

Through The Bible

I & II

THESSALONIANS

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

COPYRIGHT ZAC POONEN AND VINAY KURUVILLA

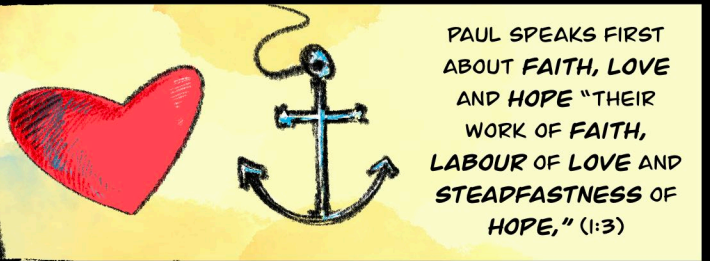
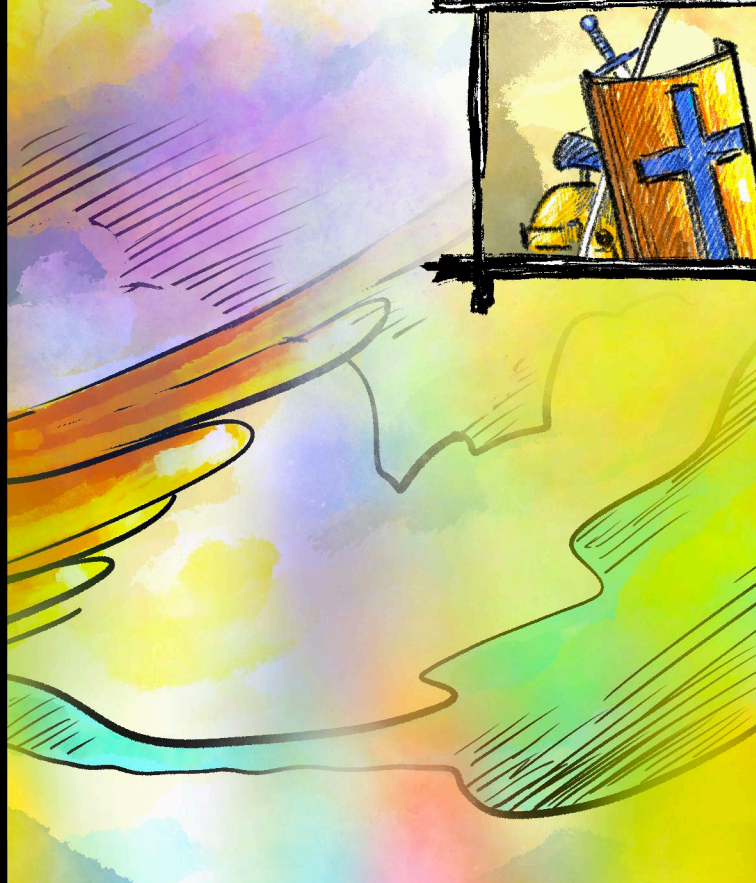
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

69, PARADISE ENCLAVE, BELAHALLI
KANNUR POST, BANGALORE - 562 149
INDIA

1 THESSALONIANS

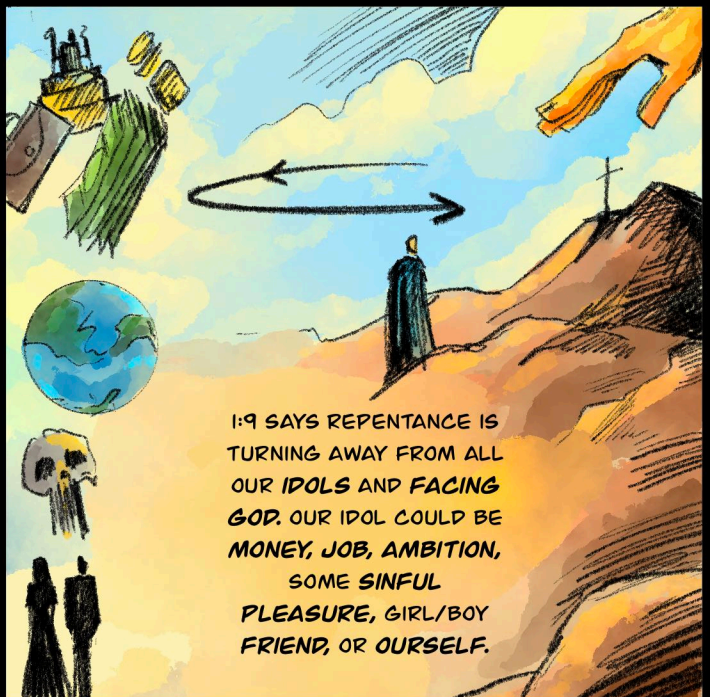


THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA WAS A PERSECUTED CHURCH; AND PAUL HAD BEEN PREPARED TO MINISTER TO THE PEOPLE THERE BY BEING PERSECUTED HIMSELF IN PHILIPPI BEFORE COMING THERE.



PAUL SPEAKS FIRST ABOUT FAITH, LOVE AND HOPE "THEIR WORK OF FAITH, LABOUR OF LOVE AND STEADFASTNESS OF HOPE," (1:3)

THE **THEME** OF THE VERY **FIRST** LETTER THAT PAUL WROTE (1 THESSALONIANS) IS BEING **READY** FOR **CHRIST'S** RETURN.



1:9 SAYS REPENTANCE IS TURNING AWAY FROM ALL OUR IDOLS AND FACING GOD. OUR IDOL COULD BE MONEY, JOB, AMBITION, SOME SINFUL PLEASURE, GIRL/BOY FRIEND, OR OURSELF.

