1Thess #40

Satan will attempt to hinder the positive Believer.

Please open back up today in 1Thessalonians chapter two.

1Thes 2:14 For you, brothers *and sisters,* 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,

It is always the religious crowd who seem to do the most damage and attack with the most severity.

[1Th 2:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/15/s_1113015) who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all people,

It is more often than not, religion and legalism that has called for violence and death throughout human history.

That is a documented fact.

[1Th 2:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/16/s_1113016) hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always reach the limit of their sins. But wrath has come upon them fully.

As we noted over the last two lessons GOD has everything under control.

Once you understand the Divine Decree and gather the correct theology behind the doctrine of Lapsarianism, you understand free will, election and predestination.

[1Th 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/17/s_1113017) But we, brothers *and sisters,* having been orphaned from you *by absence* for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face.

The Apostle Paul was truly affectionate toward these new converts.

Also, Paul was in a stronger role of leadership now that put him in a lonely position.

This was about 18 years into the Apostle Paul’s ministry and he was now becoming the most respected and really popular Apostle of the 12.

The Apostle Paul would begin or at least have touched nearly 20 churches or more, within Christian history that we can account for.

That doesn’t include men like Luke, Titus or Timothy, who because of the Apostle Paul went on to become church leaders themselves.

The higher you go as a pastor-teacher and the deeper you dive into your serious study, the lonelier it can get.

/[1Th 2:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/18/s_1113018) For **we wanted to come** to you—I, Paul, more than once—and **Satan hindered us.\**

The Apostle Paul and his team genuinely wanted to have more fellowship and teaching opportunities with the church at Thessalonica.

This is a serious statement and so is the fact that Satan was actively trying to stop the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

[1Th 2:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/19/s_1113019) For who *is* our hope, or joy or crown of pride, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Or *is it* not indeed you?

[1Th 2:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/20/s_1113020) For you are our glory and joy.

Jump over to Acts chapter nineteen.

We will look at the Apostle Paul’s travels and we will see what he meant by Satan hindering him.

/The Apostle Paul understood what was truly a Satanic hindrance and what was just the simple tests and trials of life. He knew what was a random life circumstance, or a direct attack from Satan. Paul had the discernment to know. The Apostles all shared in the same grit and tenacity within their attitudes, it was a determination to overcome average roadblocks as well as satanic roadblocks.\

Many scholars believe that 1 Thessalonians was one of the Apostle Paul’s early letters written as an apostle to a church. If this is the case, then Satan’s roadblock got Paul in a habit of writing letters to the churches.

Galatians, Thessalonians and Corinthians were some of his first congregations.

The fact that he realized letters of instruction or guidance would be needed regularly, ended up becoming historical teaching documents to this very day.

/When Satan throws up a roadblock, you can either throw in the towel, giving him a win. Or adapt and overcome using what Satan designed as a curse and turn it into a blessing! God wants to turn curses and stumbling blocks into lessons which turn into blessings. Yet most Christians are too busy complaining and running in the opposite direction to receive the blessing.\

Let us look at the months leading up to the first and even the second visit from the Apostle Paul into Thessalonica.

Act 19:21 Now after these things were finished, Paul resolved in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”

[Act 19:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/19/22/s_1037022) And after he sent into Macedonia two of those who assisted him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

This is believed to be the time that Timothy travelled through Thessalonica as a new pastor-teacher, to re-enforce Paul’s original teaching.

[Act 19:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/19/23/s_1037023) About that time a major disturbance occurred in regard to the Way.

What you need to keep in mind is that the Apostle Paul had been travelling in the Greek region for nearly two years now.

His miracles, healings and teaching combined were having a huge impact on the Greek population.

Even though many were being converted he was making many enemies as well.

/Act 19:24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith **who made silver shrines of Artemis**, was bringing considerable business to the craftsmen;

This was also known as the goddess of sexual pleasure and fertility Diana. A very famous and demonic temple was in Ephesus dedicated to her.\

Keep something in mind – though the Romans were the dominant force everywhere at this historic point.

Greeks and Romans shared a great deal of culture together.

There was a mutual respect among the two cultures.

Many Romans enjoyed the Greek religion and culture so much so, that it was intermingled into Roman life during this period.

[Act 19:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/19/25/s_1037025) he gathered these men together with the workmen of similar *trades,* and said, “Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business.

/[Act 19:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/19/26/s_1037026) “You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, **saying that gods made by hands are not gods *at all****.*

Religion in all its forms, grotesque and dark or imitating light (counterfeit), will always oppose the truth of Jesus Christ.\

BD is the singular truth - and that truth will always challenge and intimidate the counterfeits and evil, because they can never stand up to true light of TLJC.

/[Act 19:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/19/27/s_1037027) “Not only is there danger that **this trade of ours will fall** into **disrepute** (*apelegmos*), but also that the temple of the great goddess **Artemis will be regarded as worthless**, and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence.”

