

# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## LESSON 15: CHAPTER 12

4 September 2015

### PETER IS DELIVERED FROM BONDAGE BY THE ANGEL OF THE LORD.

**Vss. 7-12** This is a miraculous deliverance. A light shined, the chains fell off from his hands, and he was able to just walk out of the prison, out the gate (which opened automatically), and through the city undetected.

Peter wasn't sure if it was really happening (vs. 9) or if this was another vision like the one he had in chapter 10. (See Psalm 126:1 "like a dream"). After the angel left Peter, he came to himself and realized it wasn't a vision and he was free. Immediately, he seeks out the believers to tell them what God had done for him.

### THIS PASSAGE ILLUSTRATES THE SALVATION OF THE SINNER

- A. The sinner is trapped by the Devil at his will (2 Tim. 2:26) and is in "prison" just like Peter (Luke 4:18).
- B. He is asleep to spiritual things (Eph. 5:14) and is bound (Proverbs 24:11).
- C. He is appointed to die (Hebrews 2:15, Proverbs 24:11, "ready to be slain").
- D. And he needs light and deliverance (Isaiah 42:6).
- E. Instantaneous salvation is available (vs. 7).
- F. He should then put on the armour of God and follow Christ (vss. 7, 8).
- G. He should "come to himself," like the prodigal (Luke 15:17), and see what God has done for him (vs. 11)
- H. He should go and *tell* the body of Christ about it (vs. 12).

### PETER TESTIFIES TO THE BELIEVERS ALL THAT THE LORD HAD DONE FOR HIM

**Vss. 13-17** When Peter arrived at the gate of the house of John Mark's mother, the believers praying inside didn't believe that he was really out there. Some say this proves that they were not praying for his deliverance, but they were praying he wouldn't deny the Lord; that he would be martyred victoriously like James. We're not told what they were praying, but we know they didn't expect to ever see Peter again. They thought he was already dead and his ghost stopped by (vs. 15).

Christians commonly pray without believing they'll receive what they're praying for. God meets our needs oftentimes in spite of our weak faith (Mark 4:39-40). That's the grace of God.

When they finally let Peter in, he "**declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.**" (See Mk. 5:19). If the Lord blesses you, you ought to tell everybody.

After this, Peter "**departed, and went into another place.**" The Roman church says this proves he went to Rome. You need a pretty big imagination to read that into this text. If Peter ever did go to Rome, the Bible doesn't record it. Peter "**went into another place.**" He had first place (prominence) in the church up until now. Paul will be the central figure in the Church from this point forward, while Peter will be in a secondary "place."

**Vss. 18-19** The soldiers who guarded Peter were frantic. Herod put them to death. They most likely heard a Gospel presentation out in the streets or from James and Peter in the prison. If they ended up in hell, it's because they rejected Christ.

### **THE PRIDE OF HEROD COSTS HIM HIS LIFE**

**Vss. 20-23** Because Herod was “**displeased with Tyre and Sidon**” the people there put together a plan to appease him, both for the purpose of avoiding war, and so they could continue being “**nourished by the king's country.**”

While Herod gave a speech, the people flattered him (see Psalm 78:36, Prov. 29:5), calling him a “god.” When Herod didn't rebuke them for suggesting that, (because he flattered himself: Psalm 36:2), the true and living God “**smote him, because he gave not God the glory.**”

Herod was “eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.” This pictures the corruption of man in hell. Herod gets a taste of hell before going there. “Worms destroy this body” (Job 19:26) whether you die and go to heaven or die and go to hell. But the man in hell will experience being “eaten of worms” forever (Matthew 10:28, Luke 16:23-24, Mark 9:44-46). Hell is a place of everlasting suffering and corruption.

Cross-reference: Nabal “**became as a stone**” (1 Samuel 25:37-38). He experienced rigor-mortis (stiffness of death) before he died.

Cross-reference: “**The angel of the Lord smote him.**” See Second Samuel 24:17.

**Vs. 24** “**The word of God grew and multiplied.**” The word of God is living (Heb. 12:4 “quick”). It grows and multiplies. The word of God is not “**bound**” (2 Tim. 2:9). It shows up everywhere. Today we have a complete Bible. In Acts 12, the word they preached consisted of the Old Testament and possibly James, Jude, and Hebrews.

**Vs. 25** Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch from Jerusalem with John Mark.

### **THE DISPENSATIONAL PICTURE GIVEN IN ACTS 10-12**

1. The message that the Gospel was for both the Jew and the Gentile and the church would be composed of both, was heavenly in its origin. Heaven opened, and the sheet was let down to earth (Acts 10:11).
2. The character of the Church is established. All classes of people are equally cleansed by God.
3. The destiny of the Church is foreseen. As the sheet was taken back up to heaven, so will the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
4. After the “catching up” to heaven, Herod the king (type of Antichrist) stretched forth his hands to vex (Acts 12:1). This pictures the Great Tribulation. He's worshipped as God, then struck down.
5. James and Peter are types of the Jews who will be martyred or delivered during the Tribulation.