

Saturday, August 27, 2022 ▫ Read Acts 12:1–24

Questions from the Scripture text: Who did what at this time (v1)? What did he do to whom, how, in v2? What did he see (v3)? So what else did he do? When? Where did he put him (v4)? To whom did he deliver him? What did he intend? Who else was doing what for Peter (v5)? To Whom? What was Herod about to do in v6? What was Peter doing? With whom and where? Who did what in v7? What else appeared? What did the angel do to Peter? What did he say? What happened? What sorts of instructions does the angel give him in v8? Where does Peter go in v9? What doesn't he know? What did he think? Where have they passed in v10? To what do they come? What does it do? Where do they go? Then what does the angel do? What happens to Peter in v11? What does he conclude has happened? From what has the Lord delivered him? To where does he come in v12? What was going on there? What does Peter do in v13? Who answers? What does she recognize (v14)? What doesn't she do? Why? What does she do instead? How do the prayer participants respond (v15)? To what do they change their mind when she won't budge? What is Peter still doing (v16)? How do those who were praying for him respond to his deliverance? What does he do/say in v17? Whom does he tell them to tell? What does he do? What time of day is it in v18? What happens? Who looks for him in v19? With what result? What does he do then? And where does he go? How have things been recently between him and the people just north of this city (v20)? What do they do? Whom have they enlisted? For what do they ask? Why? Who does what, when, in v21? What do the people keep doing (v22)? Who does what in v23? Why? What happens to him first? Second? But what happens to what in v24?

Who is the real God, in real control? Acts 12:1–24 looks forward to the morning sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these twenty-four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the Lord Jesus rules and overrules all things as God, for the spread of His Word.**

How much we who pray to God need to know the sovereign rule and almighty power of the God to Whom we pray!

The Jews manipulate Herod by the pressure of what pleases them (v3, end of v11). Herod ruthlessly lords it over the local military (v19) and economy (end of v20). The people of Tyre and Sidon manipulate Herod by politics (middle of v20) and flattery (v22). But it is God Who is in control.

This should be great comfort for the Zebedee family (v2). If Herod executes James, it is not because the Lord could not have delivered him as He did Peter. It is in the same loving purpose and sovereign rule.

But Peter himself doesn't even consider that the Lord could/would do this. To be sure, he is comfortable suffering for the Lord. The angel has to work hard just to rouse him out of his sound sleep on what was to be his final night alive (v7). And the groggy apostle has to be told to put his shoes and cloak on (v8). He still thinks it's a vision until the angel disappears, and he's standing out in the open street (v11). And of course, the very people who are praying—ostensibly because they think that God could and would do something—are quite persistent in refusing to believe that their prayer has been answered (v15) and then still astonished when they are proven wrong (v16).

But it is the Lord Jesus Who is God. It is the Lord whom Peter knows to have sent the angel to deliver him in v11. And it is the Lord Whom Peter says to tell James (the brother of the Lord! cf. Gal 1:19) has brought him out of prison (v17) by that angel. Yet, when those who are not God get glory, they are deserving of things like maggots beginning to eat them from the inside out even before they expire (end of v23).

The Lord Jesus is God Who rules all things. Arrogant tyrants expire (v23), but Jesus's divine Word grows and multiplies (v24). He is the One in Whom we should trust. He is the One to Whom we should believingly and expectantly pray. And He is the One to Whom we must give all the glory!

Why do unbelievers need to know and accept that Jesus is God? Why do you need to remember that Jesus is God? How are you (or should you be) responding to Him as God?

Sample prayer: Lord Jesus, deliver us or do with us whatever is necessary to show Your divine glory. Make Your word to grow and multiply, and grant that we would always pray to You and give you glory, we ask in Your own almighty Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP110B "The LORD Has Spoken to My Lord" or TPH270 "At the Name of Jesus"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Acts 12, verses 1 through 24. These are God's words now about that time Herod, the king stretched out his hand to harass, some from the church. Then he killed James. The brother of John with the sword and because he saw that it pleased the Jews. He proceeded further to seize Peter also, Now it was during the days of unleavened bread.

