

Lesson 35: Acts 12:1-5 James Killed and Peter Imprisoned

Background: James in King Herod's court followed by Peter in King Herod's court.

Acts 12:1-2 Who killed the Apostle James, son of Zebedee, brother of the Apostle John? _____

Acts 12:3 Why did King Herod Agrippa 1 arrest Peter? _____

Acts 12:4-5 Why didn't king Herod Agrippa 1 kill Peter right away? _____

4 Prize dollars if an adult reads the Bible passage with the student and helps them fill out their Study Sheet.

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Acts 12:1-5 Question Answers

Acts 12:1-2 The Jews who did not believe Jesus was God the Son, the King, the Christ, had had Jesus arrested and killed by saying that He was a king and that He was going to tear down the temple of God in Jerusalem. These Jews thought that when the Christ came, He would defeat the Romans who had taken over the land of the Jews. Jesus though had come from heaven to live the perfect human life for us and to die to pay for our sins, so that we could become members of God's family. Even though Jesus never sinned, never did anything wrong, He freely chose to let His enemies arrest Him, make fun of Him, and to kill Him, so that everyone who trusts and follows Him can be forgiven of sin and live with God and His church family forever. As the church family of Jesus grew, more and more Jews and Gentiles were coming to trust and follow Jesus as their King, their Christ, God the Son Himself. While Herod Antipas was the "king Herod" who Jesus was sent to before His crucifixion; here in Acts 12, Antipas' brother's son, **king Herod Agrippa the first ordered James to be killed and Peter arrested.**

Acts 12:3 King Herod Agrippa 1 only became king after telling the Roman emperor that his uncle, king Herod Antipas, was plotting to fight against him. Agrippa knew that if he did not keep Rome happy, the emperor would kick him out too and make someone else king. Keeping Rome happy though meant keeping the peace in Judea, the land of the Jews. Because most of the Jews in Judea did not follow Jesus, when Agrippa 1 began arresting and killing the Christians, the followers of Jesus the Christ, it made those Jews happy. Peter was a leader of the Jerusalem church in Judea and was making a lot of Jews unhappy, because so many people were coming to believe in Jesus. **To make these Jews happy again,** king Herod Agrippa 1 had Peter arrested.

Acts 12:4-5 Because God loves His chosen people, the Jews, 1400 years earlier, just before rescuing them from slavery in Egypt, God instructed His people to prepare a lamb for each of their households to eat and for the blood of that lamb to be painted on the doorposts and lintel of the entrances of their homes. By doing this, when God went through the land of Egypt to kill the firstborn sons of the households' of His enemies, He would pass over the houses of everyone who listened to and obeyed Him. Every year the Jews were to celebrate being saved from slavery with the seven day feast of unleavened bread, which begins with the Passover meal. Because of this week-long feast, Herod Agrippa 1 **had to wait until the end of the Passover before bringing Peter before the people** and presumably killing him for telling people that Jesus had come back from the dead and that He was God.

Lesson 36: Acts 12:6-11 Peter Is Rescued Part 1

Background: Peter in prison.

Acts 12:6 Where was Peter when the angel struck him in the side? _____

Acts 12:7-10 What happened when the angel appeared in Peter's prison cell? _____

Acts 12:11 What did Peter think when he saw that he was no longer in prison, but was outside?__

4 Prize dollars if an adult reads the Bible passage with the student and helps them fill out their Study Sheet.

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Acts 12:6-11 Question Answers

Acts 12:6 The Jews who did not believe Jesus was God the Son, their King, wanted all of Jesus' followers arrested and killed. Because it made them happy when king Herod Agrippa the first arrested and killed James, Herod arrested Peter too. Since they arrested Peter just before the week-long Passover feast, **Peter was kept in prison until the feasting was over.**

Acts 12:7-10 On the night when king Herod was about to bring Peter out before the people to kill him, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers with his hands bound by two iron chains inside a prison cell. It is likely that Peter's chains would have been attached to the two soldiers on either side of him. In addition to these soldiers, there were more men guarding the iron door to the prison, making sure no one left and that no one entered. When the angel appeared in Peter's prison cell, his light filled the room, but it did not wake Peter up. Since the two soldiers next to Peter did not respond to the light of the angel, it is likely that they were asleep too. The angel struck Peter in the side and told him, "Get up quickly." Then **the chains on Peter's hands fell off.** As Peter put on his clothes and followed the angel out of the prison cell, he was not sure if he was just having a dream or if it was real. As Peter followed the angel, the locked iron doors opened by themselves, and the men guarding the way did not seem to even notice them. The angel led Peter out of the prison and into the street, and then left him.

