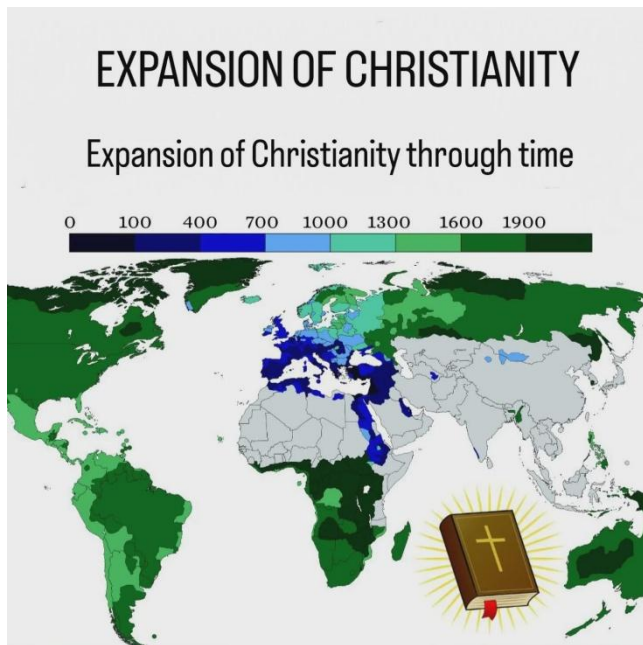


If you look at the shaded areas on the map below, what does it say to you about the “gray” areas left unshaded?



Here is where we left off in the study of **Acts 1-2** Review. The church is commissioned, empowered and the church begins to expand – to grow!

The Church Grows (expands)

So that we can get a real look at the church, let's finish off the verses in **Acts 2**:

A Vital Church Grows

⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” ⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

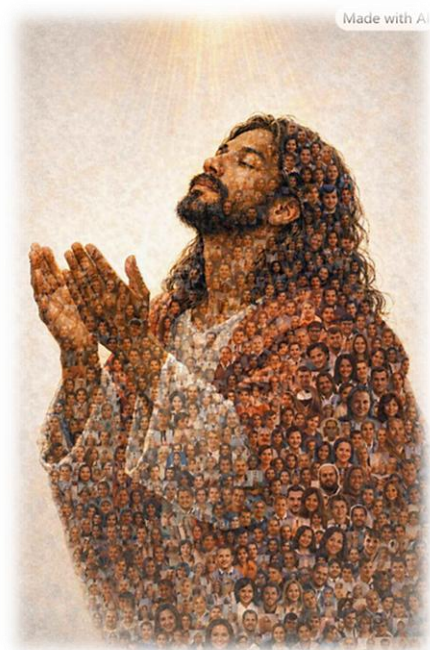
Let’s talk about what just happened:

1. God’s presence comes to live in the “new temple” = believers on the Day of Pentecost. The temple is the place where heaven and earth meet (where earth encounters God’s presence).
2. The Spirit now empowers them to be His “witnesses” (beginning in Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. See the map at the beginning).

3. The setting of the story is now in Jerusalem (where the Jewish Leaders are). Not everyone is celebrating this “new” revelation of God’s presence. The Jewish Leaders are NO LONGER the “ambassadors” and administrators of God’s presence. The Spirit has rested upon them all.
4. The Jewish leaders are now hostile with this “new” message (it wasn’t really “new” at all – it was actually prophesied and they were perhaps not listening or not discerning how all this was going to happen).
5. The disciples have been charged with the responsibility to spread the good news of God’s Reign all around through the nations.
6. Internal persecution is about to begin for the disciples. They persecuted Jesus and now His followers will experience the opposition and persecution that He experienced because of the message.
7. This persecution is about to cause a “scattering” that will ultimately bring the gospel into new territories (just as God had planned).

QUESTION: DO WE ALLOW PERSECUTION TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL MESSAGE OR STOP THE GOSPEL MESSAGE BECAUSE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF PERSECUTION? Are we like our early Christian ancestors in still moving the message forward? If not, what stops you personally?

Now that we have fundamentally defined what the church is and what it (and the situation) looks like in Jerusalem, we are now (in **chapter 3**) about to encounter what the church “did” on a daily basis. They did not “GO-TO-CHURCH” as we have become accustomed to in our lives. **THEY WERE THE CHURCH!**



They were the church at home, at work, in the community, in their social and recreational activities, when they woke in the morning and when they laid down to sleep at night.

We are the church who are the body of Christ to fulfill the covenant to Abraham in Genesis 12:3c – “And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” As we grasp the seriousness of our assignment, we will renew our minds to the fact that this life (of ours) is not about US, but about HIM! His plan is to reconcile us to the place where we have perfect fellowship with Him for all of eternity. What you could possibly obtain now would “pale-in-comparison” to what God has in store for us at the completion of our assignment. Chapter 3 is really the starting point of the disciples in their commitment to do what God commissioned them to do.

Get Ready – Get Set – Let’s Go!

Acts 3

A Lame Man Healed

Right now, it is still the temple. They are in Jerusalem.

^{3:1} Now Peter and John went up together **to the temple** **at the hour of prayer**, the ninth hour. ² And a **certain** man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid **daily at the gate of the temple** which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; ³ who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for **alms**. ⁴ And fixing his eyes on him, with John, **Peter said, "Look at us."** ⁵ So he **gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.** ⁶ Then Peter said, **"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."** ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸ So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and **praising God**. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰ Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

This power from heaven was demonstrated in this individual – causing others observing to marvel with amazement!

Preaching in Solomon's Portico

¹¹ Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. ¹² So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: **"Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"**

Peter about to preach again. Here's what you are experiencing!!!

¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

¹⁷ **"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.** ¹⁸ But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. *Peter clarifies the whole thing again! Imagine that this is what we should be doing in the culture!* ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by

When Jesus will return!

the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. ²² **For Moses** truly said to the fathers, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. **Him you shall hear** in all things, * whatever He says to you. ²³ **And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.**’ ²⁴ Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. ²⁵ **You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’** ²⁶ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

Peter puts all the messages of the prophets in context for them.

God was talking about YOU!

NOTICE: Not in filling your bank accounts with lots of money! Too much of that preaching is going on today! (The fact of the matter is that your “brokenness” is because of your iniquities – sit on that!)

Remember from last week, we talked about Peter preaching a sermon...

Peter preaches a sermon to clarify what they were experiencing
(in the above passage, Peter preaches again)



what sermons ought to do!

³⁷ Now **when they heard this**, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

“and ‘they’ said...”

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, **“Repent,** and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

“release, let go, send away, cancellation”

*Be “identified” with Jesus instead of all the contrary **ideologies** (systematic set of ideas, values, and beliefs shared by a group)*



The Church Grows (expands)
It is this message that expands the church

APPLICATION:

As the church of today, we need to study the blueprint for the ministry that God entrusted to us. There will be many broken people at the gate of our temples as we travel through life daily. We may be tempted to give them what they “want” (the provision which will satisfy their immediate situation), but will we give them what they “NEED” so that they can be healed to serve? Every witness we help raise-up is a storyteller of the goodness of God. Are we making progress DAILY? What have you done today to “MOVE-THE-MINISTRY-FORWARD?” _____