

TABLE TALK

FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE for August 14-20, 2022

ACTS IN 30 Chapter 12: *Another Passover Miracle*

CHAPTER OVERVIEW: In Acts 12 we read another amazing story of deliverance for God's people. A new "Herod" (Agrippa I) from the same lineage of Herod Antipas who oversaw the crucifixion of Jesus, is revealed in this chapter as a tyrant persecuting God's people. He has James "*killed by the sword*" (vs. 2) which was the first Apostle to be martyred (NOTE: The "James" mentioned in verse 17 is the brother of Jesus and the writer of the Book of James). Then, in order to win more favor with the Jewish religious leaders, King Herod Agrippa I has the Apostle Peter arrested and prepared for trial. All of this occurs during the week-long Festival of Unleavened Bread / **Passover**. While the Church was praying fervently for his freedom, God miraculously delivers Peter from prison. Reminiscent of the original Passover story from Exodus, God brings divine **deliverance**, divine **judgment**, and divine **increase** for His people as the Church keeps moving forward. Despite persecutions and setbacks, the Church not only **survives** them but **thrives** in spite of them (vs. 24).

DAY 1: Peter is Arrested and the Church Responds in Prayer Together

READ: Acts 12:1-5

REFLECT: Even though this tactic to stop the Jesus movement from growing did not work the last time the religious leaders put an Apostle in prison (See Acts 5:17-21), they tried it again here in Acts 12...and failed. When the Church responds in prayer, God moves.

DISCUSS:

Context Question: The Apostles John and James were brothers who once asked Jesus to sit at His "*right hand*" (Mark 10:35-40). Do you think James' death in Acts 12 is a sign of the "*baptism*" Jesus prophesied they would one day experience as He did?

Application Question: When conflicts and persecution arises, our first response should be **prayer**. James is martyred and Peter is imprisoned, yet the Church responds by gathering together in fervent prayer for him. How often do you find yourself responding in prayer **FIRST** - by yourself and/or with others - when things sometimes go wrong in your life?

DAY 2: Peter is Miraculously Delivered

READ: Acts 12:6-19

REFLECT: Many scholars agree that King Agrippa's plan was to put Peter on trial and have him publicly executed to gain more favor with people during Passover week. However, God sends an angel and miraculously delivers him. Those who gathered in prayer for Peter's release did not initially believe it themselves (vs 15). The fervent and earnest prayer of the righteous avails much! (James 5:16b).

DISCUSS:

Context Question: How many other great deliverance stories can you think of in the Bible? (i.e. The Red Sea; Daniel in the Lion's Den; The 3 Hebrew Boys; Esther; etc...). Do these accounts give you confidence that God is able to deliver His people?

Application Question: The Church never gave up praying for Peter's release until their prayers were answered. Does knowing that inspire confidence in your prayer life today? What are 1-2 things that you are really believing God to do in this season?

DAY 3: An Exalted King Becomes Devastatingly Humbled

READ: Acts 12:20-23

REFLECT: According to scholars at the time, King Herod Agrippa I clothed himself in a silver robe during this speech that would reflect the sun, making him appear like a god. The Lord "*strikes him down*" with a terrible and humiliating disease (vs. 23), no doubt striking fear in the hearts of his followers and reminding people that they "*shall have no other gods*" besides Him (Exodus 20:3).

DISCUSS:

Context Question: Read Psalm 37:34-37. What does King David observe about the end of prideful and wicked rulers both now and then?

Application Question: The Bible says that God, "*opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble*" (James 4:6). How can pride in our life potentially make God be in "*opposition*" to us and how does humility help us experience more of His "*grace*?"

DAY 4: The Church Increases and Multiplies

READ: Acts 12:24

REFLECT: Despite all of the persecutions and setbacks, the Church not only **survives** them but **thrives** in spite of them. This pattern is repeated time and time again throughout the entire Book of Acts. This is also a pattern for courageous people of faith today.

Context Question: Read Genesis 1:28 (The "Edenic Commission"). Do you see a parallel between that command and Acts 12:24?

Application Question: As followers of Jesus we have been commissioned to "*go and make disciples*" for Him (Matthew 28:19-20). What does disciple-making look like in your life today? Who are 2-3 people that you can share the Good News of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and Return with this week?
