

## Acts 12: James Is Martyred, Peter Is Set Free, God's Works On.

### I. James Is Martyred: 1-2

This is Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, who ruled in the days of Jesus' birth. No doubt, this was done because it was politically popular for Herod as it pleased many of his citizens who hated Christians.

***Matthew 10:28** - "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*

James was beheaded; He was called home, graduated to glory.

### II. Peter Is Set Free: 3-19.

Saul persecuted out of misguided religious conviction, Herod persecuted out of political motives.

When every other gate is shut and locked, the gate to heaven is wide open. We must take advantage of that open gate through prayer! Prayer is simply asking God to fulfill His will.

***2 Thessalonians 1:11** - Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power*

Peter shows no signs of anxiety. He is able to sleep soundly on what seemed to be the last night before his execution. **Psalm 127:2** - *He gives His beloved sleep.*

*The song "IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL" was written by a successful Christian lawyer. He had two girls and a wife, and the family planned a summer trip. Since he had a lot of work to do, he sent his family and decided to follow them later. He heard the news while on the following ship that another ship has capsized and he knew that his family was in that ship. On His return home, his Law firm was burned down and the insurance refused to pay, they said "ITS AN ACT OF GOD". He had no money to pay for his house and no work, he also lost his home. Then while sitting and thinking what's happening to him, being a spiritual person, he wrote a song - \*whatever my lot, you have taught me to say - IT IS WELL, IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL*

*When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, thou has taught me to say, It is well, it is well, with my soul.  
Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, Let this blest assurance*

control. That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, and hath shed His own blood for my soul.

Why did James die and Peter find deliverance? God alone knows. Simply, it wasn't time for Peter to go home yet.

**2 Corinthians 1:5** - *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.*

Rhoda is so excited to hear from Peter that she leaves him out at the gate! Even while they are praying for Peter, they find it hard to believe that God actually answered their prayer. The execution of the guards was customary; in that day, if a guard's prisoner escaped, the guard was given the penalty due to the prisoner - in this case, death.

**Deuteronomy 31:8** - *“And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”*

**Psalms 34:19** - *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.*

**Daniel 6:27** - *He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders, in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.*

**2 Corinthians 1:8-10** - *For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us...*

### **III. Herod Is Dead, God Continues to Work: 20-25.**

The contrast between Herod and the church is clear. Herod believed he had the upper hand against God and His people, but God showed who was really in charge - Herod is judged, the church is blessed.

Coming back from their relief effort to Jerusalem (**Acts 11:30**), Barnabas and Saul brought John Mark with them back to the church at Antioch.