



# The Book of ACTS

## Chapter 12

### “The Power of Prayer!”

#### (1-4) Beware of Satan’s Persecutions!

(v1-2) James – “the ultimate sacrifice”- Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, was, like his forbears, a murderer. The Herods were Edomites, descendants of Esau. In one sense, we see Esau persecuting Jacob again, for "James" is simply another form of the name Jacob!

> Christ told the apostles that they would suffer persecution; remember what Jesus told James and John in Matthew 20:20-28 - *Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father." And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

(v3-4) Peter arrested and guarded with four squads (one squad equals four soldiers). Sixteen soldiers guarded Peter.

#### (5-17) Let’s engage with Powerful Prayers!

> How to have a powerful prayer life? (1) Prayer is the acknowledgment that there is someone higher than us. (2) Prayer is trusting in God for all of life, especially for those circumstances that seem impossible. (3) There are two kinds of prayers those that are answered and those that are not, let’s look to Luke 18:9-14 - *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men — extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

- The religious man’s prayer was not answered because of pride, arrogance, and self-righteousness. The publican’s prayer reached God because he came to God in great humility and confession, requesting mercy from God. This prayer was answered.

> Let's exercise three keys for a powerful prayer life:

- Key #1 - Powerful prayer is CONSTANT! (v5)

Jesus taught us constant prayer in Matthew 7:7-12 - "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

- Key #2 - Powerful prayers are offered to God by the CHURCH! (v5)

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Timothy 2:1-9 - Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle — I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying — a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

- Key #3 - Many were gathered PRAYING (powerfully)! (v12)

Let us build upon our foundation in prayer, once again observe the blueprint for the church in Acts 2:42-47 - And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

(v18-23) Observe the Purpose of God's Judgment!

> Herod, like the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12), who will appear one day, exalted himself and took the place of God. The people worshiped Herod and honored him strictly for their own gain, and one day the world will receive and worship the Antichrist so that they might be fed and protected (Revelation 13:16-18- "mark of the beast—666"). God "struck" him with a terrible death.

- Take note, the angel who "struck" Peter brought salvation (v7); but when the angel of the Lord "struck" Herod, he brought condemnation (v23).

**(v24-25) Here we see the power of the Word of God!**

> The Word of God must grow & multiply in our Christian life! Are you fulfilling your ministry? How do I fulfill my ministry? 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 - *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

**LET'S AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST!**