

BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2026 – WEEK 7

The Third Time's a Charm

“And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don’t know what awaits me, except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.” – Acts 20:22-24 NLT

- **A man on a mission**

- Paul has already been on two mission trips
- He is preparing to begin his third
- On his third trip he spent time in the region of Galatia
- Later on, he wrote the churches there a letter

To the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
– Galatians 1:3-5 ESV

- This became a pattern for Paul
 - His letters were meant to encourage, educate, edify, and, at times, rebuke

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. – Galatians 1:6-7 ESV

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? – Galatians 3:1-3 ESV

- He also spent time in Macedonia in the city of Thessalonica
 - He wrote them two different letters

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers... – 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2 ESV

...for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere... – 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8 ESV

*God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. **So then, brothers, stand firm...** – 2 Thessalonians 13-15 ESV*

- **Paul practiced what he preached**

- He was anything but a wimp
- He walked the talk
- He demonstrated perseverance

*You know **what kind of men we proved to be among you** for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, **for you received the word in much affliction...** – 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6 ESV*

- Whose affliction?

- Remember what happened in Philippi
 - ~ They cast out a demon from a slave girl
 - ~ And suffered for doing so
 - ~ They were dragged before the magistrates
 - ~ Accused of sedition
 - ~ Stripped and beaten with rods
 - ~ And thrown into prison

“They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.” – Acts 16:37 NLT

They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city...When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica... – Acts 16:39; 17:1 NLT

- Paul makes a beeline to the synagogue
 - ~ He reasons with them from the Scriptures
 - ~ For 3 consecutive Sabbaths

...explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead... – Acts 17:3 NLT

- **Education and edification**

- Paul was an evangelist
- But he was also a pastor
 - a teacher
 - a defender & debater
 - a miracle worker
 - a mentor
 - a prophet
- Paul the prophet
 - o He never referred to himself as a prophet
 - o But he functioned as one
 - o A prophet was a spokesman for God

“In Jewish religious thought, the most vivid and formative religious happenings found their focus in the call and ministry of a prophet, through whom God made known his Word and himself to his people.” – *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*

- o Paul was called by God

*But even before I was born, **God chose me and called me** by his marvelous grace. Then it pleased him **to reveal his Son to me** so that **I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles.*** – Galatians 1:15-16 NLT

*As I briefly wrote earlier, **God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me.** As you read what I have written, you will understand **my insight into this plan regarding Christ.** God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit **he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.*** – Ephesians 1:3-5 NLT

*...he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. **I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.*** – Ephesians 1:8-9 NLT

- o Paul told the church in Rome:

*Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to **the revelation of the** mystery that was kept secret for long ages, **but has now been disclosed** and through the prophetic writings **has been made known to all nations,** according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith... – Romans 16:25-26 ESV*

- o Paul was confident of **his source**

*...was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, **he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.*** – 1 Corinthians 14:36-37 ESV

- **The mystery made known**

mystery – *mystērion*

- a hidden or secret thing
- not obvious to the understanding
- concealed or obscured
- made known by revelation

*For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of **God’s mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.** I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. – Colossians 2:1-4 ESV*

- Paul wasn’t just evangelizing
- He was **expounding** the Scriptures
 - revealing** the “mystery”
 - combatting** substitute gospels
 - exposing** false religions
 - amplifying** Jesus’ teachings
 - establishing** church doctrine
 - edifying** the body of Christ

- **The mission revealing the mystery**

- Paul was a teacher and preacher
 - Educating the uninformed (Gentiles)

*...you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and **you did not know the covenant promises** God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. – Ephesians 2:12 NLT*

*But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. **Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.** – Ephesians 2:13 NLT*

*This includes you who were once far away from God. **You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.** Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. – Colossians 1:21-22 NLT*

- Enlightening those in darkness (the Jews)
 - But the people’s minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so **they cannot understand the truth.** And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. Yes, even today when they read*

Moses' writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do not understand. – 2 Corinthians 2:14-15 NLT

- Paul was out to inform and enlighten them
- He loved them because God loved them
- He understood God's plan for them

Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will last only until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ. And so all Israel will be saved [a remnant from every tribe]. As the Scriptures say, "The one who rescues will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel away from ungodliness. And this is my covenant with them, that I will take away their sins." – Romans 11:25-27 NLT

Many of the people of Israel are now enemies of the Good News, and this benefits you Gentiles. Yet they are still the people he loves because he chose their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn. – Romans 11:28-29 NLT

- At the Jerusalem Council, Peter said:

"...this conversion of Gentiles is exactly what the prophets predicted. As it is written: 'Afterward I will return and restore the fallen house of David. I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, so that the rest of humanity might seek the LORD, including the Gentiles—all those I have called to be mine. 'The LORD has spoken—he who made these things known so long ago.'" – Acts 15:15-18 NLT

- God had made them **known**
- Paul made them **understandable**

Thessalonica

...for three Sabbaths in a row he used the Scriptures to reason with the people. He explained the prophecies and proved that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead. – Acts 17:2-3

Berea

...the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men. – Acts 17:11-12 NLT

Athens

He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and he spoke daily in the public square to all who happened to be there. – Acts 17:17 NLT

Corinth

Each Sabbath found Paul at the synagogue, trying to convince the Jews and Greeks alike. – Acts 18:4 NLT

Ephesus

While he was there, he went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews. – Acts 18:19 NLT

