:33,34
- [1 Thessalonians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For (hoti) can be translated **because** (see value of observing and querying **terms of explanation**) and here presents the evidence that the Thessalonian believers had become imitators of the Judean churches. The saints in Judea suffered at the hands of the Jews, and the saints in Thessalonica suffered at the hands of the Gentiles, but even this Gentile persecution was encouraged by the Jewish unbelievers (Acts 17:5, 13). Jesus promised that this would happen (John 15:18-27).

Don't forget the intimate association with the acceptance of the word as the Word of God which energizes us as we believe it (and obey it for if we believe it we will obey it). If we are going to experience victory in sufferings, we must appreciate and appropriate the Living Word.

The same sufferings - could also be rendered "fellow sufferings". This is the very idea inherent in the English word **sympathy** which is derived from sun (with) plus pathos (feelings, emotion, experience) (pathos is etymologically related to the verb below - pascho - to experience or to suffer). With this background one can better understand why **sympathy** sums up the relationship between the two churches, for as Webster says **sympathy** is an affinity, association, or relationship between persons or things wherein whatever affects one similarly affects the other. **Sympathy** represents the act or capacity of entering into or sharing the feelings or interests of another. In short, sympathy pictures the relationship existing between these churches that are naturally (supernaturally) drawn together. Fellow suffering always forges a strong bond of unity and in the present scenario brought together the hearts of Jews (Jerusalem church) and Gentiles (Thessalonian church) both united in Christ Jesus and the fellowship of His sufferings...

that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the **fellowship of His sufferings** (pathema = the actual suffering itself, the very pain that one is experiencing right now) being conformed to His death (see **note** Philippians 3:10) (**Comment:** The tense of **know** here suggests "come to know Him." Even though we already know Christ as Savior, we also need to know Him in both the power of His resurrection (see **notes** Romans 6:11; 6:12; 6:13; Colossians 3:1) and the fellowship of His sufferings - see **notes** Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 4:13).

Vine - Churches are knit together not by any external bond, as of order, organization, history, or distinctive doctrine but by the vital relation of each to the one Lord of all, on Whom each is directly dependent, and to Whom alone each is directly responsible. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Endured suffering (3958)(pascho) means to undergo an experience, usually difficult, normally with the implication of physical or psychological suffering.

The writer of **Hebrews** uses **pascho** to describe our Lord's sufferings...

For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has **suffered** (pascho), He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. (see note Hebrews 2:18)

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He **suffered** (pascho). (see note Hebrews 5:8)

Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (see note Hebrews 9:26)

Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, **suffered** outside the gate. (see note Hebrews 13:21)

Peter also uses **pascho** of Jesus' sufferings writing...

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also **suffered** for (substitutionary atonement implied) you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps (see note 1 Peter 2:21)

Comment: The Thessalonians and the churches in Judea were follow their Lord's example.

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin (see note 1 Peter 4 :1)

When the Thessalonians accepted Jesus as Lord, the implication is that they in effect rejected the claims to sovereignty of Caesar as "Lord" along with the tenets of the imperial cult, and thus they were perceived as threats to the established social order and government.

Bruce commenting on their **imitation** writes that...

In 1Th 1:6 the Thessalonians are commended for imitating the missionaries, not least by becoming missionaries in their turn: this was a token of the genuineness of their faith. Now a further token of the genuineness of their faith is said to be their imitation of the Judean churches. But this was not a deliberate imitation they knew of the Judean churches mostly by hearsay rather, the experience of the Judean churches was reproduced in the Thessalonian church. This was no merely external resemblance. Persecution, according to the NT, is a natural concomitant of Christian faith, and for the believers in Thessalonica to undergo suffering for Christ's sake proves that they are fellow-members of the same body as the Judean churches. ([Bruce, F F: 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, Incorporated. 1982](#))

Countrymen ([4853](#)) (**sumphuletes** from **sún** = together with, + **phulétes** = one of the same tribe from **phule** = a race, clan or tribe) describes one of the same tribe or fraternity. In the NT, generally a fellow citizen, fellow countryman and in this context **countrymen** denotes that the persecutors were Gentiles, as indicated the sharp contrast with **the Jews** as well as by the use of **your own**.

In Acts 17 we read of persecution although these were doubtless also Jewish in addition to Gentile protagonists...

But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and coming upon the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also; 7 and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." 8 And they stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things. (Acts 17:5-8)

The Jewish protagonists made a wily appeal to political passions ("another king" in verse 7) and thus had aroused the **Gentiles** to attack Paul and his colleagues. The result was the persecution of the church at Thessalonica, which had not yet subsided.

Jews ([2453](#)) (**loudaios**) is the the ethnic name of a person who belonged to the Jewish nation

Hiebert - The fires of persecution against the church were ignited by the unbelieving Jews in Judea; the story of Acts makes it clear that the unbelieving Jews of the dispersion kept those fires burning in the Gentile world. The remark of Tertullian fits the experience of the early churches: "The synagogues of the Jews, founts of persecution." ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

Even as they did from the Jews ([2453](#)) (**loudaios**) - this refers of course to the churches in Jerusalem and Judea which had suffered at the hands of the Jews their own countrymen. Such persecution from countrymen is reminiscent of **Jesus' prophetic words** in Matthew...

"For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW 36 and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. 37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 "He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it. 40 "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. (Matthew 10:35-40)

Compare to **Micah's** charge against his fellow countrymen...

For son treats father contemptuously, Daughter rises up against her mother, Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; A man's enemies are the men of his own household. (**Comment:** The sowing of dishonest commercialism, false prophecy, and judicial bribery as alluded to elsewhere in Micah is shown here to reap the demise of the basic unit of all society the family. When family ties no longer guarantee love, concern, and devotion, then a social order has been so distorted by sin that it cannot survive. Woe to America circa the twenty-first century when one's mate cannot be trusted, and one's most vicious enemies become the members of his own house, as testified almost daily on the FOX News network!)

