

The Great Escape – Aug. 31, 2022

Stephen was first martyr - 36 a.d. James next, approx. 44 a.d.

Acts 12 – King Herod arrests Peter. Peter, James, John – inner 3.

The special 3 invited when others were not: Transfig. Healing. Prayer.

These are the leaders of Christianity after Jesus' resurrection.

Acts 12:4-5 – After arresting Peter, Herod “put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by 4 squads of 4 soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

1 – Church was Praying

- When you have problems, you need the church praying.
 - Lost job... Medical... Grief... Overwhelmed... Need a miracle? Pray!
 - We suffer silently, anonymously. **Share... divide your burdens.**
 - Don't miss out. Feel loved. Matter. Support. Even Jesus had 12
 - Prayer matters, this story shows.
- Church “was **earnestly praying**”
 - Earnestly – “with sincere and intense conviction”
 - This wasn't casual. Short. Momentary. Passing.
 - They came together in 1 place. All night. Continuing prayers.
 - **We can't pray when we don't know.**

Acts 12:6-11 - The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

8 Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals.” And Peter did so. “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,” the angel told him. 9 Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10 They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. 11 Then Peter came to himself and said, “Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.”

2 – The Great Escape

- Our impossible situations are not impossible for God.
 - God knows how to turn things around, change our situation in split...
 - He rescued Joseph - pit, Daniel – lions; Peter... **He can rescue us**

3 – This story is one of **few examples** suggesting we have guardian angels

- **Mt. 18:10** – “For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven” – Jesus said – we have angels.
- **Psalm 91:11** – “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways” - Guardian or not, angels guard us.

4 - Sometimes our angels need to hit us over the head to see the light (**v. 7**)

- Angel appeared, bright light, struck Peter to wake him up
 - **B/c Angels are messengers**, they deliver God’s message to us.
 - God may be telling you to make a change... wake up
 - We have choice to get up - free will. Don’t you want to rise up?
 - Prodigal son had to get up, make change, head home.
 - **Some miracles don’t happen w/o obedience**
 - When your angel is hitting you, get up. Go. Take 1st step.

Acts 12:12-17 - When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. 14 When she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, “Peter is at the door!” 15 “You’re out of your mind,” they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, “**It must be his angel.**” 16 But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. 17 Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet & described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. “Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this,” he said, and then he left for another place.

5 – Pray out of your mind. Pray w/ mind of Jesus

- Jesus said “with God all things are possible.” The impossible can happen.
- We have a supernatural God. He does what can’t be done:
 - Leprosy healed. Dead came back to life. 5 fish fed 5,000
- **Believe and Pray. Your chains can be released.**
 - **Your healing can happen. Relationship can be restored. Job.**
 - **Promotion. House built...Sold. Friends. Pregnant. Door open.**

- The church prayed, yet didn't really believe, yet it happened.
- That is **mustard seed prayer!**
 - "You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples." Psalm 77:14 (NIV)
 - When we pray for each other... we can see miracles.
 - Freedom – addictions. Healing. Burdens lifted.

Stay positive. Test negative. Vaccinated. "When We Pray" – Tauren Wells