They knew that their own religious system could be revealed as worthless.\

APP-EL-EG-MOS, means worthless, having no value and really points to a fraud, a counterfeit.

No one will spend time, talent and treasure on a counterfeit.

Notice what the great concern is over – wealth, power and status in the community!

[Act 19:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/19/28/s_1037028) When they heard *this* and were filled with rage, they began shouting, saying, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

/Religion will always use subtle manipulation or even forceful tactics to maintain its grip of power and wealth. True Christianity is never manipulative or fearful concerning loss of power, wealth or popularity. True Christianity has marched forward no matter what obstacles and attacks it encounters. True Christianity has no desire to hold or gain power. It is the most organic and natural movement of truth that is Christ-dependent not power, wealth or popularity dependent. Flesh and works do not drive true Christianity. \

Religion uses the flesh, emotions, works programs or rituals, not true Christianity.

The Apostle Paul wants to address the growing concern but his travel companions and disciples pulled him off to the side to protect him.

The Apostle Paul had his own spiritual discernment working in his favor as well as his close companions.

Companions who were positive Bels!

Jump down a few verses and take a look at the uproar that begins from mob mentality;

Act 19:32 So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together.

Notice how emotions get whipped into a frenzy and people do not even know what they are upset over – mob mentality.

[Act 19:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/19/33/s_1037033)Some of the crowd concluded *it was* Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly.

This is the same Alexander that Paul would bring up later as someone who hindered his ministry.

Act 19:34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

The fact that it was a Jewish preacher who had led people astray made it even worse. Because there was prejudice toward most of the Jews.

[Act 19:35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/19/35/s_1037035) After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, “Men of Ephesus, what person is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the image which fell down from the sky?

This was a town official, we would consider the mayor by today’s standard.

The staunch followers of Greek religions believed that the original statue fell from the skies or was thrown down by a fallen angel called Jupiter. Jupiter was a sky god under the power of his father Saturn.

[Act 19:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/19/36/s_1037036)“So, since these are undeniable *facts,* you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash.

[Act 19:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/19/37/s_1037037) “For you have brought these men *here who are* neithertemple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess.

/This was a direct attack from Satan as he used one of his counterfeit systems and the emotions of the crowd to attempt to have the Apostle Paul beaten and perhaps jailed. This was designed as a roadblock for Paul’s ministry. God made sure there were good men in Paul’s periphery who helped him to stay clear of danger. God also had an Unbel in a position of authority who were able to quell the riot.\

Jump over to chapter twenty.

This was not over yet.

The roadblock for the Apostle Paul was never done – he faced this on the regular!

Keep in mind Satan never quits and he often circles back around in a different area after an attack fails.

/ The Apostle Paul listened and paid attention to the situation that bubbled up all around him. When we step back from the emotions and situations that spring up in front of us and earnestly seek the truth. We can operate from BD, God will always honor the positive Bel who is moving forward by placing people and circumstances in your favor. Your discernment and spiritual I.Q. will be the factors as to how in tune you are to God’s touch in our life.\

Act 20:1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had encouraged them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia.

There were some good doctrinal men with Paul and this worked in unison as a spiritual guide to get them through this volatile situation.

Between the Apostle’s Paul’s own spiritual discernment and these men who were faithful students he was carried through this attack.

[Act 20:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/20/2/s_1038002) When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.

/[Act 20:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/20/3/s_1038003) And *there* he spent three months, and **when a plot was formed against him by the Jews** as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

Even while Satan is manipulating and igniting problems in your life, God can work that situation into a blessings! \

Now the religious Jews went on the attack.

First it was the religious and greedy Greeks, now the Jews planned to trip him up.

These attacks and satanic roadblocks only increased the Apostles Paul’s ministry and added the scriptures we study today into the completed canon of scripture.

[Act 20:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/20/4/s_1038004) And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, *the son* of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

The Apostle Paul always surrounded himself with good, doctrinal Bels.

Men who had character and integrity.

[Act 20:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/20/5/s_1038005) Now these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas.

/The company you keep and the intimate relationships you have can have a profound effect on your direction in life. Positive Bels can be a true blessing and a buffer from outside attacks. Strength in numbers is a true statement, it just needs to be strength of the same faith (equally yoked), otherwise you may be pulled in the wrong direction.\

Though we are each responsible for our own growth we do have greater strength among other like minded Bels.

/Ecc 4:11 Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm *alone?* 12 And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three *strands* is not quickly torn apart.\

No matter if you are alone or in a group Satan will finds ways to infiltrate and attack.

You spiritual I.Q. and discernment will be the best weapons you have in those times.

/Isa 40:29 He gives strength to the weary, And to the one who lacks  
might He increases power. 30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, 31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.\