



THERE IS  
**POWER**  
IN  
**PRAYER**

Acts 12:1-14

**BETTER**

# Acts 12:1–14 (NKJV)

1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church.

2 Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

4 So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.

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5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.

6 And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.

7 Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands.

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8 Then the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and tie on your sandals”; and so he did. And he said to him, “Put on your garment and follow me.”

9 So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

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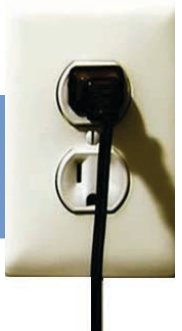


11 And when Peter had come to himself, he said, “Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.”

12 So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.

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13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer.

14 When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate.

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Acts 12:1-14



# God Sees Our Trials

- “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous” (*1 Peter 3:12*).
- God watched and noted what Herod Agrippa I was doing to His people.
- This evil man was the grandson of Herod the Great, who ordered the Bethlehem children to be murdered, and the nephew of Herod Antipas, who had John the Baptist beheaded.

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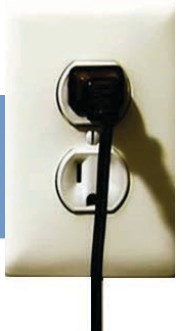


# History Of The Text

- A scheming and murderous family, the Herods were despised by the Jews, who resented having Edomites ruling over them. Of course, Herod knew this; so he persecuted the church to convince the Jewish people of his loyalty to the traditions of the fathers.
- Now that the Gentiles were openly a part of the church, Herod's plan was even more agreeable to the nationalistic Jews who had no place for "pagans."

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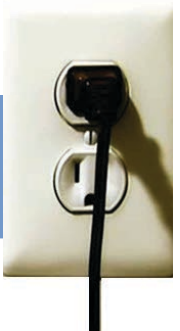


# History Of The Text

- Herod had several believers arrested, among them James, the brother of John, whom he beheaded. Thus James became the first of the Apostles to be martyred.

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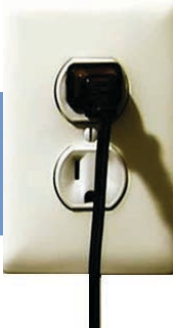
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Acts 12:1-14



- If it pleased the Jews when James was killed, just think how delighted they would be if Peter were slain! God permitted Herod to arrest Peter and put him under heavy guard in prison.
- Sixteen soldiers, four for each watch, kept guard over the apostle, with two soldiers chained to the prisoner and two watching the doors.
- After all, the last time Peter was arrested, he mysteriously got out of jail, and Herod was not about to let that happen again.

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- Why was James allowed to die while Peter was rescued? After all, both were dedicated servants of God, needed by the church.
- The only answer is the sovereign will of God, the very thing Peter and the church had prayed about after their second experience of persecution (*Acts 4:24–31*).

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# Acts 4:27–31 (NKJV)

27 “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together

28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,

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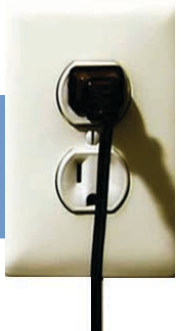
30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

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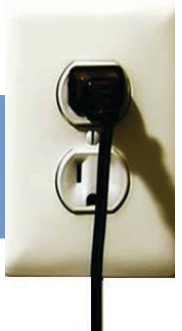
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- Herod had “stretched forth” his hand to destroy the church, but God would stretch forth His hand to perform signs and wonders and glorify His Son (*Acts 4:28–31*).

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Acts 12:1-14



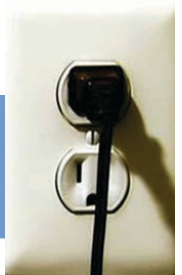
# God Stretches Out His Hand To Help Us!

## Psalm 138:7 (NKJV)

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand Against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me.

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Acts 12:1-14



# God Stretches Out His Hand To Help Us!

- God allowed Herod to kill James, but He kept him from harming Peter.
- It is the throne in heaven that is in control, not the throne on earth.

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Acts 12:1-14

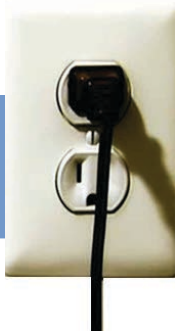




- It is good to know that, no matter how difficult the trials or how disappointing the news, God is still on the throne and has everything under control.
- We may not always understand His ways, but we know His sovereign will is best.

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Acts 12:1-14



# God Hears Our Prayers

- There is power in a praying Church!

## **Acts 12:5** (NKJV)

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.

## **1 Peter 3:12** (NKJV)

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
And His ears are open to their prayers...

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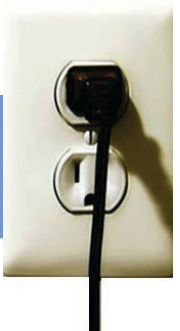
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- The phrase “but constant prayer” is the turning point in the story. Never underestimate the power of a praying church!
- “The angel fetched Peter out of prison,” said the Puritan preacher Thomas Watson, “but it was prayer that fetched the angel.”
- If you are praying, you can sleep! If the church is praying for you, you can relax.

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- Peter is alone, and the deliverance did not come right away.
- The other two times Peter was in prison, he was able to witness; but this time, no unique witnessing opportunities appeared.



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# New Challenges Are New Opportunities For God To Show His Power.

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- Peter's previous arrests had taken place after great victories, but this one followed the death of James, his dear friend, and colleague.
- It was a new situation altogether.

## **Ecclesiastes 1:9** (NKJV)

That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun.

- Our new situations are not unique to God! God has seen this before and knows what to do.

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# What Gave Peter Such Confidence And Peace?

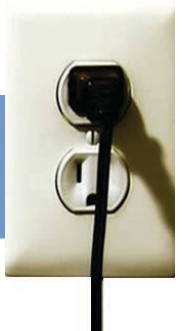
- To begin with, many believers were praying for him, and kept it up day and night for a week; and this helped to bring him peace.

## **Acts 12:12** (NKJV)

So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.

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# Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV)

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- Today in the body of Christ we need people who are praying for us, and we need to understand if we are praying we need not worry but trust in the Lord.

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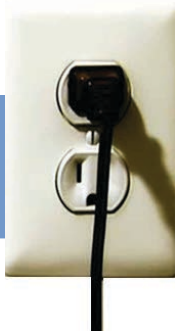




# Prayer Has A Way Of Reminding Us Of The Promises Of God's Word, Such As:

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Acts 12:1-14



## **Psalm 4:8** (NKJV)

I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

## **Isaiah 41:10** (NKJV)

Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

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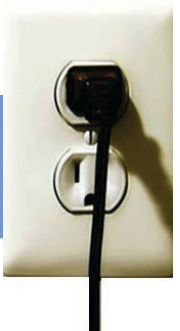
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**The Primary Cause  
Of Peter's Peace  
Was The Knowledge  
That Herod Could  
Not Kill Him.**

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- Jesus had promised Peter that he would live to be an old man and end his life crucified on a Roman cross.

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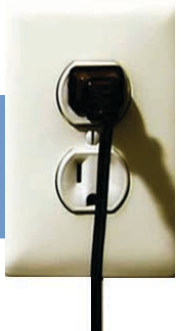
## John 21:18–19 (NKJV)

18 Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.”

19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”

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- Peter simply laid hold of that promise and committed the entire situation to the Lord, and God gave him peace and rest.
- He did not know how or when God would deliver him, but he did see that deliverance was coming.
- For the church today we have to know that deliverance is coming! There is great power in prayer!

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