**Acts**

**Chapter 12**

**Read Acts Chapter 12**

1. Why did Herod begin to persecute some believers in the church?

**It is believed that Herod harassed or prosecuted the believers because it pleased many of his citizens who did not like Christians, this included the Jewish people. This is the third time I recall Herod playing a part in trying to hinder the work of Jesus, so I decided to research and see if this was the same character. The first time we find Herod interfering in the work of Jesus was at his birth. That Herod – Herod the Great was the grandfather to the character in today’s text. He was the one who had the Jewish boys killed. The second Herod – Herod Antipas that interfered in the work of Jesus was the one who handed him over to be crucified. That Herod was the uncle to this Herod and he was also the one who married this Herod’s mother and who had John the Baptist beheaded. The Herod in today’s text is Herod Agrippa I.**

1. Why do you think it pleased the Jewish people that James was killed?

**The Jewish people had been trying to stop the spread of Christianity ever since Jesus came on the scene. They believe if they can stop the person they can stop the word. They have not yet come to accept what Gamaliel told them in Acts 5:34-39. In verse 39 he told them that if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even find yourself fighting against God.**

1. Do you think it surprised James or the believers that they were being persecuted?

**I don’ think it was a surprise that they were being persecuted. Jesus warned them ahead of time to expect persecution. He told them that they would be hated because he was hated. Matthew 10:16-26, Mark 13:9 and Luke 12:11, Jesus also told them in Mark 10:35-40 that they would indeed drink the cup that he drank.**

1. What do you think Herod expected to gain by arresting Peter?

**If they Jews were so elated that James had been killed how much more so would his political ratings be increased if he killed Peter who was always heard talking about Jesus.**

1. What is the significance of Peter being arrested during the Passover?

**I am reminded that Jesus was arrested during the Passover season. It was also a time when many Jews were in Jerusalem so he could impress more people.**

**Likely Luke is highlighting the fact that the death of Christ and the death of James and pending death of Peter occurred at Passover. It is happened again. These disciples are being persecuted in the same way that their Lord was and it coincided again with Passover**

1. How many soldiers were guarding Peter?

**Four squads of four soldiers tell me that there were 16 soldiers guarding Peter. Some say that he was guarded by one four soldiers. He was handcuffed to two and two stood guard. Typically a man was handcuffed only to one guard. Maybe Peter was put under extra guard because the last time he was arrested in acts chapter 5 an angel came and opened the gates of the jail and brought them out. (Acts 5:17-25)**

1. What was the believer’s response to Peter’s arrest?

**Once Peter was arrested the church began praying earnestly for him. An earnest prayer is sad to be a passionate prayer, one that demonstrates that our heart cares about the things that God cares about. The KJV says that constant prayer was offered for Peter.**

1. What do we learn about God from Peter’s escape from prison?

**God is all knowing, all powerful, and is in control of all things. God has a plan that thwarts all of man’s plans.**

1. What do you learn about Peter from his escape?

**I learn that Peter knew God’s voice, he trusted God and he obeyed God.**

1. Why do you think Peter went to Mary’s house?

**I believe Peter knew the believers would be gathered there and they would be praying. He also wanted them to know that God had brought him out.**

1. How does Rhoda respond to Peter’s knock and why do you think she responded this way?

**Rhoda was overjoyed when she say Peter standing at the door, but she did not open it and let him. Instead, she ran back and told the others that he was there.**

1. What was the people’s response?

**The people thought that Rhoda was out of her mind. They insisted that it must be an angel. Though they had been praying they did not immediately acknowledge that their prayers had been answered. I believe that we are sometimes just like them. Sometimes we don’t expect God to answer our prayers so quickly.**

1. Who is the James that Peter refers to in verse 17?

**More than likely Peter is speaking of Jesus’s brother James. It is believed that hew as aware that James, the brother of John, had been killed. By this time Jesus’ brother James had become a leader in the church.**

1. Why do you think Peter left Mary’s house rather than joining those who were there?

**Peter probably left that house because he knew that might come there looking for him. But he is only mentioned again in the book of Acts in chapter 15. From this point we begin to read about Paul’s missionary journeys.**

1. What are some reasons for Herod leaving Judea after being unable to explain Peter’s escape from prison?

**It is believed that the Roman’s had made Caesarea their headquarters. When he was not able to keep Peter under arrest let alone have him killed he probably lost some respect from the Jew so he departed Jerusalem.**

1. Do you see evidence of pride and humility in this chapter? If so, discuss who exhibited them and the results that occurred?

**We find humility in Peter and pride in Herod. As a result we see an angel Peter releasing from prison and an angel striking Herod with a sickness. And he was consumed with worms and died**.

1. What do you learn from verse 24 about God and his word?

**God is sovereign, and he cannot be stopped neither can his word be stopped. His word will always go forward to accomplish his plan.**