

Wednesday, August 2, 2023  
SHAKEN:  
PART 12: GOD'S SOVEREIGN PLAN

This evening, we continue our study of the book of Acts. This study is called, "Shaken." Turn to chapter 12.

Acts 12:1-4 (NKJV)

King Herod decides to step up persecution of the church.

Grandson of Herod the Great, son of Aristobulus and Berenice, nephew of Herod Antipas, possessed, along with the royal title (Joseph. *Antt.* xviii. 6. 10), the whole of Palestine, as his grandfather had possessed it; having been favored by the Roman Emperor Caligula.

Herod the Great and his descendants were often looked down upon by the Jews. His ethnic background as an Idumean/Edomite, his partnership with Rome, and his brutality even toward his family made him unpopular with the Sanhedrin. Because of his lack of popularity, Herod the Great's grandson began to persecute the church in hopes that it would create allies among the Sanhedrin and the priesthood. Herod had James, the brother of John – one of the "sons of thunder" killed with the sword. Hoping to secure even more favor, he proceeded to have Peter arrested as well.

Acts 12:4-5 (NKJV)

As soon as Peter was arrested, the church began earnest prayer on his behalf.

Acts 12:6-11 (NKJV)

This account is thought provoking. First, James is killed but Peter lives. Does this create a crisis of faith for anyone? Second, the release of the chains holding Peter and the opening of the gate of its own accord are somewhat unique in the Bible. But, to a man who walked on water these events are quite normal.

Acts 12:12-19 (NKJV)

The church is praying for Peter's release but is surprised when he is released. This is typical and makes me feel better about our prayers.

### Acts 12:20-25 (NKJV)

Is there a lesson about in this about not taking God's glory for ourselves? Maybe this event is tied to what was done to the apostles of the Lord. Josephus, the Jewish historian records that Herod was beset by abdominal pains and died five days later at the age of 54. The word of God continues to spread. Saul and Barnabas – in Jerusalem to deliver financial aid because of the prophecy of Agabus return to Antioch, taking with them John Mark. This is where we will pick up next time.

Today's Scriptures:

- Acts 12:1-25 (NKJV)