

Acts 12 Peter's Arrest and Deliverance

Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church, to do them harm. 2 And he had James the brother of John executed with a sword. 3 When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter as well. (Now these were the days of Unleavened Bread.) 4 When he had arrested him, he put him in prison, turning him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending only after the Passover to bring him before the people.

5 So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made to God intensely by the church.

6 On the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison.

7 And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly stood near Peter, and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And his chains fell off his hands. 8 And the angel said to him, "Put on your belt and strap on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me."

9 And he went out and continued to follow, and yet he did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. 10 Now when they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened for them by itself; and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

11 When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent forth His angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting." 12 And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

13 When he knocked at the door of the gate, a slave woman named Rhoda came to answer. 14 When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her joy she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter was standing in front of the gate. 15 They said to her, "You are out of your mind!" But she kept insisting that it was so. They said, "It is his angel."

16 But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, they saw him and were amazed. 17 But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, "Report these things to James and the brothers." Then he left and went to another place.

18 Now when day came, there was no small disturbance among the soldiers as to what could have become of Peter. 19 When Herod had searched for him and had not found him, he examined the guards and ordered that they be led away to execution. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and was spending time there.

Death of Herod

20 Now he was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; and with one mind they came to him, and having won over Blastus the king's chamberlain, they were asking for peace, because their country was supported with grain from the king's country. 21 On an appointed day, after putting on his royal apparel, Herod took his seat on the rostrum and began

delivering an address to them.

22 The people repeatedly cried out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"

23 And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died. 24 But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned when they had fulfilled their mission to Jerusalem, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Pauls Insights

1. King Herod went on a rampage to destroy the Christians, why?

2. The word Church is used, what does 'Church' mean?

3. The 'James' who was killed was a leader in the church in Jerusalem.

4. Herod's insecurity drove him to seek the approval of the Jews. Why do we look to others to find our security?

5. Peter gets himself arrested. The words he spoke to Jesus that 'he would die for Him' have become a real possibility.

6. How would you feel about dying for Jesus?

7. Peter is under heavy guard but no amount of men can stop God's will from being done.

8. Fervent prayer, by the church, for Peter, was being made to God. What is fervent prayer?

9. What kind of power is released when God's people gather and pray?

10. Notice the church is praying to God.

11. God answers the prayers of the church for Peter to be set free from his prison.

12. How do you find the experience of praying?

13. Have you asked what is happening when you are bringing your prayers to God?

14. The angel sent by God, to release Peter, woke Peter up instructing him to get dressed and they walked out of the prison together.

15. Peter experiencing this phenomena, questioned as to whether this experience was actually a dream!

16. Why did the guards not stop them when they were leaving the prison?

17. What sort of encounter is taking place when the doors of the prison open by themselves?

18. The angel, having accomplished his mission in leading Peter out to freedom, left.

19. What does the term 'he came to himself' mean?

20. Peter realised what God had just done for him and said the words in his head out loud from his mouth?

21. Peter is overwhelmed with excitement, he decides to go to the house of Mary to tell her his incredible experience.

22. He found Mary gathered with others, praying for him.

23. At the door joy overwhelmed Rhoda so that she left Peter outside! Did Rhoda believe? I wonder what level of faith was at work at that prayer meeting. The others were no better, they were unconvinced also.

24. Some tried to spiritualise the experience saying 'it is his angel'. Why do we do things like this?

25. Having finally accepted Peter was at the door they accepted it.

26. Peter testifies his experience and asks them to tell James, did he not know that James

was dead?

27. Why did Peter leave Mary's house?

28. Back in Gotham city jail, there is a kerfuffle as to where the lost prison is and how he had escaped!

29. Herod decides to kill the guards because of Peter's breakout.

30. This king seems to make enemies wherever he goes! What makes a bad king or a good king?

31. In Herod's pomp, he decides to address the people and unfortunately the people make the mistake of worshipping Herod!

32. The term 'immediately' what does it mean?

33. In the uproar of worshipping Herod the angel of the Lord kills him. Why?

34. Herod took God's worship unto himself.

35. Herod was doing what satan did in the beginning!

36. Herod's death was by worms – it sounds painful!

37. Despite the persecution the church grew! Why?

38. Barnabus, Paul and Mark appear on the scene, they have returned back from mission.

39. It is a strange experience coming back, having been on mission, to fit back into normal life when you have been out there doing it.