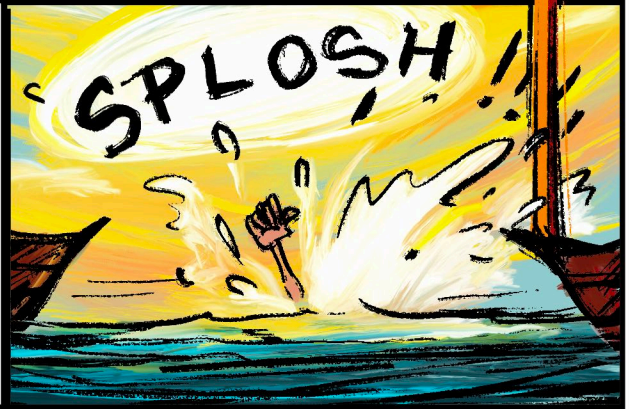
MANY CHRISTIANS TRY TO FACE GOD WHILE STILL HAVING IDOLS IN THEIR LIVES. THEIR AMBITIONS AND INTERESTS ARE ALL IN THE WORLD, BUT THEY ALSO IMAGINE THAT THEY ARE BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIANS! SUCH "CHRISTIANS" ARE THE MOST UNHAPPY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD.



PEOPLE WHO LIVE TOTALLY FOR THEIR IDOLS OF PLEASURE AND MONEY ARE HAPPIER THAN SUCH "CHRISTIANS"! BUT THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE TOTALLY FOR GOD ALONE ARE SUPREMELY HAPPY.

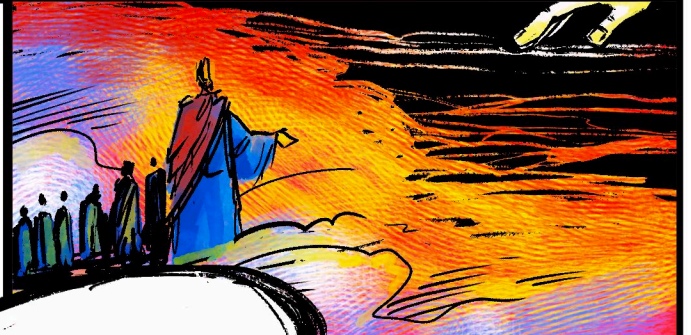


TRYING TO LIVE FOR GOD AND THE WORLD IS LIKE KEEPING YOUR FEET IN TWO BOATS THAT ARE GOING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. YOU FALL INTO THE RIVER IN THE MIDDLE.



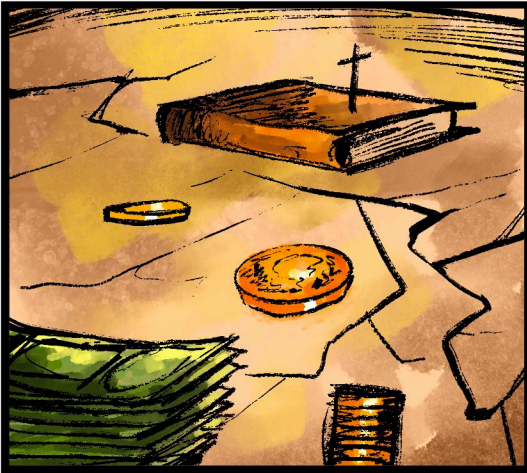
AN IDOL IS ANYTHING THAT TAKES THE PLACE OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE.

THE PERSON WHO TURNS TO GOD THEN SERVES GOD EXPECTANTLY WAITING FOR THE RETURN OF CHRIST FROM HEAVEN. WHEN JESUS RETURNS, HE WILL "DELIVER US FROM THE WRATH TO COME" (1:10).



"WE SPOKE NOT AS PLEASING MEN, BUT GOD WHO EXAMINES OUR HEARTS" (2:4). THAT SHOULD BE THE TESTIMONY OF ALL WHO PREACH AND TEACH THAT THEY NEVER PREACH TO PLEASE THEIR HEARERS BUT ONLY GOD.





PAUL GOES ON TO SAY THAT HE NEVER PREACHED IN ORDER TO MAKE MONEY (2:5).



IN PAUL'S PREACHING HE DID NOT SEEK GLORY FROM PEOPLE (2:6).



NEITHER DID HE ASSERT HIS AUTHORITY OVER PEOPLE, EVEN THOUGH AS AN APOSTLE HE COULD HAVE.



INSTEAD HE SERVED AS A GENTLE NURSING MOTHER CARES FOR HER BABY (2:7). HE SAYS, "WE HAD A FOND AFFECTION FOR YOU" (2:8).



HE SAYS, "WE WANTED TO GIVE YOU NOT ONLY THE GOSPEL OF GOD, BUT WE WANTED TO GIVE YOU OUR LIVES" (2:8).



HE SAYS HOW HE WORKED HARD NIGHT AND DAY SO THAT THEY WOULDN'T BECOME A FINANCIAL BURDEN ON THEM (2:9).



IN 2:11, PAUL SAYS THAT HE ALSO REBUKED, ENCOURAGED AND IMPLORING THOSE BELIEVERS AS A FATHER. A TRUE SERVANT OF GOD IS BOTH A MOTHER AND A FATHER.



IN 2:18, PAUL SAYS, "I WANTED TO COME TO YOU BUT SATAN HINDERED ME." ALTHOUGH SATAN WAS DEFEATED ON THE CROSS, HE HINDERED THIS WHOLE HEARTED SERVANT OF GOD. SATAN WOULD HAVE SENT HIS JUNIOR (LESS POWERFUL) DEMONS AFTER OTHER CHRISTIANS, BUT SATAN HIMSELF WENT AFTER PAUL.



SATAN WILL TOTALLY IGNORE THE PROUD AND THE MONEY-LOVING CHRISTIAN WORKERS BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT THEY CANNOT HARM HIS KINGDOM IN ANY WAY!



