



Acts 12:1-18 (NIV)

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.

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

⁶ The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. ⁷ Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. ⁸ Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. ⁹ Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision.

¹⁰ They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

¹¹ Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

¹² When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. ¹³ Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴ When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

¹⁵ "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

¹⁶ But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

¹⁷ Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the brothers about this," he said, and then he left for another place.

¹⁸ In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter.

Will the Real King Herod Please Stand Up?

- **Herod #1 was known as "Herod the Great."** This is the King Herod who slaughtered the babies of Bethlehem in an attempt to kill Jesus.
- **Herod #2 was known as "Herod Antipas."** This is the King Herod who ordered the beheading of the John the Baptist. He was on the throne when Jesus was crucified.

- **Herod #3 was known as “Herod Philip the Second.”** He was murdered by his own father because he feared his son was after his throne, but before he died he had a son who became ...
- **Herod #4, known as “Herod Agrippa,”** who was the King Herod we read about in Acts 12.

About King Herod Agrippa:

- A true politician who worked hard at building a relationship with the Jewish people.
- To gain popularity he attacked the Christian Church and its leaders.
- He had James, the brother of John, killed
- He had Peter arrested and put in prison.

The Power of a Praying Church

So Peter was kept in prison... **BUT...** the church was earnestly praying to God for him. Acts 12:5 (NIV)

(Jesus said) *My house will be called a house of prayer.*

Matthew 21:13 (NIV)

“Prayer is the force that moves the hand that moves the world.”

-Anonymous

The Truth About Prayer

1. Prayer Changes _____.

The power may come in these forms:

Wisdom, Courage, Confidence, Perseverance, Changed Attitude, Changed Circumstance, or even Miracles.

2. Prayer Changes _____.

“Salvation never finds its way to a prayer-less heart. The Holy Spirit never abides in a prayer-less spirit.”

-E.M. Bounds

Sources: *The Power of a Praying Church*, by Mark Adams and *The Power of a Praying Church* by Stormie Omartian