

Second Thessalonians

52 AD

"We ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come." 2:2

Author: Paul

Written From: Corinth

Sent To: The church in Thessalonica

Purpose: Encourage the young church which is facing persecution, and correct doctrinal error concerning eschatology which includes telling some of the people to get a job

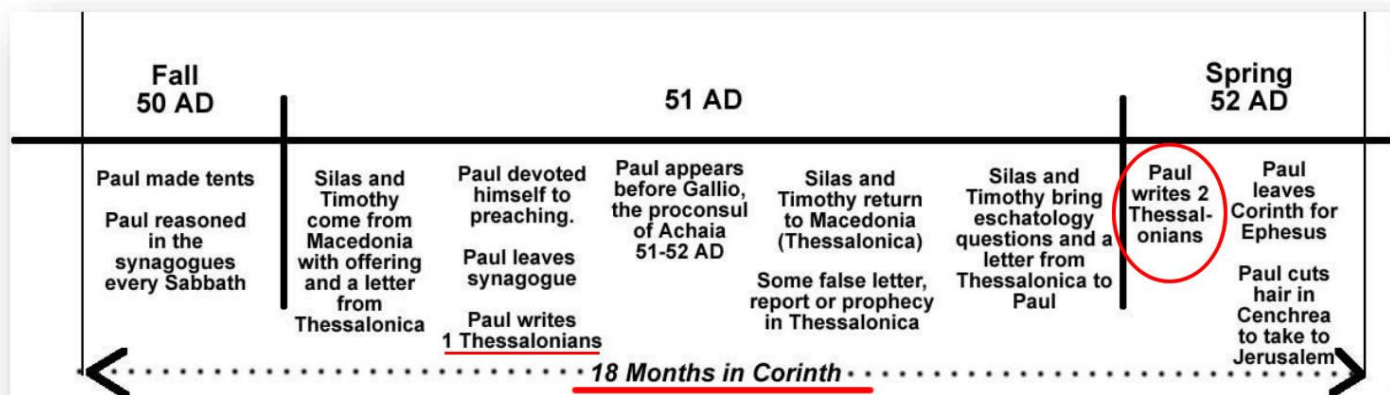
• **Theme:** Eschatology (18 of 47 verses are eschatological)

Basic Outline:

- Chapter One, Encouragement in the midst of affliction
- Chapter Two, Reject and correct a false prophetic letter written by someone posing as Paul
- Chapter Three, Correct idleness among believers

The Letter of Second Thessalonians deals with three issues:

1. Persecution (ch. 1)
2. Day of the Lord (ch. 2)
3. Lifestyle Error (ch. 3)



Greek Words:

- βασιλεια – *basileia* – kingdom, reign, 1:5.
- κρισις – *krisis* – judgment, accusation, condemnation, damnation, 1:5.
- ὀλεθρος – *olethros* – destruction, 2:3.
- ἐπισυναγωγή – *episunagoge* – assembling or gathering together, collection, meeting 2:1.
- ἀποστασία – *apostasias* – apostasy, falling away, rebellion, revolt, forsake, 2:3.
- ἀπώλεια – *apoleia* – damnable, damnation, destruction, ruin, doom, die, perdition, 2:3.

Healthy Doctrine:

- Return of Jesus Christ
- End Time Judgment
- Leading Responsible and Productive Lives

In chapter one Paul recognizes the Thessalonians' growth and perseverance. He encourages them concerning the opposition they are facing by reminding them that Jesus will come to deliver them, and at the same time punish those who oppose the gospel and cause trouble for believers.

In chapter two Paul identifies a pseudo-epistle that was reported to have been from Paul that contained a prophecy and a report that the day of the Lord, or the tribulation, had already come. Paul sets the coming or revealing of the man of lawlessness as a sign of this future day. He also says the "rebellion" is another sign that comes before the revealing of the man of lawlessness. He describes how this evil man, the anti-christ, will be overthrown when Jesus returns from heaven. The Thessalonians are told to stand firm and hold to the true teaching of Paul.

