

Lesson 9 * November 2, 2025- Prayer Works! Acts 12:1-11

 **Bible Basis:** Acts 12:1–11

 **Memory Verse:** But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him. Acts 12:5 (NLT)

 **Bible Truth:** *The fervent prayer of the church in Acts and the work of an angel provided Peter’s deliverance.*

 **Lesson Aim:**

By the end of this lesson we will:

- Understand the Power of Earnest Prayer
 - Know that God’s Sovereignty Overturns Human Plans
 - There is Divine Intervention in Impossible Situations
 - Acknowledge that Obedience Unlocks Deliverance
 - Recognize The Reality of Spiritual Warfare
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 **What was the problem:**

Political Persecution and Martyrdom

- Herod Agrippa I-the grandson of Herod the Great. Sought to gain favor with the Jewish population by targeting Christian leaders.
- His sister is Herodias who was responsible for the death of John the Baptist. (Mark 6:17-18)
- He executed James, the brother of John, with the sword—marking the first apostolic martyrdom recorded in Acts.
- Seeing that this pleased the people, Herod arrested Peter during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, intending to publicly try and execute him after Passover.

Background

Gospel Expansion to Gentiles (vs. 11:19-21)

- The Jerusalem church hears about this Gentile revival and sends Barnabas to encourage and assess what’s happening. (11: vs-22-24)
- Paul joins the mission in Antioch where he and Barnabas teaches the church for a full year. This is when the church was first called Christians. (11:25-26)
- Prophets from Jerusalem visit Antioch (11:27-29)
- A great famine was prophesied by Agabus and the church responds with compassion, sending financial aid to believers in Judea.

THE LESSON:

Punished for Preaching (vs. 1-3) NLT- New Living Translation

Scripture Reading & Discussion

Acts 12:1-3

¹About that time King Herod Agrippa began to persecute some believers in the church.

² He had the apostle James (John’s brother) killed with a sword.

³ When Herod saw how much this pleased the Jewish people, he also arrested Peter. (This took place during the Passover celebration.)

What’s happening here?

- Herod Agrippa I was appointed to rule over most of Palestine, including Galilee, Perea, Judea, and Samaria
- James the brother of John was killed with the sword.
- Herod Agrippa I sees where the death of James pleased the Jews, so he went for the big gun PETER.
- He did it during “The Feast of Unleavened Bread”. The week-long festival directly following Passover.
- This was strategic, since more Jews were in the city than usual and Herod could impress the most people.

Reflection Question:

1. How do you respond when your faith is challenged?
2. What do you do when someone wants to use you as an example

II - Boxed In (vs.4-6)

⁴ Herod took Peter and put him in prison and had sixteen soldiers watch him. After the special religious gathering was over, he planned to bring Peter out to the people.

⁵ So Peter was held in prison. But the church kept praying to God for him.

⁶ The night before Herod was to bring him out for his trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. He was tied with two chains. Soldiers stood by the door and watched the prison.

What’s Happening Here?

- To ensure Peter doesn’t escape, Herod assigns four squads of four soldiers—sixteen guards total—to watch him in rotating shifts.
- Peter is heavily guarded by four squads of soldiers. Which equals to 16 soldiers. Vs. 4It’s maximum security.
- While Peter is in prison, the church prays earnestly.
- Their prayers set the stage for one of the most dramatic rescues in the New Testament.
- The night before his trial, Peter is asleep, even though he’s facing likely execution.
- Yet Peter is resting, not panicking. This shows a deep trust in God, even in the face of death.

Reflection Question:

1. How important is prayer in troubled times?
2. Does it matter who’s praying for you?

III – Divine Deliverance (vs. 7-10)

⁷ All at once an angel of the Lord was seen standing beside him. A light shone in the building. The angel hit Peter on the side and said, “Get up!” Then the chains fell off his hands.

⁸ The angel said, “Put on your belt and shoes!” He did. The angel said to Peter, “Put on your coat and follow me.”

⁹ Peter followed him out. He was not sure what was happening as the angel helped him. He thought it was a dream.

¹⁰ They passed one soldier, then another one. They came to the big iron door that leads to the city and it opened by itself and they went through. As soon as they had gone up one street, the angel left him.

What's Happening Here?

- Poked him in his side to wake him up
- Hey Peter, wake up quickly
- Get yourself together
- Chains fell off his hands
- Get dressed
- Put on your sandals
- Put on your coat
- Follow me
- Peter leaves with the Angel but thinks it's all just a dream
- They went past the two groups of soldiers (16 soldiers)
- Walked through the iron gates to the city
- It opens by itself
- They went out together and while walking the angel left.

Reflection Question:

1. When you're in the midst of struggle, how willing are you to trust the one God sent to help you through it?

III - The Doors of the church are opened (vs. 11-12)

¹¹ As Peter began to see what was happening, he said to himself, “Now I am sure the Lord has sent His angel and has taken me out of the hands of Herod. He has taken me also from all the things the Jews wanted to do to me.”

