



New Testament 5

Everyday FAITH Family Page

Law/Gospel

In this world of sin, the Church of God will be persecuted on account of Christ, resulting in suffering for me and all believers.

God works through His Word to break the chains of sin, relieve the suffering it causes, and sustain His Church.

Bible Words

[Jesus said,] "What is impossible with man is possible with God."
Luke 18:27

The Big Picture

- Herod Agrippa I, King of Judea from AD 41–44, was the last Judean ruler with a royal title.
- Agrippa was the grandson of King Herod the Great, who ruled at the time of Jesus' birth.
- Herod the Great sent Agrippa to Rome's imperial court after ordering the murder of his own son Aristobulus, Agrippa's father.
- Tiberius Caesar educated Agrippa alongside his son Drusus and future emperor Claudius. Agrippa also befriended Caligula, who later freed him from jail and made him a Judean king.
- While jailed in Caesarea, Paul witnessed to Christ in his plea to Agrippa I's son and daughter, Agrippa II and Bernice.

Peter's Escape from Prison

Acts 12

The Early Church flourished even as opposition increased from the Council of Jewish religious leaders and the Roman government.

The Council that arrested Jesus also arrested Peter and John for healing in Christ's name. They seized and executed Stephen for preaching boldly about Jesus. The Council's high priest gave Saul consent to arrest and imprison believers.

Herod Agrippa, Rome's appointed ruler, murdered James the apostle. Seeing that this pleased the Jews, Herod arrested Peter too. Since it was Passover, he imprisoned Peter until after the feast.

God had other plans. The night before Herod planned to kill Peter, the Lord sent a rescuing angel. Asleep and chained to two soldiers, Peter awoke to a light in the cell and a smack in his side. The angel said to get up quickly and get dressed. The chains fell off Peter's hands.

The angel led Peter past two guards and through an iron gate into the city. Peter thought he was dreaming. When the angel disappeared, Peter realized he was awake and free. He made his way to Mary's house, where Christians had gathered to pray. He knocked on the gate. Rhoda, a servant girl, responded.

Recognizing Peter's voice, Rhoda did not open the gate but ran to announce his presence. No one believed her; she was crazy! Rhoda insisted, and Peter kept knocking. Finally they opened the gate and felt amazed to see Peter. He told them how God rescued him, and asked them to tell James and the other leaders of the Jerusalem Church. Then Peter left for Caesarea.

The next day, soldiers searched but could not find Peter. Herod examined and sentenced the sentries to death, the penalty planned for Peter. God saved Peter to continue the work of building His Church. The Lord used the death of James to build His Church in a different way.

We find hope in the promise that "The Spirit helps us in our weakness. . . . We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:26, 28).

Prayer

Jesus, rescue us from sin that imprisons us, and surround us with Your eternal love and forgiveness. Amen.

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