



Tell Me the Story of Jesus

Lesson 36 – Acts 12

People — Who is involved?

Apostle James – put to death; first apostle to be martyred.
Herod Agrippa I – ruler who executed James.
Apostle Peter – imprisoned again and released.
Rhoda – a girl who met Peter at the door.
Barnabas, Saul, John Mark – returned to Antioch

Places — Where does it happen?

Jerusalem – events of the chapter
Caesarea – where Peter went
Antioch – where Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark went

Pearls — What information will help me to understand better?

Vs 1 – This Herod is Agrippa I (a grandson of Herod the Great). He was given the territory formerly ruled by Philip in AD 37. His territory was broadened by Caligula in AD 41. He ruled until AD 44. Again, this provides a time frame. The events of chapters 1-12 take place in approximately the first decade of the church's history.

Vs 2 – According to Josephus, Agrippa I courted the favor of the Jewish establishment by making liberal donations to their charities and projects. This may be to further appease them.

Vs 2 – Probably James was beheaded. He might have been speared with a sword.

Vs 3 – The Days of Unleavened Bread is the Passover.

Vs 4 – A squad contained four soldiers. They probably rotated watches around the clock.

Vs 6 – The squad on duty apparently had two men chained to Peter and two watching the door.

Vs 12 – This John Mark would go with them to Antioch. He records the Gospel of Mark.

Vs 12 – The church must not have expected Peter's release even though they were praying.

Vs 13 – Rhoda is otherwise unmentioned in Scripture. She seems to act somewhat excited & irrational.

Vs 17 – This James is probably the Lord's brother. This is the first mention of him (see chapter 15).

Vs 19 – The guards are executed for allowing the escape; we know they were powerless to stop it.

Vs 20 – The exact cause of the dispute between Agrippa I and these two Phoenician cities is unknown. Tyre and Sidon were "nourished" (literally) by Herod's country and he resented their responses.

Vs 20 – Blastus was Herod's chief of staff; NKJB margin says, "was in charge of the king's bed-chamber"

Vs 22 – Agrippa I was prideful and apparently accepted their adoration as a "god" (see vs. 23).

Vs 23 – Agrippa was "consumed by worms" (Gr: *skolekobrotos*). The exact disease is unknown.

Vs 25 – John Mark is the one to whom the Gospel of Mark is revealed later.

Perspectives — What may I learn from this chapter?

1. God provided for his apostles in different ways. He took James to heaven and released Peter from prison.
2. The church should pray for God's involvement and truly believe in His ability to help.
3. "Pride goes before a fall." A haughty "powerful" man can become weakened quickly.