1Thessalonians 2:15 who **both killed** the **Lord Jesus** and the **prophets**, and **drove** us out. They are not **pleasing** to **God**, but **hostile** to **all men**, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [ton kai ton kurion apokteinanton](#) ([AAPMPG](#)) [lesoun kai tous prophetas. kai emas](#) ekdioxanton ([AAPMPG](#)), [kai theo me areskonton.](#) ([PAPMPG](#)) [kai pasin anthropois enanton.](#)

Amplified: Who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and harassed and drove us out, and continue to make themselves hateful and offensive to God and to show themselves foes of all men, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: For some of the Jews had killed their own prophets, and some even killed the Lord Jesus. Now they have persecuted us and driven us out. They displease God and oppose everyone. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: It was the Jews who killed their own prophets, the Jews who killed the Lord Jesus, and the Jews who drove out us, his messengers. Their present attitude is in opposition to both God and man. ([Phillips:](#)

[Touchstone](#))

Wuest: those who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and are not pleasing God, and are hostile to all men,

Young's Literal: who did both put to death the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and did persecute us, and God they are not pleasing, and to all men are contrary,

WHO BOTH KILLED THE LORD JESUS AND THE PROPHETS, AND DROVE US OUT: ton kai ton kurion apokteinanton (AAPMPG) lesoun kai tous prophetas, kai emas ekdioxanton (AAPMPG):

- Matthew 5:12; 21:35-39; 23:31-35,37; 27:25; Luke 11:48-51; 13:33,34; Acts 2:23; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 7:52
- Amos 7:12; Acts 22:18-21
- [1 Thessalonians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

This is the only place in the Pauline writings where the Jews are stated to be responsible for Messiah's death and the intensity of this denunciation is without parallel in his writings. Paul proceeds to make five charges against the Jews in the next two verses.

**There is
No Justification
For Anti-Semitism
Ever!**

It must be categorically stated that Paul is not advocating anti-Semitism for there is no place in the Christian faith for this sinful attitude. Paul himself loved his fellow unbelieving Jews and sought to help them (Acts 24:17; see notes Romans 9:1; 9:2; 9:3; 9:4; 9:5).

Denney comments on Paul's denunciation writing...

What we have here is not a burst of temper, though there is undoubtedly strong feeling in it; it is the vehement condemnation, by a man in thorough sympathy with the mind and spirit of God, of the principles which the Jews as a nation had acted at every period of their history.

Killed ([615](#))(**apokteino** from **apó** = intensifies + **kteíno** = slay, related to anthropoktónos = manslayer, murderer) means to kill outright, put to death.

The charge that the Jews killed their Messiah is alluded to in several NT passages (cf. John 11:45-53; 18:28-31; also Acts 2:23, 36; 3:13-15; 4:10; 7:52; 10:39; 13:28) and is accurate to the extent that while the actual execution was carried out at the hands of Roman soldiers under the command of Pontius Pilate, the later authority was coerced into giving Jesus over to Crucifixion by the Jewish leaders.

John records that...

For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. (**John 5:18**)

Peter echoes Paul's charge against the Jews declaring...

Men of Israel (who were Jews), listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you (Jews) nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men (the Romans) and put Him to death. And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. (**Acts 2:22-24**)

Lord ([2962](#)) (**kurios**) signifies sovereign power and absolute authority. It is the one who has absolute ownership and uncontested power.

Vine expands on Paul's accusation of the Jewish part in Jesus' death writing that "when His enemies thought to compass His death privately, His popularity deterred them, Matthew 21:46, and, as a public trial and execution according to their own laws were barred by the authority of the Romans, John 18:31, they accused Him before Pilate on a trumped-up political charge, Luke 23:2, and so procured His death, the actual executioners being the Roman soldiery, Matthew 27:27, 31. While this distinction is fully recognized,

Luke 24:20; Acts 13:27, 28, e.g., yet, on the principle everywhere acknowledged, that what a man obtains to be done by others he does himself the words of Peter, Acts 3:14, 15, and of Stephen, Acts 7:52, and of Paul, here are also true to fact. And, further, the persecution of the Christians by the Jews of the Dispersion, John 7:35; see note 1 Peter 1:1, shewed how thoroughly they were imbued by the same fanatical spirit that animated those who dwelt in Judaea. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Prophets (4396) (**prophetes** from **próphemi** = tell beforehand from **pró** = before or forth + **phemí** = tell) generally one who speaks for God, proclaiming what God wants to make known. In the OT of prophetic personalities, of John the Baptist, of Jesus, of believers endowed with the gift. The prophet is one who declares God's message publicly as a forth teller, as teacher, admonisher, preacher. The prophet is a foreteller with special knowledge of the future. The Christian prophet is one with a special gift and calling to proclaim the divine message, interpret the times, and urge people to believe in Christ for salvation.

Regarding the **prophets** Paul does not mean that this is the way all the Jews treated all the prophets but that this was the general attitude toward the messengers of God. For example...

they became disobedient and rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy law behind their backs and killed Thy **prophets** who had admonished them so that they might return to Thee, and they committed great blasphemies. (Nehemiah 9:26)

for it came about, when Jezebel destroyed the **prophets** of the LORD, that Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.) (1Kings 18:4)

And he (Elijah) said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy **prophets** with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (1Kings 19:10)

Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.' "So they conspired against him and at the command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD. (2Chronicles 24:20-21)

(God speaking of the Jews) "In vain I have struck your sons. They accepted no chastening. Your sword has devoured your **prophets** like a destroying lion." (Jeremiah 2:30)

(Jesus lamented) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the **prophets** and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. 38 "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! (Matthew 23:37-38)

Drove out (1559)(**ekdioko** from **ek** = out + **dioko** = to pursue, persecute) means to chase out or drive out from a place. To banish. To persecute harshly. It means to persecute severely or harass. It means to use tactics that cause the departure of someone from a place.

Paul declares that the Jews pursued Christians out of Judea, painting the picture of them driving or banishing Christians systematically out of their province.

Ekdioko occurs 16 times in the Septuagint (LXX) (Deut 6:19; 1 Chr. 8:13; 12:15; Ps. 37:28; 44:16; 69:4; 101:5; 119:157; Jer. 49:19; 50:44; Da 4:25, 32f; 5:21; Joel 2:20)

There is only one other NT use...

For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will **persecute**...' " (Luke 11:49)

Paul is referring to at least in part to the events in **Acts 17**...

But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and coming upon the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also; 7 and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." 8 And they stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things. 9 And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them. 10 And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. (Acts 17:5-10)

This action by the Jews brings to mind Paul's later instruction to...

