

# ACTS 12

## Main Point: How To 'Identify' As a Christian

*For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. -Ephesians 2:10*

### Digging Deeper

In today's culture, identity is everything! We live in a day and age where people are making all kinds of claims as to who they feel they are, but are any of them actually living as who they claim to be? In this week's study, we are looking at the three pinnacles of living a Christian life (Suffering, Prayer, and proper placement of God in our lives) as seen in the Acts 12 narrative.

King Herod began the first political persecution of the church. He attempted to posture his government against the Christian way to support and sympathize with the Jewish people. In doing so he had James executed by beheading, which was at the time a dishonorable way to be executed. After realizing that he could secure the mob's favor by attacking the Christians, he captured Peter with plans of a public trial. Even as Jesus told us, the world was going to hate us for His name, many of us still don't realize how much we must actually suffer to be a Christian. Jesus tells us "If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it." (MT 16:25) What has it cost you to become a Christian?

Next, we see the church praying earnestly for Peter. Yet, they did not expect Peter to walk out of prison and come to the prayer meeting. Further, we can assume that they had also prayed for James. One prayer was answered 'rescued' and the other was answered in death. How do we comprehend a 'NO' answer? Are we still expecting the unexpected from God? Or do we only expect what we ask for?

Finally, King Herod accepted praise as a god from his people. Although he knew of God, he did not worship him as the one true God. Instead, he took God off the throne and accepted praise for himself. As such, he was 'touched by an angel' and died of a vicious worm attack in his body. How do we keep God as the proper authority in our daily lives?

### **What characteristics do we see of God in Acts 12? - Read and discuss your initial insights!**

#### Discussion Questions

1. Acts 12 shows God as an immovable force as Herod positions himself Against Him... Do you believe that God is an Immovable Force? Why?
2. How is God's character shown in Acts 12 consistent with the Old Testament? Why? Scripture References?
3. How willing are you to suffer for Christ? If you are willing to make the big sacrifices as John 15:13 tells us "lay down one's life for one's friends", are you willing to make small sacrifices? Examples?
4. In your prayer life, What does it mean to expect an answer? If the answer is 'no', how do you typically deal with that?
5. What does it mean for you to keep God on the throne?