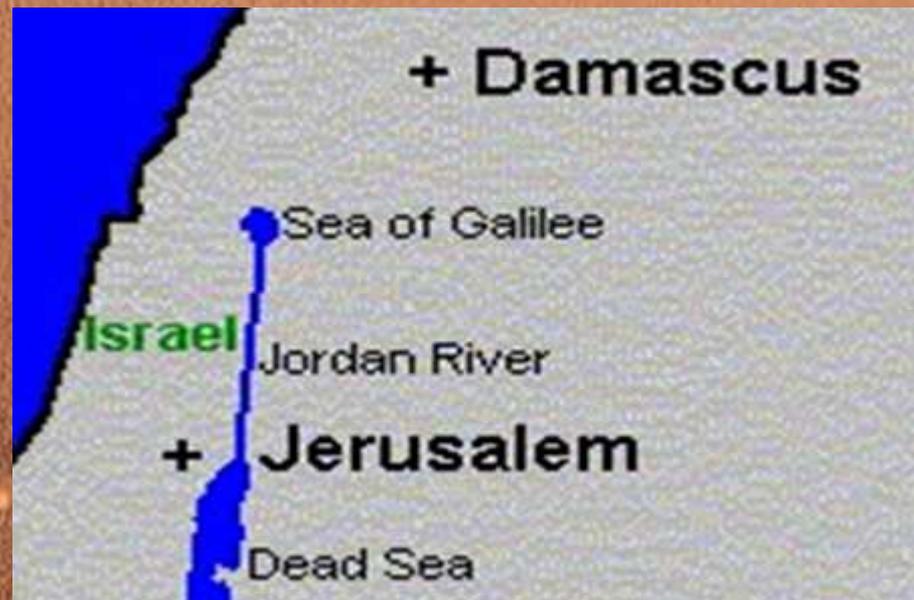
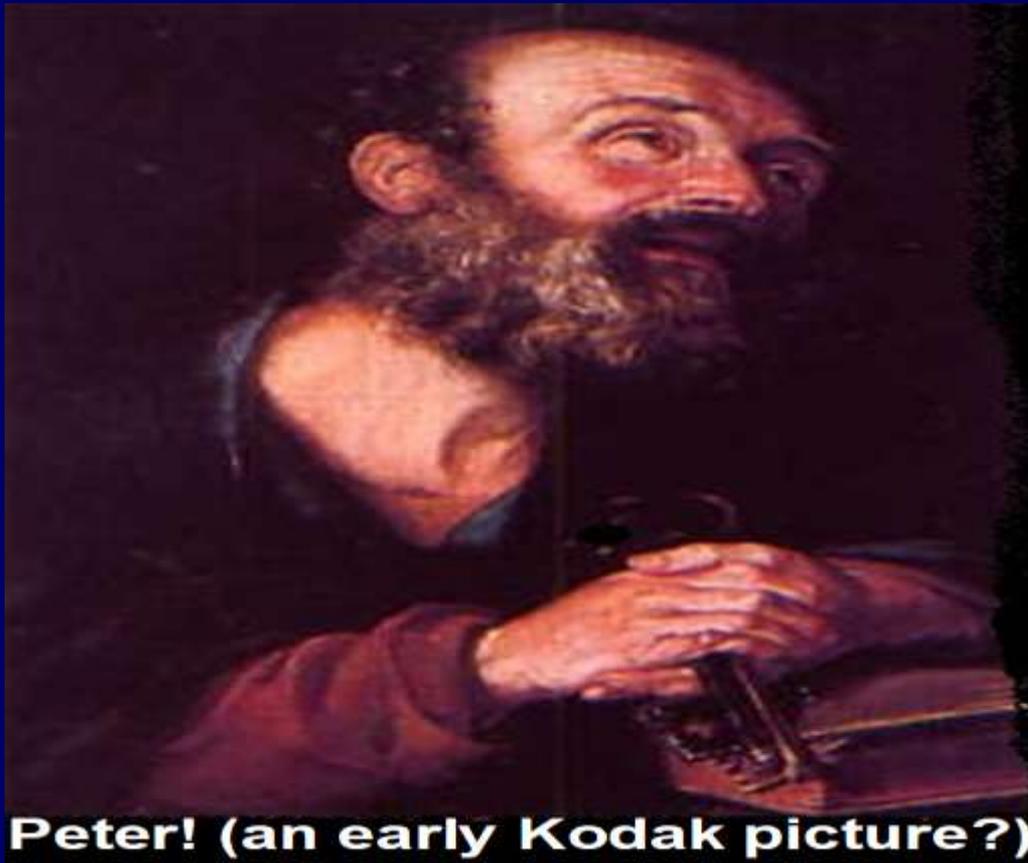


# Acts 11:19; to 12:25; The Gospel Spreads Despite Persecution



**Peter Imprisoned!  
Herod eaten by worms?**

**Acts 11:19-30;  
Acts 12:1-25;**



**Peter! (an early Kodak picture?)**

## **Acts 11:19; Introduction.**

**Jesus chose Peter to be the one to preach the first gospel sermon to the Jews, then to the Gentiles.**

**This is what was meant by the keys of the kingdom and the power to loose and bind.**

**Jesus gave this privilege to Peter.**

**(Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 15:7;).**

**The other apostles in Matt 18:18; were also given the power to loose and bind.**

**When other Jewish disciples learned about what Peter had done at Cornelius' house, they too began to preach to the Gentiles. Soon there were congregations composed mostly of Gentiles in Antioch, in Syria.**



The Apostle James  
by Albrecht Durer

Meanwhile, **back in Judea**, the enemies of the Christ were at it again!

