

We are following the growth of the Church through the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

We saw that it had an incredible beginning with:

- The coming of the Holy Spirit with power
- Thousands of people being saved
- A new bond developing among believers in Christ
- The Gospel is opened up to the Gentiles

So many good things were happening, but sadly, some very bad things were beginning to happen as well.

Herod the king did not like this new movement and the followers of Christ.

He arrested James, the brother of John killed with a sword and arrested Peter and threw him in jail.

He was probably going to be executed the next day.

**Acts 12:6** *On the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison.*

Ha!

Peter was sleeping – right before he was going to be put to death.

He has come a long way, hasn't he?

Remember the boat in the storm?

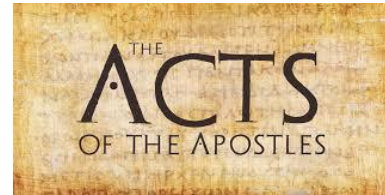
Jesus was the One sleeping in the boat and the disciples were panicking. Afraid to die!

Now,

Here's Peter – not afraid to die, and sleeping.

He was;

*bound with two chains, and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison.*



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Each hand chained to a soldier and other soldiers at the door.

No one could get out and no one could get in.

That is, except God!

**V.7** *And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And his chains fell off his hands.*

Look at this angel:

- Filled the room with light
- Undetected by those he did not want to be known by
- Worked a miracle

The chains just "fell off."

I would say God can do whatever He wants, however He wants and whenever He wants.

I like the fact that He works on behalf of His people.

**v.8** *And the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he \*said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me."*

Peter might now have understood everything that was going on but he obeyed.

That's a good lesson for us.

Sometimes God will not explain Himself when He tells us what to do

Like Peter, just do it!

**v.9** *And he went out and continued to follow, and he did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.*

Why not?

He recently had a dream of a sheet filled with animals coming down out of heaven.

Now,

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This may be another one.

**v.10** *When they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened for them by itself; and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.*

Ah! Freedom!

There is freedom in God.

And yet, there is also personal responsibility.

Freedom: they went through the prison gates into the city

Responsibility: the angel departed and left Peter to himself to continue

**v.11** *When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent forth His angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."*

Yup!

It wasn't a vision or a dream; it was a true deliverance.

Are there any listening who believe the deliverance they are looking for is only a dream?

Do you see it as an impossibility?

Peter was in an impossible situation but what is impossible with man is easy for God.

Give your dilemma to God, trust Him and watch Him work.

While Peter's miraculous rescue was taking place, there was a prayer meeting going on for him.

**v.12** *And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.*

One man said; (John Gill)

Her heart was large enough and her house large enough to accommodate all the people.

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She had a large heart “and” a large house!

Think of this:

A large house with a small heart doesn't make much for a large house.

But a large heart with a small house can certainly enlarge that home.

Watch this!

So here they are, praying for Peter's deliverance.

**v.13** *When he knocked at the door of the gate, a servant-girl named Rhoda came to answer.*

**v.14** *When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her joy she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter was standing in front of the gate.*

So here's Peter, still standing outside.

Oh it gets better.

**v.15** *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."*

They're praying for Peter's release and when he is, they don't believe it.

What kind of prayer meeting is that?

When you pray for something, you get it and you don't believe you got it!

**v.16** *But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, they saw him and were amazed.*

“amazed” astounded, astonished

**v.18** *But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, "Report these things to James and the brethren." Then he left and went to another place.*

Meanwhile back at the jail:

**v.18** *Now when day came, there was no small disturbance among the soldiers as to what could have become of Peter.*

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**v.19** *When Herod had searched for him and had not found him, he examined the guards and ordered that they be led away to execution. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and was spending time there.*

Herod represents those who reject the miracles of God.

The soldiers represent those who side with them.

There is never a good outcome for God's antagonists.

But as you can see, there is deliverance for His people.

In closing:

Back to our earlier question:

What are you seeking release from?

- A habit
- A way of thinking
- An unfair situation

You can fill in the blank. \_\_\_\_\_

But whatever it is, walk with Him, serve Him, and trust that there is a release for you from that which you are seeking.