

ACTS 12:6-11

A. Peter's Release -

Acts 12:6-11 - And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. Acts 12:7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands. Acts 12:8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. Acts 12:9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. Acts 12:10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. Acts 12:11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

1. We have seen Herod Agrippa I arrest James and then have him murdered with a sword (probably cutting off his head). James, one of the 12, was faithful to the **end** - a Little Flock martyr.
2. As King Herod targeted certain ones of the Little Flock, it was **no** accident that he picked James - then Peter. They, along with John, were the main leaders.
 - a. Peter, James, and John have something very unique and **special** about them, with regard to their position and past with the other disciples.

Mark 3:14-16 - And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, Mark 3:15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: Mark 3:16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;

*Christ changes Simon's name to Peter.
 - b. Mark 3:17 - And James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

*Christ changes brothers James and John to "the sons of thunder".
 - c. There are only 3 men of the 12 that Christ surnames. **Remember?** [Matthew 20:20-23 - Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him. Matt. 20:21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. Matt. 20:22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. Matt. 20:23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.]

*James drank this **cup** here in Acts 12.

d. Why were they given surnames? Answer: The Lord had special tasks for them and gave them names to fit those tasks. Do we remember how/why Simon got his special name Peter? (Matt. 16:15-18). Peter received divine revelation about Christ. That resulted in his becoming the leader of the 12.

(1) *Peter, more than any other, represented the Kingdom Church and all in the Little Flock. Peter was given the keys to the Kingdom and he was the main one who stood up and preached the Kingdom offer to Israel at Pentecost.

(2) The reason Peter was not killed then, as James was, is that God had more for him to do! In Acts 15, Galatians 2:9, and II Peter 3, God would have Peter to publically endorse Apostle Paul's new ministry - the change in God's program. Peter had clout and when he recognized Paul's new ministry, the Little Flock had no reason to doubt its genuineness.

e. What about James and John? Jesus called them "sons of thunder".

(1) Job 37:3-5 - He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. Job 37:4 After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. Job 37:5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.

Psalm 29:3-4, 8 - The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD *is* upon many waters. Psalm 29:4 The voice of the LORD *is* powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty. Psalm 29:8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

*Thunder is the voice of God. James and John thundered the words/voice of God. When they spoke to Israel, it was as the voice of God speaking to them. They were special!

(2) Why James and not John? James' name, through the Hebrew, will identify with Jacob. Who is Jacob? He is Israel. James represents Israel rejecting the voice of God. Herod's murder of James was a political move, as well as a spiritual move.

*Chapter 12 starts out with Herod silencing the voice of God (James), and Israel's leaders are happy that the voice of God is being deafened. The chapter ends with Herod taking for being the voice of God.

credit

Acts 12:21-22 - And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. Acts 12:22 And the people gave a shout, *saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.*

But God! [Acts 12:23 - And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.]

**Through all of this, we see Israel's rebellion and unbelief toward God and His Little Flock. God is leaving (temporarily) Israel and preparing for His new Mystery Program with Paul. He is gradually removing the standards of Israel to the new grace standards of the Body of Christ.

3. In verses 6-11, we see Peter is miraculously delivered out of prison by the assistance of an angelic being. Peter is so sound asleep that the angel had to prod Peter to wake him up. Peter was trusting God's promise and His track record of protecting him. These truths were Peter's sleeping pill.

- a. As Peter is awakened by this angel, the chains fall off. Peter gets dressed and follows the angel, while he is still groggy. Miraculously, he passes by the first and second guards, then comes to an automatic iron gate that opens for him. As soon as Peter is safely outside the prison, the angel leaves after doing God's bidding.

Hebrews 1:14 - Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

- b. It is only **then** that Peter realizes what had taken place was not a dream, but an actual fact. Peter was truly free! It mentions [...and from the expectation of the Jews]. The Jewish leaders would be **disappointed** in not seeing the execution of Peter at this time.

4. Interestingly, Paul on the other hand was allowed by God to remain in prison for **two** years in Caesarea (Acts 24:27) and **two** years in Rome (Acts 28:30).

- a. Question? Why the difference? Was Peter **more** faithful or spiritual than Paul? Was James **less** faithful than Peter? Is that why God allowed James to be killed and Peter to go free?