**Herod Agrippa** had the **Apostle James**, brother of John killed with the sword.

Thus **James** became the **second Christian martyr** we know the name of and **the first Apostle to die**.

The Scripture doesn't tell us what happened to any of the other Apostles.

But we understand from extra-biblical sources that **all except John died martyrs' deaths**.

**I think it was symbolically important that there be twelve Apostles to stand together on Pentecost to present the gospel to the Jews.**



## **Acts 11:19; Introduction.**

**None of the original Apostles except Peter, James and John are ever mentioned again by name after the Gospels.**

**The Book of Acts is called “Acts of the Apostles” but it is the story of the work of only two of the original group: Peter and John.**

**Instead of one or more of the original apostles becoming apostles to the Gentiles, Jesus chose a new one, Paul for that job.**

**Acts 11:19; “Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.”**

**The Gospel is being preached all around, according to the commandment that came from Lord Jesus.**

**Phillip is going to Samaria.  
Saul to Damascus.**

**Peter to Joppa and Caesarea and now we shall see the disciples going to Antioch.**



Acts 11:19; “Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.”

Luke mentioned real cities that exist today but with different names:- Phoenicia and Cyprus...



# Temple of Zeus at Cyrene.



**Acts 11:19; “Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.”**

**Cyprus** is an island off the Southern coast of Asia Minor in the Mediterranean Sea. It was likely that these people, evangelizing in Cyprus, prepared the way for the work of Paul and Barnabas, Acts 13:4;



## **Acts 11:20; Jewish Christians Preach to Gentiles.**

**It was after the conversion of Cornelius that Jewish disciples began preaching to Gentiles. They must have heard about what happened at the house of Cornelius.**

**The work of Jewish disciples from the island nation of Cyprus and from Cyrene, a city of Libya on the north African coast, led to the establishment of the first predominantly Gentile congregation. This congregation was in the city of Antioch, Syria.**

**This congregation in Antioch became the base of missionary operations among the Gentiles in the Roman world.**

# Acts 11:20; Jewish Christians Preach to Gentiles.

**Antioch.** There were as many as five different cities with the same name in the NT world.

One Antioch was located in Pisidia in Asia Minor, while the other referred to here, was located in Syria.



**Acts 11:20; “But some of them** were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, **preaching the Lord Jesus.”**

## **“Some of Them”**

The ones who were scattered abroad.  
These people were natives of Cyprus and Cyrene.

These men who were preaching in Antioch might have been at the Pentecost in Jerusalem and now, **they are taking charge** concerning the preaching.

Acts 2:9; 6:9; 13:1;



**Jesus is the foundation** of our **Salvation** so when it comes to faith, **we need to preach about Jesus.**

**Acts 11:20; “But some of them** were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, **preaching the Lord Jesus.”**

When we read Acts 8:35-36; we see what **“preaching Lord Jesus”** includes. They all needed to understand, in Antioch of Syria, **that Jesus is Lord.**

**To the Jews,** Peter and Paul would preach that **Jesus is the Messiah** and **to the Gentiles,** that **Jesus is Lord.**

**Acts 11:21;** “the hand of the Lord was with them, & a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”

Does that mean that God blessed their work? Or does this mean that **they were working miracles?**

The hand of the Lord was used frequently in the Old Testament, in regards to the mighty manifestation of the Power of God, on behalf of His People.

**We can see the same expression in:-  
(Ezekiel 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1;)  
The gospel Gods power. Rom 1:16;**

**Acts 11:21; “the hand of the Lord was with them, & a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”**

**God used miraculous works to confirm the word. Heb 2:3-4;**

**In Acts 2:43; we read,  
“Then fear came upon every soul,  
and many wonders and signs  
were done through the apostles.”**

**Acts 11:21;** “the hand of the Lord was with them, & a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”

In **Acts 3:16-19;** “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

**“While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent.”**

**Acts 17:30;**

**“Repent” means “change your mind,”  
“decide to go a different way.”**

**Turn away from Sin Turn back to God**

**Acts 11:21;** “the hand of the Lord was with them, & a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”

Jesus had said in Matt 28:19;

“Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit.”

Peter said in Acts 2:38; that “baptism was for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Paul was told in Acts 22:16; “To arise and be baptised to wash away his sins.”

“turning to the Lord” is something that follows “believing.” The expression Denotes **the conversion** of the people of Antioch from heathenism to Christ.

## **Acts 11:22-24; Barnabas;**

**“News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent **Barnabas to Antioch.**”**

**“When he arrived and saw the **evidence of the grace of God**, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.”**

**“He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.”**

**Barnabas** could see for himself the grace of God. That is **the gift that we did not deserve**. Having the **opportunity to be a part of the kingdom of Christ**. Having the **opportunity to share heaven with God**. **This is the grace of God. The Sending of Jesus.**

**Acts 11:22-24;  
Barnabas;**



**Acts 11:22-24; Barnabas;**

Here we have the first instance  
of a congregation having a preacher.