See that no one repays another with evil for evil but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men (see **note** 1Thessalonians 5:15)

THEY ARE NOT PLEASING TO GOD, BUT HOSTILE TO ALL MEN: kai theo me areskonton, (PAPMPG) kai pasin anthropois enantion:

- Acts 12:3; 1Corinthians 10:5) (Esther 3:8; Luke 11:52,53
- [1 Thessalonians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Not pleasing to God - The logical conclusion from what Paul has just stated about the actions of the unbelieving Jews.

Hiebert - To persist in a course of conduct that can only evoke divine displeasure is a serious thing indeed. [Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

Pleasing ([700](#)) (**aresko**) means to be satisfying or behaving properly toward one with whom one is related. **Aresko** is found in ancient inscriptions praising those who have served their fellow citizens and thus conveys the sense of service and obedience. Note Paul's use of the **present tense** which describes this trait as continuously present which marks the result of their continued persecution

Aresko - 17x in 16v in NAS - Mt 14:6; Mk 6:22; Acts 6:5; Ro 8:8; 15:1, 2, 3; 1Co 7:32 33 34; 10:33; Gal 1:10; 1Th 2:4, 15; 4:1; 2Ti 2:4

The misguided, deluded Jews thought that by such hostile deeds they were pleasing to God as explained by Jesus to His disciples that the Jews...

will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to **think** (they regarded this as presumably true, without particular certainty - it was their own subjective mental estimate, not God's) **that he is offering service to God.** (John 16:2)

In **Romans** Paul added "I bear them (the Jews) witness that they have a zeal for God, but **not in accordance with knowledge.** (Ro 10:2-note)

Through His prophet **Jeremiah** God declared "Indeed the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah have been doing only evil in My sight from their youth; for the sons of Israel have been only provoking Me to anger by the work of their hands," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 32:30)

Paul spoke to the basic underlying principle of why any man would not be pleasing to God writing that...

the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so and those who are in the flesh cannot **please** (**aresko**) God. (see **notes** Ro 8:7; 8:8)

Comment: In other words because the Jews remain in Adam and not in Christ, they lack the enabling power of the Spirit to be pleasing to God.

TDNT notes that **aresko** "originally meant to set up a positive relation, hence to make peace, then aesthetically to please, with such nuances as **a.** to be well disposed, **b.** to take a pleasant attitude, and **c.** to please. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

Paul explains how we can **please** God writing "Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and **please** (**aresko**) God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more. (1Thessalonians 4:1)

Hostile ([1727](#)) (**enantios** from **en** = in + **antios** = set against) (see note on **enantios**) literally, of direction over against or opposite and figuratively antagonistic, contrary to, hostile toward, opposed as an adversary.

Enantios is used primarily of a place and pertains to being opposite (as in face to face or fronting someone) or over against in terms of direction, as in describing the wind (enantios is used 3 times in the NT to describe winds as contrary).

Metaphorically as used here in Thessalonians **enantios** means contrary, adverse, hostile (marked by malevolence, open opposition and resistance

To all men - God's chosen people who were set apart by God in order that through them He might bless **all men**, so departed from their original purpose that here Paul says they are **hostile to all men**! The next verse explains that the basis for this charge is the fact that they hindered Paul from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved.

Hiebert - The Roman historian Tacitus (Histories 5.5) charged the Jews with "hostile odium" toward all men. In general, the Gentiles in that day regarded Jews as an unsociable and unfriendly race. This misreading of their true nature arose out of a misunderstanding of their religious exclusiveness, which made them separate themselves from all other people. While beginning as a nation divinely called to be a separate people, the Jews had become a sinfully exclusive and bigoted nation. When God overruled their perverted nationalism they reacted in bitter hostility. But Paul well understood that their hostility to non Jews was grounded "not in their natural make-up, but their rejection of the Gospel, and their determination to thwart its progress." And, it may be added, there is a permanent element in Paul's teaching here: to the unbelieving Jew, the preaching of the cross is still a "stumbling block" (1 Cor. 1:23) ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

Vincent quotes historical writings testifying to the Jewish hostility to **all men** - Tacitus (Hist. v. 5) describes the Jews as stubborn in their faith, prompt in kindly offices to each other, but bitterly hostile toward everybody else. Juvenal (Sat. xiv. 102 f.) says that they observe and respect whatever Moses has taught in his mystical volume; not to show the way except to one who practises the same rites, and to show the way only to the circumcised.

1Thessalonians 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: Lockman**)

Greek: [koluonton](#) ([PAPMPG](#)) [emas](#) [tois](#) [ethnesin](#) [lalesai](#) ([AAN](#)) [ina](#) [soteosin](#), ([3PAPS](#)) [eis](#) [to](#) [anaplerosai](#) ([AAN](#)) [auton](#) [tas](#) [hamartias](#) [pantote](#), [ephthasen](#) ([3SAAI](#)) [de](#) [ep'](#) [autous](#) [e](#) [orge](#) [eis](#) [telos](#).

Amplified: Forbidding and hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles (the nations) that they may be saved. So as always they fill up [to the brim the measure of] their sins. But God's wrath has come upon them at last [completely and forever]! ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: by trying to keep us from preaching the Good News to the Gentiles, for fear some might be saved. By doing this, they continue to pile up their sins. But the anger of God has caught up with them at last. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: They refused to let us speak to those who were not Jews, to tell them the news of salvation. Alas, I fear they are completing the full tale of their sins and the wrath of God is over their heads. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: forbidding us to tell the Gentiles that they [also] may be saved, with the result that they fill up the measure of their sins always. And there came upon them the wrath to the utmost.

Young's Literal: forbidding us to speak to the nations that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, but the anger did come upon them -- to the end!

HINDERING US FROM SPEAKING TO THE GENTILES THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED: koluonton (PAPMPG) hemas tois ethnesin lalesai (AAN) hina soteosin, (3PAPS):

- Acts 11:2,3,17,18; 13:50; 14:5,19; 17:5,6,13; 18:12,13; 19:9; 21:27-31; Acts 22:21,22; Galatians 5:11; Ephesians 3:8,13
- Isaiah 45:22; Mark 16:16; Acts 4:12; Romans 10:13-15; 2Thessalonians 2:10; 1Timothy 2:4
- [1 Thessalonians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Hindering us from speaking - Paul had endured the attempts of the Jews to restrain his ministry to the Gentiles in almost every town...

