

# The Church Is Sent to Trust God

## Summary and Goal

In the next two sessions, we will see that God has given His church the tools she needs to overcome adversity and stay focused on the gospel task. Here we will see how the opposition to the gospel is strong, severe even. And yet, the early church had access to resources—prayer, worship, fasting, and obedience—that are far more powerful than the most overreaching government. The church today has access to these same resources. Let us remember that our mission is marked not by ease, a lack of oppression, or even signs and wonders but by obedience and faithfulness to go into a hostile world and share the gospel that changes lives.

## Session Outline

1. Praying Fervently in a Time of Fear (Acts 12:1-5)
2. Recognizing God's Work in a Time of Rescue (Acts 12:6-11)
3. Disbelieving in a Time of Deliverance (Acts 12:12-17)

*Background Passage: Acts 12:1-19*

## Session in a Sentence

God responds to the prayers of His people even when they may have difficulty seeing Him at work.

## Christ Connection

When Peter was arrested and put in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him. God delivered Peter miraculously, but the church failed to believe he had been rescued at first. In a similar way, Jesus had taught His disciples that He would die and be raised again, but they too failed to believe at first. When they saw and experienced the resurrected Savior, their faith increased.

## Missional Application

Because God's love, power, and sovereignty are proven in the resurrection of Jesus, we pray with anticipation that God works in us and through us as we seek to make Jesus known.

# Group Time

## GROUP MEMBER CONTENT

*Group content found in the Daily Discipleship Guide is included in this shaded area throughout the session.*

## Introduction

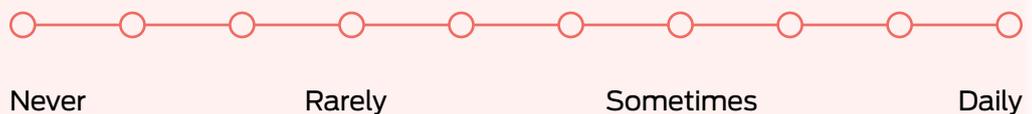
**EXPLAIN:** Use the paragraphs on page 57 in the DDG to help group members think about the role of prayer in their own conversion.

Praying and believing are essential if we are to participate in the process of evangelizing our family, friends, and neighbors. Pause for a moment and reflect on how you came to know Christ. Was it through a family member, a friend, a Sunday School teacher, or a well-placed gospel tract? Most likely someone somewhere prayed for you, for an event you attended, or personally for boldness as he or she interacted with you. Again, take a moment to reflect on the fact that your salvation in Jesus Christ most likely involved one or more people who were praying for you.

Now think about people who are unsaved, perhaps a close family member, a trusted friend, a coworker, or a neighbor. Regardless of their relationship to you, they are loved by God, and yet, they are still in bondage to sin. Are you praying for their salvation?

**INSTRUCT:** Ask group members to use the scale in their DDG (p. 57) to evaluate their own commitment to praying for those who need to be saved.

How often are you praying for the salvation of others?



**SUMMARIZE:** In this session, we will see how the opposition to the gospel is strong, severe even. And yet, the early church had access to resources—prayer, worship, fasting, and obedience—that are far more powerful than the most overreaching government. The church today has access to these same resources. Let us remember that our mission is marked not by ease, a lack of oppression, or even signs and wonders but by obedience and faithfulness to go into a hostile world and share the gospel that changes lives.

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## Point 1: Praying Fervently in a Time of Fear (Acts 12:1-5)

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read Acts 12:1-5 (DDG p. 58).

<sup>1</sup> About that time King Herod violently attacked some who belonged to the church, <sup>2</sup> and he executed James, John's brother, with the sword. <sup>3</sup> When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter too, during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. <sup>4</sup> After the arrest, he put him in prison and assigned four squads of four soldiers each to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. <sup>5</sup> So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was praying fervently to God for him.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 58) to put Herod's actions against the church in their spiritual context.

The enemy of God—the devil—opposes the church, God's people. At times he does this through people in positions of power. King Herod was one such willing pawn. The maltreatment of believers at the hand of Herod escalated from violent attacks to the murder of one church leader. Then after an assessment of public opinion, finding that the Jews were happy with the persecution of the church, Herod escalated the attack with the arrest and scheduled execution of a second church leader, Peter. The enemy clearly had found a powerful ruling family willing to use extreme measures to oppose the work of God, but God's plan can never be thwarted.

