

## Reflecting on Acts 12 | April 28, 2019

**Note:** We are taking a brief break (three weeks) from our study in 1 Corinthians. For Sunday, April 28, we have a Members Meeting scheduled during the Sunday School hour. Although we are not having our regular Discussion Groups this week, we are providing these questions for personal study and reflection. In addition, we encourage you to discuss these questions with another person or group at some point during the week. Please prayerfully consider this discipleship opportunity. We will resume our regular Sunday School classes on May 19.

### Questions for Study

1. In the book of Acts, Luke records how the Gospel spread from Jerusalem to the end of the earth (1:8) after Jesus ascended into heaven. It is an exciting time in history! Read the passages below and note some of the highlights of the beginning of the church age. The first entry is completed for you:

Acts 2:41-47 – About 3,000 people, representing various nations and languages, turn to Christ for salvation. The apostles perform many signs and wonders. The Christian community continues to multiply and unify, sharing meals and possessions.

Acts 5:27-29, 41, 42 –

Acts 8:5, 12, 25 –

Acts 9:1-6, 17-22 –

Acts 10:34-45 –

Acts 11:19-22 –

2. As Christianity grew, so did opposition to it. In Acts 12, we are introduced to Herod Agrippa, the Roman-appointed ruler over all of Judea, Samaria, and several other territories that were heavily populated by Jewish people. How does Acts 12:1-3 describe Herod's attitude toward both Christians the general Jewish population (many of whom were not believers)?
  
3. Read Acts 12:20-24. What do Herod's actions in this story reveal about his view of himself and view of God? What do these verses (particularly 23 and 24) teach us about who God is?

#### **Questions for Discussion**

4. This passage (Acts 12:23-24), in addition to others in the Bible (including Isaiah 48:9-11), reminds us that God is jealous for His glory. While Christians willingly declare that God is worthy of all glory, we also cling to the reality that God is good. What evidences of God's goodness are contained in Acts 12?

5. God's goodness may appear in question at the opening of this chapter when Herod successfully executes James the brother of John (Acts 12:2). Comparing this situation to Peter's miraculous deliverance from prison (Acts 12:6-11), one author reminds us that, "[Peter] lived to die another day. James experienced the true deliverance: death being swallowed up by the Resurrection and the Life." How is God's goodness revealed in trials and even death? How does the resurrection of Jesus and the promise of eternity with Him give you hope in difficult circumstances today?

Quote from Jon Bloom, "The Night the Angel Didn't Come."  
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-night-the-angel-didnt-come>

6. How does God show His goodness to those gathered at the "prayer meeting" for Peter's deliverance? What lesson(s) on prayer can we glean from this part of the story (Acts 12:12-19)?
7. Thinking over the circumstances of the past week, month or even year, how has God shown His goodness and greatness (glory) in your life? Take some time to praise God for these in prayer.