



# Church of God Sunday School

## PETER IS DELIVERED FROM PRISON

Acts 12:1-24

After Jesus returned to Heaven, His disciples began telling other people about Him. Many, many people became believers. God was adding saved people to the church daily. However, not everyone was happy about this.

Herod Agrippa was the king, and he began to persecute the church. King Herod had James, the brother of John, killed. When "he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also." Peter was captured and thrown into prison.

Peter was guarded by sixteen soldiers. They took turns keeping watch over Peter, four at a time. Two soldiers were outside of the door of the prison, and two soldiers were chained to each of Peter's wrists.

Peter "was kept in prison." After the Passover, King Herod intended to bring Peter "forth to the people." No doubt, he was going to have Peter killed, just as he had killed James. However, "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for" Peter.

It must have seemed impossible for Peter to be delivered from that prison, but the church prayed earnestly and continually. They did not let the hopelessness of Peter's situation hinder their prayers. God heard and answered those prayers.

The night before King Herod was to bring Peter before the people, "Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains." A light shone in the prison, for the angel of the Lord had come. Locked doors and guards could not stop the Lord's angel!

The angel woke Peter and said, "Arise up quickly." Instantly, the chains fell off Peter's hands, but the guards didn't seem to notice. The angel told Peter to put on his sandals and outer garment and to follow him.

Peter did as the angel told him, but he "wist not that it was true which was done by the angel." Peter thought he was seeing "a vision." The angel led Peter "past the first and the second ward." No guard stopped Peter as he followed the angel.

When the angel and Peter "came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city," the gate opened of its "own accord." (No guard opened this gate, and Peter didn't

have a key. How do you think the gate was opened?) The angel and Peter went out, and when Peter was out of danger "the angel departed."

Then Peter came to himself. He knew he was not seeing a vision. He was really free! He realized God had "sent his angel" and had delivered Peter "out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation . . . of the Jews." (They expected Peter to be killed.)

Peter went "to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark." This is where, although it was late at night, "many were gathered together praying." When "Peter knocked at the door of the gate," a young lady named Rhoda (*ROH-duh*) came to the door.

When Rhoda recognized Peter's voice, she was very glad! She didn't open the gate "but ran in [to the room where God's people were praying], and told how Peter stood before the gate."

The prayers of the church were answered, but they couldn't believe it. Some told Rhoda she was mad (crazy). Then they said, "It is [Peter's] angel." All the while, Peter kept knocking.

Finally, they opened the door, and when they saw Peter, "they were astonished." Possibly they were all talking and asking Peter questions, for Peter made a motion with his hand, asking them "to hold their peace." He needed them to all be quiet, so he could tell them "how the Lord had brought him out of the prison."

Then Peter told them to go tell "these things unto . . . the brethren." They needed to know that God had answered their prayers. And Peter "departed, and went into another place."

When it was day, the soldiers began to seriously wonder what had "become of Peter." When Herod sought for Peter, he "found him not." (God was continuing to protect Peter.)

Herod questioned the soldiers about what had happened to Peter. But the soldiers didn't know. So, Herod then "commanded that they should be put to death." Herod was a wicked king who did not serve or obey God.

Some time later, Herod was attending a festival

being held to honor Caesar Claudius. On the second day, Herod was wearing his "royal apparel." This garment was said to be made completely of silver. When the morning sun reflected off of Herod's silvery garment, it was very bright and shining.

Herod made a speech to the people, "and the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." Herod did not try to stop the people from worshipping him. "Because he gave not God the glory," instantly "the angel of the Lord smote him." Herod "was eaten of worms," and after suffering greatly, he died.

King Herod thought he would hinder or stop the Gospel of Jesus. "But the word of God grew and multiplied." How could that be? When Herod began persecuting the church, what did God's people do? They prayed—earnest, continual, fervent prayer. Peter was delivered from prison, and the church increased.

**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."*  
—Acts 12:5

## Follow the Maze to See the Story of Peter's Deliverance From Prison