So when you arrested him he put him into prison and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him intending to bring him before. The people after Passover, Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. And when Herod was about to bring him out that night, Peter was sleeping bound with two chains, between two soldiers.

And the guards before the door were keeping the prison not hold an angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone. And the prison and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up saying her eyes quickly. That is Jane's full off his hands than the angel said to him, gird yourself and tie on your sandals.

And so he did then he said to him put on your garment and follow me. So he went out and followed him and he did not know that was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision when they were past the first and second guard posts.

They came to the Iron Gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord and they went out and went down one street and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said, now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel and just delivered me from the hand to ferret, excuse me, Hand of Herod.

And from all the expectation of the Jewish people. So when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary. The mother of John whose surname was Mark where many were gathered together praying and as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer When she recognized feature's voice because of her gladness.

She did not open the gate, But ran in and announced the Peter, stood before the gate, but they said to her, you are beside yourself yet. She kept insisting. That it

was so, So they said it has his angel. Now, Peter continued knocking and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished but motioning to them with his hand to keep silent.

He declared to them. The Lord had brought him out of the prison and he said, go tell these things to James, and to the brethren and he departed and went to another place. Then as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become a Peter.

But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, He examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon but they came to him with one Accord and having made blast us, the king's personal aid.

Their friend, they asked for peace because their country was supplied with food by the king's country. So I want to set day Herod. A raid in Royal Apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting the voice of God and not of a man, Then immediately An angel of the Lord struck him.

Because he did not give glory to God and he was eaten by worms and died, but the Word of God, grew and multiply So far the reading of God's inspired and and aren't worked.

Israel, the juice had a king and there were a people who thought of themselves as the people of God as indeed as Hebrews 2. Verse 12 reminds us. They were constituted this Commonwealth of Israel. And until the coming of Christ and the finishing of his work and has resurrection and ascension and enthronement the Commonwealth of Israel were the people of God, apart from whom you would be without God.

And without hope in this world, as Ephesians chapter 2:12 set. But now those who are without God and without hope in this world, are those who are not as Ephesians. 2. Verse 19 says, members of the household of God, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. So the people of Israel, the Jews had a king and were constituted a people, but the people were horrible, and the king was horrible and what the Holy Spirit does for us.

Now in Acts chapter 12, it shows us how Jesus is opposite, the kings of the earth, the wicked kings of the earth, the unregenerating kings of the earth, and how Jesus, and his people are opposite, the king's the unregenerate kings of the earth. And the people's of the earth.

Of course, this comes immediately upon the heel of some Gentiles who by the work that God did in them first, by the preaching of those who came from Cyprus and Cyrene, you remember, last week. And then by the encouragement of Barnabas that by with purpose of heart, they should continue with the Lord.

And then by that year of the teaching of the Apostle Paul in which they were so conformed to Christ and became so aware of their their Christian life. Coming out of union with Christ, that they were called for the first times believers. There were called Christians and so we're coming out of the end of chapter 11 in which Gentiles became unto Jews.

What Jews should have been unto Jews? Those who love them and sacrificed themselves for them and hear that they are going to have a famine and we are going to have a famine and since they are going to have a famine, we are gonna send for them. The means of sustaining their life even though we are gonna have a famine and we who have enough right now for ourselves and to set some aside, we'll send it to our brethren and we will trust the Lord to help us.

By the means that he's given diligence further planning and generosity of others and so forth. So that's what the household of God Gentile and Jew together. We're like However the Jews who were not believers in. Jesus Christ in Judea did not feel about the believing Jews in Judea the way.

These believing Gentiles and Antioch. Felt about the believing Jews in Judea, So verse 1. Now about that time Herod, the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. And he killed James, the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that, it pleased, the Jews.

He proceeded further to seize Peter also and the Holy Spirit underlines for us, the, the significance of the fact that Herod is acting not just as a wicked king but as a wicked king of a wicked people, when he brings Peter to this conclusion in verse 11, that the Lord has sent his angel.

And has delivered me from the hand of Herod. And from all the expectation of the Jewish people. So you see the first glory of the King, Jesus in this passage is that he loves and sacrifices himself for his people and teaches them to do the same. For one, another Herod loves himself and sacrifices people for himself and he leads a people who do the same to others.

