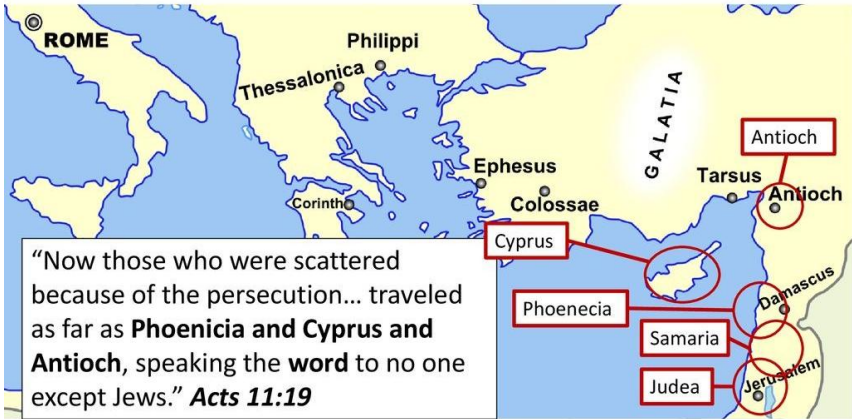


Acts 11:19-21

19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.



➤ **God leverages tragedy to move His purposes forward.**

"...if this life is but the shadow of an age to come, then conceivably suffering could have a future point that justifies letting it continue in order to do its work. If the future point is eternally good and if that good can be reached in no other way, then I can still believe in a good and mighty God even when people hurt." – Larry Crabb

Acts 11:25-26

25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

➤ **The scope of God's work has always been the nations.**

God is a missionary God that's birthed His church to be a missionary church serving His missionary purposes.

Acts 12:1-4

1 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. 4 After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

➤ **Persecution for following Jesus is expected when you follow Jesus.**

So, the Gospel is moving across the Mediterranean world AND...



Stephen is executed, James is beheaded, Peter is imprisoned

What's the church doing?

Acts 12:5

So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

earnestly = a medical term used when a muscle is stretched to its max

Acts 12:21-24

21 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22 They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." 23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. 24 But the word of God continued to increase and spread.

➤ **God gets the last word—but you might not get to see it in this life.**

"...joy beyond the walls of this world, poignant as grief." – J.R.R. Tolkien

"My father had a great heart, but an exceedingly lonely one. He was naturally sensitive, and though he had a number of great friends, he tended to be a lonely man. I never saw him angry, though tears often came to his eyes." – Margaret Simpson (daughter of A.B. Simpson)

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