SATAN HINDERED PAUL FROM GOING TO THESSALONICA. BUT GOD USED IT TO FULFIL HIS WILL -- JUST LIKE HE USED PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH ALSO TO KEEP PAUL HUMBLE. WHEN PAUL COULD NOT GO TO THESSALONICA, HE SENT TIMOTHY THERE (3:2). THAT GAVE TIMOTHY SOME NEEDED EXPERIENCE IN THE MINISTRY, AND ENABLED HIM TO GROW TO MATURITY.



SO GOD TURNED THE TABLES ON SATAN HERE, JUST LIKE HE ALWAYS DOES.



PAUL HAD GREAT JOY IN SERVING GOD (2:19 TO 3:9). HE SAYS, "MY GREATEST JOY IS FOUND IN YOU CHRISTIANS IN THESSALONICA" (3:9).

PAUL SAYS IN 3:12, 13 "MAY THE LORD CAUSE YOU TO INCREASE AND ABOUND IN LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER, BECAUSE THAT IS HOW HE WILL ESTABLISH YOUR HEARTS UNBLAMEABLE IN HOLINESS."

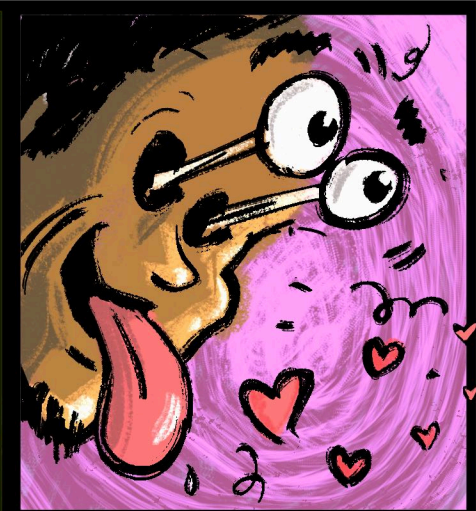
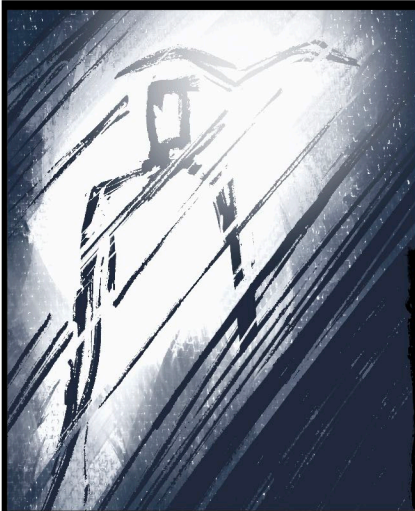
HOLINESS



SOME ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR OWN PURITY, BUT DON'T HAVE MUCH OF A CONCERN FOR THE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF OTHERS. SUCH PEOPLE ARE NOT HOLY;

IN 4:1--8, PAUL SPEAKS ABOUT PURITY IN THE SEXUAL AREA. THE WORD "VESSEL" IN 4:4 (SKEUOS IN GREEK) COULD REFER EITHER TO OUR BODY OR TO OUR WIFE.





SO 4:4 COULD MEAN: "EACH OF YOU MUST KNOW HOW TO POSSESS HIS OWN **BODY** IN **SANCTIFICATION** AND **HONOUR**." BECAUSE THE **WILL OF GOD** IS THAT WE MUST BE **SANCTIFIED** (4:3).

4:4 COULD ALSO MEAN: "EACH OF YOU MUST KNOW HOW TO ACQUIRE HIS OWN **WIFE** IN **SANCTIFICATION** AND **HONOUR**." THERE ARE MANY **UNHOLY** WAYS IN WHICH PEOPLE TRY TO GET WIVES. **LOOKING** FOR A **DOWRY** IS ONE OF THOSE **UNHOLY** WAYS.

TO LOOK FOR A WIFE "IN **LUSTFUL PASSION**", IS TO LOOK FOR A WIFE LIKE THE **HEATHEN** DO. BUT IF YOU WANT TO **SERVE GOD**, YOU MUST LOOK FOR A WIFE WHO HAS THE **SAME GODLY DESIRE** THAT YOU HAVE.



IN 4:6, PAUL GOES ON TO SAY THAT "NO ONE SHOULD EVER **CHEAT** HIS BROTHER IN THIS MATTER." THAT MEANS, "DON'T GET TOO **FRIENDLY** WITH **SOMEONE ELSE'S WIFE**", FOR "**GOD IS THE AVENGER** OF THOSE WHO DO THAT."

SAMSON AND **DAVID** ARE **TRAGIC** EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE WHO **KNEW GOD** WHO **FAILED** IN THIS AREA. THERE IS, **UNFORTUNATELY**, A **LOT OF IMMORALITY** AMONG **YOUNG PEOPLE** IN **CHURCHES** AND EVEN AMONG **CHRISTIAN WORKERS** IN THESE DAYS.



OUR **AMBITION** MUST ALWAYS BE TO LEAD A **PEACEABLE** LIFE, NOT **QUARRELLING** WITH ANYONE, **MINDING** OUR OWN **BUSINESS**, NOT BEING **BUSYBODIES** IN ANYONE **ELSE'S** AFFAIRS, AND **WORKING HARD** TO **SUPPORT** OURSELVES AND OUR **FAMILIES**. (4:11)



IN 4:13--18, PAUL SPEAKS ABOUT HOW IT WILL BE WHEN CHRIST RETURNS. "WE DON'T WANT YOU TO BE **UNINFORMED** ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE **SLEPT** IN THE LORD." THAT REFERS TO THOSE WHO HAVE **DIED** IN CHRIST. JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN; AND THOSE WHO HAVE **DIED** IN CHRIST WILL **ALSO RISE AGAIN**.



WHEN JESUS RETURNS, **WE WHO ARE ALIVE** WILL **NOT BE TAKEN UP AHEAD** OF THOSE WHO **DIED** THEY WILL **ARISE** FROM THE **GRAVES**. THAT WILL BE THE **FIRST RESURRECTION**. AND WE WILL BE TAKEN UP **TOGETHER** WITH THEM TO MEET THE LORD.



