



Manifestations of God's Word at Work

1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

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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.

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, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out.

1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, 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.

Main Point

There will be visible manifestations of the work of God's Word in believers that will include endurance through the inevitable opposition faithful followers will face.

Manifestations of the Word's Work

The work of the Word.

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but for what it really is, **the word of God,**
which also **performs its work in you who believe.**

What is this work?

A faded topographic map of a region, likely in the Himalayas, showing a network of rivers and mountainous terrain. The map is in shades of brown, tan, and light blue. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the map.

The Work of the Word

The renewal of minds.

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
so that you may prove what the will of God is,
that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

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Evidence of Renewal?

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

...you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

What ways of thinking needed to be renewed for them to respond in this way?

How did this renewal take place?

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which also **performs its work** in you who believe.

They listened to Paul's message,
received it as the Word of God,
and changed their minds about
many things as a result.

The Word was doing its work.



The Work of the Word

The renewal of minds.

The transformation of lives.

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Evidence of Transformation?

1 Thessalonians 1:3 and 6-7

...bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

You also became imitators of us and of the Lord...

...you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

Transformation was evident in that they were working out their faith, laboring in love, persevering in hope, imitating the Lord, and setting an example for others.

In a very real sense,
even the persecution they faced
was evidence of transformation.
It was their changed way of living
that led to their persecution.

Manifestations of the Word's Work

The work of the Word.

The reality of opposition.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-15

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, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out.



The Reality of Opposition

A shared experience of persecution.

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The persecution suffered by the Thessalonians was of *the same kind* as that suffered by the churches in Judea and by Paul and his companions. It was of the same kind as that suffered by Christ Himself.

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Romans 8:16-17

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Philippians 1:29-30

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

The background of the image is a faded, light-colored map. It shows a network of roads, rivers, and geographical features. Some place names are visible, such as 'Narouhi' on the left and 'SALONIKA' at the bottom center. The map is rendered in a low-contrast, almost monochromatic style, with the text overlaid on top.

The Reality of Opposition

A shared experience of persecution.

A persistent effort of Satan.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

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, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, 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.

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**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.

What was animating them?

John 8:40-41 and 44

“But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me,
a man who has told you the truth,
which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do.
You are doing the deeds of your father.”

“You are of your father the devil,
and you want to do the desires of your father.
He was a murderer from the beginning.”

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He was a murderer from the beginning.”

Satan was animating this opposition to the
gospel and persecution of the saints.
He did not make them do it, but he is the
father of it and the force behind it.

1 Thessalonians 2:18

For we wanted to come to you
— I, Paul, more than once —
and yet **Satan hindered us.**

Why such opposition?

Acts 26:17-18

“...I am sending you, to open [*the Gentiles*] eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God.”

Until Christ returns to fully and finally cast Satan out, he will persist in his opposition to the gospel and in his persecution of the saints,
but we will overcome him.

Revelation 12:10-11

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying,
“Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom
of our God and the authority of His Christ have come,
for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down,
he who accuses them before our God day and night.
And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb
and because of the word of their testimony,
and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

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And **they overcame him** because of the blood of the Lamb
and because of the word of their testimony,
and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

Manifestations of the Word's Work

The work of the Word.

The reality of opposition.

Visible manifestations
of the Word's work.

A faded topographic map of a region, likely in the Balkans, showing a river and various geographical features. The map is light-colored with brown and blue tones. The text is overlaid on the map.

Visible Manifestations

Tenacity of faith despite opposition.

1 Thessalonians 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.

1 Thessalonians 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.

Endurance necessarily involves
tenaciously holding to the faith despite
pressure to give in or turn away.

1 Thessalonians 1:9

...you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven..

Endurance means continuing to believe that God is the living and true God, and that Jesus is coming from heaven.

1 Thessalonians 3:5-7

For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

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For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, **I also sent**
to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter
might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

But now that Timothy has come to us from you,
and has brought us good news of your faith...we were
comforted about you through your faith.

Paul's concern was that they tenaciously hold onto their faith, and he was comforted by hearing that they were enduring in faith. This showed that God's Word was at work in them as they believed.



Visible Manifestations

Tenacity of faith despite opposition.

Persistence in practice
despite persecution.

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of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured
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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.

Endurance would also necessarily mean
persistence in the practices of the faith.

In fact, it was their Christian conduct that was producing the persecution in the first place.

Giving in to pressure to participate in pagan practices or ceasing to live outwardly as Christians would have diminished or stopped the persecution.

Galatians 5:11

But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.

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of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, **for you** also **endured**
the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen.

Paul was thankful to God because in their persistent practice of their faith, despite persecution, he saw the manifestation of God's Word at work in them.

Conclusion

We should expect and be prepared for opposition to the gospel and persecution for our faith.

Opposition and persecution will come because Christian thinking and conduct is contrary to and offensive to this age.

Tenaciously holding to the faith and persisting in faithful practice despite opposition and persecution is a visible manifestation of God's Word at work in us who are believing.