(At **Pisidian Antioch**) **Acts 13:45** But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming... **50** But the Jews aroused the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.

(At Iconium) **Acts 14:1** And it came about that in Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a great multitude believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. 2 But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles, and embittered them against the brethren.

(At Lystra) **Acts 14:19** But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

(At Corinth) **Acts 18:12** But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat

(At Jerusalem) **Acts 22:22** And they (the Jewish audience) listened to him (Paul) up to this statement (Jesus' command to Paul to "Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles."), and then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!"

Jesus made a similar accusation against the Jews declaring...

Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you **hindered** (koluo - the same verb that Paul used). (Luke 11:52) (**Comment:** In this context, the **key** stood for the correct interpretation of God's Word, a **key** the lawyers had removed. **A T Robertson** states that "this is a flat charge of obscurantism on the part of these scribes (lawyers), the teachers (rabbis) of the people. They themselves refused to go into the house of knowledge (beautiful figure) and learn. They then locked the door and hid the key to the house of knowledge and hindered (effective aorist active) those who were trying to enter. It is the most pitiful picture imaginable of blind ecclesiastics trying to keep others as blind as they were, blind leaders of the blind, both falling into the pit.")

Hindering ([2967](#)) (**koluo** from **kólos** = docked, lopped, clipped, **kolazo** = curtail) means to cut off, to cut short, to weaken and generally to hinder, to prevent, to check, to restrain or to forbid by word or act. The idea is to cause something not to happen. **Koluo** can describe the keeping back of something from someone (Acts 10:47 referring to the Holy Spirit - see verse below).

To hinder means to make slow or difficult the progress of something by interfering in some way with the activity or progress thereof. In short **koluo** means to make it difficult for someone to do something or for something to happen.

Here in 1Thessalonians 2:16, **koluo** is in the **present tense** indicating an active, persistent practice by the unbelieving Jews to prevent by whatever means the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. By their obstructionist tactics, the Jews were interfering with the work of the missionaries among the Gentiles, but clearly did not succeed in silencing the Gospel of God.

Koluo is used 13 times in the LXX (Ge. 23:6; Ex 36:6 = "the people were **restrained** from bringing" more contributions; Num. 11:28; 1 Sam. 25:26; 2 Sam. 13:13; Job 12:15 = "Behold, He **restrains** the waters, and they dry up; And He sends them out, and they inundate the earth."; Ps. 40:9; 119:101 = I have **restrained** my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Thy word.; Eccl. 8:8 = "No man has authority to **restrain** the wind with the wind"; Isa. 28:6; 43:6; Ezek. 31:15; Mic. 2:4) and 23 times in the NT...

Matthew 19:14 But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not **hinder** them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Mark 9:38 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to **hinder** him because he was not following us." 39 But Jesus said, "Do not **hinder** him, for there is no one who shall perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me.

Mark 10:14 But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not **hinder** them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. (**Comment:** The construction is present imperative in a prohibition, "stop hindering" which is what the disciples were doing. Jesus forbids the continuance of the action.)

Luke 6:29 "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not **withhold** your shirt from him either.

Luke 9:49 And John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to **hinder** him because he does not follow along with us." 50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you."

Luke 11:52 - see above

Luke 18:16 But Jesus called for them, saying, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not **hinder** them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Luke 23:2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and **forbidding** to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

Acts 8:36 And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What **prevents** me from being baptized?"

Acts 10:47 "Surely no one can **refuse** the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" (Literally, *Can any one cut off the water from the being baptized as to these?*)

Acts 11:17 "If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could **stand** in God's way?"

Acts 16:6 And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been **forbidden** by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;

Acts 24:23 And he gave orders to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and yet have some freedom, and not to **prevent** any of his friends from ministering to him.

Acts 27:43 but the centurion, wanting to bring Paul safely through, **kept** them **from** their intention, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land,

Romans 1:13 (note) And I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been **prevented** thus far) in order that I might obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.

1 Corinthians 14:39 Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not **forbid** to speak in tongues.

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

1 Timothy 4:3 men who **forbid** marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

Hebrews 7:3 (note) And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were **prevented** by death from continuing,

2 Peter 2:16 (note) but he received a rebuke for his own transgression; for a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, **restrained** the madness of the prophet.

3 John 1:10 For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and he **forbids** those who desire to do so, and puts them out of the church.

Gentiles ([1484](#)) (**ethnos**) refers to non-Jews or the heathen and when preceded by the definite article ("the") in Greek, means "the nations" which is synonymous with the Gentiles a description implying those who practice idolatry and are ignorant of the true and living God.

All of mankind can be divided into Jew and Gentile and thus "Gentile" is a synonym for anyone who is non-Jew, who is not a member of the "chosen people". The Hebrew word corresponding to Gentile is goyim. From Genesis 12 onward the majority of the Scriptures are about the Jews, with the Gentiles mentioned as they interface with the Jews. The NT does have more mention of the Gentiles after the formation of the Church, but the last book, the book of Revelation is predominantly Jewish with over 200 OT quotes or allusions to OT passages.

So that ([2443](#)) (**hina**) expresses the purpose for which they were seeking to speak to the Gentiles, to preach Christ and Him crucified that they might be saved. See value of observing and querying **terms of purpose or result** (so that, in order that, that, as a result).

This was the purpose for which Jesus had called him and set Paul aside, Luke recording that...

the Lord (Jesus) said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake. (Acts 9:15-16)

In **Romans** Paul declared...

I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry

(see **note** Romans 11:13)

Hiebert explains that the fierce opposition of the Jews...

was due to the fact that Christian missionaries offered salvation to Gentiles without demanding that they first become Jews. Everywhere the Jews showed themselves wildly jealous at Paul's success in winning Gentiles to the Christian faith directly. By their persistent opposition, the Jews deliberately sought to rob Gentiles of the salvation in Christ that they resolutely rejected for themselves. As Lenski well remarks, "The worst feature of unbelief is not its own damnation, but its effort to frustrate the salvation of others." It was precisely because Paul clearly saw the seriousness of the hindering work of the Jews—that it was fraught with eternal consequences for the Gentiles they were able to turn away from the gospel—that he denounced the Jews so passionately. ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

Saved ([4982](#)) (**sozo**) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole.