**He was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit.**

Did that have anything to do with  
the number of people who came to the Lord?

Those who preach regularly for a congregation  
were not called **“Pastors”** in New Testament times  
unless they were **elders** of the congregation.

**“Pastor”** means **“shepherd”**  
and it’s one of the names for an **elder.**  
**(1 Peter 5:1-4;)**



**Acts 11:23; (b) “and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.”**

**Do we need to do this now days? How much good does encouragement do to the Christian?**

**1 Timothy 3:2 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11;  
Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25; Galatians 6:2;**

**If a congregation does not know how to encourage its members, when the members are in trouble, sooner or later, they will depart.**

**We all need encouragement.  
We need to take care of one another.**

**Acts 11:24; “For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. a great many people were added to the Lord.**

**Was Barnabas a strong Christian? He was Very strong! These are the kind of people that Christ is looking for to build up His congregations.**

**Christians willing to encourage others,  
Christians that can set good examples.  
Christians with a lot of love  
for Jesus and His family the church.**

**Christians who really understand  
what it means to be a Christian.  
A servant of Christ.**

**Acts 11:24; “For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. a great many people were added to the Lord.**

**When we put into practice what the Bible says, when we open our hearts to the word and set a good example, this ought to be result!**

**Others begin to come to Christ.**

**Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 1 Peter 2:12;**

**Through Barnabas, his example, devotion and faithfulness caused many to be added to the church the family of God.**

**This needs to be our goal.**

**The congregations were growing because every member in the beginning was very responsible for their own work. They were all preaching and helping others.**

**Acts 11:25;** “Then **Barnabas** went to Tarsus to look for **Saul**, and when he found him, he brought him to **Antioch.**”



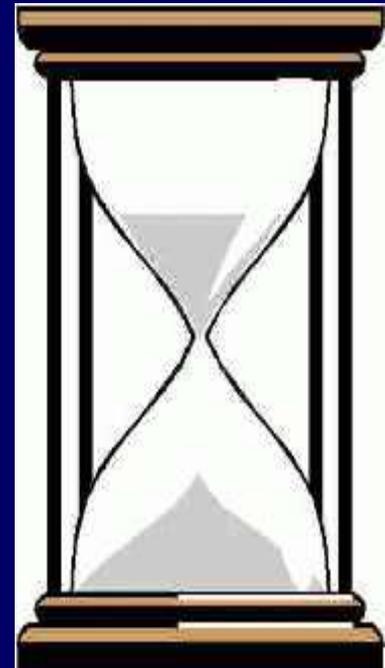
## Acts 11:25; Barnabas brings Saul!

“Then **Barnabas** went to Tarsus to look for **Saul**, and when he found him, he brought him to **Antioch.**”

So for a whole year **Barnabas** and **Saul** met with the church and taught great numbers of people. **The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.**

According to **Galatians 2:1**; how long had it been since the story of **Acts 9**; about Saul's conversion?

**14 years!**



# Cave Church

The oldest church building in Antioch.



## **Acts 11:26; ANTIOCH!**

**“Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch.”**

**Antioch** became one of the five greatest cities in the first-century world, the other four being Rome, Ephesus, Jerusalem and Alexandria.

For a time Antioch was the base of operations from which missionary activities were conducted throughout the Roman world.

**According to tradition, Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of Luke, was born and grew up in Antioch.**

**Acts 11:26;** “When he found him, he brought him to **Antioch.**”

Antioch was an exceedingly important city in numbers, wealth, and influence. It was probably for this reason that they stayed a year there instead of travelling to other places.

The attention of the apostles, in the beginning, was directed to cities. Cities were places of influence and centres of power.

Later, Luke says that Paul spent **three years** in **Ephesus**. (Acts 20:31;) And, he continued **a year and a half at Corinth**. ( Acts 18:11;)

The first congregations were founded in cities; with the most remarkable success in preaching the gospel in large towns.

## **Acts 11:26; Called “Christians” by God!**

**When he found Saul, Barnabas brought him to Antioch. Saul and Barnabas taught a large crowd. For a whole year they met with the congregation.**

**In Antioch, God called the followers “Christians” for the first time.**

**Names are important as they distinguish one thing from another.**

**If you go into a supermarket for a tin of Mushroom soup and a tin of Tomato soup. If the tins are not labelled you will not be able to tell them apart!**

