

# *Resurrection Life of Jesus Church*

## **BACK TO THE BOOK OF ACTS (BBA)**

RLJ-1139

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### **PART 28: THE FIRST APOSTLE IS EXECUTED**

Chapter 12 of the Book of Acts is the written record of an earthshaking event to the young Christian Church when the first apostle was beheaded. It shattered the dream that none of the apostles would die before Jesus returned and set up His kingdom on this earth. It also showed that the apostles were not immune from death. Let's begin this study by looking at King Herod, who ordered the execution of the apostle James.

#### **HEROD AGRIPPA I**

Herod Agrippa I was born in 10 B.C. and died in 44 A.D. and came from the family Herod. This family ruled in Palestine from 37 B.C to 70 A.D., a total of 107 years.

The Herod family was not blood Jews but known as Idumaeans, which were Edomites and descendants from Esau. They were living under the curse pronounced by God. **Hebrews 12:16-17; Ezekiel 25:12-14**

The Idumaeans at the time of Christ had converted to Judaism and the males were circumcised. But they were not fully accepted by the regular Jewish population who viewed them with suspicion and called them "half Jews." Looking at the Herod family it is easy to see that this was a cursed family with all kinds of trouble. There was murder, adultery, fornication and incest in the family.

Herod Agrippa I was the grandson to Herod the Great and his parents were Aristobulus and Bernice. Herod the Great got so angry with his son Aristobulus that he had him murdered. Aristobulus and Bernice were first cousins and Herod Agrippa I also married a first cousin.

Herod was appointed as a vassal king by the Roman government and part of the occupation force from Rome. There were Roman army units at his disposal, but at the same time, the supreme Roman Army commander could overrule and arrest him if he did not follow the Emperor's directions.

Herod was ruthless, selfish, power hungry, sought worship from his underlings and would align himself with anyone to gain money, power and fame. His short reign only lasted seven years. He has now been burning in hell for some 1,964 years and his next court appearance will be at the Great White Throne Judgment and then be cast into the Lake of Fire to burn forever. **Revelation 20:10-15**

#### **THE APOSTLE JAMES IS MURDERED**

It is obvious that King Herod tried to maintain good relations with the local Jewish leadership consisting of the high priest and a number of chief rabbis. The Roman government wanted peace in all the provinces they conquered so people could



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work and pay taxes. As a result, there was peace and prosperity when the Jewish leadership was happy. **Acts 12:1-2**

## **THE ARREST OF THE APOSTLE PETER**

When Herod saw that the Jewish leadership was happy with him, he decided to keep the momentum by arresting the top leader of the church. But since there was a pagan holiday of Easter was coming and also fell on the same day as the Jewish Passover, he decided to keep Peter in prison and kill him after the feast days were over. **verses 3-4**

## **THE CHURCH IS SHOCKED INTO PRAYER**

The remaining apostles and disciples of Jesus living in Jerusalem realized that Peter would be killed unless God intervened. In the flesh it was impossible to rescue Peter out of the Roman prison. **verses 5**

## **THE GREAT ESCAPE**

God had no intention of allowing Peter to be killed at this time. I believe that the Holy Spirit impressed on the disciples of Jesus that they needed to pray like they never had done before, and when they obeyed, God intervened supernaturally. **verses 6-10**

## **THE SPIRIT OF UNBELIEF**

It was not clear at first to Peter if he was dreaming or if this was actually happening. The response from the people praying was unbelievable. ***They had prayed hard but did not expect a miracle!*** Christians continue to faithlessly pray this way today. God rescued Peter from prison despite their unbelief. **verses 11-17**

## **THE DEMISE OF KING HEROD**

Instead of realizing that something supernatural had taken place, that Jesus was resurrected and empowering his disciples, the king decided to have the soldiers killed and then went on a journey. **verses 18-19**

The king forgot his misfortunes in Jerusalem and got involved with the usual politics, always looking for more income through trade and taxes. **verses 20-22**

Time was up for King Herod on this earth and he was executed by an angel of the Lord. **verse 23**

How true are the words of Jesus? **Luke 12:16-21**

## **THE WORD OF GOD PROSPERED**

God's intervention and the death of King Herod were used to increase the church and build faith in Barnabas and Saul. **Acts 12:24-25**

## **WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS CHAPTER?**

1. We never know when the Devil will strike. **1 Peter 5:7-9**
2. Very little will happen in the life of a Christian or a local church without prayer.  
**James 5:13-18**
3. Expect miracles at all times. **John 14:11-15**
4. God will take care of His enemies. **Deuteronomy 32:35-43**

**DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?**