Sozo is sometimes used of physical deliverance from danger of perishing (see Mt 8:25; Mt 14:30; Lk 23:35; Acts 27:20 27:31), physical healing from sickness (Mt 9:21-22; Mk 5:23, Acts 4:9), and deliverance from demonic possession (Lk 8:36).

More often as here in 1Thessalonians 2:16, **sozo** refers to **salvation** in a spiritual sense as in Matthew's record the angel's conversation with Joseph declaring

She (Mary) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will **save** (**sozo**) His people from their sins. ([Mt 1:21](#))

Here **sozo** is equated with deliverance from sins (guilt and power of) with Jesus' name being a transliteration of Joshua meaning "Jehovah is salvation".

Jesus warned His disciples

And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be **saved** (**sozo**). (Mt 10:22, cf Mt 24:13)

Note it is **not** one's endurance (self effort or works) that saves but that one's endurance to the end demonstrates that they have been saved and supernaturally enabled to endure.

Again Jesus was teaching His disciples about salvation and declared

it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be **saved**?" (Mt 19:24 25)

Here He equated entrance into the kingdom of God with being saved. In explaining to His disciples and the multitudes what it meant to come after Him, denying self, taking up one's cross and following Him, Jesus declared that

whoever wishes to **save** (referring to one's physical life) his life shall lose it (eternally); but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall **save** (spiritually) it (eternally). (Mk 8:34)

Jesus speaking to a

woman in the city who was a sinner (Lk 7:37) said to her "Your sins have been forgiven" (Lk 7:48) **and then** Your faith has **saved** (**sozo**) you; go in peace. (Lk 7:50).

In these passages Jesus equates **sozo** with forgiveness of sins, confession of faith and experiencing peace!

In a parable explaining the role of the Word of God and the character of the "soil" in salvation, Jesus taught that

those (people) beside the road are those who have heard (the seed, the Word, the Gospel); then the devil comes (Mark's gospel adds "immediately", "at once") and takes away (**present tense** - continually) the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be **saved**. ([Lk 8:12](#))

Observe that one cannot be saved unless he **believes** the word and that merely **hearing** (and even assenting to the veracity) of the word does not result in salvation. (see discussion 1Th 2:13-note)

NET Bible notes add that

The word of Jesus has the potential to save if it germinates in a person's heart, something the devil is very much against. ([NET Bible](#))

Vine has an excellent summary note on **salvation** adding that

the characteristic use of the words in the Bible (sozo - to save, soteria - salvation, soter - Savior) is to sum up and describe the spiritual and eternal deliverances which result from the intervention of God on behalf of those who trust Him. Salvation has its origin in the mercy of God Titus 3:5 (note), and in the grace of God, Titus 2:11 (note), Whose gift it is, Eph 2:8 (note). And in the fact that salvation is also traced to the grace of the Lord Jesus, **Acts 15:11** ("*But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.*"), lies another testimony to His essential deity.

Faith in the Lord Jesus is the condition on which salvation is obtained, **Acts 16:31** (*And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."*); Romans 10:8 9 10 11 12 13 (see **notes** Ro 10:8; 10:9; 10:10; 10:11; 10:12; 10:13).

To be saved is to enter into the kingdom of the heavens, or of God, **Matthew 19:23-25**. (*And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"*)

It is to obtain the remission, or forgiveness, of sins, **Luke 7:50** (And He said to the woman [who had asked "Who is this man who even forgives sins?], "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."), cp. **Luke 1:77** (*To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins.*).

Forgiveness alone is seldom intended; it is indeed the first of the blessings vouchsafed by God to the repentant sinner, cp. **Psalms 32:1, 2** (*How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!*); **Ps 103:3** (*Who pardons all your iniquities; Who heals all your diseases*); **Acts 2:38**; Ephesians 1:7 (note), but to be saved means much more than to be forgiven: it means also to be made whole and to enter upon the enjoyment of peace, Luke 8:48 (*And He said to her [the woman who touched Him and was immediately healed], "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."*).

Those who are said to be saved in this sense are also said to be redeemed (see word study on **lutroo**), Titus 2:14 (note); (*Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds*) 1Peter 1:18 (note), cp. He 9:12 (note), justified, Acts 13:38, 39 (*"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed [see word study on **dikaioo** = justified = declared righteous not made righteous] from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses,*), and sanctified, He 10:10 (note) (*By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*); He 13:12 (note), and to have eternal life, John 5:24 (Jesus declared "*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*"), and peace with God, Ro 5:1 (note). (*Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*)

The believer's present experience of the power of God to deliver from the bondage of sin, Ro 6:6(note) (*knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;*), is also included in salvation, and is the primary reference of the word in 2 Corinthians 2:15 (*For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;* = "Present Tense" Salvation); He 7:25 (note); James 1:21, cp. 1Ti 4:16 (*Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*), and Php 2:12 (note) (*So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling*); 1Pe 1:9 (note); 1Pe 3:21 (note). Salvation in this sense is intended by the word "sanctification," as in 1Th 4:3 (note), where see note; it is the experience of present deliverance from the dominion of sin, Ro 6:14 (note), and is as much the privilege of the believer, and as much the mind of God for him here and now, as it is that he should have present assurance that his sins have been forgiven him.

Salvation is also the object of hope, 1Th 5:8(note), inasmuch as its consummation is reserved until the Lord comes, Ro 5:9 (note), Ro 5:10 (note); Ro 13:11 (note); 1Cor 3:15 (*If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.*); 1Cor 5:5 (*I have decided to deliver such a*

one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.); Php 3:20 (note); He 9:28 (note); 1Pe 1:5 (note). In this sense salvation is associated with the redemption (see word study apolutrosis) of the body, Ro 8:23(note); 1Co 1:30 (*But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption*); Ep 1:14 (note); Ep 4:30 (note), and with the impartation to it of that eternal life or immortality, Mk 10:30; Jn 6:27 (*"Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal."*); Jn 12:25 (*"He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal."*); Ro 6:22 (note); Titus 1:2 (note); Titus 3:7 (note); Jude 1:21, on which believers enter at the Parousia of the Lord Jesus, 1Co 15:1, 1Co 15:2, 1Co 15:3 4 5-note 1Co 15:6 7 8-note.

