

# THE BOOK OF ACTS

## ACTS 12:1-7 | LESSON SUMMARY

### King Herod

**ACTS 12:1**, "About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church."

- "King Herod" = Agrippa I
  - Grandson of Herod the Great
  - Son of Aristobulus
    - Aristobulus was murdered by his own father, Herod the Great
  - Raised by his uncle, Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist and tried Jesus
    - Matthew 14:3-12
    - Luke 23:8-12
- Friends with Caligula, who is debatably more insane than Nero
- From this point on, procurators (those ruling over region) would continue to persecute Christians
  - Other procurators we know of include Marcus Antonius Felix (A.D. 52-59, Acts 23:24) and Porcius Festus (A.D. 59-62, Acts 24:27) who are both noted in Scripture to have imprisoned Paul.

### James Martyred

**ACTS 12:2**, "He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread." (ESV)



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- James is the first of the original twelve to be martyred
  - Others have been martyred, but James is the first of the original twelve
  - Killed the same way Herod's uncle executed John the Baptist
  - Peter is likely next
  - Extraordinary precautions are taken regarding his shackling—apparently word had spread of his previous miraculous escapes
- Passover Week = the same week Christ was murdered

### Earnest Prayer

ACTS 12:5, "So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church." (ESV)

- Earnest = ἐκτενῶς
  - Means "stretching to the utter limit"
  - Same word Luke uses to describe Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane
  - "And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:44, ESV)



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ACTS 12:7, "And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell." (ESV)

- Peter is sleeping between two soldiers that he is chained to
  - Two additional soldiers are keeping guard
  - The angel instructs him to get dressed and "follow me," then proceeds to lead him out of prison
    - Initially Peter thinks he's seeing things
    - When he realizes that an angel has actually set him free, he goes to where he knows Christians will be gathered, praying for him

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** R. Kent Hughes, Acts: The Church Afire, John B. Miller, Convinced That God Had Called Us, C. Hemer, The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History