- The enemy's instrument of evil and persecution on this occasion was King Herod Agrippa I. Agrippa I was the grandson of Herod the Great, the tyrannical, bloodthirsty ruler who three decades earlier ordered the execution of all male children up to two years old in Bethlehem in a failed attempt to find and kill Jesus as the young King of the Jews (Matt. 2:1-18). Another relative, Herod Antipas, beheaded John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29). It is understandable that Luke, the author of the Book of Acts, identified this king as part of the Herodian dynasty rather than simply by name.

**Commentary:** The Festival of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:17) was an annual reminder to the nation of Israel of God's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The celebration reminded the Jewish people how God preserved their ancestors from the tenth and final plague on Egypt, the death of the firstborn, through the blood of the Passover lamb (Ex. 12:1-13). What should have been a time of celebration and recognition of the gospel in the coming of the Messiah as the fulfillment of the Passover lamb became a time of fear for the followers of Jesus because of the persecution from Herod.

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 58) to help explain why believers should pray, even in the middle of seemingly hopeless situations.

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Given Herod's power, support, and ambition, the church would have much to fear. But God is all-powerful, in full support of His people, and good. Today, one of the most significant conflicts in our world is not a battle of nation against nation but the battle that rages between our heads and our hearts. Informed by the truth of Scripture, we may acknowledge with our heads that God is good, but in the midst of pain or suffering, we often question in our hearts, "Where is God?" Here we see the early church acted on what they believed—they prayed fervently to God, the One who is good and gives hope in the midst of hopeless situations.

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- The all-powerful God can halt the enemy's efforts at any moment. The devil and his minions, including Herod, are always on a leash and can only go as far as God allows them to go (see Job 1–2). So if the church and her leaders were being persecuted, even killed, then this must have been part of God's good plan. A dictionary definition of *good* seems to preclude arrest, prison, shackles, and execution, yet those actions against the believers were allowed by God, who is good. We may not understand how God's plan is good because we cannot see it in its totality, but we can know it is good because it flows from our good God. And whatever our circumstances, God is able and has promised to work all things together for our good (Rom. 8:28). So we pray to that end, believing God can and will accomplish His good will.
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**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 58).

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**Prayer and Providence:** The Bible teaches that although God has a **plan** for this world that He promises to fulfill, prayer is often the means God uses to **accomplish** His divine purpose. Even though God **knows** the end result, the means that lead to that end result will be accomplished through prayer.

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**Essential Doctrine "Prayer and Providence":** If God is in control and already knows the future, why pray? The Bible teaches that although God has a **plan** for this world that He promises to fulfill, prayer is often the means God uses to **accomplish** His divine purpose. Even though God **knows** the end result, the means that lead to that end result will be accomplished through prayer. In this sense, it is true that "prayer changes things," and it is also true that God uses prayer to change our hearts so that our will comes into conformity with His.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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 How have you seen God work things together for good through your prayers? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

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## Point 2: Recognizing God's Work in a Time of Rescue (Acts 12:6-11)

**READ** Acts 12:6-11 (DDG p. 59).

<sup>6</sup> When Herod was about to bring him out for trial, that very night Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while the sentries in front of the door guarded the prison. <sup>7</sup> Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. Striking Peter on the side, he woke him up and said, "Quick, get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. <sup>8</sup> "Get dressed," the angel told him, "and put on your sandals." And he did. "Wrap your cloak around you," he told him, "and follow me." <sup>9</sup> So he went out and followed, and he did not know that what the angel did was really happening, but he thought he was seeing a vision. <sup>10</sup> After they passed the first and second guards, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened to them by itself. They went outside and passed one street, and suddenly the angel left him.

<sup>11</sup> When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's grasp and from all that the Jewish people expected."

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 59) to emphasize that earthly bonds are not barriers for God.

Herod took steps to ensure Peter would not escape from his prison before he could have the apostle executed. Perhaps he was aware of Peter's previous escape, along with the other apostles, from the prison of the Sadducees in Jerusalem (Acts 5:18-19). Multiple guards and layers of security should have been sufficient, but Herod did not account for God's will in the matter. Peter's miraculous escape is clear evidence of the almighty power of God.



