

STRANGER THINGS IN THE BIBLE

When Chains Fall

What if you had a friend who had a friend and that friend told you a crazy story, would you just believe it? Even if it reminded you of stranger things? There is a Christian story that has made the rounds of a town that had a bar. This bar was causing trouble. A local church decided to pray that the place would be closed down. Sometime later the bar did indeed burn down. Problem solved right? Well, the owner of the establishment decided to sue the church for causing the fire. The lawyers for the Christians said they had nothing to do with the fire. In conclusion, the judge made the comment that the bar owner had more faith in prayer than the church did.

In Acts twelve, Peter is imprisoned by King Herod. James the brother of John had just been put to death for his Christian faith and things did not look good for Peter. They're sat Peter in the company of sixteen soldiers while behind bars and in chains. At that time, the church felt compelled to pray unceasingly for his release. This is where the stranger things come in. While Peter was in-between two of the soldiers, an Angel of the Lord came in and poked Peter to wake up. There was a bright light and his chains fell off.

How does a man get up, put on his sandals and clothes while walking straight out of the prison containing sixteen guards? Peter said he felt that he was in a trance or dream. The iron gate opened on their own accord and out Peter walked a free man. He not only walked out of the prison but the city as well. Then as if things could not get stranger, the Angel left and Peter woke up. Think about it. Peter pondered it for a while and then went to the house of John Mark's

mother Mary. Remember, James had just been killed by Herod. Now, this is where stranger things get stranger.

Peter knocks on the door and a servant answered him behind the locked door. Locked because the church was afraid of Herod. The girl was so astonished that it was Peter than she left him there and ran to tell the others. Of course, they thought she was nuts. They're stood Peter still knocking. Clearly it was a big locked door, they could not see it was Peter. As they opened the door, they were astonished. I suspect there was mixed emotions as they gazed at Peter. Herod would be coming for them, right? Yet, on the other hand, there prayer had worked.

There is an unwritten rule within the Roman army. Do your job or your dead. Grace was not a thing within Rome. I have to laugh at times when this current society gets up in arms about freedom of speech and rights. The only one who had rights in Rome was Caesar. Even King Herod was subject to Caesar. Imagine what happened when he found out the sixteen guards let Peter escape. Herod had the guards killed for clearly losing their prisoner. Then Herod himself came to the town to have a party. While sitting on his throne there is an exchange between him and his people. The Bible alludes to Herod's words being revered as a God. The Lord took offence to this and had Herod drop dead.

This is a stranger thing story. Not only did the church pray for Peter but they had prayed against Herod. I suspect some of the people were considering leaving town. It was becoming dangerous to be called a Christian at that time. Yet, here we have answered prayer. The big door was locked as if that would have stopped Rome from entering. The gate to the prison was locked but that could not stop God from leading Peter out. I suspect Herod was well protected but that did not stop prayer from getting through. This stranger thing story is a reminder that prayer matters. Faith matters.

Did Peter think he was doomed. I even wonder if the church patrons felt the same way. They were surprised to see Peter even after they prayed. In my home town was a bar right at main and center. This bar was able to have strippers and motorcycle gangs. It was becoming a problem. This is a true story because I was there. The town churches gathered together a block away and prayed right on the street. No word of a lie, within six months that place closed down and ironically was demolished. It's still a vacant lot to this day twenty years later. We all were stunned. This story of Peter is dear to me because of my own experiences. Prayer should be believed. Is that so strange?