UNBELIEVERS WILL **NOT RISE** FOR ANOTHER ONE **THOUSAND** YEARS. THEY WILL RISE IN THE **SECOND RESURRECTION**.



AT HIS RETURN, OUR LORD WILL **DESCEND** WITH A **SHOUT**, WITH THE **VOICE** OF THE **ARCHANGEL** AND WITH THE **TRUMPET** OF GOD. HE WOULD **NOT** COME **SECRETLY**, AS **MANY** BELIEVE TODAY. WHEN HE COMES, IT WILL BE LIKE THE **LIGHTNING** THAT FLASHES FROM THE **EAST** TO THE **WEST**. **EVERY EYE** WILL BE ABLE TO SEE HIM.



IN 5:2, WE READ, "THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME LIKE A **THIEF** IN THE **NIGHT**." A THIEF DOES **NOT ANNOUNCE** HIS COMING, BUT COMES **UNEXPECTEDLY**. THUS, EVERY **UNBELIEVER** WILL BE **SURPRISED** WHEN THE LORD RETURNS.

WE, THE **SONS** OF **LIGHT**, HOWEVER, ARE **EXPECTING** OUR LORD TO COME (5:4). WE DO **NOT** LIVE IN **DARKNESS**. SO WE SHOULD **NOT** BE **ASLEEP** **SPIRITUALLY**, BUT **ALERT** (5:6).



WHEN A MAN IS **ASLEEP**, THE THINGS THAT ARE **REAL** AROUND HIM IN THE ROOM ARE **INVISIBLE**; BUT THE THINGS THAT ARE **UNREAL** (IN HIS **DREAMS**) APPEAR TO BE **REAL**.





PAUL SAYS WE LOOK FORWARD TO THAT DAY AND WE EAGERLY AWAIT HIS COMING. PEOPLE AROUND US WILL BE IMAGINING THAT EVERYTHING IS PEACEFUL AND SAFE (5:3). BUT DESTRUCTION WILL COME UPON THEM SUDDENLY.



THIS DESTRUCTION, IT SAYS HERE WILL COME SUDDENLY "LIKE BIRTH PANGS UPON A WOMAN WITH CHILD" (5:3) WHICH IS SIMILAR TO MATTHEW 24:8. THIS IS A PICTURE OF THE PAINFUL PERIOD OF TRIBULATION THAT WILL PRECEDE THE COMING OF CHRIST.



SOME WORSHIP THEIR LEADERS AS GODS, WHILE OTHERS DO NOT ESTEEM THEIR LEADERS OR EXPRESS THEIR APPRECIATION TO THEM. IN 5:12, WE ARE TOLD TO "APPRECIATE THOSE WHO DILIGENTLY LABOUR AMONG US, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO GIVE US INSTRUCTION."



IN 5:14--18, PAUL GIVES NINE EXHORTATIONS: ADMONISH THE UNRULY, ENCOURAGE THE FAINT-HEARTED, HELP THE WEAK, BE PATIENT WITH ALL, NEVER REPAY EVIL FOR EVIL, ALWAYS SEEK GOOD FOR OTHERS, REJOICE ALWAYS, PRAY ALWAYS (SPIRIT OF PRAYER ALWAYS) AND IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS -- BECAUSE ALL OF THESE ARE GOD'S WILL FOR US.



IF THE HOLY SPIRIT URGES YOU AT TIMES TO SHARE A WORD, STAND UP AND SPEAK UP. DON'T QUENCH THAT FIRE. (5:19) AND LISTENERS ARE WARNED FIRST OF ALL NOT TO DESPISE "PROPHETIC UTTERANCES"(5:20)



THEY MUST ALSO USE THEIR GOD-GIVEN DISCERNMENT TO DECIDE WHAT IS FROM GOD AND WHAT IS NOT. TO ILLUSTRATE- PEEL THE SKIN OFF AND EAT THE BANANA.



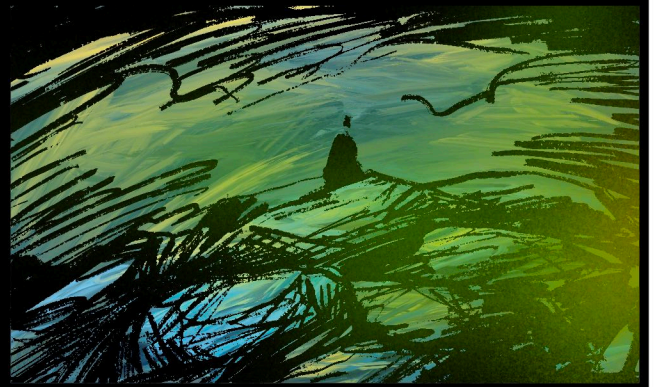
IN 5:22 AND 23, WE ARE URGED TO ABSTAIN FROM EVERY FORM OF EVIL.

IF WE DO THIS, WE ARE ASSURED THAT THE GOD OF PEACE WILL SANCTIFY US AND MAKE US PERFECTLY HOLY IN SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY AND PRESERVE US UNTIL THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

II THESSALONIANS



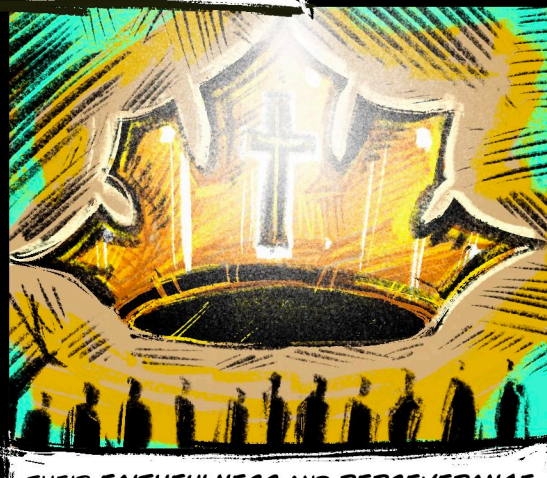
IN HIS **FIRST LETTER** PAUL TOLD THE **THESSALONIANS** TO BE **READY FOR CHRIST'S RETURN**. **SOME** OF THE **CHRISTIANS** THEN SAID, "IF THE **LORD** IS COMING SOON, WHY ARE WE **WASTING** OUR **TIME WORKING?**" SO THEY SAT AROUND **LAZILY** DOING **NO WORK**. SO PAUL HAD TO **CORRECT** THEIR **WRONG IDEAS**.