### Voices from Church History

"Even though all who are imprisoned and in chains for Christ's sake are not delivered in such wonderful ways, yet there are universal promises that all who give themselves to God's service are under his protection."<sup>1</sup>

—Rudolf Gwalther (1519-1586)

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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What are some ways God has demonstrated throughout Scripture His all-powerful nature to protect and deliver His people from bondage? (Joseph from the ire of his brothers and his false imprisonment in Egypt; the Israelites from slavery in Egypt; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace; Daniel from the lions' den; Jews and Gentiles from the bondage of sin and death through the cross of Christ)

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- Similar accounts of divine release were experienced by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 3:16-27), Daniel (Dan. 6:16-23), and Paul and Silas (Acts 16:22-34). These examples of earthly bondage should provide assurance to the believer that God is able to deliver us from persecution, if that be His will. And of course, His will includes a final judgment when He will vindicate His children and punish their oppressors. We are also reminded of God's power and desire to deliver people from sin and spiritual bondage. There is no sin so great nor offenses too many that God cannot grant release to those who repent and believe in Jesus.
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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 59) to highlight Peter's example of listening and obeying when God speaks.

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In the confines of the prison, the Lord's angel appeared and gave Peter five commands. If one takes the time to unpack these commands, one comes to understand Peter's faith, which was fueled by the fervent prayers of the church. Even though Peter thought what was happening was a vision from the Lord, he obeyed without question. Whatever method God chooses to reveal His message, now primarily through His inspired Word, when God speaks, we must listen and obey.

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- The first command, "get up," would have been impossible given the chains that bound Peter. Nevertheless, Peter exercised the same degree of faith as demonstrated by the man who was lame, who several years earlier had taken Peter's hand and got up to walk, leap, and praise the Lord (Acts 3:6-8). At the angel's command, the chains fell and the apostle arose.
- The next three commands demonstrated faith, given the acts of getting dressed, putting on sandals, and finding one's cloak likely would make a significant amount of noise and wake the guards in the prison cell. But as Peter obeyed, the guards remained asleep and unaware of what was happening.
- The final command, "follow me," harkens back to the words of Jesus on the shore of Galilee, when the Lord said to Peter and his brother, Andrew, "Follow me" (Matt. 4:18-20). Peter obeyed this bold command, just as he had been doing for years since the Lord called him.

*Application:* It might be tempting to think that the commands uttered by the mouth of an angelic messenger somehow have greater authority and weight. But the angel was simply a messenger of the Lord, a communicator of God's words. We have the fullness of God's Word in the Bible, which testifies to the Word of God, Jesus Christ. We must listen to and obey Him (Deut. 18:15-19).

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### Point 3: Disbelieving in a Time of Deliverance (Acts 12:12-17)

**READ** Acts 12:12-17 (DDG p. 60).

<sup>12</sup> As soon as he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was called Mark, where many had assembled and were praying. <sup>13</sup> He knocked at the door of the outer gate, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer. <sup>14</sup> She recognized Peter's voice, and because of her joy, she did not open the gate but ran in and announced that Peter was standing at the outer gate.

<sup>15</sup> "You're out of your mind!" they told her. But she kept insisting that it was true, and they said, "It's his angel." <sup>16</sup> Peter, however, kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were amazed.

<sup>17</sup> Motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. "Tell these things to James and the brothers," he said, and he left and went to another place.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 60) to make the point that where we go when we are in need says much about what we truly believe.

When Peter realized his deliverance was not a dream, he did not seek to put as much distance as possible between him and Herod, which is what most would do. Rather, Peter went to where the church was assembled and praying for him. His presence at the gate was evidence of answered prayer and an encouragement to the church that the Lord indeed is in control. Our presence in the church gathered not only brings comfort and support to ourselves but encourages others to remain steadfast in the faith as well.

- It is easy to understand why some give up on the church. Even Peter discovered some challenges "getting in the door." Since the church is made up of people, the possibility of disappointment exists. Still, the church belongs to Jesus and serves as His body to show His love and share His gospel in this world. Even when the church fails to follow or live up to her Head, we must not abandon her but encourage her to follow her Savior. As Peter kept knocking, we too need to keep praying, keep serving, and keep calling the church to repentance and faith.

*Illustration:* While serving as a church planter in Minnesota, our family embarked on a vacation in California. Somehow my son and I became separated from my wife and two daughters. After notifying the police that either we were lost or they were (who lost whom is still up for debate), I contacted a local church. Soon, several men from the church came and prayed with me and my son. Their encouragement and prayers changed my perspective of the situation, and a few hours—and one state—later, our family was reunited. This experience illustrates a truth found in this passage: Where we go when we are in need says much about what—and Whom—we truly believe.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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 How have you found the church to be an encouragement to your faith? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 60) to explain that prayer has an impact even when we don't recognize its power.