¹² After thinking about all this, he went to Mary’s house. She was the mother of John Mark. Many Christians were gathered there praying.

What’s Happening Here?

- After being miraculously freed by an angel, Peter fully wakes up to what just happened.
- He recognizes that God has rescued him from Herod’s grip and from the plans of those who opposed him.
- Peter heads straight to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark—a known gathering place for believers.
- There, he finds many Christians praying, likely interceding for his safety.
- This scene shows the power of community prayer and the faithfulness of the early church, even under threat.

Reflection Questions:

1. Have you ever looked at a situation and knew it had to be God who brought you through?
2. How did that make you feel about your relationship with the Lord?

Key Takeaways from Acts 12

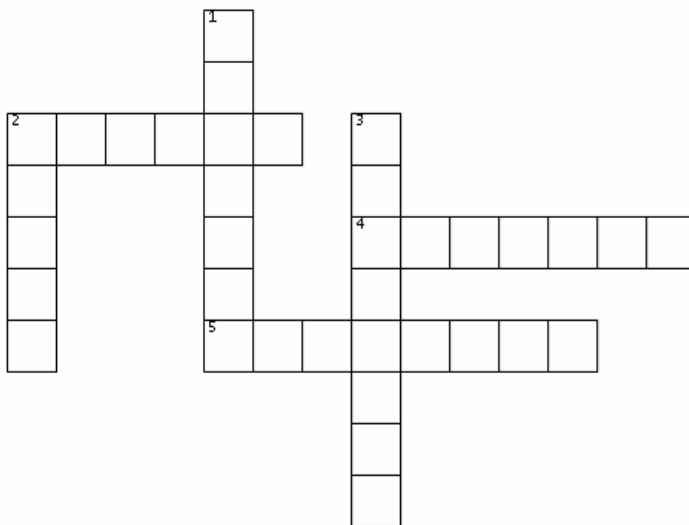
1. The Power of Earnest Prayer – prayers are answered in a miraculous ways, showing that prayer moves heaven even when circumstances seem hopeless.
 2. God’s Sovereignty Over Human ability – God overturned Herod’s plans, recuing Peter and later striking Herod down, proving that no earthly authority can stop divine will.
 3. Divine Intervention in Impossible Situations – Peter’s escape was orchestrated by an angel, bypassing guards, chains, and locked gates. This reminds us that God is not limited by human constraints. He opens doors no one else can.
 4. Obedience Unlocks Deliverance – Peter obeyed the angel’s instructions – even while groggy and confused. Obedience, even when we don’t fully understand, positions us to receive God’s help.
 5. The Reality of Spiritual Warfare - The chapter begins with martyrdom and persecution, underscoring the spiritual battle the early church faced. We too must be vigilant, prayerful, and armed in faith.
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Reflection Questions

1. When have you felt “trapped” or stuck in a situation?
2. How did you see God work in that moment?
3. What does this story teach you about prayer?

Prayer Works PUNISHED FOR PREACHING Acts 12:1-12



ACROSS

2. Who was praying for Peter while he was in prison?
4. How many soldiers total was watching Peter in prison?
5. Herod Agrippa I's sister.

DOWN

1. Where did Paul and Barnabas teach for one year?
2. James was executed with this?
3. What Jewish celebration was taking place during Peter's arrest?

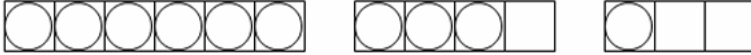
“List Peter’s Instructions from the angel in the order they were given.

DIVINE DELIVERANCE VS. 7-10

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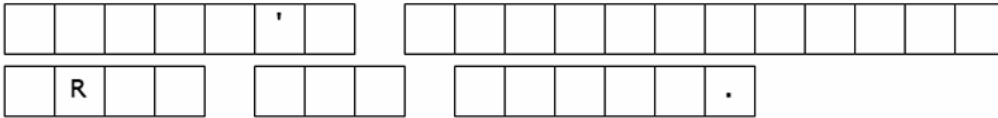
NBDSDHNN0YSIALTA



TCNSTATGMERYAH



ELOMOWLF



Solve the anagrams to reveal the letters for the final message

Solve the anagrams in the top part of the puzzle.

Use the circled letters from the words in the top part to complete the final word or phrase at the bottom.

Each circled letter is used just once.

Fill-in-the-Blank Summary

1. Peter was arrested by King _____ to please the _____
2. The church responded by _____ for him.
3. While Peter was sleeping, an _____ appeared and told him to _____.
4. Peter’s chains _____ off, and he walked past the guards and out of the _____.
5. This miracle showed that _____ is more powerful than any prison.