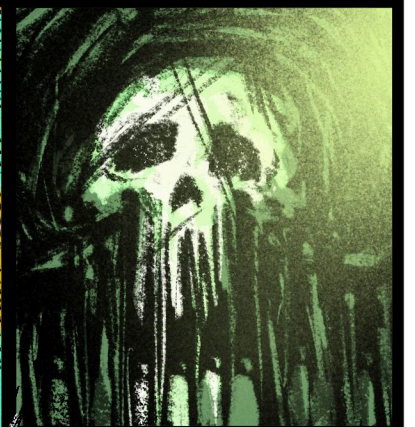
WE KNOW THAT THE **COMING OF THE LORD** IS **NEAR**. BUT WE **DON'T** KNOW THE **DATE** OR THE **HOUR**. IT'S **NOT** FOR US TO KNOW THE **TIMES** OR THE **SEASONS** (ACTS 1:7). SO **NO-ONE** SHOULD **RESIGN** HIS **JOB** AND WAIT ON SOME **MOUNTAIN** FOR THE **LORD'S RETURN**.



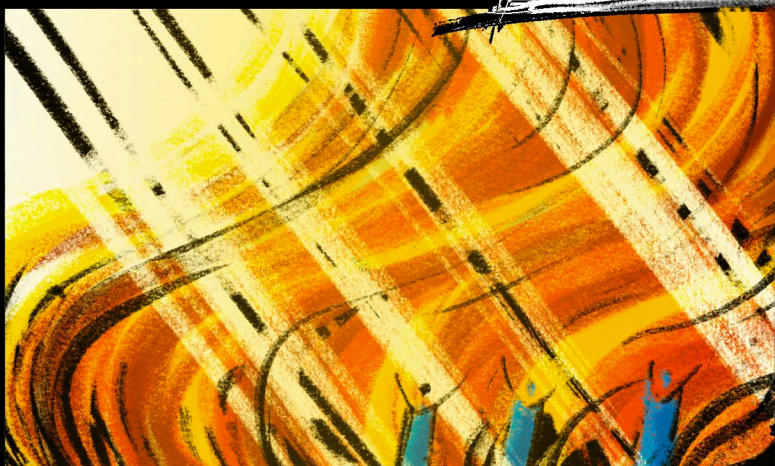
IN 1:4, PAUL IS **JOYFUL** THAT THOSE **CHRISTIANS** WERE **FAITHFUL** IN THEIR **TRIBULATIONS**.



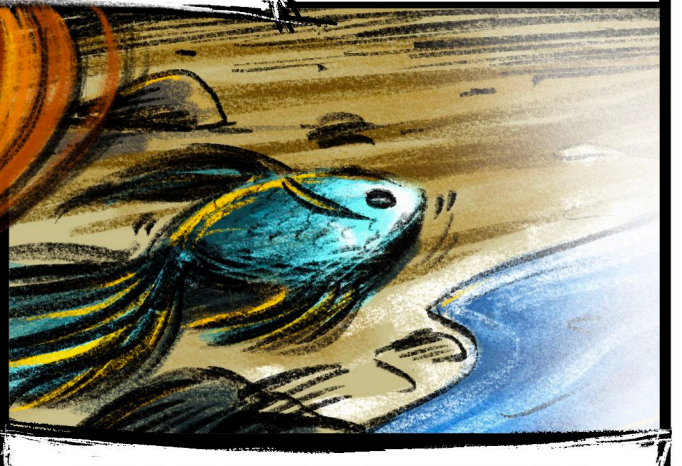
THEIR **FAITHFULNESS** AND **PERSEVERANCE** IN THE **MIDST** OF THEIR **PERSECUTIONS** WERE A **CLEAR PROOF** THAT THEY WERE **WORTHY** OF THE **KINGDOM OF GOD** (1:5).



AT THE SAME TIME, THAT WAS A **CLEAR PROOF** OF **GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT** ON THE **UNBELIEVERS**.



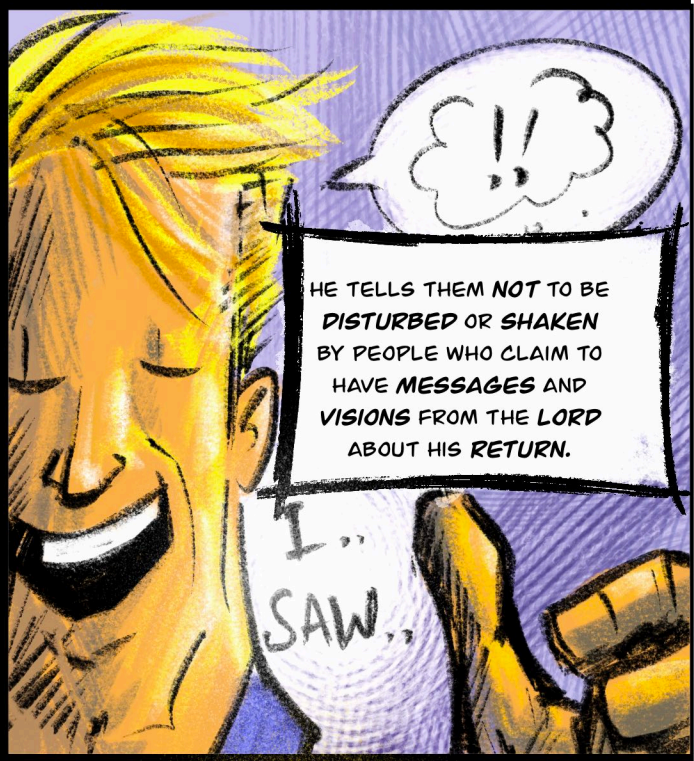
PAUL TOLD THEM THAT WHEN **CHRIST RETURNS**, THEY WOULD GET **RELIEF** FROM THEIR **TRIBULATION**. THAT TEACHES US THAT **PERSECUTION** WILL **CONTINUE** UNTIL THE **RETURN OF CHRIST** (1:7).