**If you pick the wrong unlabeled tin you will be disappointed, a name should tell us what is inside!**

# Acts 11:26; Called “Christians” by God!

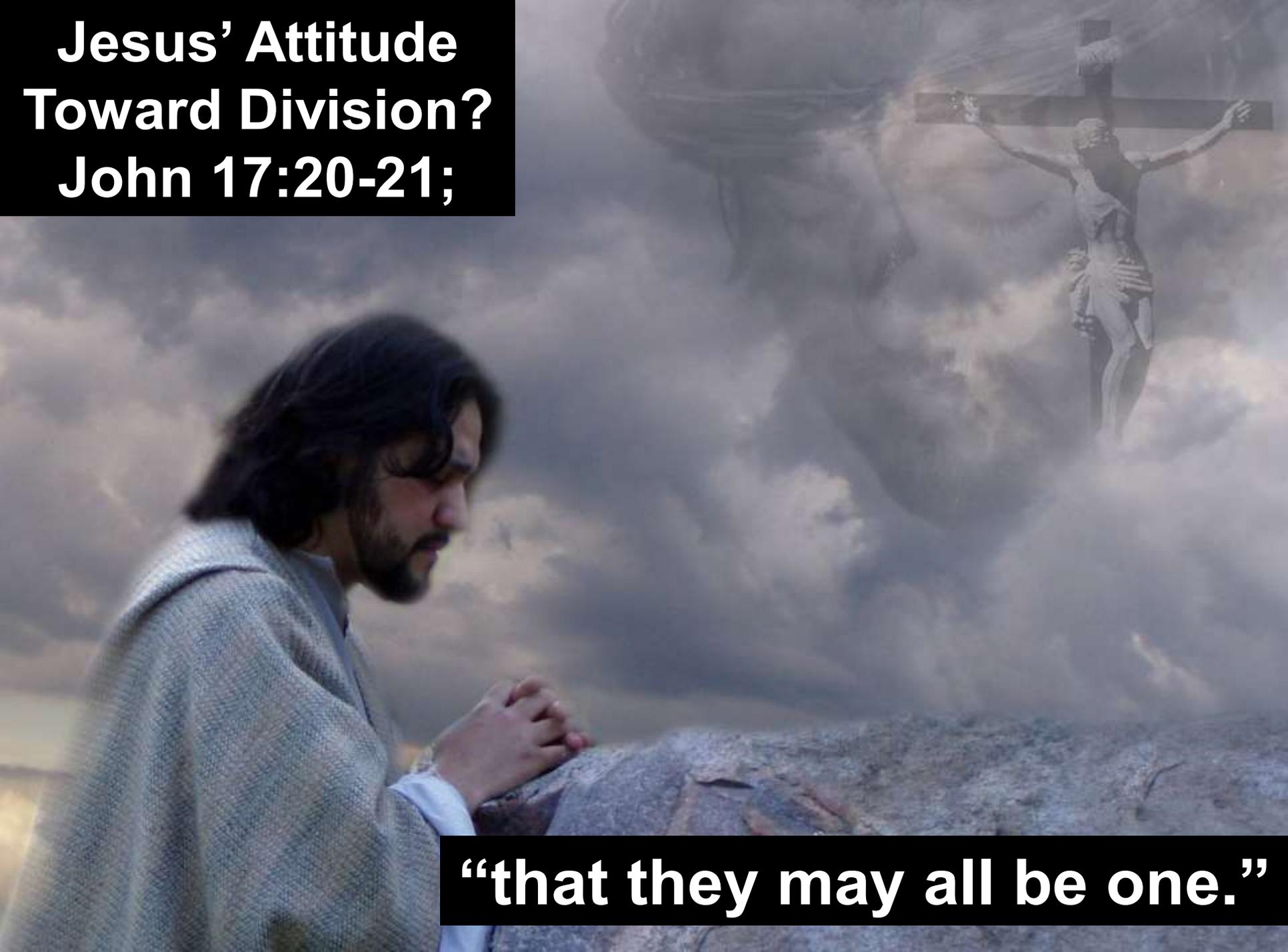
“There isn't anything in a name!”



“And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.” Acts 4:12;

10. “so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11. and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Phil 2:10-11;

**Jesus' Attitude  
Toward Division?  
John 17:20-21;**



**“that they may all be one.”**

**Acts 11:26; Called “Christians” by God!**

**John 17:20-21; Jesus’ Attitude Toward Division?**

**Jesus prayed that there be a “oneness”  
In plan, purpose, effort, and relationship!**

**All disciples united Jesus,  
in faith and worship  
as revealed in the New Testament.**

**WHY?**

**“that the world may believe!”**

**Acts 11:26; Called “Christians” by God!**

**Has God** already provided a **name** for His people?

**Or has God left it up to us  
to chose a name for ourselves?**

**Acts 15:18; speaks of “the eternal purpose” of God.**

**“Known unto God are all His works  
from the beginning of the world.”**

**Eph. 1:4-12; Eph 2:8-12;  
1Peter 1:10-12; Rev 13:8;**

**Look to the O.T. for prophecy.**

**Look to the N.T. for fulfillment.**

Teaching regarding **“The Name”** in the **Old Testament**.

**“Your name will be a curse word among my people,  
for the Sovereign Lord will destroy you  
and call His true servants by another name.”**

**Isa 65:15; New Living Translation.**

**“The nations shall see your righteousness.  
Kings shall be blinded by your glory;  
and God will confer (give) on you a new name.”**

**Isa 62:2; Living Bible.**

**“I will give them- in my house, within my walls-  
a name far greater than the honour they would  
receive from having sons and daughters. For  
the name that I will give them is an everlasting one;  
it will never disappear.” Isa 56:5; Living Bible.**

# Acts 11:26; Called “Christians” by God!

## What were the followers of Christ called in the New Testament?

“disciple(s). Almost 300 times.

“brother(s). 200 +.

“assembly(ies).” 120+.

“saint(s).” 60 +.

“believers.” 20+.

“believers.” 20+.

“children.” 30+.

“The Way.” 6.

“family.” 4.

“Christian(s).” 3.