Chapter three warns the idle Thessalonians who had stopped working. Apparently they were waiting for the Lord to come and figured, why should we worry about paying our bills, buying groceries or mowing the yard? Jesus will come back and deliver us from the debt collection agencies. They probably also cancelled their life insurance policies and cashed in their retirement plans. This would have been a misapplication of Paul's teaching. In verse 17 Paul actually writes a closing and signs this letter with his own signature and handwriting to authenticate this letter.

The Man of Lawlessness Details of the Anti-christ in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12	
•	He is revealed after the rebellion, departure, or apostasy has happened or has begun
•	He is doomed to destruction
•	He will oppose everything called God
•	He will exalt himself over everything called God
•	He sets himself up in God's temple
•	He proclaims himself to be God
•	He will be revealed at the proper time
•	He is being held back by "the one" and will be revealed when "he" is taken out of the way
•	He will come in accordance with the work of Satan: counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders
•	He will come with every sort of evil that deceives those who reject truth
•	He will be overthrown by the breath of the mouth of the Lord Jesus
•	He will be destroyed by the splendor of the coming of the Lord Jesus

Bible prophecy includes obvious predictions and the obscure riddles, metaphors, images and word plays.

Bible prophecy leaves the undeniable impression that God knows and God is in control, but is not so scientific that anyone can become a confident fatalist in their own days and predict events and use these prophecies to their own advantage, other than to build their faith, know right from wrong, and live with hope in God.

Thus, Bible prophecy is designed to always be helpful, but challenging.

Bible prophecy builds confidence, but leaves not knowing.

We can only take what we do understand to live godly and wait confidently, yet prophecy still remains a challenge for there is much we will not know.

Verses 1:3-10 is a single sentence in the Greek that can be broken down like this:

- 3-4 thanks God for preserving the Thessalonian believers in their trials and persecutions
- 5 is a transition between Paul's addressing the persecution and the coming judgment of the Lord
- 6-9 declaration of the Lord's intention to return and bring judgment on the persecutors
- 10 statement of the hope and glory for believers on the day the Lord comes

1:7 "revealed" is **apokalypsei** (1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13 and Luke 17:30) it means "the removal of the veil" most often used with a divine "revelation" or unveiling of a truth or part of the divine mystery. Here Jesus would be "unveiled", "revealed" or **apokalypsei**.

In other places in the books of First and Second Thessalonians the "coming" of Jesus is referred to as the **parousia** (1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23 and 2 Thess. 2:1). **Parousia** is an event, arrival, advent, presence.

1:7 "and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels."
"relief" means the lifting of the pressure caused by the persecution.

APOKALPSEI ---"revealed" is **apokalypsei** (1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13 and Luke 17:30) it means "the removal of the veil" most often used with a divine "revelation" or unveiling of a truth or part of the divine mystery. Here Jesus would be "unveiled", "revealed" or **apokalypsei**.

The "revealing" or "apocalypses" includes the same as the first letter:

- "from heaven"
- "with the angels of his power" – as in Zech. 14:5 and 1 Thes. 3:13
- "in blazing fire" – as in **Isaiah 66:15** with the end of the phrase coming from Isaiah 66:4
 - Paul in 1 Thes 1:6-8: *of the Lord Jesus...in flaming fire, giving punishment to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*
 - Isaiah 66:15: *The Lord as fire will come, and as a storm his chariots, to recompense with wrath, punishment and repudiation in flaming fire*
 - Isaiah 66:4: *Says the Lord (verse 2)...I will repay them because I called them and they did not obey me*

In **1 Thess. 4:16** the Lord will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the arch angel and with the trumpet call of God. ("meet" is "apantesis" a technical term of a meeting of a delegation of citizens from a city with a dignitary approaching their city to show respect and to escort the dignitary back into their city as in Matt. 25:6, "But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him,' " and Ac28:6, "And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.")

