

Putting Feet to Your Faith

Acts 12:1-25

- A change has occurred within the body of Christ as Peter has declared that when it comes to salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit that God deals with the both the Jews and the Gentiles the same, and to prove it just as it happened in Jerusalem and Samaria, Antioch has had a revival and the Hand of the Lord was with the Gentiles and a great many of them was saved. You can expect that when God is moving the enemy is preparing his forces to rise up and oppose and that's exactly what we'll see here in **Ch 12**, but God shows us **3** assurances that we can count on.

V1-25

- **V1** while the revival is going on with the gentiles in Antioch, with the Samaritans in Samaria, and with the Jews in Jerusalem, the enemy stirs up a familiar name to rise up and persecute the church. It says "**he stretched out his hand to harass come from the church**" in other words he went out of his way to reach people within his sphere of influence even if it meant causing him discomfort in order to bring misery upon those who were known to serve-worship in the church.
- This is the grandson of Herod the Great who in his madness killed all those babies in an attempt to slaughter Jesus before he came of age because of his fear that He would take his throne away, he is also the nephew of Herod Antipas who had a role in the trial of Jesus and mocked Him during His interrogation. So his family has a history of being on the wrong side of doing what's right when it comes to the gospel and he's following in their footsteps unfortunately.
- **V2-4** after he saw how it benefitted him politically to go after the Christians he killed James the brother of John and then further went after the saints until he caught Peter and placed him in jail. This happened right during the Passover so instead of executing him then he feared a riot could break out so he intends to have Peter killed afterward. Up until now the church had been on a streak of success witnessing one revival after another but with success comes opposition.
- Peter's in trouble to say the least, but this is nothing new to him, this is the third time we've read where Peter has been taken by the authorities for the gospel sake, and right here we see the first of God's assurances to all of us that He will never leave us or forsake us. Notice before now Herod's actions are met with approval, so he takes it further and arrests Peter, but he can't kill him, not yet because of religious ceremony, which causes him to delay the execution just long enough for us to see God at work > **1st** this proves that **God sees our trials**- Yrs later when he wrote his first epistle in **1Pet 3:12**, he quoted **Ps 34:15-16** to summarize what God did for him
- **V5-7** not only are God's eyes over the righteous but His ears are open to our prayers, **2nd** **He hears our prayers** people- but constant prayer was being offered up on his behalf. Normally a prisoner is handcuffed to one soldier but Herod quadrupled the guards because had escaped before in **Acts 5**, so he assigns a high security detail to make sure it doesn't happen again.

- Peter has experience with dealing with Angels and this time he doesn't doubt or question he is just going to listen and follow. **V8-11** the chains, the guards, the prison doors meant nothing to God or His appointed messengers, so whatever were facing is anything to hard for the Lord! Peter didn't know whether it was a dream or not until afterward. I'm sure when he had time to think, that **Jn 21:18-** came to mind when he was told that he would live to be an old man.
- **V12-15** he goes to the house of Mary John Mark's mother and their having a prayer meeting and he knocks on the door and a young girl comes to answer name "**Rhoda**" and when she recognizes that its Peter we read that she was glad, but she didn't open the door! She got so excited that she took off to tell the others that their prayers had been answered all the while leaving him outside. As funny as that is how sad it is the response that those who are praying give upon hearing that Peter's is outside asking to come in.
- **V15** first they don't believe her, next they think it's his Angel, some superstitious belief the Jews held, even while they prayed they found it hard to believe God actually answered their prayer, I think most of us can relate to this > **Mk 9:23-24-** the father of his child whom he had faith enough to bring to Jesus but still doubted whether Jesus could heal him. **V16-17** to Peter's credit he continued to knock until they finally answered and being astonished that it was really him and once they did they couldn't get their questions out fast enough until Peter told them to be quiet and began to share with them exactly what happened, and for them to tell James I'm free.
- **V18-19** Herod was furious that Peter escaped and he has the guards executed, but little does Herod know his day of reckoning is coming and it brings us to our third and last point > **3rd God deals with our enemies- "but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil"**. **V20-23** the people of Tyre and Sidon were depended upon Herod for their food and they had displeased him in some way were not told what, but they had bribed one of Herod's officials into meeting him and the prideful King used it to flaunt his authority and splendor and the crowd flatters him by calling him a god and not a man in which he ate it up and this praise became the death of him
- The manner of Herod's death was appropriate to his spiritual state, as God struck him with a disease that corrupted him from the inside out which was ironic for that is exactly how he was, rotten on the inside which produced nothing but corruption on the outside. So instead of Peter being killed by Herod, its Herod who is killed by Peter's God and history says it he languished for five days. **V24-25** meanwhile the church continues to grow and multiply, in the beginning of the chapter Herod believed he had the upper hand against God's people, but God showed him and us Who really is in charge, for in the end Herod is judged, and the church is blessed.