

NOTE: For exceptional Bible students, I have created links online to other material related to this chapter. Go to <http://LemmonsAid.WordPress.com> and type in the SEARCH BOX: Acts 12 Links.

Peter—Acts 12

Peter Set Free; Herod's Death

I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

01. 12:3... because he saw it pleased the Jews—“Popularity was the ruling passion of this Herod, not naturally so cruel as some of the family [Josephus, *Antiquities*, 19.7.3]” [*A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown].
02. 12:4... four quaternions of soldiers—“Four soldiers in each quaternion (*tetradion* from *tetras*, four), two on the inside with the prisoner (chained to him) and two on the outside, in shifts of six hours each, sixteen soldiers in all, the usual Roman custom. Probably Agrippa had heard of Peter's previous escape ([Act 5:19](#)) and so took no chances for connivance of the jailor” [*Robertson's Word Pictures*]. ||||| after Easter--“There never was a more absurd or unhappy translation than this. The original is simply after the Passover (μετὰ τὸ πάσχα *meta to pascha*). The word 'Easter' now denotes the festival observed by many Christian churches in honor of the resurrection of the Saviour. But the original has no reference to that, nor is there the slightest evidence that any such festival was observed at the time when this book was written. The translation is not only unhappy, as it does not convey at all the meaning of the original, but because it may contribute to foster an opinion that such a festival was observed in the time of the apostles” [*Barnes' Notes*].
03. 12:9... and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision —“It is not at all strange that Peter thought, at first, that he was dreaming; for the deliverance was entirely unexpected, and was effected in the most wonderful manner, and amid the bewilderment usual upon being suddenly aroused from deep sleep. When he found himself alone in the street, and had collected his senses, he knew that it was a reality, and felt like one waking from a singular dream” [J.W. McGarvey, *Original Commentary on Acts*, p. 154].
04. 12:15... Then said they, It is his angel—“The Jews held that every one had his guardian angel, and they thought his angel had assumed Peter's voice. A mistake, and Luke does not say whether the idea on which it was based is true or not” [B.W. Johnson, *The People's New Testament*].
05. 12:23... And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory —“Luke does not tell us that this angel was visible; he record does imply that Herod's death was a judgment from God; he had failed to give God praise; he received the honor which belonged to God; hence, his punishment was considered as divine judgment. ... It is recorded that Herod died in August, A.D. 44. Herod died a most revolting death, and much more shocking than a sudden stroke of death” [H. Leo Boles, *A Commentary on Acts of the Apostles*, p. 197].

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Church.

“Within the same general time frame of Barnabas and Saul's benevolent mission to Judea, 'Herod the king' sought to afflict some within the Jerusalem church. This 'Herod' was known as Agrippa

I; he was the grandson of Herod the Great, who slaughtered the infants in an attempt to eliminate the Christ child (Mt 2:1ff), and the nephew of Herod Antipas, who decapitated John the Baptizer (Mk 4:14ff). Agrippa had been granted the title 'king' by Caligula, with territories in northeast Palestine. In A.D. 41, he also had been placed over both Samaria and Judea by Claudius" [Wayne Jackson, *The Acts of the Apostles: From Jerusalem to Rome*, pp. 147-48].

III. Summary.

We read here about Herod Agrippa I persecuting the church because it would put him in good standing with his Jewish subjects and he surely felt that this would keep him in power longer. The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us that Herod was very ambitious to please the people. Having killed James and noticing that it pleased the Jews, he next had Peter arrested. Peter was miraculously released, however, and returned to the home of John Mark. The pride of Herod Agrippa I became the cause of his own death as a direct judgment from the Lord. This was a time when the gospel was receiving a favorable response from a great many people.

IV. Outline.

1. Herod persecutes the church to please the Jews (Acts 12:1-3).
2. Peter is imprisoned, BUT was also the object of prayer (4-5).
3. Peter is released miraculously by the Lord (6-11).
4. Peter seeks to enter the home of John Mark (12-16).
5. Peter sends word to James and others (17).
6. Peter's release becomes known (18-19).
7. The death of proud Herod Agrippa (20-23).
8. The word of God multiplies (24-25).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The people really liked the speech Herod gave.
02. _____ The Jews disapproved of Herod taking the life of James.
03. _____ The prison guards on duty when Peter escaped were questioned by Herod and he ordered their deaths.
04. _____ Peter saw a vision in this chapter.
05. _____ Peter had difficulty getting into Mark's house.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ With whom does John Mark eventually team up: (a) Peter & John; (b) Apollos & Simon; (c) Barnabas & Saul.
07. _____ What group is mentioned in this chapter as having been WITH ONE ACCORD: (a) Christians; (b) Barnabas, Saul, and Mark; (c) people of Tyre & Sidon.
08. _____ Herod left Judea and stayed for a while in a city on the coast of: (a) the Sea of Galilee; (b) the Mediterranean Sea; (c) the Dead Sea.
09. _____ Who said—NOW I KNOW OF A SURETY: (a) Peter; (b) Herod Agrippa; (c) Rhoda.
10. _____ THOU ART MAD was said to: (a) Peter; (b) Herod; (c) Rhoda.