In many passages **salvation** is used in an inclusive sense covering all the meanings noticed above and summing up all the blessings bestowed by God on men in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:12 (*"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."*); Ro 1:16 (note); 2Corinthians 6:2; He 5:9 (note); Jude 1:3. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#)) (Bolding, notes and Scripture added)

WITH THE RESULT THAT THEY ALWAYS FILL UP THE MEASURE OF THEIR SINS: eis to anaplerosai (AAN) auton tas hamartias pantote:

- Genesis 15:16; Zechariah 5:6 7 8; Matthew 23:32
- [1 Thessalonians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

With the result (eis) - Here expresses purpose of result (see **terms of purpose or result**)

Always (3842) (**pantote** from **pas** = all + **tote** = then) means at all times and is emphatically placed at the end of the sentence. At all times signifies before Christ came in the flesh, in Christ's time and now, in all these times the Jews by their resistance to the divine word were filling up their sins. What would be the culmination of this always filling up? It would be **the time of Jacob's distress** (see **Jeremiah 30:7**) but even in the midst of the outpouring of His wrath God remembered mercy for Jeremiah adds that Jacob **will be saved from it (Jeremiah 30:7)** (See synonym **The Great Tribulation**). The point is that God's longsuffering has an endpoint but even then, unlike men who explode in anger which does not accomplish the righteousness of God, God's holy wrath fulfills His divine purpose of keeping His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Paul explaining...

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB. AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS. From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers for the gifts and the calling of God are **irrevocable**. (See **notes** Romans 11:25; 11:26; 11:27; 11:28; 11:29)

Vincent commenting on **always** adds "Always blind and stubborn, the Jews filled up the measure of their sins by their treatment of Christ and his apostles."

Fill up (378) (**anapleroo** from **aná** = up or as an emphatic + **pleroo** = to fill) means to fill up, spoken of a measure. **Anapleroo** means the making up of what is lacking to perfect fulness. **Anapleroo** is the filling of a partial void. This description implies that there is a certain measure of wickedness that God will allow a nation, a group, or an individual to complete before His judgment falls on them. In other words this verse reveals the principle that God permits sin to run its full course. The figure of speech which the prophets used was that the cup of iniquity must be filled up. God is permitting the cup to be filled. **Anapleroo** also refers to fulfilling a prophecy (Mt 13:14). **Anapleroo** can mean to supply (make up for - 1Cor 16:17).

Friberg - (1) literally fill up, make complete; figuratively, of filling up the measure of sins sin to the limit (1Thes 2.16); (2) of prophecy fulfill, confirm, cause to happen; passive be fulfilled, happen (Mt 13.14); (3) of filling or taking someone's place replace, make up for someone's absence (1Cor 16.17); fill a position (1Cor 14.16); (4) of making good a lack supply (Php 2.30); (5) of observing the law fulfill, obey (Gal 6.2) (Analytical Lexicon)

Anapleroo - 6x in 6v - **NAS Usage:** complete(1), fill up the measure(1), fills(1), fulfill(1), fulfilled(1), supplied(1).

Matthew 13:14 "In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is **being fulfilled**, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON

HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;

1 Corinthians 14:16 Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who **fills** the place of the ungifted say the "Amen " at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?

1 Corinthians 16:17 I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they **have supplied** what was lacking on your part.

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby **fulfill** the law of Christ.

Philippians 2:30 (**note**) because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life **to complete** (make up for) what was deficient in your service to me.

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** (bring to completion similar to use in the Septuagint translation of Ge 15:16) the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

Anapleroo - 11v in Septuagint - Gen 2:21 ("**closed up** the flesh"); Ge 15:16 ("iniquity of the Amorite is not yet **complete**"); Ge 29:28; Ex 7:25 ("Seven days **passed**" - were fulfilled); Ex 23:26 ("I **will fulfill** the number of your days"); Lev 12:6 ("When the days of her purification are **completed**,"); 1Kgs 7:51 ("Thus all the work that King Solomon performed in the house of the LORD **was finished**"); Esther 1:5 ("When these days were **completed**,"); Esther 2:12, 15; Isa 60:20 ("And the days of your mourning **will be over**.").

Barclay paints a vivid picture writing that "Each fresh act of hostility to the Gospel was an additional drop in their cup of guilt, which had been steadily filling during the ages. ([1 Thessalonians 2 Commentary - Daily Study Bible - online](#))

Criswell points out that the phrase "Fill up the measure of their sins" - points out the reality that the persecutors of believers are sometimes allowed to continue their sinful conduct. The evil nature of their actions will become a matter of record, and God's response of judgment will unquestionably be seen as an administration of righteousness. There is a limit to God's patience, and the fact that the wrath of God is spoken of here in the present (not future) tense affirms the certainty that it is in the process of coming even now. ([Criswell, W A. Believer's Study Bible: New King James Version. 1991. Thomas Nelson](#))

Hiebert explains that "The rendering "heap up" (NIV Translation) conveys the picture of the unbelieving Jews continuing to pile up their sins as a great heap. The more familiar rendering here, "to fill up," conveys the common Hebrew image of a measure or cup that is being filled up. It implies that the cup is still partially empty but that it is rapidly being filled to the brim... The task at which their fathers had been diligently working, the Jews by their opposition to the Gospel were still aggressively carrying on. ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

Calvin says that "this is why the punishment of the ungodly is often postponed—it is because their acts of ungodliness are so to speak not yet ripe.

Tasker remarks "that God delays the display of His wrath till offenders have reached a kind of saturation point, beyond which they may not pass... that time, Paul implies in 1 Thessalonians 2:16, is now imminent

Moses records a parallel thought in Genesis writing that

in the fourth generation they (the Jews) shall return here (to Canaan, given to Abraham by covenant promise), for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete (Lxx = **anapleroo**). (Genesis 15:16)

Comment: The Septuagint translates **complete** using the same verb as Paul used here in verse 16.

