

What We Teach

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The Model Church: A Strong People, [1 Thessalonians 2:13-20](#)

[\(1 Thessalonians 2:13-20\)](#) **Introduction:** a strong church is a church of strong people, a people who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and who are continuing steadfast in Him. This passage covers the traits of a strong people.

1. [\(1 Thessalonians 2:13\)](#) **Word of God:** a strong people receive the Word of God as the Word of God.

[1 Thessalonians 2:13 \(NASB\)](#)

¹³“**For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.***”

Note three facts.

1. The Thessalonian believers had received the Word through the preaching and teaching of men. Paul, Silas, and Timothy had carried and proclaimed the Word of God to them. They or some other believer had to take the Word to the Thessalonians, for there was no other way they could have received it. It takes people to communicate the Word of God. If believers did not speak and share the Word, then it would never be heard or received. It would stop dead in its tracks and no one would ever again be reached for Christ.

There would never again be a branch added to the tree of life. The only way the Word of God can go forth is for believers to share it. **The point is this:** proclaiming and bearing witness to the Word of God is God’s *ordained way* to reach the world for Christ. He has ordained the mission of proclaiming it *to men*, not to angels or to any other creature.

The duty to proclaim and bear testimony to the Word of God lies in the lap of believers. For this reason, we must proclaim and bear witness to God’s Word every day of our lives. The very life of every soul upon earth rests in our hands. Paul knew this; that is the reason he had carried the Word of God to the Thessalonians.

2. The Thessalonian believers had received the Word not as the word of men, but as *it is in truth, the Word of God*. What a phenomenal statement! Paul unequivocally declares that the Word he proclaimed was not the word of men, but the Word of God Himself. He further adds that “**it is in truth, the Word of God.**” Do you and I believe that the Word of God is the Word of God?

⇒ The Thessalonians believed it.

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- ⇒ Paul believed it.
- ⇒ But do you and I believe it? Really believe it?

Remember: what Paul preached was the Old Testament Scriptures and the mysteries of Christ which God had revealed directly to him (cp. [Romans 16:25-26](#); [1 Corinthians 2:7](#); [Ephesians 1:9](#); [Ephesians 3:4, 9](#); [Colossians 1:27](#); [Colossians 2:2](#); [Colossians 4:3](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#)).

[Romans 16:25-26 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁵ “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past.”

²⁶ “But now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading* to obedience of faith.”

[1 Corinthians 2:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷ “But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory.”

[Ephesians 1:9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹ “He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him.”

[Ephesians 3:4 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴ “By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.”

[Ephesians 3:9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹ “And to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things.”

[Colossians 1:27 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁷ “To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

[Colossians 2:2 \(NASB\)](#)

² “That their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, *resulting* in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, *that is*, Christ *Himself*.”

[Colossians 4:3 \(NASB\)](#)

³ “Praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned.”

[2 Timothy 3:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶ “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”

Most people—by far most—do not believe that the Word of God (the Bible) is the Word of God. They receive the Word of God only as the word of men.

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- ⇒ They think that the Word of God is only of men.
- ⇒ Some think that the New Testament is only what the early apostles and believers could remember about Christ and conclude from His teaching.
- ⇒ Some think that the Old Testament is only the religious book and religious fables of the Jews, written by their great religious leaders.
- ⇒ Some think that the Bible is the great religious book chosen by God to use in the lives of people when it is proclaimed. Sitting on the shelf, they say that the Bible is not the Word of God, but when it is read or proclaimed, it becomes the Word of God; God uses its message to move upon the hearts of people and convict them.

However, note a critical point, a point so critical that it can be the determining factor that affects a man's eternal destiny: both the Bible and Paul claim that the Word of God is not the word of men, but the Word of God. **"It is in truth, the Word of God."** And the Thessalonian church and its believers received it as the Word of God.

3. The Thessalonian believers received the Word so that it could work and operate in their lives. The verse says that it is God who *works in us that believe*.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NASB)

¹³"For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.*"

But what is it that we believe? The Word of God. If we do not believe the Word of God, there is nothing left to believe but the word of men.

And the best that men can give us is messages and words that stir us to greater...

- self-improvement
- self-development
- self-image
- justice
- equality
- works
- goodness
- morality
- commitment

All of this is good, but it has one terrible flaw: it ends. Everything about man ends when man dies. The messages and words of men can do no more than what man can do, and man can do no more than die and continue in his terrible separation from life and God. Man cannot save himself. This is the reason man must hope and trust that God is love and has loved us enough to speak to us—speak accurately and clearly. If God cares no more than to leave us in the dark about how to become acceptable to Him, then we never want to have to face Him. Why? Because He could not be a God of love—not if He has left us in a dark, evil, and destructive world—left us groping and grasping to find our way to Him.

A God of love would love and speak to us clearly and accurately, without any error, so that we could unmistakably know Him, ourselves, and the world:

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- ⇒ who we are
- ⇒ why we are here
- ⇒ why things are the way they are
- ⇒ where we are going

This is the glorious gospel: God has loved us and has given us His Word, the very Word of God itself, the Holy Scriptures. Some of the Thessalonians believed in the Word of God. Therefore, God worked in their hearts and lives, converting and growing them to be more and more like His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 13:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.”

Matthew 13:23 (NASB)

²³ “And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”

Luke 8:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ “But the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”

Acts 2:41 (NASB)

⁴¹ “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.”

Acts 17:11 (NASB)

¹¹ “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so.”