

**Series "God At Work" Book Of Acts**  
**"Prayer Opens Prison Doors"**  
**Acts 12:1-25 | Study 23**

**Acts 12:1-11**

**The principal relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Church has been through Prayer!**

**Thought of our Passage:** "Early Church Knew Their Weakness, So Their Dependence Was Upon All-Powerful God, Who's Righteous In Judgment."

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|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>1. Verses 1-4</b>   | <b>Christian's Weakness</b>     |
| <b>2. Verses 5-17</b>  | <b>God's Unlimited Power</b>    |
| <b>3. Verses 18-25</b> | <b>God's Righteous Judgment</b> |

**1. Verses 1-4 Christian's Weakness:**

**Acts 12:1 Now about that time Context** - The Church is now about 11 years old. Luke left off in **Acts 11:28-30, which** speaks of a period of famine and relief for the Church in Judea. **Acts 11:30**

**Herod the king** - The name **Herod** is a family name. This is **Herod Agrippa the 1<sup>st</sup>**, who was the grandson of **Herod the Great**. He was the one who condemned Jesus to be crucified. **Herod** was of Edomite descent, meaning he was a descendant of **Esau**.

**laid hands on some who belonged to the church, in order to mistreat them.** We saw the conversion of **Saul** in **Acts 9**, which brought a short period of peace.

**This is the 5<sup>th</sup> Recorded Persecution Against the Church:**

- 1.** Through Sadducees, elders, rulers, and scribes. **Acts 4**
- 2.** Through the Sadducees alone because of the preaching of the resurrection. **Acts 5**
- 3.** Through the synagogue of the Libertines, who brought Stephen to trial. **Acts 6**
- 4.** Through Saul, who headed intense persecution that scattered the church. **Acts 8**
- 5.** Through Herod Agrippa (Political Powers). **Acts 12**

**Acts 12:2** This is **James**, the son of Zebedee, the older brother of John. **James the brother of John put to death with a sword.** He was decapitated.

Jesus had told James and John that they would undergo suffering.

**Mark 10:37-39**

**Acts 1:8 witnesses** – "*You shall be martyrs*" James, the first Apostle to be martyred.

**Acts 12:3 pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. Peter's 3<sup>rd</sup> Arrest.**

**Now it was during the days of Unleavened Bread.** The Feast of Unleavened Bread (**Exodus 23:15; Deuteronomy 16:16**) is often called Passover because only unleavened bread was eaten during these seven days immediately following Passover.

**Acts 12:4 put him in prison,** (Antonio's Fortress)

**delivering him to four squads of soldiers to guard him,** The custody of 16 soldiers, 4 watches, 3-hour shifts, two guarding at his side, two at the door. Double-chained wrist.

No repeat of the Apostles' escape from jail in **Acts 5:19**

**intending after the Passover to bring him out before the people.** (KJV "Easter")

## **2. Verses 5-17 God's Unlimited Power:**

**Acts 12:5 So Peter was kept in the prison,** It looks dark, **"but prayer"**

### **4 Details About Prayer Are Revealed:**

- 1. Prayer was Specific - but prayer for him** Prayer was specifically being offered.
- 2. Prayer was Fervent - was being made fervently** – "*to stretch out, to extend to cast*" What drove them to this fervent praying? It was no doubt the death of James
- 3. Prayer was Corporate - by the church** United, Only those that are set apart.
- 4. Prayer was to God - to God.** but we need to speak to God. **James 5:16**

**Acts 12:6 On the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward**

**Peter was sleeping between two soldiers,** - the night before his execution!

### **Peter is recorded to have fallen asleep 3 times in the Scripture.**

- 1. At the Transfiguration: Luke 9:32** (He slept because he expected nothing)
- 2. At the Garden of Gethsemane: Matthew 26:40** (He slept pride/disobedience)
- 3. In Prison: Acts 12:6** (He was at peace)

**The Church Was Praying For Peter:** What peace we enjoy.

**Jesus Had Promised Peter A Long Life: John 21:18**

**Acts 12:7 And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared,** God has ministering spirits. Many times used by God in Acts.

**Hebrews 11:32-34**

**And his chains fell off his hands.** How amazing the chains fell off him.

**Acts 12:8 "Gird yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me."** He still expects us to use what He has given to us.

**Acts 12:9 thought he was seeing a vision** – *This is descriptive of an experience* Peter had, a vision in **Acts 10.**

**Acts 12:10 opened for them by itself;** This is the result of prayer!

**and they went out and went along one street; and immediately the angel departed from him.** After this miraculous deliverance, Peter was alone!

**Acts 12:11-12 Where does a marked man go? Here is the Biblical Fugitive! And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark,** - He went to John Mark's house.

**Note that Peter immediately returns to the believers, the Church.**

**where many were gathered together and were praying.** A prayer meeting.

**Acts 12:13-14 because of her joy she did not open the gate,**

**Acts 12:15 Churches Unbelief - They said to her, "You are out of your mind!"**

**Colossians 4:2**

**But she kept insisting that it was so.** God bless the Rhodas who see the answers to prayer and see it as a work of God.

**And they kept saying, "It is his angel."**

**Acts 12:16 But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, they saw him and were amazed.**

**they saw him and were amazed. Wow, God answers Prayer!**

**Acts 12:17 "Report these things to James and the brethren."** This **James** is the Lord's brother. Later, he seems to take charge in the church of Jerusalem, (**Acts 15**)

**Then he left and went to another place.** What place did he move to? Catholics say Rome for 25 years to become the first Pope! No. **Acts 15:7 Jerusalem**

### **3. Verses 18-25 God's Righteous Judgment:**

**Acts 12:18-19 he examined the guards and ordered that they be led away to execution.** The escape of a prisoner who was in the custody of a soldier was death.

**Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea** - Herod went down to the capital.

**Acts 12:20 fed by the king's country.** Alliance dates back to Solomon (**1 Kings 5**)

**having won over Blastus the king's chamberlain,** - Bribed the manager of Herod's.

**Acts 12:21 Herod, having put on his royal apparel,** Josephus' account said that he wore garments that had woven threads of silver.

**took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them.** The sun was shining on him, and he was glittering in the sunlight!

**Acts 12:22 "The voice of a god and not of a man!"** People started to worship the man.

**Acts 12:23 And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him** - angel that saved Peter, now the angel brings death.

**because he did not give God the glory,** - God will not share His glory with any man.

**and he was eaten by worms and died.** Eaten by worms and then died.

**Acts 12:24-25 And Barnabas and Saul Mark.**  
Here is the team for **Acts 13**

### **Application:**

- 1.** Prayer Has Been Defined As "*an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will.*" Prayer Is Not For The Things We Want But Rather For The Will Of God.
- 2.** Opposition To God's People Took Place When The Church Added Souls.
- 3.** God Glories In Doing The Impossible.
- 4.** What Situation Or Situations Do We Need To Pray Specifically For?
- 5.** As We Pray, Keep Alert To See How And When God Answers Prayer.