

## Lesson 15- Acts 12:1-25

### Escape from Prison

Jesus promised, “I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it” (Matthew 16:18). In our study of the Book of Acts, we see this promise being fulfilled. Not the building of a structure made of bricks or wood—but the Church that consists of men and women, young people and children.

We learned in the last lesson that God had accepted both Jews and Gentiles as believers. However, the ruling King Herod hadn’t accepted the believers at all, no matter what their nationality. In his eyes, they were troublemakers who needed to be gotten rid of as quickly as possible.

In Acts 12:1–4 for instance, we see James put to death and Peter put in prison and on death row. But the believers remembered that it was Jesus who was to build His Church, and when Peter was put in prison they turned to Him in prayer. Jesus answered that prayer consistent with His promise that all the powers of hell and evil will not overpower His Church.

### Answered Prayer

The prayers of Peter’s friends were answered when the angel led him out of the prison. The same man imprisoned by Herod in Acts 12 wrote the books of I and II Peter.

What does I Peter 3:12 say about how God deals with prayer? \_  
*God listens to every prayer of the righteous*

In Philippians 4:6–7, what goes along with “prayer and supplication”?  
*thanksgiving*

What is the result of a prayer like that? v. 7  
*we will have peace because God will guard our heart (emotions) and our minds (our thoughts) He will not allow us to be overwhelmed*

### Into the Word: Acts 12:1-25

King Herod managed to get rid of James, one of the twelve apostles, and he captured Peter as well. He planned to kill Peter just like he had killed James. He knew this would please the Jewish leaders in his land.

Read Acts 12:1–25 and complete the crossword puzzle to see how the followers of Jesus were encouraged and the church kept growing.

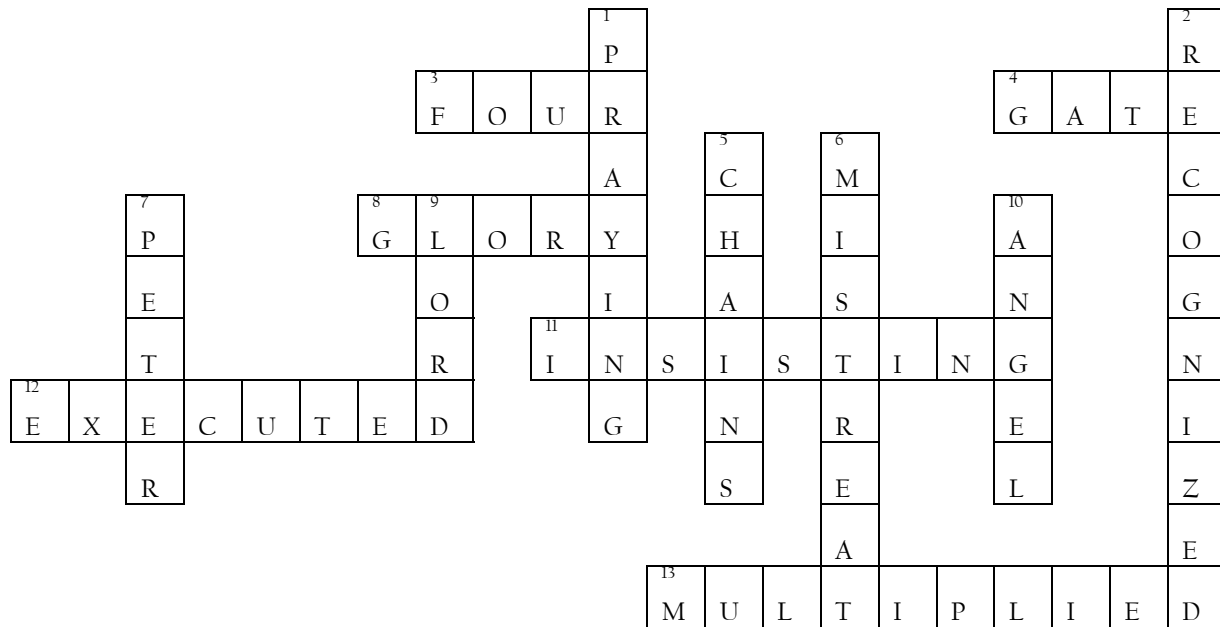
Across

3. There were *four* squads of soldiers guarding Peter in prison. (v.4)
4. Miraculously, the *gate* opened by itself to let the angel and Peter through. (v.10)
8. Because Herod did not give *glory* to God, an angel struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. (v.23)
11. Those gathered at Mary’s home could not believe Rhoda. When she kept *insisting* that Peter was at the door, they assumed it must be Peter’s angel. (v.15)
12. Herod was so angry at the guards because Peter was not in jail that he ordered the guards to be *executed*. (v.19)
13. In spite of persecution, God’s Word continued to grow and be *multiplied*. (v.24)