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It would be easy to fault this gathering of believers for a lack of faith and failing the test of being ready for the knock (Luke 12:35-38). But consider the facts: 1) the church was still meeting together and praying for Peter late into the evening; 2) even at that hour, Rhoda was there to answer the door; and 3) her response was not fear but joy and excitement that led her to forget to open the gate and let Peter in! The church prayed in faith, but they still had their doubts, as shown by their disbelief and alternative explanation for Rhoda's news. When we pray, we must pray in faith, believing that God will answer our prayers, even if He answers them in ways we don't expect.

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*Illustration:* A naysayer of the gospel was chiding a Christian coworker about his practice of daily prayer. "I bet you don't remember what you prayed this time last month," goaded the man. The Christian looked up and said to him, "I doubt if you remember what you had for dinner this time last month. Just as that meal sustained you physically for another day, daily prayer sustains the Christian spiritually."

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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 How should the details of this biblical account affect how we pray? (we should pray for the Lord's will to be done; we should pray in faith and with expectation of God's answer; we should pray for the faithfulness of believers who are enduring persecution; we should pray for the church to remain faithful to her gospel mission in the midst of opposition)

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# My Mission

**EXPLAIN:** The early disciples initially failed to recognize God’s prevailing plan and power as they prayed for Peter, their brother in Christ. The praying church is not a perfect church, but a praying church is striving to be a faithful church. They struggled to see God’s work around them, and often we do too. So we must trust the Lord to accomplish His will as we look on eagerly to see how He does so. And let us never allow our frailties nor the seeming strength of our enemy to keep us from fervent prayer for our brothers and sisters in the faith and our faithfulness to the gospel mission we share. The Lord is always faithful, and we can always trust Him—we need only to look to Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection for the proof of His care for us.

**READ** the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 61), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

Because God’s love, power, and sovereignty are proven in the resurrection of Jesus, we pray with anticipation that God works in us and through us as we seek to make Jesus known.

- **What will you begin to pray fervently for, trusting in the Lord’s power and care to provide?**
- **What are some people and needs your group can be praying for in faith?**
- **Who will you intercede for fervently that they might be freed from bondage to sin?**



## Voices from Church History

“One man with the truth on his side is stronger than a majority in error, and will conquer in the end.”<sup>2</sup>

—Philip Schaff (1819-1893)

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** Father, we come to You in faith and with expectation that You will answer our prayer according to Your will. We pray for the faithfulness of the persecuted church around the world. We pray for their boldness and ours to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and make disciples as Jesus commanded us. And we pray that we would pray ever more faithfully through Your Spirit that Your will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

**PACK ITEM 8: TRUST IN CHRIST:** Cut out these cards and pass them out to group members to remind them of the importance of trusting in Christ for both our justification and our sanctification.

**INSTRUCT:** As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 62-64), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 65) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.

# Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 62-64) will help group members get into God's Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 65) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

## Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 62-64) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 2** as a part of point 2 in the session: **When one trusts God and is obedient to His instructions, one can rest well in the assurance that God is in control—regardless of the outward circumstances.**



Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God's Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 1:** "We always pray in submission to God's will, trusting that He knows and does what is best."
- **Day 4:** "The only way to ensure the sting of death does not overtake us is through knowing Jesus Christ."



Visit [www.GospelProject.com/Blog](http://www.GospelProject.com/Blog) for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

## Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 65) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to share about the biggest struggles in their respective prayer lives.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

# Additional Commentary

## Point 1: Praying Fervently in a Time of Fear (Acts 12:1-5)

“While the church was experiencing unprecedented growth among the Gentiles in Antioch, it was also experiencing unprecedented opposition and persecution from the ruling classes in Judea. King Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, put James the brother of John to death. No reason is given for why James was singled out (12:1-2). When Herod saw that killing an apostle pleased the Jews, he imprisoned Peter, intending to put him on trial after the Passover because a public execution during an important festival would offend people (12:3-4; see Mark 14:2). Acts often shows rulers resorting to tactics intended to increase their popularity and acceptance with the masses (24:27; 25:9) ... While Peter was in prison, the church members were earnestly praying for him (12:5). There was nothing else they could do. Turning to God in prayer was the only option.”<sup>3</sup>