## **“The Name” in New Testament teaching.**

**“having found him, he brought him to Antioch, and it came to pass that they a whole year did assemble together in the assembly, and taught a great multitude, the disciples also were **divinely called** first in Antioch **CHRISTIANS.**”**

**Acts 11:26; Young's Bible.**

**“Brothers, listen to me. Symeon has told how God first looked graciously upon the Gentiles, to take out from among them **a people to be called by His name.**” Acts 15:14; Montgomery New Testament**

**Then Agrippa answered Paul, “In brief you are trying to persuade me and make a **CHRISTIAN** of me!”**

**Acts 26:28; William's New Testament.**

## **“The Name” in New Testament teaching.**

**“And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”**

**Colossians 3:17; New Living Translation.**

**“If, however, any one suffers because he is a CHRISTIAN, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God for being permitted to bear that name.”**

**2 Pet 4:16; Weymouth's New Testament.**

**“the pure are the bride of Christ”**

**2 Cor 11:2; Rev 21:2;**

**Jesus is the “head of His body the called out ones.” Eph 1:22-23;**

## **Acts 11:26; Called “Christians” by God!**

Some people have said that **enemies** created the name **“Christian”** to mock the followers of Christ.

But there is no evidence that the name originated from enemies of Christ. Instead, the Greek word for **“called”** in Acts 11:26; suggests that it was a pronouncement from God.

Other **Greek words** could have been used for **“called.”**

**Lego.** - “a city **called** Ephraim.” (John 11:54;)

**Eipon.** - “If He **called** them gods.” (John 10:35;)

**Kaleomai.** - “he shall be **called** John.” (Luke 1:60;)

**Onoma.** - “a certain man **called** Simon.” (Acts 8:9;)

## **Acts 11:26; Called “Christians” by God!**

In Acts 11:26, **God chose** to use **chrematidzo**.

**Notice** how **chrematidzo** is used in several verses:-

Heb 12:25; “... how terrible our danger if we refuse to listen to **God who speaks to us** from heaven!”

Matt. 2:12; “...being **divinely warned** in a dream....”

Matt. 2:22; “...being **warned by God** in a dream....”

Lk. 2:26; “...it had been **revealed** to him **by the Holy Spirit....**”

Acts 10:22; “...Cornelius...was **divinely instructed** by a holy angel to summon you to his house....”

Heb 8:5; “...as Moses was **divinely instructed** when he was about to make the tabernacle....”

## **Acts 11:26; Called “Christians” by God!**

Heb. 11:7; “By faith Noah, being **divinely warned** of things not yet seen....”

Acts 11:26; “...and the disciples were first **called Christians** in Antioch.”

The first seven of these verses clearly use **chrematidzo** to mean **a communication from God**.

This strongly suggests that the disciples were “**divinely called**” by the name “**Christian**” as **a pronouncement from God** in Acts 11:26;

## **A. J. Gordon. (Baptist) Selected Northfield Sermons.**

**“If the called out are the bride of Christ, the bride must have been the same name as the bridegroom.**

**If the called out are the body of Christ,  
They must have the same name as their head.**

**It would be strange if my body  
and my head should bear different names.**

**In some comments on the passage, ‘The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch,’ it is held that this name was given in derision.**

**I THINK NOT** If you study the use of the Greek word, ‘called’, you will conclude that they were **DIVINELY called Christians. God gave them that name.**

**James speaks** about rich men blaspheming that ‘beautiful name by which you are **called.**’”

**Charles Haddon Spurgeon (Baptist)  
Spurgeon Memorial Library, Vol I, p. 168.**

**“I look forward with pleasure to the day  
when there will not be a Baptist living.”**

**“I hope they will soon be gone.  
I hope the Baptist name will soon perish;  
but let Christ’s name last forever.”**

**Martin Luther. (Catholic Reformer.)  
Charles Stork, Life of Luther, p. 289.**

**“I pray you to leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians.”**

**“Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine.**

**I have not been crucified for any one. St Paul (1Cor 1:13;)**

**Would not that any should call themselves of Paul, nor of Peter, but of Christ.”**

**“How, then, does it befit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of Christ?”**

**“Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions; away with them all; and let us call ourselves only Christians after Him from whom our doctrine comes.”**

**John Wesley. (Methodist.)**

**“Would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgot;”**

**“that we might all agree to sit down together as humble, loving disciples at the feet of the common Master,”**

**“to hear His word, to imbibe His spirit, and to transcribe His life into our own.”**

**Tabernacle Sermons. Vol. II, p. 14. (Baptist.)**

**“A preacher one time, in a revival, clapped his hands and shouted, ‘Thank God, there is Nothing in a name! Nothing in a name!’”**

**“When an old woman in that audience, who had been Scripturally taught, jumped to her feet, clapped her hands and shouted, ‘Glory to Beelzebub, the prince of devils,’”**

**“The preacher and the congregation were shocked, and he immediately rebuked her for giving glory to Beelzebub.”**

**But she said, “you say there is nothing in a name. Glory to Beelzebub, the prince of devils.’  
The preacher’s mouth was closed.”**

## **Tabernacle Sermons. Vol. II, p. 14.**

**“It is told of Sister Taubman, who was a member of the church in Augusta, Ga., that a minister of a sectarian church came to her soliciting help to liquidate a debt against their building.”**