PAROUSIA ---In other places in the books of First and Second Thessalonians the "coming" of Jesus is referred to as the **parousia** (1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23 and 2 Thess. 2:1). **Parousia** is an event, arrival, advent, presence. "presence, the coming, arrival, advent". Used in 1 Thess. 3:13

ISAIAH 66:15-16

- 15** "For behold, the LORD will come in fire,
and his chariots like the whirlwind,
to render his anger in fury,
and his rebuke with flames of fire.
- 16** For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment,
and by his sword, with all flesh;
and those slain by the LORD shall be many.

2:1-9 "(1) Concerning the coming (parousias) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him (episunagoges)...(3) the man of lawlessness is revealed (apokaluphthe)...(6) And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed (apokaluphthenai) at the proper time...(8) And then the lawless one will be revealed (apokaluphthasetai), whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming (parousias) (9)The coming (parousia)of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan..."

2:5 - Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

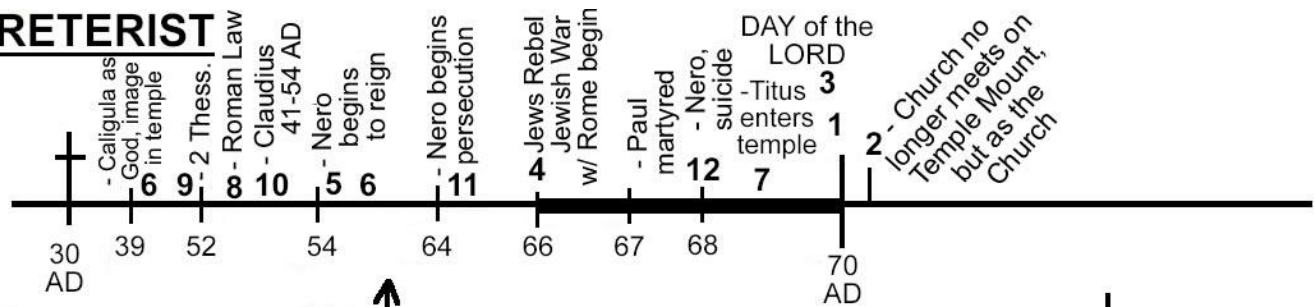
1. "used to tell you" - imperfect tense of the verb elegon so this verb and its tense stress the repeated action indicating it was Paul's custom to say these things over and over and over about the man of lawlessness.

2:6 - And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.

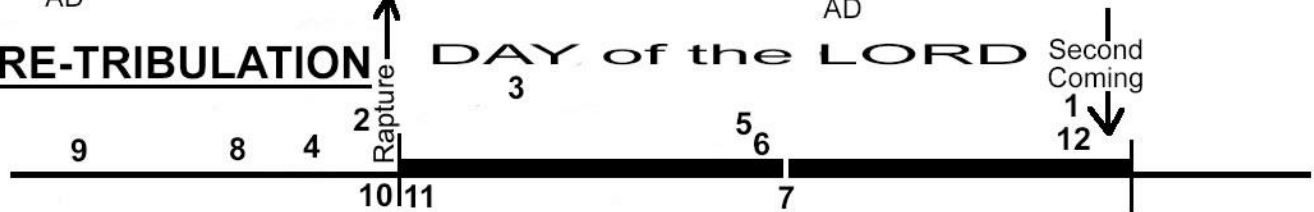
1. Augustine writes concerning this verse: "I am entirely ignorant of what he means to say."
2. The "thing" that restrains or the "person" who restrains?
 - a. 2:6 says "what is restraining" which is referring to a "thing" in the Greek since it is neuter.
 - b. 2:7 says "the one who now restrains" is masculine in the Greek referring to a "person"
3. Who/What is the restrainer? Here is a brief list of historical teachings:
 - a. The Roman Empire
 - b. The Roman Emperor
 - c. Law and Order
 - d. Political Leaders in general
 - e. Proclamation of the Gospel
 - f. The proclaimers of the Gospel (even, Paul)
 - g. Power of God
 - h. God
 - i. Presence of the Church
 - j. Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church
 - k. Force of Evil
 - l. Satan
 - m. False Prophecy
 - n. False Prophet
 - o. The Jewish Nation
 - p. James of Jerusalem