So there's a very stark contrast isn't here between the sort of King Jesus is. And the sort of people that he leads because he's the one who makes them by his spirit to be like himself. And we love that Jesus as this king that we have and we want to be a people who are like our King.

And so that's the the first great distinction, The second. Great distinction. Is that Jesus saves his servants while Herod kills his servants. Peter, you know, James, the brother of John, by the way, got saved from Herod in verse 2. And you say, what do you mean Herod? Killed James, the brother of John with the sword.

Well, that's true. Then what happened to James? The brother of John Well, his body is resting in the grave and his soul is translated into glory and Herod. Can't touch him anymore. He's been saved from Herod. Hasn't, he don't be afraid of those who can only kill the body.

Fear God. Who after killing the body, can cast the soul into hell. But for those who come to fear and by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and faith in Jesus Christ, and the production of fear in our hearts, that reverential fear, that knows God as God and our Savior and loves him.

When he, when the body dies, you know, the scripture says, it goes into the ground like a seed. And unless the seed goes into the ground and dies, it cannot spring up again and it comes out a glorious resurrected body. So it's very short-sighted If we don't recognize that James gets delivered from Pharaoh.

In verse 2, not Pharaoh Herod. I've been doing that a lot lately. James gets delivered from Herod in verse 2. But Peter gets delivered from Herod in a more temporary way in versus five. Through 10 Peter's in prison Herod, is doing everything he can for squadrons of soldiers in verse 4.

Including two soldiers, who are bound to him with two different chains, extra guards at the door, and so forth. Now, an angel of the Lord stands by him. And we know because of frequent Old Testament usage, that that's angel with the Lord, with a capital, A Angel, Lord of the capital, A because the Lord himself sometimes makes himself to appear as an angel.

And if that wasn't as obvious in other situations or some situations, where it wouldn't be a holy angel, such as Joshua outside of Jericho where the angel accepts, his worship, and whenever a mere angel is accidentally mistakenly worshiped by a man, they tell him. No, you must stop that.

Immediately you're not to worship me, but whenever the angel of the Lord is a manifestation of the Lord himself, Then you have capital, A angel of the Lord.

And that I think, is what Peter is referencing in verse 17, when he declares to them, how the Lord brought him out of the prison and you see how entirely it is, the Lord himself, who does this.

Now, in God's mercy, Peter was given much faith and comfort of faith to the point that he's sleeping. So soundly that when the Lord appears to him as an angel to bring him out, he has to slap him to wake him up. And it's kind of like getting a four-year-old up and ready to go when you were getting everything ready before it was time to leave.

In the last thing to do is to get the four-year-old up and she's sleeping so well, because they live, so soundly or they live. So energetically and they don't have the cares of older people. And so they burn all of that energy until they fall into a coma and then it's next to impossible to arouse them.

That's the kind of sleep. You hear the phrase, sleep like a baby. It should be like sleep like a four-year-old because sometimes babies, really decide that they don't want to sleep and a new parents who hear the phrase? Sleep like a baby and are going through a sleepless season.

May not like the phrase but there is a phrase sleep like a baby. Yes. A four-year-old is not a baby. I understand but four-year-old sleep. Well, so we're gonna say Peter was sleeping like a baby. The Lord had given that to him, But he really is in the passage like a baby, the angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the prison.

It's a miracle that the guards don't wake up and of course, Peter himself doesn't wake up ordinarily. If you're sleeping in a dark room and someone flips a light on let alone and angelic light on that wakes, you up. But how soundly is Peter sleeping like a baby? He strikes Peter on the side and raised him up saying, rise quickly and his chains fell off his hands.

So, Peter gets up the chains. Fall off. Angel says, gird yourself and tie on your sandals. So it's like, put your clothes on, put your shoes on. It's time to go and he obeys like a child and so he did. He says put on your garment and follow me.

Okay. Put on your code or your cloak or whatever, so he does. So he went out and followed him and he did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. So they go past the first guard post and the second card post and they come to the Iron Gate outside.