- b. Do you remember when the disciples asked Jesus a question and His answer?

John 9:1-3 - And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth. John 9:2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? John 9:3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

*God can do whatever **He** chooses to do that brings Him the most glory!

B. A Rabbit Trail:

1. During Is-91:11-12; Matt.

Remember Angels

 rael's Program, God used angels to **protect** believers (Ps. 34:7, 4:5-6; Luke 4:9-11). Angels **rescued** believers from prison (Acts 5:18-20, 12:7-8), ministered to believers (Heb. 1:13-14), provided for believers (II Kings 1:5-8), and guided believers (Gen. 24:7-40).

2. The ministry of angels to unbelievers was just the **opposite**. God sent His angels to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:13). God sent angels to curse unbelievers (Judges 5:23), and they defeated Israel's enemies (Sennacherib and his army of 185,000 slain by **one** angel).

3. Angels today?

- a. God's purpose today in saving us is to teach the angels in heaven things they **never** knew about the wisdom of God. This is especially true of God's wisdom in the **cross**, where it defeated Satan and openly displayed Satan's pride and ignorance in crucifying God's Son.

Ephesians 3:9-10 - And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: Eph. 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

I Corinthians 2:6-8 - Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 1Cor. 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 1Cor. 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Colossians 2:14-15 - Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; Col. 2:15 *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

- b. Since it is the Body's responsibility to teach angels truth that was hidden from them, and since our gospel (D.B.R.) exposes the defeat (eventually) - failure - and doom of the devil with his fallen angels, this truth puts us at **odds** with them. Today, we are in spiritual warfare with evil spiritual beings.

Ephesians 6:10-12 - Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Eph. 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Eph. 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

*Notice that the armor God gives us is **not** guardian angels. The truth is we are in Christ and our weapons to fight/resist Satan's evil system are spiritual.

II Corinthians 10:4-5 - (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 2Cor. 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

- c. Today, we are not to rely on angels, but on what God has provided for us. Today, no human living on earth has ever **seen** a good angel. But, if one bad ever showed up, we are never to receive an angel's message or gospel.

Colossians 2:18 - Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

Galatians 1:8 - But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

I Timothy 4:1 - Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

- d. Paul tells us: "We are made spectacles to angels (they **watch** us) (I Cor. 4:9), "we shall judge angels" (I Cor. 6:3), we show obedience to the authority of God that He has established "because of the angels" (I Cor. 11:10), and we are to teach the angels about Body Mystery Grace that they have **never** seen (Eph. 3:10).

*Paul acknowledges his life and words were being **monitored** by the angels.

I Timothy 5:21 - I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

- e. we have the privilege and ministry of using God's **Word** to spoil principalities and powers by preaching the full truth of the cross.

Today

Ephesians 6:16-17 - Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Eph. 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Acts 20:32 - And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

- f. So today, we - the Body are in a battle of spiritual warfare and are teaching in heavenly places. As we are faithful to God, we accomplish **un**seen victories.

*So we march on in Pauline truth: [Ephesians 6:19 - And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,]

- g. Rather than angels helping us in our Dispensation of Grace, God has given us something **more** powerful and comforting than the angels. He has given us **Himself**, in the Person of the **Holy Spirit**.

Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30 - In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Eph. 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Eph. 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

- h. Instead of being protected from all the world's evils that may come our way, we are instructed to "be filled with the Holy Spirit" - to learn the Word - pray - and that God's grace is sufficient. By doing this, we are giving a testimony to the power of God's grace both to man and the angels. Then we are honoring and **re**warding **God** in the heavenlies, proving His wisdom.
- i. If guardian angels prevented our afflictions, then angels would be **work**ing against us. They would be preventing us from experiences that develop our maturity and, in the end, glorifies God on earth and in heaven. Angels involved in our lives would also **rob** us of rewards for being faithful through thick or thin times!

* Angelic activity, no doubt, **was** and **will** be a part of Israel's Prophetic Program: Gen.-Acts, * Heb.-Rev. But they have never had what Body believers have in God's completed **Word** and * permanent presence of the Holy Spirit within us.

II Corinthians 4:16-17 - For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. 2Cor. 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

Romans 8:17-18 - And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. Rom. 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Dispensations of the Bible