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“The martyred **James** was Jesus’ disciple, son of Zebedee and brother of John, not to be confused with James, the brother of Jesus and author of the book of James, who became a prominent leader in the Jerusalem church (see note on v. 17). Jesus had predicted his suffering (Mark 10:39). Why this **pleased the Jews** is not specified. Perhaps the persecution following Stephen’s death (8:1) had escalated. The **days of Unleavened Bread**, the seven days following the Passover meal, were considered holy and not to be desecrated by an execution. The **prison** was probably the Tower of Antonia, which was at the northwestern corner of the temple complex and was the quarters of the Roman garrison. The use of **four squads of soldiers** reflects Roman practice: one squad of four soldiers for each of the four three-hour watches of the night. **Passover** refers to the entire spring festival that unites Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The mention of **earnest prayer** continues Luke’s emphasis that every step in building the church is due to God’s blessing and supernatural intervention.”<sup>4</sup>

## Point 2: Recognizing God’s Work in a Time of Rescue (Acts 12:6-11)

“Peter was asleep, untroubled by the thought of what he expected to happen the next day, and had to be awakened by a nudge on his side. As he stood up, the fetters holding him to the soldiers fell off his hands. Half asleep, he heard the angel tell him to put on his daytime clothing preparatory to leaving the prison. He walked out of the open door of the prison, following the angel and not unnaturally thinking that he was dreaming it all. There were three gates to be traversed before Peter reached freedom. The story does not make it clear whether the first two were open or closed, but the implication is that they were open while the guards were sleeping. The third door was the massive outside door of the prison, and it swung open of its own accord, letting Peter and the angel pass out and along the street. Once they had walked away from the immediate vicinity of the prison, the angel disappeared, and Peter realized that he was really and truly free, thanks to divine intervention.”<sup>5</sup>

“See how Peter slept and was not in anguish or fear. In the very night when he was about to be brought before the court he slept, leaving everything to God. Indeed the multitude becomes powerful when virtue is present. And it had such a power that even though the doors were closed, chains bound the apostle and the jailers slept at both his sides, virtue delivered him and saved him from all those difficulties. So if virtue is present the multitude has great strength, but if vice is present it makes no benefit.”<sup>6</sup>

### Point 3: Disbelieving in a Time of Deliverance (Acts 12:12-17)

“There, out in the darkness and exposed to danger, stands Peter. He just keeps knocking, perhaps pausing to whisper with more intensity: ‘Rhoda! Let me in!’ Thankfully, the church eventually opens the door, and Peter enters. Apparently the group then erupts with such astonishment and joy that Peter has to tell them to be quiet. He is a wanted man, after all, in the middle of a city. Once they calm, he goes on to tell the church ‘how the Lord had brought him out of the prison’ (v. 17). He tells them about the Lord’s grace. The church’s reaction to Peter reminds us of an important lesson. God ‘is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think’ (Eph. 3:20), yet the church here is surprised by God’s ability.”<sup>7</sup>

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“Knowing that everyone inside was praying for Peter, **Rhoda** rushed back in to tell them that God had answered their prayers, not bothering to let Peter in first! Remarkably, they disbelieved her and suggested it was Peter’s **angel**. This reflected the common Jewish belief in guardian angels. It also shows how serious the persecutions had become, for it was believed that your guardian angel would sometimes appear shortly after your death. Thus it seems the crowd of believers was better prepared to believe Peter had been executed than that he had been released. Peter **went to another place** most likely in an attempt to throw Herod and the Jewish authorities off his trail. God had freed him miraculously, but this did not mean Peter could flaunt his freedom or act imprudently. Peter instructed those present to tell **James**, Jesus’s brother, mentioned here for the first time in Acts. James, apparently not a follower of Jesus until after the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7), emerged as a leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13-21; Gal. 1:19).”<sup>8</sup>

### References

1. Rudolf Gwalther, Homily 84, quoted in *Acts*, eds. Esther Chung-Kim and Todd R. Hains, vol. 6 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014) [Wordsearch].
2. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church: Modern Christianity: The German Reformation, A.D. 1517-1530* (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1888), 313.
3. Babu Immanuel Venkataraman, “Acts,” in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1482-83.
4. John B. Polhill, “Acts,” in *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 2106-107, n. 12:2; n. 12:3; n. 12:4; n. 12:5.
5. I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, vol. 5 in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015), 221 [Wordsearch].
6. Chrysostom, *Catena on the Acts of the Apostles*, 12.6-7, quoted in *Acts*, ed. Francis Martin, vol. V in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014), 153 [Wordsearch].
7. Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 175 [Wordsearch].
8. Stanley E. Porter, “Acts,” in *CSB Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 1739, n. 12:12-16; n. 12:17 [Wordsearch].