



## Acts 12

Whoever has written this chapter is very smart and witty. They say that the writer of Acts is Dr. Luke. It makes sense. Doctors are smart. Sometimes God says yes in weird ways. Peter is told by Jesus that he will be the rock that the church will be built on. Is that so? In chapter 11 of Acts we find Peter working on and with the church in Antioch. God in the meantime is sending Barnabas and Saul (Paul) to this city as well. Clearly, something was at work in Antioch.

Chapter 12 opens with a bang. The reader knows that God is moving in and around Antioch. King Herod did not know that. He decided to pick on a church. He killed James the brother of John. Herod was a people pleaser to keep the Romans at bay. He wanted no uprisings. The people liked what he was doing to the church so he imprisoned Peter as well. Then we have a small insignificant prayer in verse 5 of chapter 12,

*“So, Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.”*

We don't get to read the prayer but we know they prayed for Peter. God answers prayer with a yes sometimes. I feel we think God says no when it's not answered right away.

Remember, Peter was told he would be the rock of the church. How is that possible in prison? I feel that many prayers are being worked out far earlier than we know. Jesus tells Peter that the

church will begin through him. We find Peter working on the Antioch church. Paul, Barnabas and others are being drawn to help Peter. God is working behind the scenes to complete his yes.

Then this church needs a pick me up. A reason to feel the presence of God. Isn't that how you strengthen a church? Have them believe in God. Have them believe in prayer. Believe in their current leader. Then God makes it happen. The church prays for Peter and God replies "yes" I will help. Those are the building blocks of creating a church movement.

Is Peter praying? We are not told. It's ironic that Peter chastised Jesus for sleeping during a storm. Now we find Peter asleep between two guards (a storm). An angel of the Lord comes upon Peter and his chains fall. The gates open and he just walks out. What happens next is just hilarious. Peter walks to the door of his small church group. They refuse to let him in. They don't believe it's him. In verse 18 it says the guards at daylight realized Peter was Gone. It's implied they were stunned for words. It seems everyone is stunned God is moving.

Ok, so how will this mess get fixed? Herod certainly won't put up with a jailbreak. He just needed a reason to crush the church. There is an implication that the guards were killed for their failure. Then God completes the prayer of the church. Herod has his followers declare that he is not just a man but the word of a God. I suspect the church would be in great danger. Then the Angel of the Lord comes back and kills Herod.

It's interesting how God does it. Yes, Peter you will be the rock. Yes, church I will answer your prayer for Peter. Then at the very end of this chapter we have Saul, Barnabas, and a rejuvenated John Mark coming back into the scene. That proves that this whole event might have taken several months. It looks like days but at the beginning of this chapter Saul was not there.

Now he has come back from another ministry. In those days that takes time to go anywhere. No cars!

The point of this chapter is clear. Pray to God. Believe in his promises. We need to be patient. God's "yes" usually takes time. The answer will probably come from unexpected sources. The church always has God tinkering with it. We must always remember that God has already been working on our troubles before they happen. Prayer = rest, hope, and believe in the promise of God that he listens. A silent no just might be a silent yes. Just wait and see. It might take time. An eternal God has plenty of that.