



The Church in Acts

Week 10: Acts 12 - God's Sovereign Oversight

Senior Teaching Pastor Jim Supp - Reston Bible Church - Sunday, March 9, 2025

The background consists of horizontal wooden planks. The top portion of the image is illuminated with a warm, orange-gold light, which fades into a darker, blue-tinted wood as it moves down. The planks are arranged in a staggered pattern, typical of a wooden wall or floor.

The Church in Acts: Foundation for Mission and Community

“But you will receive **power** when the **Holy Spirit** has come upon you, and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 1:8 ESV

Acts 12 - God's Sovereign Oversight

1. The Political Environment

About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who **belonged to the church.**

Acts 12:1 ESV

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he **withdrew to the district of Galilee.**

Matthew 2:22 ESV

When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for **he had long desired to see him**, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him.

Luke 23:6-8 ESV

**“I consider myself fortunate that it is
before you, King Agrippa, I am going
to **make my defense** today...”**

Acts 26:2 ESV

2. James Taken

He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread.

Acts 12:2-3 ESV

3. Peter Remains

And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So **Peter was kept in prison**, but **earnest prayer** for him was made to God by the church.

Acts 12:4-5 ESV

Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, **Peter was sleeping** between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And behold, an **angel of the Lord** stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He **struck Peter on the side** and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands.

And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but he **thought he was seeing a vision**. When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city.

It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that **the Lord has sent his angel** and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.”

Acts 12:6-11 ESV

They said to her, **“You are out of your mind.”**
But she kept insisting that it was so, and they
kept saying, **“It is his angel!”**

Acts 12:15 ESV

4. Herod Agrippa Judged

Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, **they asked for peace**, because their country depended on the king's country for food.

On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. And the people were shouting, “**The voice of a god**, and not of a man!” Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and **breathed his last.**

Acts 12:20-23 ESV

- **The Political Environment**
- **James Taken**
- **Peter Rescued**
- **Herod Agrippa Judged**

1. God's Control is Ultimate

The **secret things belong to the Lord** our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Deuteronomy 29:29 ESV

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares
the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than
the earth, so are **my ways higher than your
ways** and **my thoughts than your thoughts.**

Isaiah 55:8-9 ESV

**“If God was small enough for me to figure out,
he wouldn’t be big enough for me to worship.”**

JB Phillips

“Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. **The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;** blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Job 1:21 ESV

So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?”

Jesus answered him, “**You would have no authority over me at all** unless it had been given you from above.

John 19:10-11 ESV

2. God's Grace is Sufficient

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, **a thorn was given me** in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 ESV

For **the Lord is good**; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 100:5 ESV

3. God's Justice is Perfect

For I the Lord love justice...

Isaiah 61:8 ESV

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment...

Hebrews 9:27 ESV

- **God's Control is Ultimate**
- **God's Grace is Sufficient**
- **God's Justice is Perfect**

**But the word of God
increased and multiplied.**

Acts 12:24 ESV