**“She told him she could not contribute money to the spread of sectarianism, but he answered; ‘There is nothing in a name; we are all striving for the same end.’”**

**“She then wrote out her check for a thousand dollars and handed it to the preacher, and with a heart full of joy he quickly made his way to the bank for the money.”**

## Tabernacle Sermons. Vol. II, p. 14.

**“The cashier refused to accept the check.**

**‘Why,’ said he, ‘this was given to me by Mrs. Taubman and her credit is good.’”**

**“The cashier replied, ‘Her name is not signed to the check.’ The preacher examined it and found that she has signed the name of her servant.”**

**“He went back to Sister Taubman, told her of her mistake, but she replied,”**

**“There is nothing in a name, so you say, and that check ought to be just as good with the name of my servant on it as my own.’**

**The preacher had a practical demonstration of the inconsistency of his argument.”**

**Acts 11:26; Called “Christians” by God!**

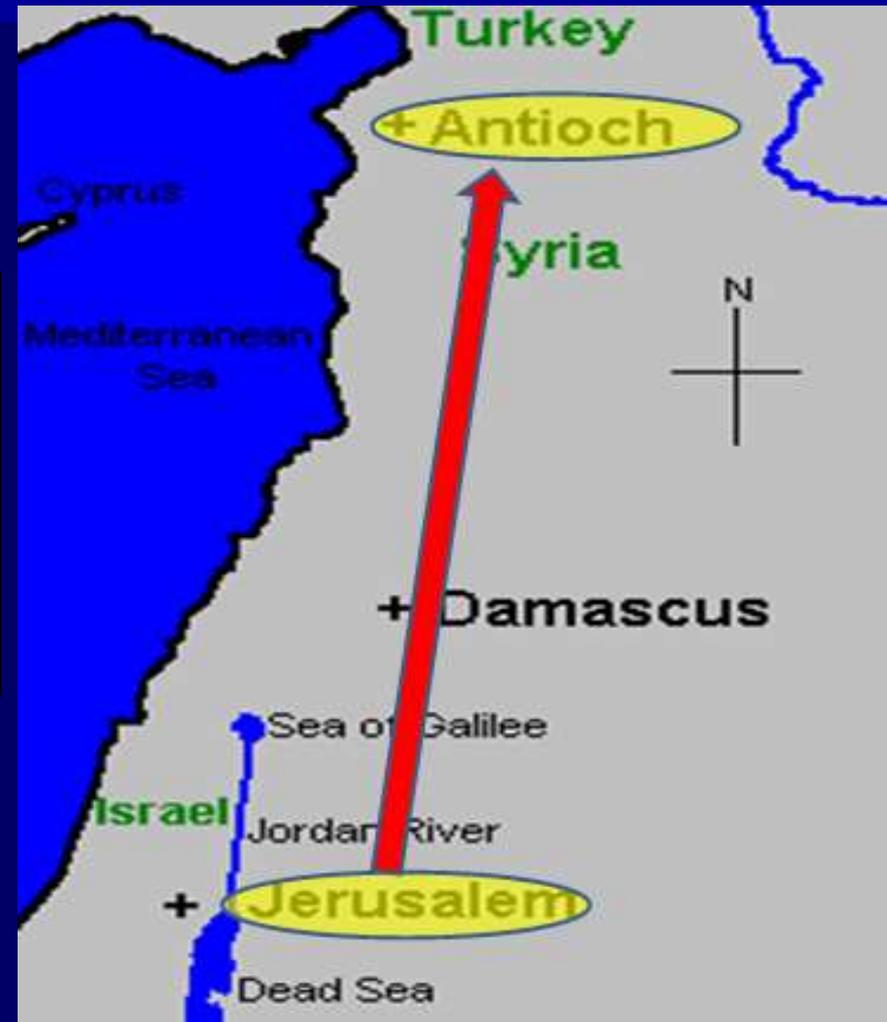
**If we are to be eternally saved,  
we shall be saved in the name of Jesus.**

**The Lord’s name is the only name  
which has any credit  
at the Bank of Heaven!**

**Acts 11:27; “During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.”**

**Prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch!  
What kind of prophets are these?**

**Prophets were inspired men, ready to foretell or tell forth the message from God.**



Acts 11:28; “One of them, named **Agabus**, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world.”

This prophet **Agabus** must have been prominent in Palestine in these days because:-

We meet him again in **Acts 21:10**; when he comes down to Caesarea and prophesied that Paul would be bound and handed over to the Gentiles if he went to Jerusalem.

Of course we know that **Paul did go** there and the prophecy was fulfilled. **He was imprisoned** and eventually sent to Rome as a prisoner for a hearing before the emperor.

# INFORMATION:

Waymon Miller says that **Crysostom** estimated that there were some **100,000 Christians in Antioch** by the fourth century.



