

# Prison Break - Celebrating God's Deliverance

October 14, 2007

**Icebreaker:** *What is the first thought that would run through your head if you woke up only to see an angel standing over you?*

## Acts 12:1-5

Herod Agrippa was a shrewd ruler. The Jews he ruled over hated him intensely. In order to keep stability he would often find ways to gain their favor. As we have seen many of the non-Christian Jews had a difficult time accepting Christianity and even fought against the church, as Saul had done in the last lesson. Persecuting the church helped Herod gain political stability.

*Who does Herod arrest and what does he have done to him?*

- The apostle James—he has him executed
- This is the first apostle to be martyred.

Next Herod has Peter arrested during the Passover week. *Who had also been arrested during the week of Passover?*

- Jesus

*If you were a Christian in the Jerusalem church, how would you have responded to Peter's arrest following the execution of James?*

- You would be scared
- You would probably pray

It is important to remember that God can answer our prayers in ways we could have never anticipated. God didn't need to use the legal system and an innocent verdict to get Peter out of prison. God just let him walk right out.

## Acts 12:6-11

*What does this story have to teach us about the providence and power of God over human authority?*

Most people don't often find themselves in physical prisons but many of us are suffering from prisons that are not built with human hands. Whether it be an addiction, a recurring sin, or an unhealthy relationship with a co-worker or family member we also need God's power to help us find freedom from the things that enslave our lives.

## Eph 3:12

*Through Christ we can approach God with what two things?*

- Freedom and confidence

Prisoners usually don't have very much of either of those two things. *How does Christ give us freedom and confidence?*

*In what way does God offer us freedom from the prisons we face on a spiritual level?*

- He has already paid the price for our freedom through the death of his son on the cross
- The resurrection also provides freedom because we know that when we are baptized we have been raised to walk in newness of life.

We have to remember that the battle has already been won. When we face obstacles and the spiritual prison of sin in our lives it is surrendering to an enemy that has already been defeated.

*Why must we fully rely on God's power and not our own to release us from the captivity we face on a daily basis?*

- We do not have the power to gain the victory. Only God does. So we trust him to rescue us.

### **Acts 12:12-19**

*How would it build your faith to have your prayers for Peter's release interrupted by Peter himself knocking on the door?*

*Have you ever found out that God was busy answering your prayer at the moment you prayed it?*

*What prisons has God released you from and how can that build your faith and the faith of those in a similar circumstance?*

Notice that Peter wants the news spread of how he had been released by God's power. *Why would Peter want others to hear about his release?*

- First because they cared about Peter and would want to hear the good news of his release
- Also because hearing such stories builds our faith and helps us if we encounter something similar.

*How can sharing our stories of God's deliverance help us grow closer to God and each other?*

Persecution is still alive and well today. Go to [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com) to see the Voice of the Martyrs website and learn about people we can pray for who are being persecuted for their faith in Christ.

### **Application:**

*What do you want to remember the next time you suffer for your faith?*

*What prisons do you need released from and how can this group help you through it?*

I hope this is a time our groups can do some sharing about the struggles we face as we realize that God can take care of it and also that we need each other to get through it.