

Acts 12.1-25 Political Expedience and Gospel Expansion

Early Chs Acts Peaceful Co-Existence Followers JESUS & JEWS

Jesus, Apostles, Members Early Church > All Hebraic JEWS

1000's of Jews Believed Risen Jesus was MESSIAH

Ch 7 Traditional Jews INVADED by Hellenistic Jews

Ch 8 Samaritans followed Jesus – Ethiopian Eunuch

Ch 10 Peter Ap.Jews invites Roman Centurion/Cornelius> House!

Ch 11 – Int'l Church – All kinds of Nationalities formed ANTIOCH

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” Acts 11.1-3

1. Problems for the People of God

a. Suffering and Persecution

Thru NT Family HERODS – Name & Title – Trouble for God's People

HERODs were EDOMITES - NOT JEWS – Descendants of ESAU

Herod the Great appointed Roman Senate - Killed Baby Boys Bethlehem

HEROD ANTIPAS - King who had John the Baptizer beheaded

King Herod AGRIPPA I > Grandson of Great > NEPHEW of Antipas

Son of Agrippa – Agrippa 2 Sits in Judgment over Paul in Acts 25

Hated by Jews: Win Pts w JEWS Kill Followers of J. Misguided Rabbi

Good Politician STAY Ahead of Crowd > Which way WIND Blows?

Traditional Marriage? Gay Marriage? Trans? Group Marriages?

Leader – No Followers – Man taking a Walk! E.V. Hill

v 1 About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James/brother of John with the sword

Jesus FIRST Called His DISCIPLES said "Come & See"

Learned MANY Things - Who Jesus Was, what He came to DO

feed hungry multitudes - healed sick - raised dead - joy & peace

Growing Contrast: More Wonderful He WAS / More He was HATED

LEADERS became so THREATENED – Needed to KILL HIM

NIGHT before CROSS: "All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you" Jn 16:1-4

James & John heard those Words, Oh Boy!! What would MOM Think?

She > Big Ask of Jesus: 1 sit on Right / 1 on Left in your GLORY

No Promise about Seating Arrangements > Word about MENU > CUP!

Will Drink Cup of Suffering: Did! James: Herod's Sword / John: Patmos

b. Sovereign Purpose - Why JAMES DIE & PETER Spared??

...significant role of James, along with his brother John, & Peter. 3 inner circle of Jesus: w/ Him at raising of Jairus's daughter from dead, Mt of Transfig w/ Moses & Elijah, comforted Jesus in prayer in Gethsemane

v. 3 when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also... intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people.

Herod got Points from Enemies of Church, Kill James - Big Points: Peter

Had to do Right – Killed Jesus during Passover – Not Turn Out Good

King HEROD that he was IN CONTROL > SURPRISE!!

v. 4 And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him

Not taking any CHANCES > Not even GOD could Set Peter FREE

4 Squads Soldiers, Man chained each Arm, 2 Constant Guards @ Door

Watch: 3 hrs Long > 16 Soldiers assigned to this Important PRISONER

v. 18 Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter

Commotion of Guys about to DIE for LOSING their THEIR PRISONER

GUARDS WHO LOST HIM EXECUTED IN HIS PLACE

v. 19 he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death

c. Advance and Attack – Pattern thru ACTS / History of CHURCH

3000 on Day of Pentecost - Samaritans - Ethiopian eunuch

Saul of Tarsus - Gentile Centurion named Cornelius - Antiochans

With Each Success there is New Set Back > New Challenge

No Need to Replace JAMES – like did Judas in ch 1 – 12 Established
 Apostles DEAD > But Still SPEAKING thru N.T. in 3000 Languages
 No Need for Apostles Today > God’s Once for All Message Complete
 THROUGH IT ALL - JESUS SHOWS HIMSELF MIGHTY

Jesus to Apostles, including PETER: “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it”
 Matt 16:18

2. Prayer for the Power of God

CHURCH TURNED TO GOD IN PRAYER - only power of powerless

v. 5 earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

a. Deliverance of Peter GOD sent ANGEL as Peter’s ALARM CLOCK

Peter in Prison for 3rd time Awaiting Certain Death > Deep SLEEP

v. 6 Peter sleeping between 2 soldiers, bound with 2 chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison...angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands. Angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.”

