

ACTS

LIVING ON MISSION

November 5, 2023

Acts 12

BELONG

Get to Know One Another

Take a **few minutes** to hear about your group members' week.

- **How have your expectations of the church changed and shifted since you were younger?**
- **Have you had an answered prayer recently? – Share the story.**

BELIEVE

Read this Week's Scripture

Over the last two weeks, we have seen the church take some huge steps in understanding and fulfilling its mission of taking the gospel to the “ends of the earth.” The gospel has moved out of Jerusalem to Antioch, and the gospel has reached the Gentiles. But today, we’re going to see that opposition against the church continues to exist. And honestly, this is a good reminder for the church in America – that doesn’t normally experience opposition – although the “volume” of voices against Christianity in America seems to be growing.

Question 1: Why does the American church view any criticism or questioning of their actions as persecution?

- Do you think this is a valid definition of persecution in the church [*both the questioning, criticism and calling that persecution*]? Why or why not?

Have someone in your group read **Acts 12:1-8**

BUILD

Engage the Scripture

Question 1: **Herod Agrippa** was a ruler of Israel appointed by Rome and a descendant of Herod the Great. His Kingdom included the regions of Judea and Samaria, and his job was to *keep the peace* for the good of the Roman empire.

- How does this context help you make sense of his actions in **Acts 12:1-5**?

Question 2: What is the church’s response to Peter’s imprisonment in **Acts 12:5**?

- Is there a difference in “prayer” and “earnest prayer”? Explain.
- What does “praying with expectation” look like?
- Why do we sometimes pray for things instead of acting?
- When should we pray and when should we act?

Question 3: How many soldiers are guarding Peter? [have someone read in the NIV and NLT to help with your answer]

- Why do you think Herod required that many soldiers to guard Peter?

Question 4: What other details do you notice about Peter’s imprisonment in this passage?

- Why are those details so significant?

BECOME

Apply the Scripture

Have someone in your group read **Acts 12:12-16**

Question 5: In **verses 12-16** we see that the church was praying but almost seemed resigned that Peter was dead – referring to what Rhoda saw as “his angel.”

- Have you ever prayed but had doubts about what God could do? How can this passage encourage us to pray with faith?

Have someone in your group read **Acts 12:19-24**

Question 6: In connection with Herod’s personality in **vss. 1, 2, 3, 19 & 20**, what does this reveal about Herod?

- Does God’s response to Herod’s actions seem appropriate or severe to you? Explain your answer.
- What does God’s response to Herod teach us about God and His glory?
- **Read Psalm 115:1-18.** In what ways are you prone to worship created things rather than the Creator?

Question 7: What detail does Luke share in **Acts 12:24** immediately after telling us about Herod’s death?

- Why is the placement of this detail in the story significant to the whole chapter?
- What does it show us about God’s commitment **to His gospel? to the Church?**

BEGIN

Response and Prayer

How should it change the way you pray, think, speak or act this week?

At the end of the conversation, spend some time praying as a group. Here are some prompts:

- Spend some group time-sharing requests and praying specifically for them.
- Spend some time praying for FBC and how God is working in and through FBC Portland.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Blue Letter Bible: [Acts 12](#): Check out the QR code to learn more.



Precept Austin: [Acts 12](#): Check out the QR code to learn more.