Down

1. At the home of Mary, mother of John Mark, many people were gathered and were *praying*. (v.12)
2. The servant Rhoda answered the knock at the door of the gate and *recognized* Peter’s voice. But she was so overjoyed that she forgot to open the gate. (vv.13-14)
5. On the night before the trial, Peter was bound with two *chains*. (v.6)
6. Herod laid hands on some believers in order to *mistreat* them. (v.1)

7. Upon waking, *Peter* thought he was experiencing a vision. (v.9)  
 9. Peter soon came to the realization that indeed he had been rescued by the *Lord*. (vv.11-12)  
 10. The *angel* struck Peter on his side to wake him. (v.7)



### New Ideas:

Herod WHO?

It seems like every time we turn around in the New Testament, we run into another Herod making things difficult for the people of God. What's with all the Herods?

**Herod the Great** ruled over Judea at the time of Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:1). He tried to kill baby Jesus, and ordered the murders of every boy in and around Bethlehem two years old and under (Matthew 2:16). Herod the Great died in 4 B.C., making way for . . .

**Herod Antipas**, who put John the Baptist to death in order to satisfy a whim of his niece Salome (Matthew 14:3-11). Jesus was sent to him for trial before He was crucified (Luke 23:7-12). Herod Antipas was banished by the Roman emperor in 39 A.D., making way for . . .

**Herod Agrippa**, who killed James and put Peter in prison (Acts 12:1-3). Herod Agrippa died a horrible death in 44 A.D., making way for . . .

**Herod Agrippa II**, whom we will meet in Acts 25. The apostle Paul goes to Agrippa II to make a defense for himself in response to the accusations of the Jews.

### Memory Verse

When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise,  
 in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?  
 Psalm 56:3-4

### Extra Memory Challenge

Psalm 4:8

*In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety.*

## Discussion Questions

*Each teacher should encourage, as much as time permits, discussion and inquiry on the part of students. Not every aspect of the following questions is addressed here, and students may have thoughts related to but not mentioned in this guide. The obligation of the teacher, then, is to understand as deeply as possible the Scriptures that are being discussed, in order to answer as well as possible any questions a student might have.*

1. In Acts 12:6 we read that Peter was sleeping soundly the night before his scheduled execution. How could he have been so calm? He didn't know he was going to be rescued. He was expecting to be killed in front of a cheering crowd in the morning! Read Psalm 56:3–4 and discuss the source of his calmness. *Peter knew that God was trustworthy. In Ps. 56 we learn that when we are afraid we can turn to God. He will calm our fear and remind us that He is our protector, Savior and friend. When we remember that, we know that nothing people can do to us will separate us from the love and protection God gives His people.*

2. Read Proverbs 16:18. Herod's pride was on full display in Acts 12:21-23. How might pride be a temptation for us? *Success can tempt us to be prideful (academics, sports, music) or obsession with material possessions, clothes, appearance, cars. During the discussion, help the students recognize that God desires humility.*

3. Read Colossians 4:2. This passage links our prayer with thanksgiving. It also tells us to be devoted to prayer. How can we be devoted to prayer? *We are to be steadfast in prayer. There is nothing too small to pray about. God desires us to pray to Him anytime about anything. Romans 8:26 – remember that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us.*

## Daily Devotions

Sunday:	I Peter 3:13-18
Monday:	I Peter 4:1-6
Tuesday:	I Peter 4:12-19
Wednesday:	Luke 22:31-34
Thursday:	Matthew 26:36-41
Friday:	Matthew 7:7-11
Saturday:	Matthew 18:19-22

## THE LUTHERAN CHURCH: THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE AFLC

### \* Fundamental Principle 2

According to the Word of God, the congregation is a body of believers. The purpose of this fellowship of Christians is to seek salvation for themselves and others. The primary work of the congregation is evangelism and missions.

1. What are two parts of the work of the congregation described in Acts 10:42 and 48?

*It is described as the preaching of God's Word so that souls are saved. This preaching should call people to repentance of their sin and to faith in Jesus Christ as their only Savior. Baptism is also to be administered correctly. (For further information regarding baptism, see Luther's Small Catechism and Explanation Questions 237, 335, and 337.)*

2. What is God's will for everyone? I Timothy 2:4

*God's will is that all "be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." The Lord has established the congregation to work for the salvation of all. The call is to evangelism and missions.*