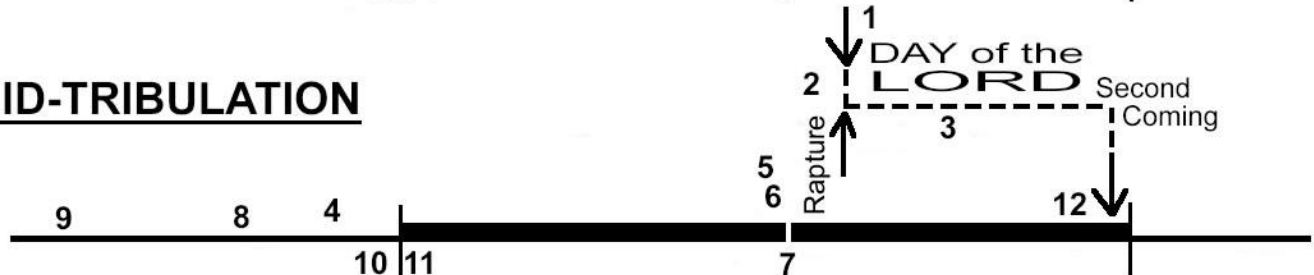
PRETERIST



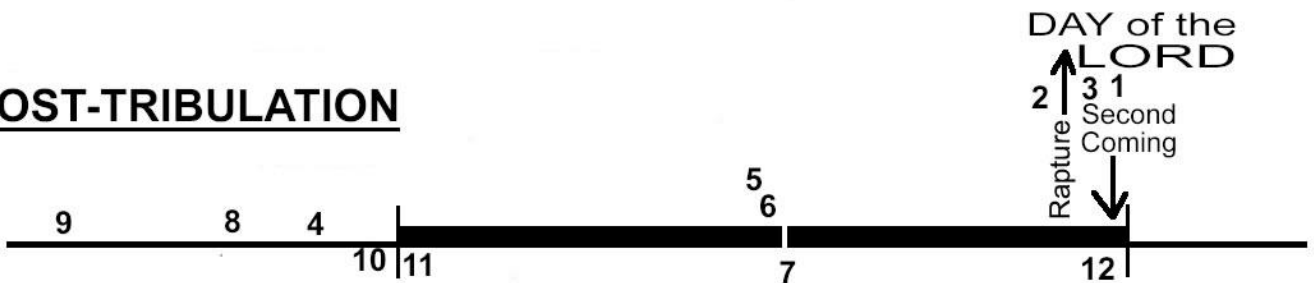
PRE-TRIBULATION



MID-TRIBULATION



POST-TRIBULATION



1. "coming (*parousia*) of the Lord"
2. "of us being gathered (*episunagogas*) to him"
3. "that is come (*enestaken*) the Day of the Lord"
4. "unless comes (*elthe*) the apostasy (*apostasia*) first"
5. "and revealed (*apokaluphthe*) the man of lawlessness"
6. "setting against and exalting himself over everything called god"
7. "him in the shrine of God (*naon tou theou*) to sit"
8. "now the thing restraining (*katechon*) him from being revealed (*apokaluphtheiai*)"
9. "mystery of lawlessness already operates (*energeitai*)"
10. "now the one restraining (*katechon*) until out of the midst it comes"
11. "then will be revealed (*apokaluphthesetai*) the lawless one"
12. "whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the spirit of his mouth and bring to nothing by the outshining (*epithaneia*) of the presence (*parousia*)"

MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

- 1 Timothy 3:16 – *Beyond all question, the **mystery of godliness** is great:*

*He appeared in a body,
Was vindicated by the Spirit,
Was seen by angels,
Was preached among the nations,
Was believed on in the world,
Was taken up in glory.*

- 1 – Jesus is **manifested** in a body
("manifested" is *ephanerothe* from *phanerod* meaning:
Reveal, disclose, expose publicly, make known,
cause to be seen.)
- 2 – Jesus did **miracles**
("vindicated by Spirit" by miracle power, Acts 2:22,
and by the resurrection, Rm. 1:4.)
- 3 – Jesus was seen by **angels**
(resurrected and seen in the underworld, 1 Pt. 3:19, and
the head over all angelic beings, Ep. 1:20-21, 1 Pt.3:22)
- 4 – Jesus was preached among the nations
- 5 – Jesus was **believed** on in the world
- 6 – Jesus was taken up in glory.

MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS

- 2 Thessalonians 2:7 – "For the **secret (mystery) power of lawlessness** is already at work."

- 1 - Man of Lawlessness is revealed (2 Th. 2:8)
- 2 - Vindicated by Satan with miracles, signs, wonders(2Th.2:9)
(this also includes a "resurrection" – Rev. 13:12, 14)
- 3 – Exalted by Satan as head of his kingdom (Rev. 13:2, 4)
- 4 – Whole world is astonished by him (Rv.13:3)
- 5 – Whole world follows him (Rev. 13:3) and they believe the lie (2 Thes. 2:1-12)
- 6 – Man of Lawlessness is destroyed by the glory, or the
"splendor" of Jesus' coming (2 Th.2:8)
("splendor" is *epiphania* which means:
- Manifested glorious appearing
- It is used to describe the striking splendor
of a Greek god's appearing.)

2:13 – "But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth."

- This verse focuses on the purpose in the mind of God.
- "But" presents the following contrasts between 2:13-14 with 2:8-12 :
 - "you" (2:13) **vs.** "those" (2:10)
 - "loved by the Lord" (2:13) **vs.** "God sends them a powerful delusion" (2:11)
 - "chose you" (2:13) **vs.** "they perish" (2:10)
 - "chose you to be saved" (2:13) **vs.** "those who are perishing." (2:10)
 - "sanctifying" (2:13) **vs.** "delighted in wickedness" (2:12) AND "every sort of evil"(2:10)
 - "sanctifying work of the Spirit" (2:13) **vs.** "in accordance with the work of Satan" 2:9)
 - "belief in the truth"(2:13) **vs.** "refused to love the truth"(2:10) AND "believe the lie"(2:11)
 - "the truth" (2:13) **vs.** "the lie" (2:11)
 - "share the glory" (2:14) **vs.** destroyed in glory (2:8)

2:15 – “So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.”

Note: no “prophecy” is mentioned as the source of stability or necessary to “stand firm”.
Paul’s view of prophecy seems to be:

1. Test it (1 The. 5:19-22)
2. Do not reject the concept or the practice (1 Thes. 5:19-22)
3. Do not focus on it or depend on it for a source of stability (2 Thes. 2:15)
4. It is a source of encouragement, etc. (1 Cor. 12:3)

3:2 – “And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith.”