THAT IS OUR **APPOINTED LOT** AS **BELIEVERS**, BECAUSE WE ARE HERE ON **EARTH** LIKE **FISH OUT OF WATER**. THIS **WORLD** IS **NOT** OUR **HOME**, AND WE ARE IN **CONSTANT CONFLICT** WITH THIS **WORLD SYSTEM**.

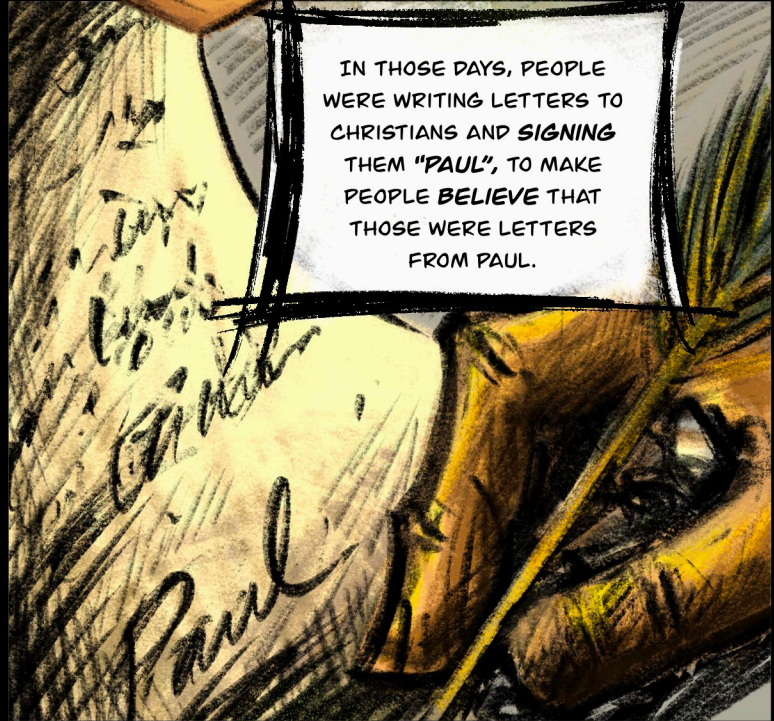


IF WE BECOME FRIENDLY WITH THIS WORLD, THEN IT WILL STOP TROUBLING US. BUT THEN, WE WON'T BE WITNESSES FOR CHRIST.



HE TELLS THEM NOT TO BE DISTURBED OR SHAKEN BY PEOPLE WHO CLAIM TO HAVE MESSAGES AND VISIONS FROM THE LORD ABOUT HIS RETURN.

I... SAW...



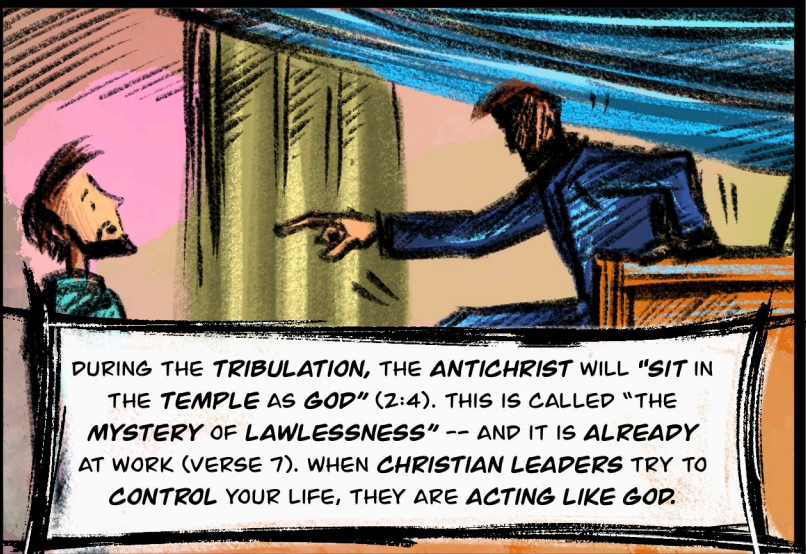
IN THOSE DAYS, PEOPLE WERE WRITING LETTERS TO CHRISTIANS AND SIGNING THEM "PAUL", TO MAKE PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THOSE WERE LETTERS FROM PAUL.



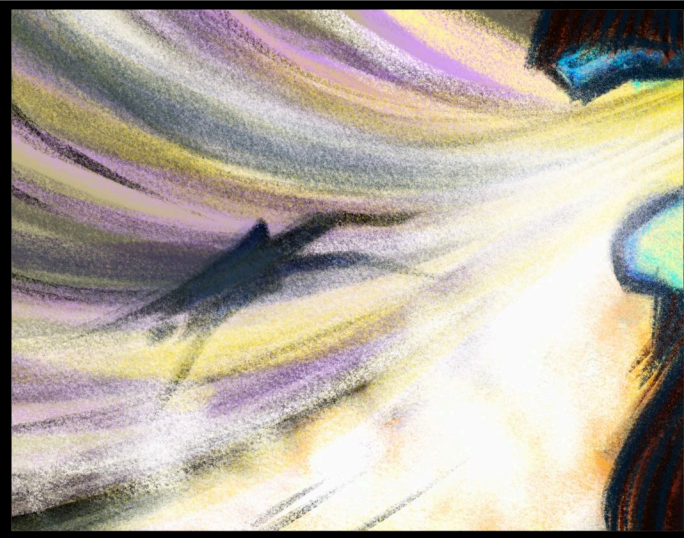
PAUL GOES ON TO SAY THAT CHRIST'S RETURN WILL NOT COME UNTIL THERE IS, FIRST OF ALL, A GREAT FALLING AWAY OF CHRISTIANS FROM THE FAITH.