Fill in the Blanks

11. The JAMES who was killed by Herod was the brother of _____, the son of _____ and was also one of the _____.
12. Because he gave _____ was the reason Herod was smitten by the angel.

13. The _____ gate that led to the _____ opened of its own _____ and Peter and the angel went out.
14. Peter's escape resulted in _____ among the soldiers.
15. It is _____ was the explanation given to Rhoda by those assembled at Mark's home.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

ANSWERS to Acts 11 Questions... [(1) False, Acts 11:25; (2) True, Acts 11:3; (3) True, Acts 11:20-21; (4) True, Acts 11:12; (5) False, Acts 11:15; (6) b, Acts 11:3; (7) c, Acts 11:28; (8) b, Acts 11:26; (9) e, Acts 11:23-24; (10) a, Acts 11:17; (11) disciples, every, man, ability, determined, relief, Jerusalem, Acts 11:29; (12) received, the, word, of, god, Acts 11:1; (13) ears, eyes, mouth, hand, heart, Acts 11:22, 6, 8, 21, 23; (14) nothing, doubting, Acts 11:12; (15) What, was, withstand, God, Acts 11:17.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **...BECAUSE HE SAW IT PLEASED THE JEWS, ...** (Acts 12:3). What motivates a person reveals much about them. The praise of men is that which motivated much of Herod Agrippa's ungodly behavior. Scripture teaches of the rewards and the importance of doing what we do in order to PLEASE GOD (cf., Proverbs 16:7; John 8:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 4:1; Hebrews 11:5; 13:16).
 2. **...BUT PRAYER WAS MADE WITHOUT CEASING OF THE CHURCH UNTO GOD FOR HIM** (Acts 12:5). BUT in this context is a very significant word (comparable to its use in Ephesians 2:4). Peter was in prison, BUT, God was on his side. If it was not the Lord's will for him to stay in prison, NO prison would be able to hold him there (v. 11)!
 3. **...WHERE MANY WERE GATHERED TOGETER PRAYING** (Acts 12:12). What great things might be accomplished for God's glory today if our homes were used as Mary's was here! Has there ever been any crisis in my life which I considered serious enough to gather brethren together in my home for a prayer meeting??? These first century Christians serve as wonderful examples that we should follow.
 4. **...IT IS THE VOICE OF A GOD, AND NOT OF A MAN** (Acts 12:22). This shout of the people was PLEASANT MUSIC to the ears of proud Herod, but greatly displeased the God of heaven. For the PROPER response to this kind of deification and worship of man, see Acts 14:11-18.
 5. From Herod's horrible death we should learn—
 - 1) That God will avenge the blood of His martyrs (Deuteronomy 32:43; Luke 18:7).
 - 2) That it is the height of folly to fight against God (Isa 27:4).
 - 3) That PRIDE GOETH BEFORE DESTRUCTION (Proverbs 16:18; Isaiah 28:1; Matthew 23:12).
 - 4) That the word of God will ultimately triumph over all its foes, even the mightiest (Isaiah 11:9).
- Treatises of Luke, by Frank L. Cox, p. 185.*

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

A A W A F P R A Y E R H R I E J L C M W
 B V B H G R E T E P X V E X J U I S I V
 S H E I M O G V D H M D W H U Z M T X V
 A D D N A P D Q A I A U Q U S O H F R P
 Y Q Z G R H C U N U S M W N O O Y O R I
 A S Z U T F D A G X U P P W U R H R C Q
 H W E H O Y E T E E G E L T O M H A E P
 T T C B B C U E L U J P C E L T M T I V
 V D D C B B F R R F O E G J A V I I I R
 R X E I M H T N T O A S K S O S P O W R
 C M H K C B O I R S C X E V N R E N Y H
 S T S M R E F O I Y J M D O W Z H D B C
 W O I S C R A N I X A N S I O L X J J M
 B W N T E X G S M J D I X K L F U P C Q
 Y O O I L F E R D Z R Q R O L C T D G W
 S L T Z E B E E A P J K J C O L Y A N L
 R V S O M U L T I P L I E D F R D G J P
 W P A G S L O W J J Q U L F A O S V T X
 E U G H I S H E R O D L Z M H E A F X I
 W T Z K H K V A G B N K A R D S I K O G

[The words (or word locaters) listed below are to be found in the text of our lesson. They also are found in the puzzle above. This is just one more way to reinforce what you have studied from the text. Why not read the whole verse where the word is found one more time as you do the puzzle? Thank you for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. Let's desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow (1 Pet 2:2). DRL]

Acts 12

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|--------------------|----------------|
| Herod, 1 | Mary 12 |
| vex, 1 | Rhoda, 13 |
| killed James, 2 | astonished, 16 |
| Peter, 3 | displeased, 20 |
| prison, 4 | oration, 21 |
| quaternions, 4 | a god, 22 |
| prayer, 5 | multiplied, 24 |
| without ceasing, 5 | |
| angel, 7 | |
| follow, 8 | |