The prison that that leads to the road to the city, and the iron gate opens to them of its own accord. Indicating, by the way, the angel doesn't open the gate. Whoever the angel is, is has such providential power that without even a command, the molecules of the gate obey the will of the angel.

So you're getting the idea of who the agile is, right? The gate opens of its own accord and they went out and went down one street and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said now I know for certain the Lord has sent his angel.

So this is the kind of mercy and the kind of power that King Jesus exercises for his servants. He exercises it for his servants when they are getting executed like James the brother of John had Was Jesus being less, merciful or less powerful When Herod had James. The brother of John executed, of course not and we must remember that He is always dealing with us in the same mercy and the same power as when he brought Peter out of prison.

Even when we are in the hardest circumstances and people and devils are doing their worst that they can to us, King, Jesus is still acting in his infinite, mercy towards us and his infinite power towards us. And so by by dealing diff in different providence, with James and with Peter, but the same person and the same personality or character with James and with Peter, He shows that to us.

Now, what does Herod do with his servants? We had four squadrons of servants, four squadrons of soldiers, who had guarded Peter. But when it was day, there's no small stir among the soldiers about what I'd become of him. And when Peter had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards there.

Sorry. Did I say Peter? Sorry. But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death. Was Peter's faith in Jesus. Perfect. No. But Jesus was merciful and powerful to give Peter both the comfort of his heart that enabled him to sleep like a baby and the miraculous deliverance, out of the prison.

That's how Jesus deals, King. Jesus deals with his imperfect servants. How does Herod deal with? What? Actually wasn't even an imperfection of the soldiers. They had done nothing. Wrong four squadrons of soldiers, got executed because Herod lost his prey.

You see the difference between the unregenerated kings of this world and your King? Jesus, Not only. Is he a good king? Who makes his people good like himself. But he delivers his servants, Whereas the kings of this world oppressed their servant's. That's what Samuel said. When the people of Israel came and said, give us a king like all the other nations so that he will save us from our enemies.

And what did Samuel say? He said, Actually a king will oppress you. He's gonna take your sons and your daughters. He's gonna take your money etc. King Jesus, as the king, who serves His people? He saves his servants heritage, as the sort of king, who kills his servants, who oppresses them

The Lord Jesus does this even when we don't believe or have hope that he can or that he will, which is a horrible thing. Peter doesn't believe that it's actually going to happen. He's sleeping like a baby because tomorrow, he goes to be with Jesus, like, James just went to be with Jesus.

Before the Passover, the people in the prayer meeting for the deliverance of Peter, or at least for his comfort. And that he would have a good testimony and that maybe he would give an answer like Stephen had given When he was being executed and that the Lord would use this and all the sorts of things.

That Why is Christians pray for in the situations like that and certainly for deliverance, how whatever will honor the Lord and to do the most good to his people. But the people in the prayer meeting didn't believe that it could happen. So that Peter gets stuck at the door because they won't believe Rhoda.

When she recognizes his voice, Jesus is more merciful and more powerful to his servants. Then even they are able to believe, However merciful, you know, Christ to be to you. He has more However, powerful you believe Christ is for you. He is more, and he is always that for you even now and even when you come, even when you come into a season of trouble, Finally Herod is the sort of king who compromises with his enemies in order to receive their praise.

But Jesus is the king who if his enemies will not be converted will not turn and kiss the Sun then they shall be consumed in his wrath when it is kindled. But a little as you see at the end of Psalm 2, Jesus does not compromise with his enemies.

He went to the cross, because in his holiness, compromised is not possible. There must be atonement and there must be conversion. Herit had been very angry at the people of Tire and Sidon but they come to him, he's in Caesarea. So Judea is, it is down here and says Arias over here and tire inside and are up here.

So he's come up down in elevation but up if you're talking about South to North and there and he's near enough by and says Rhea is on the beach of the Mediterranean. It's basically a kingly vacation area for him and so they figure he's nearby he's in a good mood.

We're going to come flatter him because he's been angry with us. Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tarrach but they came to him with one Accord and having made blast us that Kings personal aid, their friend. So they know that not only is the king manipulating, the kind of guy who can be manipulated, but his personal friend can be bribed to to grease the skids.

