Murray Baptist Church – 7/14/20 – Bible Study Outline

Acts Chapter 12

**Key people**

Herod – This is a different Herod than the once in Acts 4:27. This is Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great.

James – brother of John (killed by King Herod with a sword).

Peter – Arrested by King Herod and prepared to be killed after the Passover.

Church people – Praying.

Mary – Mother of John Mark (this person will prove to be a reason for the later separation of Paul and Barnabas in terms of their missionary work).

Rhoda – the maid who refused to answer the door when Peter knocked.

Soldiers – those assigned to watch Peter until he could be killed after the Passover.

**Key themes**

* Persecution of people who belonged to the church
* Relationship between the Jews and Romans
* God’s deliverance of Peter from prison and 16 guards (4 men were on duty at a time in four rotating shifts)
* The death of Herod

Acts 12:1-3

v.1 – Herod’s role is not dissimilar to that of Saul/Paul in Chapter 9. What are some similarities?

v.3 – Additional motivation as to why Herod continued persecution of key church leaders

Acts 12:4-6

* Indicates the planning Herod went to make sure Peter was executed
* Four (4) squads of solders
  + A squad of soldiers was comprised of 4 men
  + 16 men total were tasked with guarding Peter
  + 2 slept beside him during the night
* Each wrist was chained while he slept

Acts 12:7-11

* An angel appears – angels are associated with light
* This is a sensory experience – Peter sees the angel (sight v.7), feels the angel tapping (feel v.7), and hears the angle speak (hearing – vs. 7-9). The sensory experience is not always a part of an angelic/Godly encounter. Contrast that against Saul’s conversion experience with Jesus
* Vs. 10-11 – Peter comes the reality of his escape and the assurance that God delivered him

Acts 12:12-19

* Goes to house of Mary – mother of John Mark (this provides a segue into John Mark’s future interactions with Barnabas and Saul.
* Vs. 13-17 – Rhoda’s response, The Church’s response

Acts 12:20-22

* Herod could play politics with people but not with God
* What is the difference between the angelic reaction here, vs. the reaction of the Iconium people to Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14:8-15?

Acts 12:24

* What continues to advance and gain followers.

Questions, symbols and connections

1. The arrest of Peter, four squads of guards, the two chains – all are symbols of hopelessness. Yet Peter escaped. When you look at your circumstances or past challenging circumstances, did you ever think it was unescapable? How did that turn out?
2. Why did Rhoda and then the church react with amazement when Peter was knocking on the door? Why do we get so surprised that God answers are prayer as if we don’t know that he did it (Sure we don’t know how he did it, but we know he did!).
3. What is the cost when do something unethical when it brings us personal, political, or professional capital?
4. What does it mean to pray fervently? It is number of words, repetition? What makes prayer fervent?
5. Does persecution cause you to only think of yourself or do you see opportunities in the transition?