Perhaps that Dreaming / or VISION / Found HIMSELF OUTSIDE

GOD Not Vaporize PETER OUT OF CELL > Get Up > Dress, Sandals!

GOD does the EXTRAORDINARY / PEOPLE Must do the ORDINARY

Jesus raised Lazarus from death / Men had to roll away gravestone

Jesus multiplied fish and loaves / Disciples gathered leftovers

Jesus brought Jairus daughter to life / Parents had to feed her

Blessing Word & Worship / Get Out of Bed and Come to CHURCH!

God removed Chains from Peter’s Wrists / Peter Strapped on Sandals

v. 11 When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.”

Peter NOT KNOW the Details > Knew the God of the Details

RESCUED wd. EXODUS / "Apostle to Jews" needs EXODUS from Jews

LAST Word on PETER v. 17 Then he departed and went to another place.

Roman Catholics teach Peter went to Rome & founded church, 1st POPE

History tells Different Story, Neither Peter Nor Paul founded Ch in Rome Peter MAY HAVE

Visited ROME Later / Scripture is Silent

Last Appearance in Acts, Ch 15 Council in Jerusalem / Important Apostle
 Scripture NOT give PETER Prominence - JESUS IS ROCK

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.
 1 Corinthians 3:11

b. Doubting in Prayer Angel is GONE / Need to Use Brains & Blessing

v. 13 And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed.

Many PRAYED / EARNESTLY / NIGHT & DAY / for WEEK

THOMAS WATSON "The angel fetched Peter, but prayer fetched angel"

PETER at the DOOR - "you're out of your mind" / ASTONISHED!!

Must be his ANGEL "why would angel bother knock?" - Angels Knock??

FACT - MOST FERVENT PRAYER MEETINGS / Some DOUBT

WE ARE LIKE THE FATHER OF BOY JESUS HEALED

"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" Mark 9:24

Became Xtian in Year > Supreme Court adopted Roe v. Wade 1973

Spent My Christian Life PRAYING for it to be OVERTURNED

60 Million Babies KILLED in USA because of So-Called Legal RIGHT

PRAISE God > EVIL Law is Now Reversed > NOW What !

Lots of Work – Trusted Politicians More interested in Votes than Values

Pro-Abortion message Deeply Embraced – You?? – WOMAN'S RIGHT

Very Little WOMAN in Mother's WOMB – NO RIGHTS – Kill Her!

Work make Abortion ILLEGAL & UNTHINKABLE

What about KIDS Kohala Schools – Need to Know & Follow JESUS

Families? Drug Addictions? Suicides? Good Jobs? Health Care?

Many Needs – Only Almighty God can SOLVE Problems: SAVE US!

"The early church had no 'political clout' or friends in high places to 'pull strings' for them. Instead, they went to the highest throne of all, the throne of grace. They were a praying people,

for they knew that God could solve their problems. God's glorious throne was greater than the throne of Herod, and God's heavenly army could handle Herod's soldiers, day or night! The believers did not need to bribe anyone at court. They simply took their case to the highest court and left it with the Lord" Warren Wiersbe

3. People see the Purpose of God

Those in Prayer Mtg Saw Answer to Prayers, We May Not See on Earth

Herod's Captive Peter Escapes > Herod the Captor seems to Escape TOO!

Herod NOT Know SAND in his Hour-Glass was Quickly PASSING

a. False Praise Not only does Herod REJECT God, he Becomes God

Enters dispute btwn Coastal Towns – Tyre & Sidon over FOOD Supply

His Advisor: BLASTUS – Organized PEACE for their Dispute

v. 20 Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!"

Herod chance to GUSSY Up and wear Royal Robes before CROWDS

JOSEPHUS - Jewish History - DESCRIBES THIS OCCASION

Festival honoring Claudius Caesar, Herod wore beautiful silver garment –

Herod is a GOD – How Wonderful Must have SOUNDED to his Ears

Slice of Ancient History / Modern Ring / We Love the Praise of Man!!