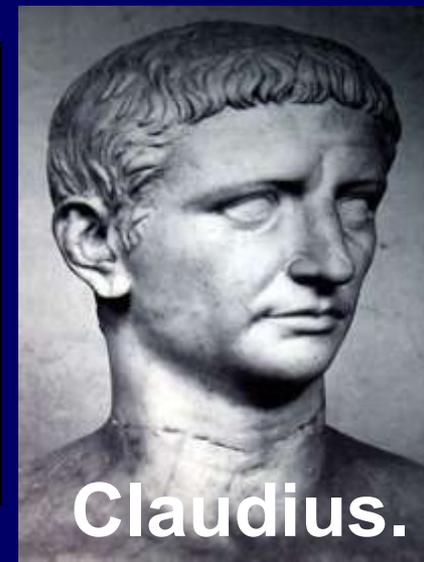
**Agabus prophesies to Paul!**

Acts 11:28; “This happened during the reign of Claudius.”

**Agabus** is telling the church that there would be **a great famine** throughout all the world...  
A famine obviously here means a shortage of food.

**This happened in all the world,  
that is, the inhabited world at that time-  
The Roman Empire.**

**Claudius** was the Roman Emperor from 41-50 AD. So, we can see that it has already been a few years since the first congregation was established in Jerusalem.



## **Acts 11:27-30; The Prophet Agabus!**

The famine **Agabus** predicted affected the whole Roman world but was especially severe in Palestine.

Much like what happened in Egypt under Joseph, the warning was taken seriously and non-perishable foods were stored up by the Christians all over the Roman world.

The churches throughout the Roman world collected some of this food and sent it to Judea.

**This sharing of Gentile Christians with their Jewish brethren is mentioned in Roman 15:25-27; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; and 2 Corinthians 8 & 9;**



Acts 11:29; Then the disciples, **each according to his ability**, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.

Notice that the Christians in Antioch  
**“each,”**

that is, the whole congregation.  
Not only a few helped, but all...

**They all helped... How?  
According to their abilities...**

**1 Corinthians 16:1-2!**

**2 Corinthians 8:12!**

**Acts 11:30;** “This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

We are going to talk more about the **“elders”** in every congregation, later in the book.

**Who took the help? Paul and Barnabas.**

With this trip that Paul took, the one back to Jerusalem, we are getting ready to see all of the trips of Paul in which he would establish many congregations that you and are familiar with today.

# A Model of Herod's Palace.



**Acts 12:1;** “It was about **this time** that **King Herod** arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.”

Herod Agrippa I is the man Luke is writing about.

He appeared only here in chapter 12 in the pages of the New Testament.



This **Herod Agrippa I** was born around 10 BC he was **the son of Aristobulus and Bernice** and thus he was **the grandson of Herod the Great.**

**Who is instigating this persecution?**

Remember the apostles are not popular with the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Notice also that **the ecclesia** are “**not**” in **prophecy** any more but **are already a reality.**

**Acts 12:2; “He had James, the brother of John,  
put to death with the sword.”**

**Jesus called James to be one of His followers.**

**Matthew 4:21;**

**James was John’s brother Matt 10:2;  
and very important always  
when Jesus was doing miracles among people.**

**When he brings to life Jairus daughter  
Jesus permitted no one to go in except  
James, John and Peter. Luke 8:51;**

**Jesus had told James he would suffer martyrdom.  
Matthew 20:23;**



## **Acts 12:1-3; Persecution:- James is Killed.**

This language sounds like there were more Christians besides **James** and **Peter** who were seized on Herod's orders.

But **these two** are mentioned specifically because they were **the most prominent** and because of what happened to them.

**James, brother of John, son of Zebedee, is killed** with the sword, becoming the **second named Christian martyr.**

**Herod** sees that the Jews were happy about this so **he had Peter arrested.**

**Peter** is put into jail until after the holidays.  
**Herod intends to have him killed too.**



## **Acts 12:4-5; Peter in Prison!**

**4 “After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.”**

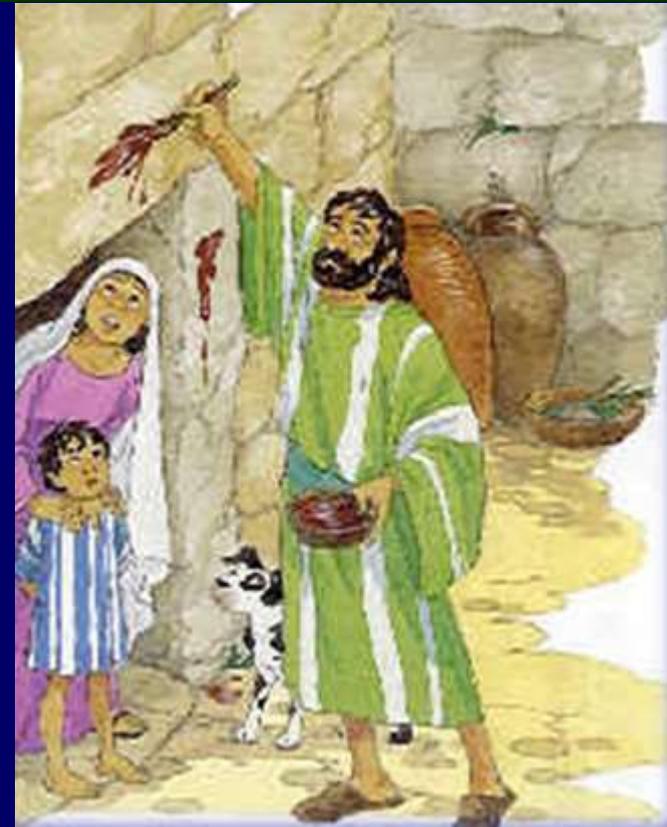
**5 “So Peter was kept in prison, but the ecclesia / assembly was earnestly praying to God for him.”**

**Acts 12:3; “Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread.”**

**Why is Herod killing one and arresting the other one during this time?**

**Perhaps by this he’s showing them his “zeal for the law.”**

**Trying to gain popularity among them by showing them that he is willing to kill anyone who is not willing to observe the law.**



**Acts 12:4;** “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.

**Four squads  
with  
four soldiers  
in each squad.**



## Acts 12:1-5; Prayer!

1 “It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the assembly, intending to persecute them.”

