

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for June 1, 2014

Peter's Rescue
Acts 12:6-17

Acts 12 is another episode in the saga of the earthly powers foiled in their opposition to the work of God (cf. Acts 4 and 5).

1. Peter's release (12:6-10)

a. Peter sleeping under arrest (12:6)

The obstacles between Peter and freedom included: (1) the prison holding him; (2) two soldiers on each side of him; (3) two chains binding him; (4) two soldiers guarding the door and (5) twelve other soldiers there to relieve those at immediate attention (12:4).

This high level of security was only arranged to protect Herod from the embarrassment of an escape (cf. Acts 5:17-24).

The likelihood of the loss of the leading apostle was high (cf. Acts 12:2, 11). Nevertheless, Peter's faith was seen in his trust in God in spite of his dire circumstances, as we find him that night not in distress but sleeping (cf. 1 Peter 5:7).

b. Peter set free by an angel (12:7-10)

After the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Lord sent an angel the night before Peter's judgment. We should not only trust God's will but also trust God's timing.

Angels are mentioned over a dozen times in Acts, and earlier an angel released Peter from the public jail (Acts 5:19).

Peter's physical deliverance was totally by the power of God, which corresponds to spiritual deliverance.

2. Peter's return (12:11-17)

a. Peter aware of his condition (12:11)

Peter's deliverance was not only from Herod or the Jewish leaders, but now the general population was opposed to Peter, which was fueled by the Gentile inclusion in the church.

b. Peter arrives at the church (12:12-16)

Peter goes to those to whom he is most connected.

Luke introduces John, called Mark, whose desertion in Acts 13:13 would later be the focal point of a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41). About twenty years later, we see John Mark having a very close relationship with Peter (1 Peter 5:13), and there is ample evidence of Peter's influence on the Gospel of Mark.

God delivered Peter in spite of the lack of hope of those praying. The issue in prayer is not the amount of our faith in an outcome but rather the Person in whom we have faith (cf. Matthew 17:20).

c. Peter addresses the church (12:17)

This is the first mention of James, the Lord's brother, as a leading figure in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15; Galatians 2:9).

The angel that delivered Peter a dozen years earlier instructed him to preach the gospel in the temple, but now Peter goes away. This further moves the focus of the gospel from the Jews to the Gentiles.

May we, like Peter, trust God's will to deliver us in His way, in His time, for His sake.