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Beyond the Walls – Set Free

Acts 12:1-25

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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



In Acts chapter 12, the church is back under heavy persecution. James is killed at the hand of Herod, and the Jews rejoice. When Herod sees that the Jews are pleased, he continues to persecute the church in order to find favor in their eyes. In dramatic fashion, God steps in, sending His angel to save Peter from prison. This leaves us with a very tough question. Why does God step in and save Peter, but not James? Sometimes God works in mysterious ways, but what we know for sure is that He works for our benefit.

But the word of God kept on
increasing and multiplying.

Acts 12:24

EXAMINE His Word (Observation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in these passages.

Read Acts 12:1-25 (NET)

¹ About that time King Herod laid hands on some from the church to harm them. ² He had James, the brother of John, executed with a sword. ³ When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter too. (This took place during the feast of Unleavened Bread.) ⁴ When he had seized him, he put him in prison, handing him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him. Herod planned to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. ⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but those in the church were earnestly praying to God for him. ⁶ On that very night before Herod was going to bring him out for trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison.

⁷ Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the prison cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly!" And the chains fell off Peter's wrists. ⁸ The angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." Peter did so. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your cloak and follow me." ⁹ Peter went out and followed him; he did not realize that what was happening through the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ After they had passed the first and second guards, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went outside and walked down one narrow street, when at once the angel left him. ¹¹ When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from everything the Jewish people were expecting to happen."

¹² When Peter realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many people had gathered together and were praying. ¹³ When he knocked at the door of the outer gate, a slave girl named Rhoda answered.

¹⁴ When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she did not open the gate, but ran back in and told them that Peter was standing at the gate.

¹⁵ But they said to her, "You've lost your mind!" But she kept insisting that it was Peter, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" ¹⁶ Now Peter continued knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were greatly astonished. ¹⁷ He motioned to them with his hand to be quiet and then related how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. He said, "Tell James and the brothers these things," and then he left and went to another place.

¹⁸ At daybreak there was great consternation among the soldiers over what had become of Peter.

¹⁹ When Herod had searched for him and did not find him, he questioned the guards and commanded that they be led away to execution. Then Herod went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.

²⁰ Now Herod was having an angry quarrel with the people of Tyre and Sidon. So they joined together and presented themselves before him. And after convincing Blastus, the king's personal assistant, to help them, they asked for peace, because their country's food supply was provided by the king's country. ²¹ On a day determined in advance, Herod put on his royal robes, sat down on the judgment seat, and made a speech to them. ²² But the crowd began to shout, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" ²³ Immediately an angel of the Lord struck Herod down because he did not give the glory to God, and he was eaten by worms and died. ²⁴ But the word of God kept on increasing and multiplying.

²⁵ So Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem when they had completed their mission, bringing along with them John Mark.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.

③ **EMBRACE His Word (Application)**

Why does this MATTER to me?

13. Do you think there are angels among us today?

14. If there are angels among us, how should we respond to them?

15. Where do angels come from, and why do you think that sometimes they act on our behalf and sometimes they don't?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

Write about what God wants you to **KNOW**, to **FEEL**, and to **DO**...

SERMON NOTES