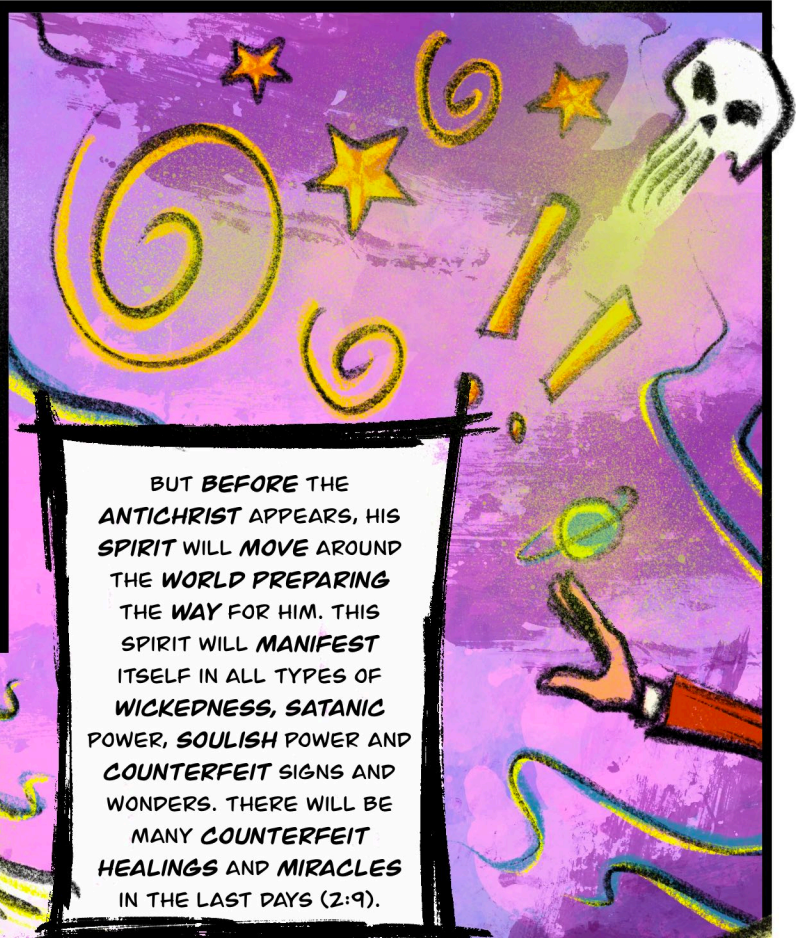
SECONDLY, PAUL SAID THAT CHRIST CANNOT RETURN UNTIL THE ANTICHRIST (THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS) IS REVEALED (2:3). THE ANTICHRIST HAS TO COME FIRST AND THE PERIOD OF TRIBULATION HAS TO BE OVER.



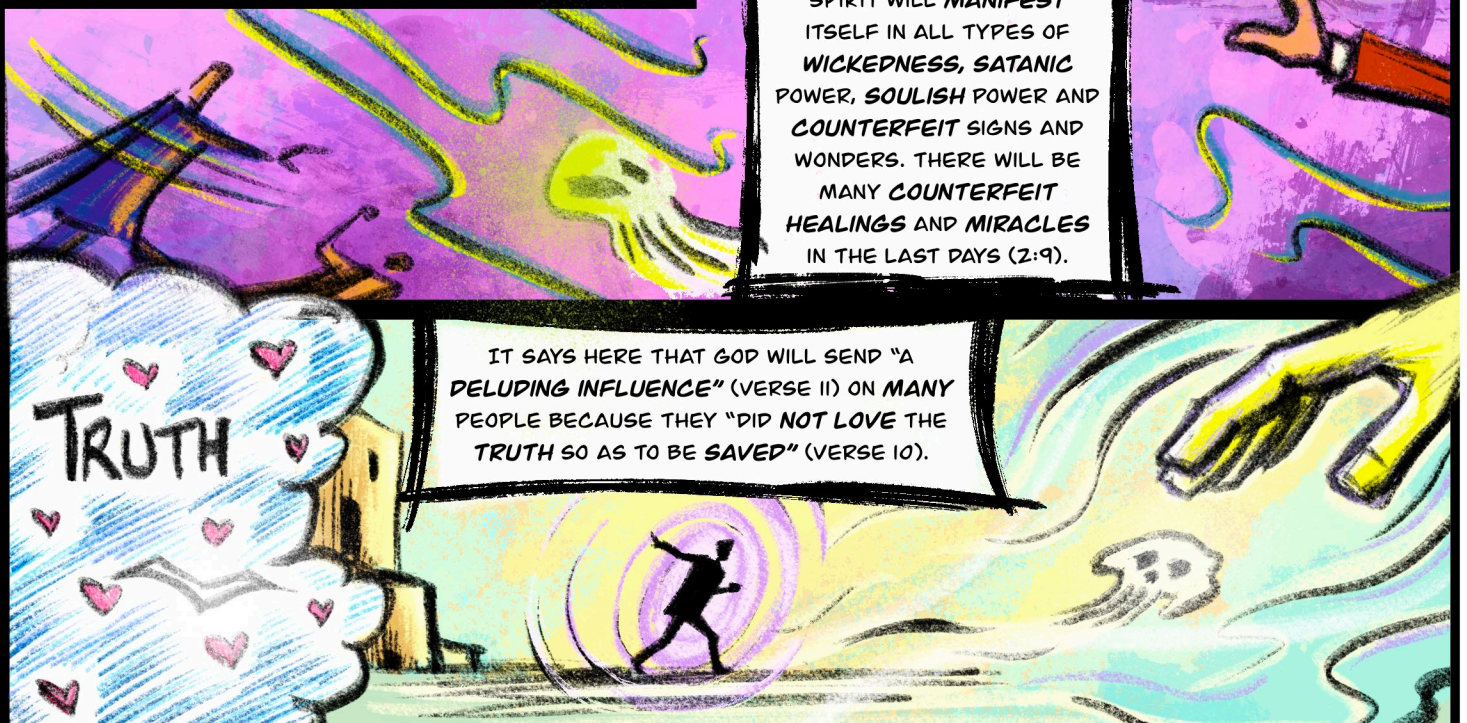
DURING THE TRIBULATION, THE ANTICHRIST WILL "SIT IN THE TEMPLE AS GOD" (2:4). THIS IS CALLED "THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS" -- AND IT IS ALREADY AT WORK (VERSE 7). WHEN CHRISTIAN LEADERS TRY TO CONTROL YOUR LIFE, THEY ARE ACTING LIKE GOD.



