

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

Acts 12:1 (NASB) Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them.

Acts 12:1 (ESV) About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church.

Acts 12:1 (NIV) It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.

HEROD --- Agrippa I, the son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod. He ruled with the title of king from A.D. 41-44. Agrippa I ordered James the son of Zebedee killed with the sword and imprisoned Peter ([Acts 12:1-23](#)). **Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary.**

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.

The Feast of the Passover came on the fourteenth day of the first month, Abib, or Nisan; the feast of "unleavened bread" followed the Passover and continued seven days. (Ex. 12:12, 13, 29, 30; Lev. 23:5-8; Deut. 16:1-8) Since the feast of unleavened bread followed the Passover so closely, the same name was applied to both feasts; the Passover was sometimes called the feast of unleavened bread, and the feast of unleavened bread was called the Passover; both came in the first month of the Jewish year, Abib, or Nisan, and correspond to our latter part of March and the first of April. (See Luke 22:1.)

Acts of the Apostles By H. Leo Boles (pg. 189)

After "Easter" (KJV), Herod would bring Peter **forth to the people** - that is, he would bring Peter out for public trial and execution, thereby impressing the Jews all the more. The term that the KJV translators rendered **Easter** (*pascha*) is found many other times in the New Testament, and *every other time* it is translated "Passover." That is the meaning of the word, and the translators of the KJV only caused confusion by translating it differently in this place. The early Christians had no Easter celebration, and if they had, Herod would have had no regard for it; he surely would not have waited until it was over to execute Peter. It is more likely that he would have delighted in executing him on a day the Christians considered holy. The reference here is not to a Christian holy day, but to a Jewish one. Herod intended to keep Peter imprisoned until after Passover so as not to offend the Jews by executing him during the holy season. Luke evidently is using the term *Passover* to refer to the Passover and the days of unleavened bread that followed it. **Acts** Johnny Stringer (pg. 245)

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.

To four quaternions of soldiers (*tessarsin tetradiois stratiōtōn*). Four soldiers in each quaternion (*tetradion* from *tetras*, four), two on the inside with the prisoner (chained to him) and two on the outside, in shifts of six hours each, sixteen soldiers in all, the usual Roman custom. Probably Agrippa had heard of Peter's previous escape ([Acts 5:19](#)) and so took no chances for connivance of the jailors.

Word Pictures in the New Testament.

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.

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.

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.

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.

¹⁵ But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel."

¹⁶ Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened *the door* and saw him, they were astonished.

¹⁷ But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren." And he departed and went to another place.

¹⁸ Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter.

¹⁹ But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed *there*.

²⁰ Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made **Blastus the king's personal aide** their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king's *country*.

Acts 12:20 (NASB) Blastus the king's chamberlain Acts 12:20 (NIV) Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king

²¹ So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them.

²² And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"

²³ Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.

²⁴ But the word of God grew and multiplied.

²⁵ And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.

Questions Acts 12

1. Who was Herod and what did he do to please the Jews?
2. Constant prayer was made for whom? Why?
3. Briefly describe Peter's imprisonment and his release?
4. Where did Peter go after his release and describe the reaction he received.
5. What happened to the guards who were keeping watch over Peter?
6. Why did Tyre and Sidon seek peace with king Herod and how did they secure a meeting with the king?
7. Describe Herod's death.
8. When you reflect upon Acts chapter 12 what will you remember?