Then Paul went to the synagogue and preached boldly for the next three months, arguing persuasively about the Kingdom of God. – Acts 19:8 NLT

- **The proof of God’s presence and power**
 - Paul’s words were accompanied by works
 - He didn’t just **speak** like a prophet
 - He **did miracles** like a prophet

God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles. When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled. – Acts 19:11 NLT

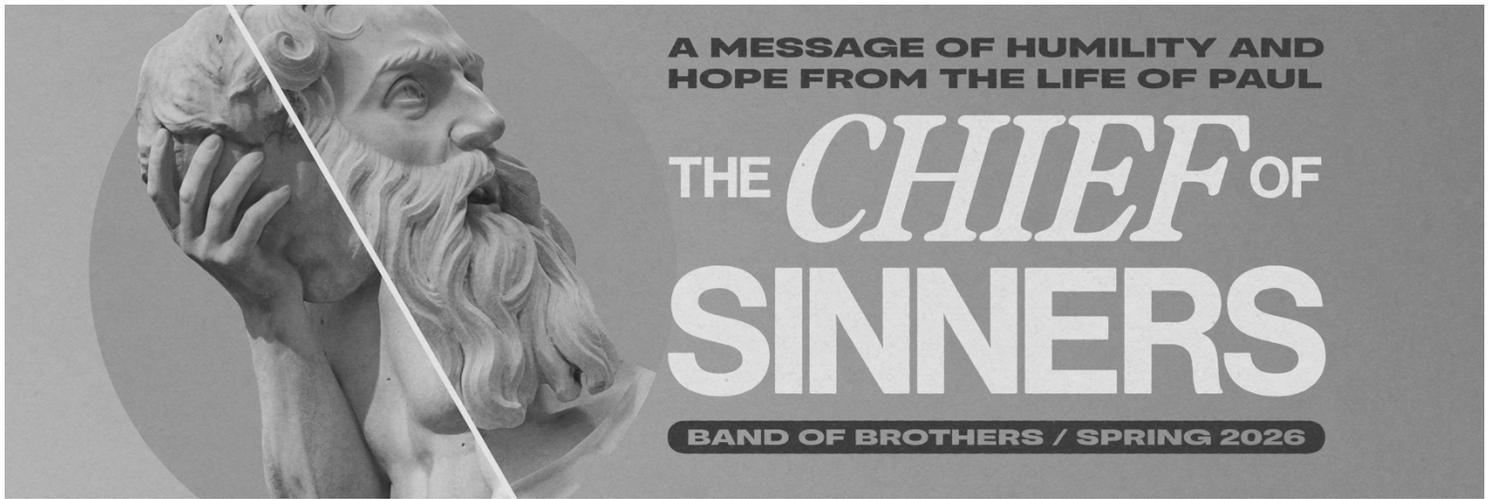
- This is Elijah and Elisha caliber miracles
 - Paul was in a different zone
 - He raised Eutychus from the dead
 - He healed a man lame from birth
 - He cast out demons
 - He struck Elymas blind
 - He survived a stoning that left him “dead”
 - But he kept going and going and going
- **Planting churches and preparing leaders** – Acts 20:17-24
 - Paul ends his third missionary journey
 - He was on his way to Jerusalem
 - He stopped in Miletus
 - He called the elders from Ephesus
 -

- **Discussion Questions:**

What could Paul’s demonstration of persistent perseverance look like in our lives?

In what ways is our culture ignorant of the gospel and how can we enlighten them?

Why is education and edification so vital to our spiritual growth?



BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2026 – WEEK 8 HOMEWORK

WEEK 8 – Welcome to Jerusalem!

In this lesson, Paul ends up in Jerusalem, and we will see his ongoing battle with the Jews come to a head. His three missionary trips proved to be successful, but they left him with many enemies who wanted to put an end to his ministry and life. Paul will defend his mission, message, and Hebrew heritage. He was not out to replace Judaism, but to point to its fulfillment in the coming the Messiah. We will take a close look at Paul’s defense of the doctrine of the resurrection.

- Read through pages 197-228 of the PDF containing Ken’s Devotional™ on the Book of Acts.
- Read Acts 19:21 and 23:11. Paul had a long-standing plan to go to Jerusalem, but what was his long-term goal?

Why do you think Paul wanted to make a trip to the Roman capital?

Read Romans 15:23-29. What insights do these verses give you regarding Paul’s motive for going to Rome?

According to Acts 20:22-23, what does Paul expect to happen in Jerusalem? What advice would have you have given him based on this news?

- Read Acts 21:7-14. What does Agabus tell Paul and how does he respond to the news?

In verses 15-26, what does James ask Paul to do?

What is James' rationale for this request? What does he hope it will accomplish?

- Verses 27-36 record what happened after Paul finished his seven days of ceremonial purification. Describe what happened in your own words.
- In verses 37-40, it appears that Paul has been mistaken for someone else. Who was it?

What is Paul's request?

How was it received?

- Read Acts 22:1-21. What are the key points that Paul brings up in his address to the crowd?

What does the encounter he describes in verses 17-21 tell you about Paul and his relationship with the risen Lord?

In verses 22-29, what was the response of the crowd to the words of Paul? What do you think it was that triggered their reaction?

- Acts 23:1-11 records Paul's interrogation before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish religious court. How would you describe the relationship between Paul and these men?

According to verses 6-10, what was the issue that divided the Sanhedrin and why did Paul take advantage of it?

How can you see the sovereign hand of God in verses 12-22?