

STRUCK BY AN ANGEL

Acts 12

"5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church." - Acts 12:5

Ice Breakers:

- Are you a morning or a night person?
 - What's the last random thing that made you smile?
 - Which season fits your personality?
-

BELIEVE

Read this Week's Scripture

Let me make a couple of general observations before we go into today's text.

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 seem to be growing.

This is a good reminder for two reasons:

- That kingdom advancement doesn't come without a cost – sometimes a significant cost. Scripture is clear: Christians from every age will face conflict when taking the gospel "to the ends of the earth."
- And, NOTHING can stop the advancement of Christ's kingdom. Again Scripture is clear, Christ has won. There is NOTHING – including opposition – that can stop the advancement of the gospel.

BUILD

Engage the Scripture

*Have someone in your group read **Acts 12:1-5***

Question 1: Herod Agrippa – Ruler 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 **12:1-5**?

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

- When you think of "earnest prayer" – what comes to mind?

*Have someone in your group read **Acts 12:6-10***

Question 3: In **verse 6**, How many soldiers are guarding Peter? [have someone read in the NIV and NLT to help with your answer]

Question 4: What do you think motivates Herod to require that Peter be guarded by so many soldiers?

- In what ways do they guard him?
- Why are those details so significant?

*Have someone in your group read **Acts 12:11-17***

Question 5: In verses 12-16 we see that the church was praying but struggled to believe that God had actually answered their prayer.

- 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 12:18-23***

Question 6: In **verse 19**, what three things does Herod do? What does this show us about the “power” of man?

Question 7: In **verse 22**, we see the death of Herod. How does Herod’s death highlight the centrality of the glory of God?

Question 8: Does God’s response to Herod’s actions seem appropriate or severe to you? Explain your answer.

Question 9: Herod’s death shows us that our God is a jealous God, wanting no one else to receive the glory that is due to Him alone.

- Read **Psalms 115:1-18**. In what ways are you prone to worship created things rather than the Creator?

*Have someone in your group read **Acts 12:24-25***

Question 10: What detail does Luke share in **Acts 12:24** immediately after telling us about Herod’s death?

Question 11: How is the placement of this detail in the story significant?

- What does it show us about God’s commitment to the Church?