

Scripture Reading:

**1 THESSALONIANS**

**2:13 – 16**



# IMITATORS & EXAMPLES

A Series in 1 Thessalonians



**"BIG, IF TRUE"**

**VS**

**"TRUE, SO, BIG."**

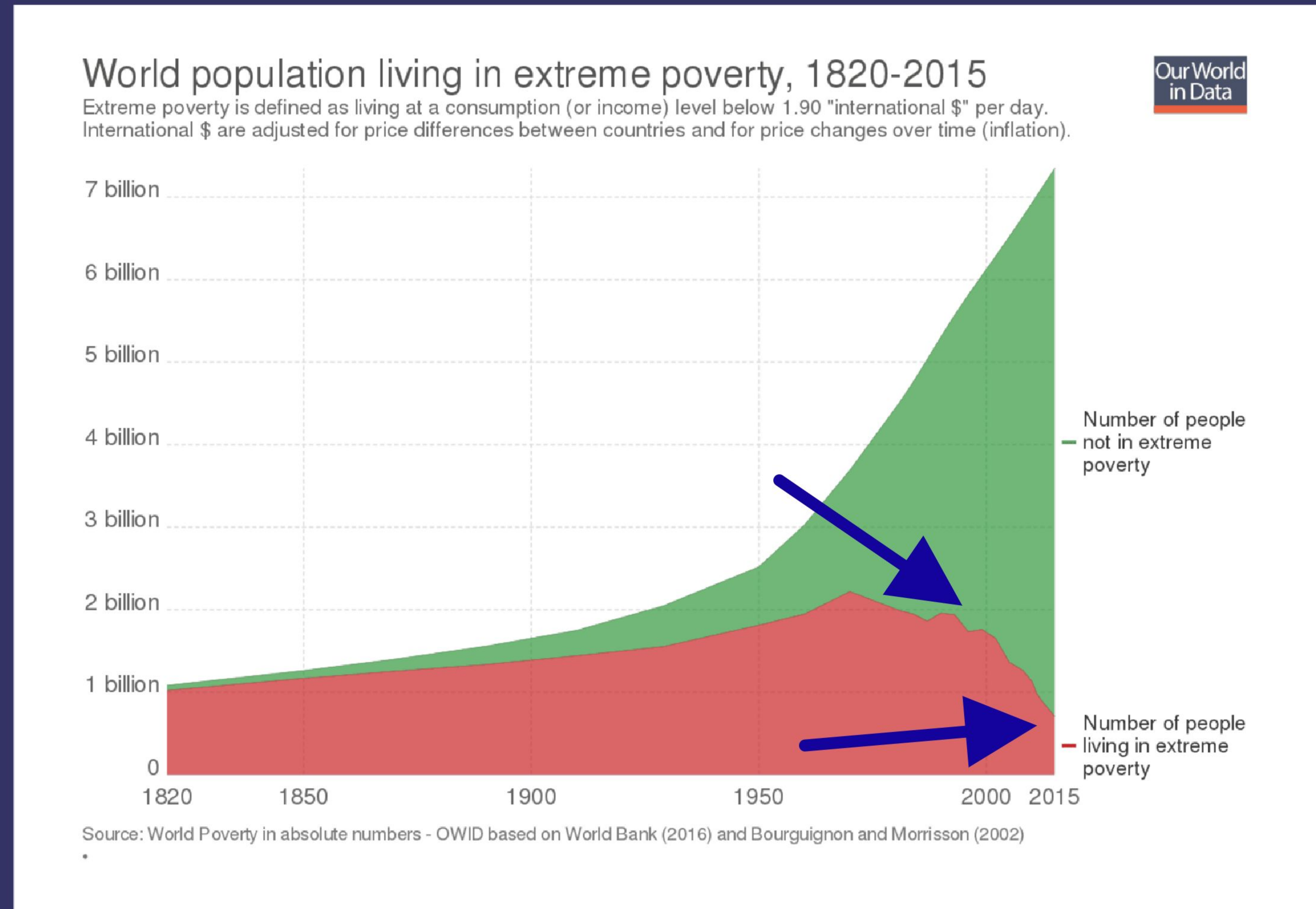
# BIG, IF TRUE

We're all getting  
helicopters in less  
than 2 years!!!



# TRUE, SO...BIG

The number of people living in extreme poverty has been cut in half since 2000.



# **THE GOSPEL IS ONE OF TWO THINGS:**

1. The Word of God entrusted to men

2. The word of men ascribed to God

# 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13

And we also thank God continually because, **when you received the word of God**, which you heard from us, **you accepted it** not as the word of men, but **as** it actually is, **the word of God**, which is at work in you who believe.

# **OUR RESPONSE LEADS TO ONE OF TWO DIRECTIONS:**

- 1. Redemptive suffering in its service**
- 2. Damnable suppression in its opposition**



# OBJECTION:

Can't I just find religion unlikely, uninteresting and irrelevant and not care about it?

**You will either be in solidarity with the  
Word, or complicit in its suppression.**

# **1. YOU'LL WALK IN THE SOLIDARITY OF REDEEMPTIVE SUFFERING**

## **1 Thessalonians 2:13 – 15**

**...you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out.**

# TWO CONCERNS:

Solidarity in varying intensity

**Sober humility:** Persecution prepared vs.  
Persecution complex

## **2. YOU'LL STRAY INTO COMPLICITY IN DAMNABLE SUPPRESSION**

### **1 Thessalonians 2:14 – 16**

**You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved.**

# PRUDENTIAL HUMILITY

**Resolute** - Don't excuse suppression or oppression.

**Understanding** - Our message is threatening to people. The natural response is resistance.

# SO WHAT?

1. Is the Gospel the word of God or men?
2. Are you willing to imitate the people of that word?
3. Stop suppressing the Word.
4. Thank God when you see the Word working in anyone.
5. We are heralds, not judges.

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