

Acts 12:1-25

October 12, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?
- What Scripture has been shaping you recently?
- Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?
- What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?
- What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?
- What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?
- What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Who's There?

Setup:

Create or use a simple barrier (like an easel with a sheet, or a door frame) so two students can stand on opposite sides without seeing each other.

How to Play:

- Choose one student to be the door keeper.
- Take volunteers from the other students to knock on the "door."
- When a student knocks, the door keeper will ask "Who's there?"
- The knocking student must respond by using a disguised or funny voice.
- The door keeper will guess which student knocked.
- If the door keeper guesses correctly, choose a new door keeper and keep the game going for as long as you have time!

Teaching Moment:

In our game today, we let the door keeper guess who was “knocking” on the door. In our reading today, we’ll read a story about someone who comes to the gate to find the very last person she expected to see!

DISCUSSION

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 12:1-25.

How do you see God at work in this passage?

How do you reconcile the idea that God rescued Peter so miraculously but allowed James to be killed?

How did both instances serve to glorify God?

What do you think the Lord wants us to learn from Herod’s story?

After everything that happened in chapter 12, what result did Luke report regarding the church? Why was this significant?

How is this a reminder that God’s purposes never fail?

GOING DEEPER

When was a time you felt like Rhoda—really surprised and joyous about something God has done in your life?

How likely are you to share with others in these instances? Why?

APPLICATION

When has God answered your prayers in a surprising way?

Have you ever seen God work in difficult circumstances? What happened? Why is it important to have Christian community for these seasons?

How can you use whatever circumstances you face to tell others about Jesus, like the church did in Acts 12?

PRAYER

Thank God for taking care of us even when rescue seems unlikely. Praise Him for listening to and answering our prayers. Ask for Him to continue to reveal Himself to your group as you continue your study in Acts

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

October 19, 2025 --- Acts 13:1-12

COMMENTARY

Acts 12

Chapter 12 is the last chapter in Acts that deals with the Jewish-Christian congregation in Jerusalem apart from Paul. It is a model of Luke's dramatic style. It falls into four segments.

1. Herod Agrippa's Persecution of the Apostles (12:1-5).

Herod Agrippa I was the grandson of Herod the Great. He ruled over Judea between A.D. 41 and 44. Reared in Rome, one of the major concerns of his reign was to win the favor of the Jews. He must have ordered the execution of James in an attempt to please the Jewish leaders who opposed the Christians. He would have done the same to Peter had not the Passover season intervened when executions were not considered proper. He held Peter in jail until the feast days were past. Herod had clearly become the archenemy of the Christians.

2. Peter's Miraculous Deliverance from Prison (12:6-19a).

Herod's plans for Peter were not to be. Peter was delivered from prison by an angel of the Lord. Luke tells the story in a delightful way. Peter was to come to trial on the next day, but he was sound asleep, as if he had not a worry in the world. His trust was in God. Peter's escape was certainly none of his own doing. The angel had to rouse him, direct him how to dress himself, and lead him each step of the way until safely outside. Only then did Peter fully awaken.

The scene shifts to the house of John Mark's mother, where the Christians were gathered together to pray for Peter. Rhoda ("Rosie"), the little servant girl, was so excited to see Peter that she left him at the gate. The Christians inside could not believe her good news. They found it easier to believe that Peter had been

executed and his ghost returned to earth than that their prayer for his release had been answered. Peter gave them a message for James, Jesus' brother, who from then on became the leader of the Jerusalem church, as Peter hastened off to a safer place.

3. Herod's Self-destructive Arrogance (12:19b-23).

The soldiers paid for Peter's escape with their lives, but Herod got his as well. On a formal occasion in the theater at Caesarea, Herod appeared in especially fine regalia. The Jewish historian Josephus also records the event and says that Herod wore a garment of silver plates which glistened brilliantly in the rays of the sun. The people hailed him as a god. Josephus stated that Herod neither affirmed nor denied their acclamation. He was immediately struck down, "eaten by worms" in Luke's words. He died for his blasphemous arrogance.

4. Peace for the Church (12:24-25).

Chapter 12 has come full circle. The murderer of James now lay in his own grave. The church was at peace. Its witness could continue. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, and the stage was set for the next step in the advancing Christian mission.