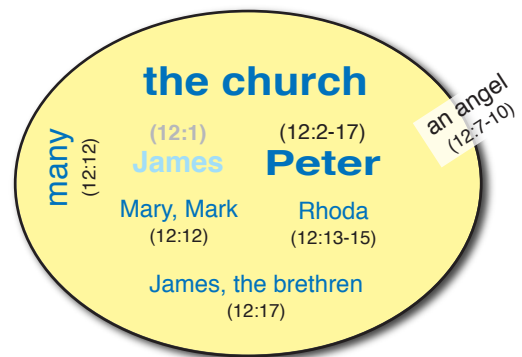
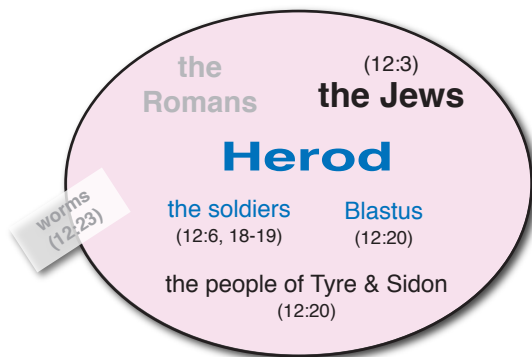


Peter's Prison-Break Testimony

a four-step study on evangelism and missions in Acts chapter 12

W	<i>Watching</i> in order to gather the measurable biblical data.
A	<i>Analyzing</i> the passage data to find the main theme and subthemes.
L	<i>Linking</i> the content themes to other Scripture and everyday life.
K	<i>Knowing</i> what to do and planning how to do it.



Commentary overheard in an Evangelism Class at imaginary Quest Bible College

Mr. Carey (on evangelism being more than what evangelists do)

Acts chapter 12 shows that evangelism is the work of God through the church (12:1) and that the church, though weak (12:1) and comical at times (12:13-16), has access to God's great power through prayer (12:5, 12). This chapter is not just about a few individuals. There were many gathered together to pray (12:12). What do you think about the various relationships?

Socie (on the importance of social connections)

I believe we often overlook the key social aspects of life by focusing too much on individuals. Peter was not alone, and neither was Herod. I often use relational diagrams to illustrate the various connections. [See the two diagrams above.]

Indy (on Rhoda's personal faith)

What about Rhoda? Though she was just a lowly servant girl, she was right about Peter being at the door, while everyone else in the house was wrong (12:12-16). Collective prayer is important, of course, but so too is personal faith. Rhoda believed; the others did not. If Luke only cared about the church as a group, he would not have even mentioned Rhoda.

Mr. Carey (on God being most important)

You are both right in a way, but you are also both wrong. The main focus in the Bible and today's chapter is on God, rather than just individuals and groups. The key missing Person in most relational diagrams [including the ones above] is God. **HE** was at work (12:21-24).

ON THE MOVE FOR GOD	Acts 12:1-19 Praying for Peter
W.	A.
<i>who, what, when, etc. (especially measurable things)</i>	<i>Theme Analysis, putting it All together</i>
<p>WHO? — THE BAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Herod (12:1, 6, 11, 19, 20, 21), - soldiers, guards (12:4, 6, 10, 18, 19) - Blastus (12:20) <p>WHO? — THE GOOD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - James (12:1) - Peter (12:3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18) - the church, many (12:1, 5, 12) - an angel of the Lord (12:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 23) represented the Lord Himself (12:11) - a girl named Rhoda (12:13) - (another) James & the brethren (12:17) - the people of Tyre & Sidon (12:20-23) <p>When?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - after Herod killed James (12:2) - the night before bringing out Peter (12:6) - while the church (many) were praying (12:5, 12) <p>What stands out?</p> <p>1.) DETAILS OF THE GUARDS (12:4, 6, 18-19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - four groups of four (12:4) - chained between two (12:6) - guards outside (12:6, 10) - guards examined, executed (12:18-19) <p>2.) DETAILS OF THE RESCUE (12:7-11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a light in the prison (12:7) - angel stuck Peter on the side (12:7) - everything the angel said <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clothing and sandals (12:8) - chains (12:7) and city gate (12:10) - one street, then angel left (12:10) - what Peter thought (12:9, 11) - Details are centered on Peter, not the guards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It doesn't say the guards were sleeping. <p>3.) DETAILS OF DOOR KNOCKING (12:12-16)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peter kept on knocking (12:16) because Rhoda didn't unlock gate (12:13-14) because people did not believe Rhoda perhaps because God wanted this to happen <p><i>Add or change points as needed.</i></p>	<p>What are the themes?</p> <p>Power Struggle: Herod vs GOD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peter is mentioned more than Herod, but... the chapter does not end with Peter. - Herod had great power, but he lost. God did not let Herod kill Peter (12:11). angel of the Lord came (12:7-10). God didn't let Herod glory (12:22). angel of the Lord struck him (12:22). <p>Church Praying, appealing to a Higher Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peter were vulnerable (12:5a), - but the church prayed to God for him (12:5b). 12:5a (prison) but 12:5b (prayer) The church is important in the chapter. - The angel of the Lord showed God's power. to Peter (12:7-10), to Herod (12:23) to church via Peter (12:16, 17) but the Lord got all the credit (17). <p>Praying and (not) Expecting Answers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Expectations of the Believers Peter wasn't expecting an angel (12:9). The church wasn't expecting release (12:15). Rhoda showed the most faith. - The Expectations of the Unbelievers God frustrated them (12:11). - This was God's Just-in-Time Answer (12:6). <p>TESTIMONIES & DETAILS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peter testified in detail (17a) and then asked for it to be passed on (17b). - Rhoda testified to others, but she was not believed (12:15). because she lacked any detail info.? - Luke passed it all on to us in detail The details add show authenticity. <p>Angels, but they are a secondary theme. The angel is not even mentioned in 12:17.</p>

L.