God is longsuffering and gives men time to repent while at the same time permitting them to continue in wickedness. And yet there is a limit. To the antediluvians, He warned

My spirit shall not always strive with man (Genesis 6:3)

And He followed through by sending the Great Flood to cleanse the earth. God delayed giving the promised land to Abraham and his seed for four hundred years because

the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full (Genesis 15:16)

In the case of the Jews of whom Paul was writing, they not only had slain their prophets and killed Christ, but now were trying to keep the gospel of God from being brought, not just to Jews, but even to the Gentiles (hostile to all men - Jews and Gentiles), so their iniquity, like that of the Amorites long before, was being filled up. In fact it was not many years after this was written that the Jewish Temple and their beloved city Jerusalem would be destroyed (70AD), and their people scattered or dispersed all over the world almost 2000 years. And this destruction would only portend of an even greater retribution in the time of the Great Tribulation.

One wonders how long God will be patient with once Christian, but sadly now pagan, America?

Peter spoke of God's longsuffering...

(in the context of angels who) once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. (1Pe 3:20-note)

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2Pe 3:9-note)

Paul addressing religious men (especially Jews) asked...

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? (Ro 2:4-note)

Vine explains that "On the other hand, God permits the evil things He sees in a man, or in a nation, to grow and develop until they become manifest to other eyes than His own, that thus the righteousness of His judgments, when they do come may be put beyond dispute, see Ps 89:2, 14. So He dealt with the Amorites, Ge 15:16 (the language of which the apostle uses here from the LXX), and in due time judgment fell upon them, see Joshua 10. Gabriel ascribed this reason for the delay of the divine retribution, Dal 8:23 (*"And in the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise Insolent and skilled in intrigue."*); and the Lord warned the leaders of Israel that they were pursuing the same infatuated course that involved their fathers in disaster and exile, Matthew 23:32 (*"Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers"*). ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Sins (266) (**hamartia**) originally conveyed the idea of missing mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow then missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. Sin is missing true ultimate purpose God has for each individual. It is an act contrary to the will and law of God, a departure from doing what is right.

BUT WRATH HAS COME UPON THEM TO THE UTMOST: ephthasen (3SAAI) de ep' autous e orge eis telos

- Joel 2:30,31; Malachi 4:1,5; Matthew 3:7 8 9 10,12; 12:45; 21:41 42 43 44; 22:6,7; Mt 24:6,14,21,22; Luke 11:50,51; 19:42 43 44; 21:20-24; Hebrews 6:8; Hebrews 10:27 28 29 30; James 5:1-6; Revelation 22:11
- [1 Thessalonians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

But - see discussion of value of assessing **terms of contrast**.

Literally the Greek reads "but the anger did come upon them -- to the end!"

Wrath (3709) (**orge** [word study] from **orgaō** = to teem, to swell) is used primarily of God's holy, righteous wrath but occasionally refers to the wrath of men (Ep 4:31-note).

John MacArthur comments that "**Orge** does not refer to an explosive outburst of temper but to an inner, deep resentment that seethes and smolders, often unnoticed by others. It is therefore an anger that only the Lord and the believer know about. Therefore, it is a special danger, (for the believer because the anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God) in that it can be privately harbored. ([MacArthur J. James. Moody](#))

Orge refers to to an inner, deep resentment that seethes and smolders. Orge as used of God refers to His constant and controlled indignation toward sin, while **thumos** (which originally referred to violent movements of air, water, etc., and consequently came to mean well up or boil up) refers more to a passionate outburst of rage. **Thumos** type anger represents an agitated, vehement anger that rushes along relentlessly. The root meaning has to do with moving rapidly and was used of a man's breathing violently while pursuing an enemy in great rage!

Orge is...

God's settled opposition to
and displeasure with sin

Orge does not refer to uncontrollable anger to which men are so prone but to God's **settled indignation** and controlled passionate hostile feeling toward sin in all its various manifestations. "Settled" indignation means that God's holiness cannot and will not coexist with sin in any form whatsoever. Orge is not the momentary, emotional, and often uncontrolled anger (thumos) to which human

beings are prone.

God's wrath is his holy hatred of all that is unholy. It is His righteous indignation at everything that is unrighteous. It is the temper of God towards sin. It is not God's uncontrollable rage, vindictive bitterness or a losing of His temper, but the wrath of righteous reason and holy law.

Orge - 36x in 34v in the **NAS** - Mt 3:7; Mk 3:5; Lk 3:7; 21:23; Jn 3:36; Ro 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; 13:4 5; Ep 2:3; 4:31; 5:6; Col 3:6, 8; 1Th 1:10; 2:16; 5:9; 1Ti 2:8; He 3:11; 4:3; Jas 1:19 20; Rev 6:16 17; 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15. **NAS** = anger(6), wrath(30).

John MacArthur adds that **orge** "signifies the strongest kind of anger, that which reaches fever pitch, when God's mercy and grace are fully exhausted. It will mark the end of God's patience and tolerance with unregenerate, unrepentant mankind in the swelling of His final, furious anger which He will vent on those whose works evidence their persistent and unswerving rebellion against Him. ([MacArthur, J: Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

William Barclay - The Greeks defined **thumos** as the kind of anger which is like the flame which comes from straw; it quickly blazes up and just as quickly subsides. On the other hand, they described **ogre** as anger which has become habitual... **Orge** is anger which has become inveterate; it is long-lasting, slow-burning anger, which refuses to be pacified and nurses its wrath to keep it warm... To the Christian the burst of temper and the long-lived anger are both alike forbidden. ([1 Thessalonians 2 Commentary - Daily Study Bible - online](#))

Larry Richards in describing God's **anger** writes that...

The OT clearly specifies what human actions provoke God to anger. The NT treats wrath as a basic relational state, showing that the unsaved are under God's wrath. But God never acts capriciously in his anger. He always acts in full harmony with his character as a loving, forgiving, compassionate, and just person. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

Arthur Pink defined God's **wrath** as...

His eternal detestation of all unrighteousness. It is the displeasure and indignation of Divine equity against evil. It is the holiness of God stirred into activity against sin (Arthur W. Pink, The Attributes of God).

Bishop Trench defines **orge** as

a wrath of God who would not love good unless He hated evil, the two being inseparable, that He must do both or neither." Trench adds that **orge** is an anger "which righteous men not merely may, but as they are righteous, must feel; nor can there be a surer and sadder token of an utterly prostrate moral condition than the not being able to be angry with sin—and sinners (Trench, R. C. Synonyms of the New Testament. Hendrickson Publishers. 2000)

Orge is used of our Lord when, after healing the man with the withered hand, He observed the hardness of heart of the Pharisees, and looked upon them with anger ([Mk 3:5](#)).

