

PLOT TWIST

When God Surprises His People

Part 5: *Touched By an Angel*

King Herod Agrippa (Grandson of Herod the Great) is ruling over Judea at this time. The church in Jerusalem is growing again. And the Jewish establishment feels threatened.

~ Frank Viola
The Untold Story of the New Testament Church

Once again, violence breaks out against the Jerusalem believers in the form of execution and imprisonment.

~ F. Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading*

The persecution had now become universal in Israel or at least in Jerusalem, but this group of believers apparently considered no marches, sit-ins, or protests to demand their rights as a minority group. They did the one thing earnest Christians have always done – they prayed.

~ Kenneth O. Gangel
Holman New Testament Commentary

The real battle field where the decisive events of time and history are decided is in the faithful group of followers of the Lord who are down on their knees, praying without ceasing to God.

~ W.A. Criswell, *Acts: An Exposition*

Without explanation, one apostle is executed but another is rescued, teaching the church to live with the mystery of God's providence and to rely afresh in each situation on the mercy and continuing care of God.

~ David G. Peterson
The Pillar New Testament Commentary

The entire scene in Acts 12 is rich comedy and only adds to the theological claim that stands behind the story: A sovereign God acts powerfully to reverse misfortune, even to the joyful surprise of God's people.

~ Robert W. Wall
The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary

That's the great lesson of Acts 12. We are not to take events for granted, as though we can do nothing to affect them. The old adage, "Prayer changes things," is true. Prayer is a mighty, powerful force by which God's people connect with God's power to change events. That's the message Acts 12 shouts to us.

~ Ray C. Stedman, *God's Unfinished Book*

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

~ Acts 12:5 (TNIV)