1990's Stretched Food Budget lived in Hilo w/ 3 Teenage Boys

Campaigns Seasons – Forever – Politicians Luau at Campaign HQ

We were Eager Supporters of ALL of Them – esp When the FED US!

b. Fatal Pride

v. 23 Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.

God sounded Buzzer on Herod's Evil Schemes > He'll do for Everyone

Stayed Alive after Murdering Apostle – Life Hung by a THREAD

Sit on Throne as King of Jews and let Jews call YOU God > Too Much!

Everyone had Lots to Eat > Including the WORMS who Ate HEROD!

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" Prov 16:18

"I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another" Isaiah 42:8

Herod committed UNPARDONABLE / JUDGMENT SWIFT & SEVERE

MERCY that NOT God's Normal Way of Treating PROUD Leaders

NO Politicians Remain ALIVE > NO PASTORS could Survive Either!

c. Flourishing Preaching

v. 24 the word of God increased and multiplied. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John/Mark.

Luke ends Chapter 12 w Gospel Advance SUMMARY

Barnabas & Saul back from Ministry to Jerusalem – B's Nephew Mark

Many Ways and Places > Word of God getting BIGGER & STRONGER

Word of God growing BIGGER and STRONGER even in INDIA

People in India: Hmar/ 100,000 / Descend. from Mongols in Central Asia

HEADHUNTERS > Hung heads of their enemies on Bamboo Huts

Early 1900's British Colonialists tried enter Land: Hmar took 500 Heads

Gospel of John in Language of Neighboring Tribe > Hmar Chief heard

Sent out word > Looking for someone to Translate Bible for Hmar people

News > Wales 1910 Chemist Watkin Roberts sent Gospel/John Chief

The chief invited Roberts to come and explain the Scriptures

Neared their Region STOPPED by British Officer > "When I go there, I take 100 soldiers for protection, I cannot spare a single soldier for you"

Without SINGLE Soldier > Roberts went to meet the Hmar Chief

After Week Bible teaching > Chief & 4 Hmar men Repented & Believed

Before Long 1 of these men went to Preach in other Hmar villages

Teaching Bible, Leading people to X, Founding Churches Every Village

Many Hmars Converted > Tired of Fighting, Drinking, and Fear

BRITISH sent Watkin Roberts home > Branded a TROUBLE-MAKER

Hmar > Rochunga Pudaite > Sent to school to Translate Bible for Tribe

Within two generations the entire Hmar tribe was evangelized.

Today 99% of Hmar Xtians > except Roberts, only M had was BIBLE

85% Hmar Read & Write > 88 Xtian Elem Schools, 7 Intermed, 4 H.S.

Hospital Staffed by Hmar Doctors and Nurses

Hmar taking Gospel to Neighboring Tribes > 100's of New Churches

“The Bible is the Book that reveals the mind of God, the heart of man, the way of salvation, and the blessedness of believers...It is the Book that set my people free.” Rochunga Pudaite

"This chapter opens with James dead, Peter in prison and Herod triumphing; it closes with Herod dead, Peter free and the Word of God triumphing. Such is the power of God to overthrow hostile human plans to establish his own in their place. Tyrants may be permitted for a time to boast and bluster, oppressing the church and hindering the spread of the gospel, but they will not last. In the end, their empire will be broken and their pride abased." John Stott

Congregational Prayer from Psalm 115

Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!

Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see.

They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell.

They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat.

Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.

Prayer of Humility and Praise

O Israel, trust in the LORD! He is their help and their shield.

O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD! He is their help and their shield. You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD! He is their help and their shield. The LORD has remembered us; he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron; he will bless those who fear the LORD, both the small and the great.

May the LORD give you increase, you and your children!

May you be blessed by the LORD, who made heaven and earth!

The heavens are the LORD's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man. The dead do not praise the LORD, nor do any who go down into silence.

But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and forevermore. Praise the LORD!