Marvin Vincent describes **orge** as God's personal emotion with regard to sin. It represents God's abhorrence and hatred of sin and His constant, invariable reaction to sin.

Literally the passage reads

but the anger did come upon them -- to the end!

Come ([5348](#)) (**phthano**) means to come on. It means to to come to or arrive at a particular state. This common verb means to do or be first to overtake. The meaning of the **aorist tense** is debated (see below), but can be understood as having come and still remaining with a potential that is yet to be fulfilled but here is spoken of as a potential that one day will be consummated (reach its goal).

John has a similar statement regarding the present state all of unbelieving mankind...

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides (present tense = continually) on him. (John 3:36)

Comment: As an aside remember that "Eternal life" does not simply mean eternity in heaven. The believer possesses that life right now! It is the life of Christ in the believer. [Col 3:3-note *When Christ, Who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.*] The opposite of eternal life is eternal death = the wrath of God [being revealed even now in Ro 1:18 [note] but rising in crescendo in Revelation 6-19 and

consummated at the Great White Throne and the Lake of Fire in Revelation 20:11 12 13 14 - see note beginning [here](#). A person does not have to die and go to hell to be under the wrath of God. *He that believeth not is condemned already*" [Jn 3:18]. The verdict has already been handed down, but the sentence has not yet been executed. Why? Because God is patient and long-suffering, and continues to call sinners to repentance - 2Pe 3:9 [see note].

Wrath has come upon them is a difficult phrase to understand, for we know that final wrath has not come upon the Jews (see discussion above regarding The Great Tribulation). Not surprisingly, the commentaries offer numerous interpretations (and of course only one is correct - one always hears there are many ways to interpret the Bible, which to an extent may be accurate, but the truth is that there is only one accurate interpretation!).

MacArthur writes that has come...

is in the **aorist tense**, which affirms that Paul was so certain that divine wrath would come that he expressed the notion as if it had already occurred. And historically, it had occurred—in the Babylonian exile (Ezekiel 8-11). His expression likely includes the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70, although then nearly twenty years off; and it denotes the eschatological wrath to come when Jesus returns to earth in judgment ([Revelation 19](#)). But primarily the expression points to the damnation of people who reject God (cf. John 3:36). That, too, was so certain that Paul could write of it as if it had already occurred. Those Jews had met all the prerequisites for future damnation. ([MacArthur, John: 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Moody Press](#))

F F Bruce feels that...

The best explanation is a constative aorist, pointing to a past arrival but an arrival only in a potential or positional sense. Such a potential presence of the wrath accords with the Epistle's emphasis on an imminent breaking forth of end time events, one of which is the well-known trouble of Israel before Messiah's return (Ed note: See discussion of the **time of Jacob's distress** above). ([Bruce, F F: 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, Incorporated. 1982](#))

Vine explains **wrath has come upon** the Jews reminding us that at the time of the writing of this epistle...

The Jews were already a scattered people, their land under a foreign yoke and within twenty years of the writing of these words their temple and their city were destroyed. The phrase **come upon** occurs elsewhere only in Matthew 12:28 (*But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God **has come*** [same verb = phthano] *upon you.*) and Luke 11:20 (*But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God **has come*** [same verb = phthano] *upon you.*), suggesting a solemn contrast between what might have been had they recognized the **time of their visitation**, Luke 19:41, 44 (*And when He [Jesus] approached, He saw the city and wept over it... and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.*" - referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70), and what actually followed on their determined rejection of the Messiah. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

To the utmost (to the end) ([5056](#)) (**telos**) speaks of a consummation, a goal achieved, a result attained, or a realization. **Telos** is the culmination or the outcome of a growth or development representing an attained objective.

Wiersbe observes that...

Saints have been saved to the uttermost (He 7:25-note), but sinners will experience wrath to the uttermost (1Th 2:16). Here is one of the great values of the local church: we stand together in times of difficulty and encourage one another. It was when Elijah isolated himself from the other faithful Israelites that he became discouraged and wanted to quit. One reason Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica was to encourage the believers (1Th3:1 2 3 4). A lonely saint is very vulnerable to the attacks of Satan. We need each other in the battles of life. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

Telos is the result of an event or process with special focus upon the final state or condition and in the present context indicates that God's wrath has now reached its extreme limits. Judgment cannot be averted.

John used this same phrase **to the utmost** (eis telos) but in marked contrast writing of Jesus and His disciples...

Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them **to the end** (*eis telos* - **to the utmost**). (John 13:1)

Vine explains that **to the utmost** is a reference

to the prophecy of Deuteronomy 28:15-68; but inasmuch as the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of (are not irrevocable), Ro 11:29 (see note)., God will not make a full end of Israel, Jeremiah 30:4–11, though still heavier sorrows await the nation before final deliverance comes, Matthew 24:15-28. (Ed note: See (discussion of **The Great Tribulation**) ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Hiebert explains that ...

Paul's picture here of the outlook for the Christ-rejecting Jews is dark indeed. Their fate was sealed; they were irrevocably doomed. But God has promised that He "will not make a full end of" His people (Jer 30:4-11; Jer 31:35 36 37; Jer 33:20 21 22). Although a dark future still awaits them, final Messianic deliverance is assured them. Paul's statement here deals with the inevitable fate of the Christ-rejecting Jews who reveal their determined opposition to the gospel by their efforts to hinder its preaching to the Gentiles. But it must be remembered that this passage does not give Paul's complete teaching concerning the future of Israel. His statement here is quite consistent with his fuller teaching in Romans 9-11.

There he shows that the masses of the Jews in every period of their history have been unbelieving and therefore under the judgment of God, but always there has been an elect remnant to whom God has manifested His saving grace. Since the masses of the Jews, by their persistent opposition to his work, reveal that it is their settled policy to reject the gospel of Christ, Paul knows that inevitable judgment awaits them. Because of their unbelief, a hardening has befallen the nation that will last "until the full number of the Gentiles has come in" (Ro 11:25-note). ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))