

Acts 12:1-19 **Herod killed James and imprisoned Peter – Angel freed Peter**

¹ Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. ² Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. ³ 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. ⁴ So when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.

Prayers of the Saints for Peter

⁵ Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. ⁶ 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.

Angel brought Peter out of the prison

⁷ Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands. ⁸ Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me." ⁹ So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ When they were past the first and the 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.

Peter went to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark

¹¹ And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain 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." ¹² 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.

Disbelief of Saints at the arrival of Peter at the gate

¹³ And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴ When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. ¹⁵ But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel." ¹⁶ Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. ¹⁷ But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how 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.

Herod put the guards to death and went to Caesarea

¹⁸ Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. ¹⁹ 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. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Herod killed James and imprisoned Peter

✠ God does not prevent evil people from attacking His closest friends. [Acts 12:1-4]

- ✧ James was one of the three Disciples whom Jesus held closest of them all. When Jesus did something where those who were with Him was limited, He always took Peter, James and John with him. [Matthew 17:1, 26:37, Mark 5:37, 9:2, 13:3, 14:33, Luke 5:1-11, 8:51, 9:28]
- ✧ The three closest were named first in the list of Disciples called to be Apostles. [Matthew 10:2, Mark 1:19-20, 3:16-17, 10:35, Luke 6:14, Acts 1:13]
- ✧ James and John his brother were the sons of Zebedee [Matthew 4:21, 10:2, 26:37, Mark 1:19-20, 3:17, 10:35, Luke 5:10, John 21:2]
- ✧ In his attempt to harass some of the leaders of the Church, Herod killed James. [Acts 12:1-2]
- ✧ When he saw the death of James pleased the Jews, he arrested Peter also and held him in prison over the holidays of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, intending to do the same with him after Passover. [Acts 12:3-4]
- ✧ Peter was guarded by four squads of soldiers to make certain that he did not escape. [Acts 12:4]

Prayers of the Saints for Peter

- ✧ While Peter was in prison the Church was in fervent prayer for him. [Acts 12:5]
- ✧ Peter was chained between two soldiers with guards stationed at the door to keep the prison.
- ✧ Peter was asleep.

Angel brought Peter out of the prison

- ✧ Chains, guards, locked prison doors, and darkness are not a problem to angels. [Acts 12:7-10]
- ✧ The presence of the angel in the locked and guarded prison illuminated the prison.
- ✧ The guards were not aware of what was happening.
- ✧ The angel awakened Peter but Peter thought he was seeing a vision.
- ✧ The chains fell off of Peter's hands.
- ✧ At the command of the angel, Peter clothed himself and followed the angel out the door, past the men standing guard at their posts in the corridor, through the iron gate that opened by itself as they approached, into the city, and down one street.
- ✧ There the angel left Peter.
- ✧ When Peter realized where he was, he said;
 - ✧ "Now I know for certain 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." [Acts 12:11]
 - ✧ Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John (Mark), where many were gathered together praying for him. [Acts 12:5, 12]

Disbelief of Saints at the arrival of Peter at the gate

- ✧ And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that 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 is 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 how 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. [Acts 12:13-17]
 - ✧ It is quite normal for people to pray without expecting an immediate visible answer to their prayer because of the numerous times we pray and it does not so happen.
 - ✧ This time it was no different, and Peter was left outside knocking until they finally recovered from their shock and were able to face the possibility it may be true.
 - ✧ When they opened the door, Peter confirmed it was true and instructed them to notify key brethren, to **James and the brethren.** [Acts 12:17]

- ✧ This James was most likely James the brother of Jesus who had become a believer after Jesus appeared to him following His resurrection. [Matthew 13:55-56, Mark 6:3, John 7:5, 1 Corinthians 15:3-9]
- ✧ James continues to appear as a leader of the Church in Jerusalem. [Acts 15:13, Galatians 1:19, 2:9, 12]
- ✧ James the brother of John had previously been killed by Herod. [Acts 12:1-4]
- ✧ James also wrote the book of James, where he calls himself the "Bond Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." [James 1:1]
- ✧ James was the brother of Jude, another brother of Jesus who calls himself "a Bondservant of Jesus Christ and brother of James." [Jude 1:1]
- ✧ Jesus did indeed have a mother named Mary, and brothers named James, Joses, Judas, and Simon, and sisters as well. [Matthew 13:55-56, Mark 6:3]
- ✧ Peter departed to another place away from any place Herod might be expected to search for him.

Herod put the guards to death and went to Caesarea

- ✧ Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of 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. [Acts 12:18-19]
- ✧ The guards were dismayed when they realized that Peter was loosed from his chains and gone from the prison.
- ✧ Four squads of soldiers responsible for Peter's imprisonment knew that their lives were in jeopardy.
- ✧ Herod demonstrated his evil character when he was unable to locate Peter after a careful search for him failed to locate him.
- ✧ Herod commanded the death of all the soldiers who had been appointed to keep Peter in prison until Herod could have him killed publicly.
- ✧ Herod's evil character was not changed, He will have to answer to God on the day of Judgment which comes at the will of God Himself. [Acts 12:20-23]
- ✧ Herod went to Caesarea and stayed there. [Acts 12:19]