

First Baptist Church of Progress Village
Wednesday Bible Study
Acts of the Apostles – Chapter 12
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Key Phrase: Prayer versus Pride

I. The Pride of the Herod Family.

A. “Herod the Great.” Ordered the murder of children trying to kill Jesus as a young child. (**Matthew 2:15-21**)

B. Archelaus, Herod “The Great” Son

Matthew 2:22-23 *But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.*

God’s Will is always accomplished even through tribulation.

C. Herod Agrippa I, is the Herod king of chapter 12.

D. Herod Agrippa II, Agrippa I, son will put Paul on trial later in Acts.

II. The Passing of the Apostle James. (Brother of John, Son of Zebedee)

A. James is the first of the apostles to be martyred.

Acts 12:1-2 *Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*

B. Jesus foretold James and John they would suffer.

Matthew 20:22-23 *But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

C. James is the only other apostle’s death recorded in the New Testament except for Judas (who killed himself).

III. The fervent Prayer of the Church.

Acts 12:5 *Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*

A. The adverb *ektenōs* (fervently) is related to *ektenēs*, a medical term describing the stretching of a muscle to its limits.

Luke 22:42-44 *Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

B. The church exerted the maximum **effort** they could into praying for Peter.

Acts 4:24-31 *And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: ...28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done...29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, ...31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

C. They knew only God had the power to save Peter, and they knew His will would be done.

James 5:16 *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

D. Active, **energetic** prayer of those who are holy and just is **proven** to accomplish **plenty**.

Acts 12:17 *But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.*

Apart from his brief appearance at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15), this is the last we see of Peter in Acts.

Acts 12:18-19 *Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode.*

IV. The punishment for Herod Agrippa I.

Acts 12:21-23 *And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. Of all his crimes against God the one that gets him is the one of failing to acknowledge and **accept** God.*

Proverbs 16:18-19 *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.*

James 4:6 *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*