

ACTS- Church On Mission

Part 33- The Power Of God In Impossible Situations

Acts 12:1-19-“About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some **who belonged to the church**. He killed James the brother of John w/ the sword, & 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**. Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping **between two soldiers, bound w/ two chains, & sentries before the door were guarding the prison**. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, & **a light shone in the cell**. He **struck Peter on the side & woke him, saying, "Get up quickly."** And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself & put on your sandals." (parents) And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you & follow me." And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first & the second guard, they came **to the iron gate** leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, & they went out & went along one street, & immediately the angel left him. When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel & rescued me from the hand of Herod & from all that the Jewish people were expecting." When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were **gathered together & were praying**. And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter's voice, **in her joy** she did not open the gate but ran in & reported that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, & they kept saying, "It is his angel!" But Peter continued knocking, & when they opened, they saw him & were amazed. But motioning to them w/ his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James & to the brothers." Then he departed & went to another place. Now when day came, there **was no little disturbance** among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. And after Herod searched for him & did not find him, he examined the sentries & ordered that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea & spent time there.”

- **The Extent Of The Persecution (VS. 1-3)**
- VS. 1- “laid violent hands on...” (seems like an understatement)
- VS. 2-3- “He killed James, the brother of John w/ the sword & when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also.”
- Matthew 4:21-22- “And going on from there **he saw** two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee & John his brother, in the boat w/ Zebedee their father, mending their nets, **& he called them. Immediately they left the boat & their father & followed him**”
- This is now the second time one of the disciples, or newly named “Christians-little Christs” has been murdered (Stephen Acts 7)
- Mark 10:35-40- “And James & John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him,

"Grant us to sit, one at your right hand & one at your left, in your glory." Jesus said to them, "**You do not know what you are asking.** Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized w/ the baptism w/ which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "**We are able.**" And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink **you will drink**, & w/ the baptism w/ which I am baptized, you will be baptized, but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

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- **The Extent Of Guarding (VS. 4-6)**
- VS. 4- "seized him & put him in prison w/ 4 squads of soldiers"
- VS. 6- "sleeping between 2 soldiers, bound w/ 2 chains & sentries before the door"
- John 18:3-4- "So Judas, having procured **a band of soldiers** & some officers from the chief priests & the Pharisees, went there w/ **lanterns & torches & weapons**. Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward & said to them, "Whom do you seek?"
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- **The Ironic Timing Of This Persecution (VS. 3-4)**
- John 1:29- "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (Jesus has become for us our Passover Lamb)
- 1 Corinthians 5:7- "Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. **For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.**"
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- **The Power Of Belonging (VS. 1, 5, 12)**
- VS. 1b- "Those who belonged to the church"
- VS. 5b- "but earnest prayer for him **was made to God by the church**"
- VS. 12b- "where many **were gathered together & were praying**"
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- **The Power Of God In Impossible Situations (VS. 6-17)**
- VS. 6- "Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night..."
- Philippians 4- Peace that passes all understanding
- Our God is the God of the impossible!
- VS. 10- "When they had passed the first & the second guard, **they came to the iron gate** leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, & they went out..."
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- **RESPONSE:**
- **The Passover Lamb**
- **The Community Of Jesus**
- **The God Of The Impossible**
- Jeremiah 32:27- "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?" (been huge for me again & again)
- Luke 18:27- "But he said, "What is impossible w/ men is possible w/ God."