

acts

OF THE APOSTLES

Lesson 7 • August 18

Acts 12

But the Word of God Increased and Multiplied

As our attention is brought back to Jerusalem, **Acts 12** introduces us to a new character—**Herod Agrippa I**, a grandson of Herod the Great (**Matt 2**).

About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed **James** the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest **Peter** also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. (**12:1-5**)

On the night that Herod was about to bring him out, Peter was bound with chains, sleeping between two soldiers with guards outside the prison door. An angel of the Lord woke him up, set him free, and walked him out of the prison. Peter knew it was the Lord who had rescued him. He went to the house of **Mary**, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

Herod was very angry and had the prison guards put to death. He left Jerusalem and went to Caesarea.

On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. And the people were shouting, “The voice of a **god**, and not of a man!” Immediately an **angel** of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. (**12:21-23**)

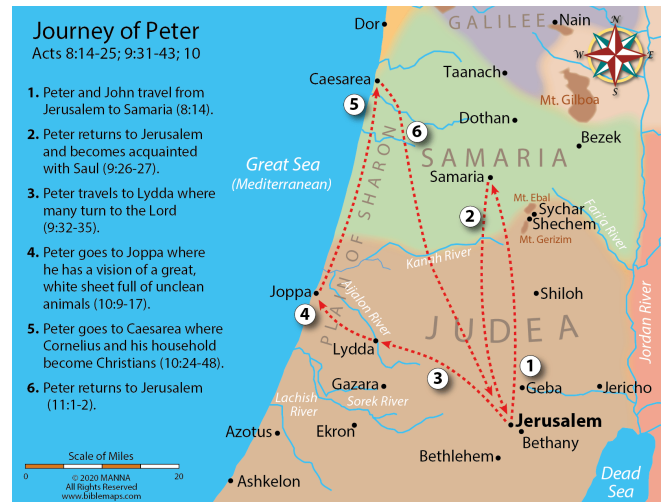
Think about what we’re being told in **Acts 12**:

- Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church.
- James, an apostle, was killed with a sword.
- Peter was thrown in prison.
- A human king was worshiped as a god.

But through it all? Pay special attention to **12:24**: “The word of God increased and multiplied.”

And **Barnabas** and **Saul** returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them **John**, whose other name was **Mark**. (**12:25**)

We’ll read more about these three in the chapters ahead. For now, let’s talk about **Acts 12**...



For Class & Family Discussion:

- Why do you think Herod Agrippa I would “lay violent hands on some who belonged to the church”?
- When you think of James the brother of John who was killed by Herod, what comes to your mind? Who was he? What can we know about him? [Mark 10:35-45](#) might also be worth going back and reading together.
- While Peter was in prison, “earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church” ([Acts 12:5](#)). Is there anything we can learn from that?
- What can we learn about angels from [12:6-11](#)?
- We’re told very little about Mary, the mother of John (whose other name was Mark) in [Acts 12](#), but what can we appreciate about her in [12:12](#)?
- “But the word of God increased and multiplied” ([12:24](#)). What does Luke want us to see, understand, and remember from this account?
- In [12:25](#), we read about Barnabas and Saul returning from Jerusalem “when they had completed their service.” According to [11:27-30](#), what was that service?
- [Acts 12](#) has introduced us to John Mark. According to [Colossians 4:10](#), how was Mark related to Barnabas?