*Like: what is the passage like?***Like what else in Acts?**

- like the rescue in 5:19-20
but much more detailed in chapter 12
- like the rescue in 16:25 (Philippi)
Prayer & Praise by Paul & Barnabas
but an earthquake. (not an angel)
and the jailor saved (not killed)
- like the detailed shipwreck (27:1-44)

Like what/who in other Scriptures?

- like Daniel & the lions (Dan. 6:18-27)
an angel mentioned in Dan. 6:21
but the angel was not seen
God's ability to save stressed (6:20-21)
fasting by the king in Dan. 6:18
but no mention of prayer for Daniel
execution of the opponents in Dan. 6:24
- like the continual knocking in Lk. 11:9
Jesus commanded us to keep on asking.

Like what else?

- Like being bullied but not giving up,
because of belief in God's eventual justice and
His possible (but not guaranteed) intervention on
our behalf in our present difficult situation.
- Like Christians in an oppressive land,
praying in secret (12:12) and moving around to
avoid capture (12:17),
expecting some to be killed, but praying that
some will be spared.
- Like us giving TESTIMONIES
Testimonies are often full of details.
People who move a lot have more to tell.
Travel books tend to be detailed.
but moving is not just geographic.
- Like us being surprised by God's answer

*Add or change points as needed.**Choose your favorite likeness point(s).*

K.

*Key points for us, Knowing what to do***1.) WE SHOULD PRAY****- TO GOD**

to HE who is over all others,
not being intimidated by man,
naming the opposition (our Herod's).

- FOR GOD'S WORK(ERS)

(like Paul taught in Rom. 15:30-31)

- WITHOUT CEASING

asking God to open doors
prison doors (Acts 12:10) and
opportunity doors (Eph. 6:18-20)

- EXPECTING GOD TO ANSWER

at just the right time (12:6),
and according to His will (12:1-2)

2.) WE SHOULD TESTIFY**- TELLING WHAT GOD HAS DONE.**

Like Luke did throughout Acts.
Like Peter did re. Acts 12 events
Like Paul did re. Acts 27 events
This often involves many details.
This may be done informally (12:17).

- TELLING WHATEVER GOD HAS DONE

Salvation of Cornelius (chapters 10-11)
Physical deliverance of Peter
(answered prayer regarding Peter)
The judgment of Herod (12:20-24)
The expanding ministry (12:24), etc.

How? *Make some specific applications.*

Commentary from various perspectives as overheard in an evangelism class at imaginary Quest Bible College

Mr. Carey (on the need for testimonies)

It is good to include salvation testimonies in evangelistic meetings, but I believe that the book of Acts shows that there should be testimonies of various kinds. Today's passage is one of many that demonstrates the importance of personal testimonies. It is based on Peter's testimony (12:17). What do you think this passage is like?

Frank (on the humorous Rhoda incident)

Well frankly, the part about Rhoda forgetting to unlock the gate and the church members arguing with her while Peter is left outside knocking is like something out of a comedy. I'm sure it really happened, but it is hilarious!

Mr. Carey (on the humor and seriousness of the passage)

Yes, real life people do funny things, but I don't think anyone in Mary's house (12:12) was laughing at the time. The fact that the church had prayed earnestly for Peter but were surprised by God's answer is humorous in a way as well. It is so much like us.

Cal (on the human weakness seen in the passage)

It was all in God's plan, even the part about Rhoda forgetting to unlock the gate, but this is not in the Bible just to entertain. Rather, it helps us laugh at human frailty which in turn glorifies God. The Lord and his angel did everything perfectly, but Rhoda and the rest of the church were in a way like a bunch of clowns.

Wes (on the faith and testimony of Rhoda)

Oh, come on! Rhoda was not stupid. She was just excited (12:14), and she showed more faith than the others. Luke, who wrote Acts, may have heard about all this from Rhoda herself. If so, he probably combined Peter's and Rhoda's testimonies in chapter 12.

Theo (on the Holy Spirit's work of inspiration)

I agree, but let's not forget about divine inspiration and the Holy Spirit who enabled Luke to perfectly combine various testimonies and common knowledge about Herod. Much of chapter 12 is about how Herod opposed the Lord and was judged for doing so. Therefore, to me, the chapter is like an inspired collection of war stories which show how God won and Herod lost.

Mr. Carey (on applications: praying and testifying)

Prayer to God (12:5), who has far greater authority and power than the Herods of this world, played a key role in the victory. So we should pray like the church did.

Secondarily, we should testify, like Peter, Rhoda, Luke, and others, about the things that God has done. I believe the main reason why various passages in Acts, including 12:1-19, are so full of details is because they are largely personal testimony.