

Introduction

The foundation of the churches in Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia were among the most important achievements in Paul's ministry. During his second missionary journey Paul founded the Thessalonian church, to whom he wrote one of his most important epistles, which included special instruction on Christ's second coming.

This year we are memorizing Ephesians 2. This week's verse is going *back* to Ephesians 2:10:
"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

Day One

Read Acts 16; ***The Gospel Spread to Macedonia, Part 1***

1. What principle encouraged or convicted you from last week's lesson or lecture? What have you done differently this week to apply it to your life?

2. **Dig Deeper:** In Acts 16:1-3, Paul met Timothy, his "true child in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2). Using your Bible notes or other resources, why do you think that Timothy was circumcised? (See also 1 Corinthians 9:20-23.)

3. According to Acts 16:6-10, how and where did God direct Paul and Timothy to go?
 - a. Share with your group a time in your life when God closed the door to a particular situation and then allowed good to come from a different opportunity. How was God's character and provision revealed in this?

4. From Acts 16:11-15, what do you think it means that Lydia was a "worshipper of God" before believing in Jesus Christ as her Savior?

5. According to verses 25-40, how did Paul and Silas respond to the persecution they encountered in Philippi, and how did the Lord use this to further the gospel?

Day Two

Read Acts 17-18; ***The Gospel Spread to Macedonia, Part 2***

1. According to Acts 17:1-3, after Paul and Silas left Philippi, where did they go and what did they do?
 - a. In verses 5-9, what were the two different responses to the Paul's reasoning from the Scriptures?

2. In verse 11, why do you think the Jews of Berea were described as "more noble?"

- a. How do *you* respond to the teaching of God's Word? What can you do to cultivate a softer heart toward Scripture and a more disciplined study of it? Be practical and specific.
 - b. From Acts 17:13–14, what happened in response to the news of the Bereans' belief?
3. From Acts 17:22–34, how and why was Paul's introduction and explanation of the gospel to the people in Athens different than his reasoning with the Jews in the synagogues in verses 2–3?
 4. In Acts 18:1–11, after Paul left Athens, where did he go, what did he do, and how did people respond to his message?
 5. From Acts 17–18, identify two or three elements of God's redemptive plan and purpose for the church that became a reality.

Day Three

Read 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5; **Hope's Expectation, Part 1**

NOTE: Paul visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey and wrote these epistles to encourage believers and strengthen their faith.

1. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13, what was Paul's concern for the Thessalonians?
 - a. As new believers in Thessalonica tried to reconcile the deaths of others in the church, what was their hope?
2. From 1 Thessalonians 4:18, what benefit is there in understanding God's plan for the end times?
 - a. Does considering the return of Christ hold a priority in your thoughts and motivations? Why or why not?
3. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:1–3, what will be some of the signs of the coming Day of the Lord?
4. From 1 Thessalonians 5:4–5, what makes the believer distinct from the world?
 - a. From verses 6–11, by what should believers be defined, and what are practical manifestations of that?

5. As the letters to the Thessalonians were designed to be an encouragement to believers, what has most encouraged you from these chapters, and how can you encourage others with that truth?

Day Four

*Read 2 Thessalonians 1–2: **Hope's Expectation, Part 2***

1. In 2 Thessalonians 1:4 and 1 Thessalonians 1:2–10 and 2:13–16, what was Paul's boast of the Thessalonians?
2. According to 2 Thessalonians 1:5–10, what hope is extended towards the church in light of persecution?
 - a. Why is the promise of God's judgment an encouragement to the believer? Is it an encouragement to you? Why or why not?
 - b. From 2 Thessalonians 1:11–12, for what should believers pray in light of God's coming judgment?
3. In 2 Thessalonians 2:1–2, what concern did Paul have for the new believers at Thessalonica?
 - a. What must come first before the Day of the Lord?
4. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:13–15, what does knowledge of Scripture and holding to the teachings of Scripture accomplish in the believer?
 - a. Are you standing firm and finding encouragement and hope through your study of Scripture as you see the glory of the unfolding of God's redemptive plan? Share with your group something that you've learned during this study that has particularly blessed and encouraged you.

Day Five

*Selected Scriptures from 1 and 2 Thessalonians; **Hope's Obedience***

1. According to 1 Thessalonians 4:1–7 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13, what is the will of God for the believer?
 - a. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3–4; 9–12; and 5:12–22, what are some practical expressions of the sanctification of a believer?

- b. From this list, in what area do you need to particularly grow? Spend time in prayer asking God to help you be more obedient in this specifically area.

2. In 2 Thessalonians 3:6–12, what command did Paul give?
 - a. Why do you think this command is important for the believer?

3. From 1 Thessalonians 3:11–13, what is the connection between obedience and the expectation and hope of the return of Christ? Why is it significant?

4. In 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11; and 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17, what is Paul’s emphasis in writing this letter? How can you practically live out this priority in your own life this week?