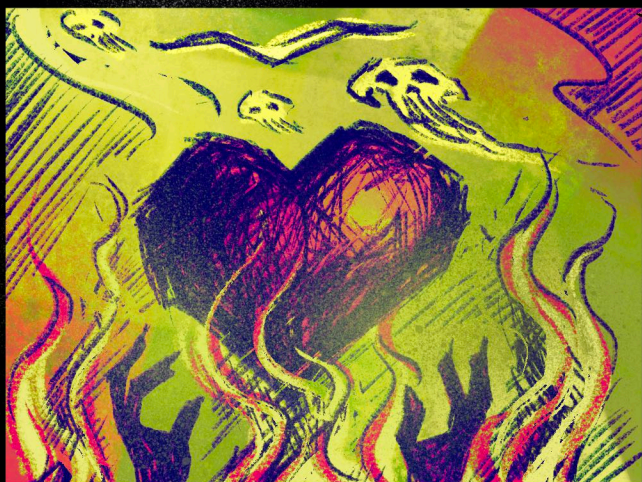
THE LORD WILL **SLAY** THE **ANTICHRIST** WITH THE **BREATH** OF HIS **MOUTH** WHEN HE COMES AGAIN (2:8).



BUT BEFORE THE **ANTICHRIST** APPEARS, HIS **SPIRIT** WILL **MOVE** AROUND THE **WORLD** PREPARING THE WAY FOR HIM. THIS **SPIRIT** WILL **MANIFEST** ITSELF IN ALL TYPES OF **WICKEDNESS**, **SATANIC** POWER, **SOULISH** POWER AND **COUNTERFEIT** SIGNS AND **WONDERS**. THERE WILL BE MANY **COUNTERFEIT** **HEALINGS** AND **MIRACLES** IN THE LAST DAYS (2:9).



IT SAYS HERE THAT GOD WILL SEND "A **DELUDING INFLUENCE**" (VERSE 11) ON MANY PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY "DID NOT LOVE THE **TRUTH** SO AS TO BE **SAVED**" (VERSE 10).



SATAN IS ALREADY **DECEIVING** US, OUR **HEARTS** ARE **DECEPTIVE** AND SO ARE OUR **LUSTS**. ON TOP OF THESE, IF **GOD** ALSO **ALLOWS** US TO BE **DECEIVED**, THEN WE ARE **DOOMED** WITHOUT HOPE.



MANY PEOPLE ARE **DECEIVED** THAT BECAUSE THEY **DON'T** **ACKNOWLEDGE** THE SIN IN THEIR OWN LIFE AND THEY **DON'T** LONG **EAGERLY** TO BE **SAVED** FROM IT. INSTEAD THEY **JUSTIFY** THEMSELVES AND **COVER UP** THEIR SIN



"BUT BRETHREN, WE GIVE THANKS FOR YOU BECAUSE YOU WERE CHOSEN THAT YOU MAY GAIN THE GLORY OF JESUS CHRIST" (2:14). THIS WAS THE FULLNESS OF GRACE AND TRUTH IN HIM WHEREBY HE MANIFESTED HIS GLORY (JOHN 1:14).

IN 3:6--11, PAUL WARNS THE CHRISTIANS THERE (AND US) TO "STAY AWAY FROM BROTHERS WHO ARE LIVING LAZY LIVES". PAUL WORKED NIGHT AND DAY MAKING TENTS AND EARNED MONEY AND PAID FOR HIS FOOD.



SO PAUL LAID DOWN A RULE FOR THEM, "IF ANYONE IS NOT WILLING TO WORK, THEN HE IS NOT TO EAT, EITHER. SUCH PERSONS WE COMMAND AND EXHORT IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST TO WORK IN QUIET FASHION AND EAT THEIR OWN BREAD" (3:10, 12).

THE TRAGEDY IN CHRISTENDOM IS THAT MOST CHRISTIANS IN SECULAR WORK ARE WORKING MUCH HARDER THAN FULL-TIME CHRISTIAN WORKERS WHOM THEY MAYBE SUPPORTING!

FINALLY, PAUL SAYS, "IF ANYONE DOES NOT OBEY OUR INSTRUCTION IN THIS LETTER, TAKE SPECIAL NOTE OF THAT PERSON AND DO NOT ASSOCIATE WITH HIM, SO THAT HE WILL BE PUT TO SHAME. YET DO NOT REGARD HIM AS AN ENEMY, BUT ADMONISH HIM AS A BROTHER" (3:14, 15).