Acts 12:11 When Peter was fully awake, he saw that he had not been dreaming, but that **God had sent one of His angels to rescue him from prison and from being killed** by king Herod and the enemies of Jesus.

Lesson 37: Acts 12:11-19 Peter Is Rescued Part 2

Background: Peter goes to the house of John-Mark's mother.

Acts 12:11-12 Where did Peter go after the angel rescued him from prison? _____

Acts 12:13-17 What happened when Peter knocked on the door of the house? _____

Acts 12:18-19 What did Herod do after discovering that Peter had escaped? _____

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Acts 12:11-19 Question Answers

Acts 12:18-19 King Herod Agrippa 1 did not think for a second that anyone who was chained to two soldiers inside a prison full of men guarding locked iron gates could possibly escape. But when the day came for Peter to be taken out and executed, killed, Peter was nowhere to be found. **Herod searched for Peter and questioned the sentries,** the guards. Because none of them knew where Peter went, so Herod had them all put to death for losing a prisoner. We know that if any of these men had seen Peter escaping, they would have told Herod, hoping to save their own lives. But because they did not see the angel leading Peter out of the prison, they were just as shocked by Peter's escape as Peter had been.

Acts 12:13-17 Because the members of the church were all busy praying for Peter, who they thought was in prison, they were not expecting him to come knocking on the door in the middle of the night. Rhoda, the girl who answered Peter's knock at the front gateway, was so overwhelmed with joy over Peter being outside that she forgot to let him in, but instead, ran back into the house to tell the others. In the meantime, Peter was left standing outside the house's gate, knocking and knocking, waiting for someone to let him in.

The rest of **the church did not at first believe Rhoda when she said Peter was outside,** because last they had heard, Peter was in prison, waiting to be killed by king Herod. In disbelief, the others argued with Rhoda that it was not Peter, but rather, it was his angel. Because they had been praying for Peter and because Rhoda had recognized the voice of the man outside as Peter, it seems that they thought that Peter's guardian angel had assumed Peter's form to deliver a message from God to them.

Finally they went to the gate to let Peter inside the house. Peter described how the angel rescued him from prison and told them to tell James and the rest of the brothers and sisters in Jesus' church family. This James was the half-brother of Jesus through Mary and Joseph. After the resurrection of Jesus, James had become a believer in Jesus, and a leader in the church.

Acts 12:11-12 Earlier in Acts 12:5 we were told that when Peter was first arrested by king Herod Agrippa 1, the church, the followers of Jesus were praying for God to help Peter. Peter knew that the members of the church were gathered in **John-Mark's mother's house.** John, whose other name was Mark is the same John who would later abandon Paul during one of his missionary journeys. He was a student of Peter and wrote the Gospel according to Mark, which is presumably Peter's account of the life and work of Jesus.

Lesson 38: Acts 12:20-25 The Death of Herod

Background: King Herod before the people of Tyre and Sidon.

Acts 12:20-21 Who was king Herod Agrippa 1 angry with?_____

Acts 12:22 What did the people of Tyre and Sidon call Herod?_____

Acts 12:23-25 What did the Lord God do to Herod?_____

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Acts 12:20-25 Question Answers

Acts 12:20-21 Luke, the writer of Acts, does not tell us why **King Herod was angry with the cities of Tyre and Sidon**, just that the people of those cities were afraid of Herod not letting them buy food from his country. To make peace with King Herod, the people of Tyre and Sidon got Blastus, the keeper of the king's bedroom, to talk to Herod for them. Because of this, Herod arranged to see the people and deliver a speech, telling them if he would make war or peace with them.

Acts 12:22 Tyre and Sidon were in the country of Phoenicia to the North of Judea, the land of the Jews. The people of that country were gentiles, non-Jews, so they did not believe in the One True God. Instead, they believed that there were lots and lots of gods. Because they wanted Herod to make peace with them and not war, when Herod spoke to them, they shouted out, saying **that Herod was a god**, someone that they should love and worship.

Acts 12:23-25 Herod was an Edomite, a non-Jew, but he claimed to believe in and worship the One True God of the Jews. He knew there is only One God and that no man on earth should be worshiped like God is worshiped. When the people of Tyre and Sidon called Herod a god, he should have said, "there is only One God, and I am not Him!" Instead, Herod allowed the people to give him the praise and worship that only God deserves. Because Herod let the people call him a god, the One True **God struck him with worms**, which ate his insides until he died. Because of all God was doing through His church family, more and more people became followers of Jesus everyday. And when Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus had finished their work at the church in Antioch, they returned to Jerusalem along with John-Mark, the student of Peter and the writer of the Book of Mark.