

Acts 12 – Peter imprisoned, released miraculously

I. Peter imprisoned by Herod Agrippa I – 12:1-11

- A. Herod plays on the affections of the people – 12:1-4
 - 1. Killed James, the brother of John (sons of Zebedee, “sons of thunder”)
 - 2. Seized Peter, with intention to kill him after Passover
- B. Peter released by an angel of God – 12:5-11
 - 1. Constant prayers were offered up on his behalf by the church
 - 2. Peter was kept under guard securely
 - 3. An angel struck him to wake him, guided him out of the prison
 - 4. Peter did not realize it was real until after the angel had left

II. Peter goes to the house of Mary – 12:12-17

- A. Peter goes to the house of Mary where many of the saints were gathered praying, presumably for Peter
 - 1. Mary, mother of John Mark
- B. Rhoda hears Peter's voice and, in her excitement to tell the others, forgets to let Peter in
 - 1. The saints did not believe her; “It is his angel”
- C. Peter tells the brethren what had happened; they instruct Peter to go tell the rest of the brethren

III. Herod is punished by God – 12:18-25

- A. Investigation into Peter's disappearance reveals no information; the guards are put to death
- B. Herod arranges an address to the peoples of Tyre and Sidon
 - 1. The countries of Tyre and Sidon were trying to appease Herod, as he was very angry with them. Herod supplied their countries with food.
- C. Herod is struck down as he accepted worship as a god
 - 1. “*The voice of a god and not of a man!*”
 - 2. Struck by an angel of the Lord, eaten by worms
 - 3. March 10th, 44AD; 54 years old
- D. The word of the Lord spreads; Barnabas and Saul complete their ministry (bringing aid to the needy saints of Judea) and bring John Mark with them back to Antioch

Questions for Acts 12 and 13:

1. What do you suppose the brethren were praying for with regard to Peter?
2. Examine the circumstances under which Peter was asleep. What might this say about Peter's mind and attitude?
3. Why didn't the saints believe Rhoda's report? Why did they claim it was "his angel"? Could this in any way have application for our own prayers regarding matters that seem impossible?
4. Why were the people of Tyre and Sidon trying to appease Herod?
5. Why was Herod killed? Who killed him?