For them butter up. The king they asked for peace because their country was supplied with food by the king's country. And now all they need is to make Herod feel like they're having a very good interaction with one another. And as many people know, if you want someone else to think you had a good conversation, just don't say anything and the more they talk the better they think the conversation will have went and so they the butter rum up and there's a set day and Herod comes out in his royal apparel and he sits on his throne and he gives narration to them.

And the people kept shouting, the voice of a God and not of a man. The problem is it is not the voice of a God. It is the voice of a man then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give glory to God and he was eaten by worms and died.

You see men are not just dark dust, you are and to dust you shall return. Men are sinners and so they don't just deserve to die and then be eaten by worms. They deserve hell, which Jesus describes as a place where the worm does not die. And the flame is not quenched where those who are resurrected unto judgment endure.

Not only the agony of soul that comes from the immediate presence of the Lord and his glory in all of its brightness and all of its intensity knowing that you are against him and he is against you in your soul. But there is a resurrection of the body unto the judgment as well.

Not a glorious body, like Christ's, but a body that can endure pain from the inside pain from the outside, like being eaten by a million little maggots from the inside and burned on all the surface area of your body with flame and even all of that physical pain. There's the smaller part of the pain.

And so the warnings of what hell is and what hell is like, in Scripture are incredibly severe and Herod becomes such a warning to us here, doesn't he? Because he doesn't go through the ordinary process. The word died. At the end of verse 23 is translating a word that means expired.

In fact, it sounds very much like our English word expired which comes from it. Breathed his last exhaled to the horror of everyone present. And certainly to the horror of Herod himself, he falls down and there is as it were an acceleration of time and experience. And the fact that he is dust and dusty shall return is displayed by his being eaten.

By the maggots before he breathes his last and the fact that hell will be an experience of that judgment on a continual and felt basis. Forever is displayed to us there because Jesus is holy and just God is holy and just and He does not lay his holiness by in order to forgive and he does not lay his justice by in order to forgive.

But because he alone, who is God, could endure the infinity of his wrath, he adds to himself, not another person. But another nature. The second person of the Godhead adds a full human nature to himself, so that he will be judged according to the nature and endure the wrath, according to his person.

The king's of this earth are the sort that compromise of their enemies. Your king isn't like that So everything that your enemies have done unto, you will be fully avenged by the Lord Jesus. This is why you don't have to take vengeance for yourself. You can't actually take the intensity of vengeance that a sin against you deserves.

So, you don't have to take vengeance for yourself because the Lord Jesus will, but if you don't belong to the Lord, Jesus, no, no. This that he will avenge himself because those holiness and justice are perfect. And will not compromise like Herod was all too willing to do. Jesus has all glory in himself already and he is not manipulated by others.

He will be glorified in the damned and he will also be glorified in the redeemed and he loves to be glorified by showing mercy to vessels prepared. For mercy, even though he is willing to be glorified, but pouring, wrath upon vessels who are prepared for wrath. Let me see the great difference then between Jesus and the owner regenerate kings of the earth, wicked kings of the earth.

Jesus is good and he can make us people. Good. Even converted King. Jehoshaphat couldn't make his people. Good. Jesus, delivers his servants from every trouble, the kings of the earth have to oppress, and use their servants when they are even often wicked and murderous towards them. As Herod was to his and Jesus doesn't compromise with his enemies, The Avengers himself fully whereas The king's of the earth compromise with their enemies, They do not avenge their people for themselves properly.

Remember, let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this passage. We thank you that we will get to hear it, not just in our families worship. But in the holy assembly tomorrow we pray that your spirit would help me as I come to preach it and help our family and all of your congregation as we come to hear it that you would write.

Its truth on our hearts, that Christ Himself would address us by the means of preaching in the assembly. Just as he is appointed to do and that we would be preserved to inherit an unshakable kingdom. Help us. Holy Spirit to know Jesus. Our God and our king, and our Savior more.

As a result of having studied this word now and then more as a result of having heard it. Preached tomorrow, make us to know Christ because to know God and Jesus Christ to whom he has sent. This is eternal life and so we pray that you would give it to us in Jesus' name.

Amen.