

## THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 38 | ACTS 12:6-17

### ACTS 12:3-17 | PETER IMPRISONED AND MIRACULOUSLY RELEASED

- Verses 3-5 included on session 37
- Verse 6 –
  - This expands on the role of the **quaternions of soldiers** in verse 4. The prisoner was bound to two of the soldiers, and two guarded the door.
  - The verse clarifies that Peter was well guarded and his time for presumed execution was very close.
- Verse 7 - No amount of prison force could have kept Peter in prison, because the **angel of the Lord** wasn't under the same laws of nature as were the prison guards.
- Verse 8 –
  - The appearance of the angel is not noted, but he does speak, using language that can be understood.
  - The angel instructed Peter to **Gird thyself** and **bind on thy sandals** and **Cast thy garment about thee** and **follow me**. That is, get up, get dressed, get going!
- Verse 9 –
  - Peter, as he was going, **wist not that it was true**. The word **wist** is the past-participle of "to know." Peter **thought he saw a vision**.
- Verse 10 –
  - Soon there was enough reality to know that it was not a vision. Peter was miraculously delivered from the prison, and from an almost certain death.
  - This miraculous intervention shows that Peter's mission as an apostle (including the Kingdom aspect of that mission) was not yet ended.
- Verse 11 –
  - Peter now fully realizes what God has done. He has been delivered from **Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews**.
  - That expectation was that Peter was going to be put to death just as James had been.
- Verse 12 –
  - Peter **considered the thing**, the word **considered** being συνοράω [synorao] or *together with (syn-) knowledge/perception* (orao - from oido). Thus, "when he had had the time to put everything he knew together and analyze the facts."
  - Then **he came to the house of Mary**.
    - I would love to know if he specifically chose this house or he was just in the proximity. Did Mary have such a reputation that Peter would know that people would be gathered at her house for prayer? Was Mary's house a "house church?"
    - Note: there are six women named Mary in the New Testament. Mary was the mother of **John, whose surname was Mark**, often called John Mark. This is the

first reference to him in the book of Acts, though he will be prominent in a later incident with Paul.

- This is the same John Mark who is cousin to Barnabus (Col. 4:10) and author of the Gospel of Mark.
- Verses 13-16 –
  - This is “humor in hindsight,” and it is hard to believe that those involved did not laugh at it later.
  - For those who insist that the reason their prayer was answered is because of the fervency of their prayer (Acts 12:5), these verses stand in stark contrast. When their prayer was answered they did not react in confidence, but rather **they were astonished**.
  - When Rhoda **constantly affirmed** that Peter was at the gate, those present assumed it must be **his angel**. There are a few possibilities of what is meant:
    - That Peter sent a *messenger* and the word should have been translated, not transliterated.
    - That this was Peter’s “guardian angel.” See Matthew 18:10 and Hebrews 1:14 for additional support.
    - That Peter was dead and had become “an angel.” This is the least likely because the Hebrew people (and all of Scripture) viewed angels as separately created beings from humans.
- Verse 17 –
  - Peter made some kind of hand motion, which evidently was a Jewish motion to be allowed to speak. It is seen also in Acts 13:16, 19:33, and 21:40.
  - The household, after hearing what had happened, was instructed to **shew these things unto James, and to the brethren**. This is the first reference to James, the Lord’s brother (the apostle being killed at the beginning of this chapter).
  - The reference to James brings up some unanswered questions:
    - How long had James been a prominent leader (or had he been) prior to this incident. In Galatians 1:19 he is called a
    - Who are **the brethren**? Are they the other apostles? Are they the other brothers of the Lord (James, Simon, Judas).
    - Why did Peter not go himself? Why did Peter not stay at Mary’s home? Why did he depart and go **into another place**?