- The second prayer request was for deliverance from those who did not believe and opposed Paul and his message.
- “wicked” is the word *atopon* which means “perverse.”
- “evil” is the word *poneron* which means “actively harmful.”
- In Acts 17:5-9, Paul and the Thessalonian church experience perverse and harmful reaction from the non-believers:
 - “But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd... These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ...they are defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus...” – Acts 17:5-9

3:3 – “But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”

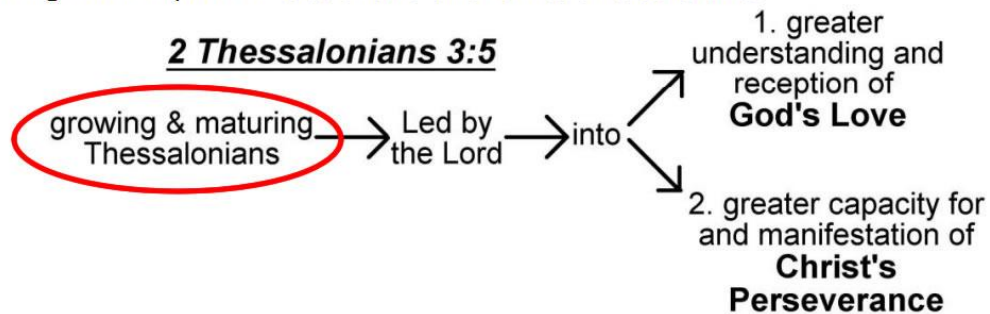
- Paul was confident that the Lord would respond and help them. Because:
 1. The Lord is “faithful”
- The Lord’s assistance would come in two forms:
 1. The Lord will “strengthen” the believers in Thessalonica as they continue to face the opposition of the unbelievers.
 - a. Timothy was sent to “strengthen” the Thessalonian’s hearts in 1 Thes.3:2,
 - i. “We sent Timothy...to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials...we were destined for them...we kept telling you that we would be persecuted.”
 2. The Lord will protect the believers in Thessalonica from the evil one.
- “The evil one” – is manifested in the “evil men” of verse 3:2 who do not have faith.
- Pray for “DELIVERANCE” in 3:2 which is manifested by the faithful Lord who provides:
 1. “STRENGTH” to continue and endure (3:3)
 2. “PROTECTION” from the evil one (3:3)



3:5 – “May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance.”

- Paul prays that the Thessalonians would be led or directed by the Lord into an ever increasing understanding and reception of “God’s Love” and “Christ’s Perseverance”

2 Thessalonians 3:5



3:6

Here begins Paul’s correction of an error in the lifestyle of believers in Thessalonica.

Paul had urged the church to warn the idle in his first letter in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 –

“**We urge you**, brothers, **warn those who are idle**, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”

- The church was “urged”, not commanded.
- “warn”
- “idle” **ataktos** – “without rank, out of rank, disorderly.” The word was a military term used to refer to soldiers who is out of step or out of rank. It could refer to an entire army out of control and moving in disarray. It came out of the military to be used to refer to things out of order. Paul uses it here to refer to those who are “out of order” with society and are neglecting their natural duties of engaging in productive work/labor.

3:6 – “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you (or, “they”) received from us.”

- Key phrases that set the tone of Paul’s correction:
 - “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” – this is a serious violation of character of Jesus and the nature of God.
 - “we command you” –
 - “we” indicates this is not Paul’s personal preference of a pet-peeve of Paul’s, but the entire ministry team is concerned about this deviant behavior of the Thessalonians.
 - “command” is not a suggestion, but a command to follow through on orders given by a higher command which is the Apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ (God, Savior, Messiah)
 - “keep away from” – is from “stello” (present middle infinitive = “stellesthai”)
 - Originally meant “to get ready” “to equip” an army for an expedition such as getting a ship ready for sailing.
 - Then it began to be used to say “bring together” or “to gather up” such as to separate something to a certain place for use or for protection
 - This led to the use of this word as it is used by Paul here, which is “to gather in”, “to withdraw”, “to avoid”
 - This same word is used in Romans 16:17 in reference to “Those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned.”

3:8 – “...nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you.”

- Paul worked in:
 - Thessalonica, 1 Thessalonians 2:9 and 4:11
 - Corinth, Acts 18:2-3
 - Ephesus, Acts 20:33-35
 - Overall ministry practice: “We work hard with our own hands.” – 1 Corinthians 4:12

3:9 – “We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.”