2 “He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.”

3 “When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.”

**The story begins here!**

**Acts 12:1-5; Prayer!**

**There is NO promise  
to answer any and all prayers!**

**John 14:13; “And whatever you  
ask in My name, that will I do, that  
the Father may be glorified in the Son.”**

**1 John 5:14; And this is the confidence which  
we have before Him, that, if we ask anything  
according to His will, He hears us.**

**James 4:2; You do not have because you do not ask.**

**3 You ask and do not receive,  
because you ask with wrong motives,  
so that you may spend it on your pleasures.**

**Acts 12:1-5; Prayer!**  
**There is NO promise**  
**to answer any and all prayers!**

**Summary of Reasons:-**

- 1. Unbelief!**
- 2. Not “God’s will!”**
- 3. Failure to pray!**
- 4. Wrong motives!**
- 5. Bad Timing...!**

## **Acts 12:1-5; Prayer!**

**4 “After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.”**

**5. “So Peter was kept in prison, but the assembly was earnestly praying to God for him.”**

**Do you think the united prayer of Christians for Peter had something to do with his rescue from prison?**

**At least several days of imprisonment. As the feast of Unleavened bread was 7 days.**



## **Acts 12:6-7; Peter and an Angel!**

6 “The night before Herod was to bring him to trial **Peter** was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance.”

7 “Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.”

**Importance of persistence in prayer. Luke 18:1;**

# **Importance of persistence in prayer. Luke 18:1;**

**Persistence does not mean:-**

**“mindless or meaningless repetition.”**

**Nor is prayer to be issue orientated!**

**Nor is it “look at how good I am!”**

**Nor is it an effort to:-**

**“force or compel God to do something.”**

**It is to be from the heart!**



DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

## **Acts 12:6-7; Peter and an Angel!**

This is the **second time** Peter has been rescued from prison by an angel.

The rescue of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from the fiery furnace and Daniel from the lions' den were **two other examples** of rescues of God's servants by angels.

Although there are no more rescues in which angels are mentioned, was **anyone else miraculously rescued from prison** whose story is told in Acts?  
**(Acts 16:25-26;) Paul and Silas.**



## **Acts 12:8-9; Peter and an Angel!**

**8 “Then the angel said to him,  
“Put on your clothes and sandals.”  
And Peter did so. “Wrap your cloak around  
you and follow me,” the angel told him.”**

**9 “Peter followed him out of the prison,  
but he had no idea that what the angel  
was doing was really happening;  
he thought he was seeing a vision.”**

## **Acts 12:10-11; Peter and an Angel!**

**10 “They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city.**

**It opened for them by itself,  
and they went through it.**

**When they had walked the length  
of one street, suddenly the angel left him.”**

**11 “Then Peter came to himself and said,  
Now I know without a doubt that the Lord  
sent his angel and rescued me  
from Herod's clutches and from everything  
the Jewish people were anticipating.”**



## **Acts 12:10-11; Peter and an Angel!**

**At first Peter thought he was dreaming or seeing a vision. Once he was on the street and the angel has left him, he realizes that what has happened to him is real.**

**He also realizes that his life has been saved.**

**Peter must have also figured out that**

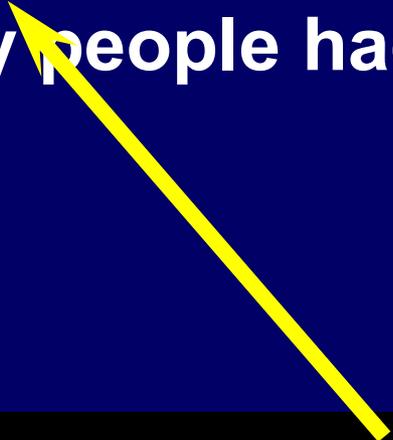
**God had other jobs for him to do**

**before his final departure from this life.**

**Jesus had told him that he would someday die a martyr's death (John 21:18-19;) but It would not be today.**

# Acts 12:12-14; House of Mary Praying!

12 When this had dawned on him, he went to the **house of Mary** the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.



**Mary's House?**

## **Acts 12:12-14; House of Mary Praying!**

**Some think** this was the same house where Jesus ate the Last Supper and the 120 met before Pentecost to choose an Apostle to take Judas' place.

It is the house of Mary of Jerusalem, one of the **five Mary's mentioned in the Gospels**, mother of John Mark who was the cousin of Barnabas. (Colossians 4:10;)

This is the **Mark** who **wrote the Gospel of Mark** and is thought to be **the young man** who slipped out of his linen garment and **fled naked** when those who arrested Jesus tried to grab him. (Mark 14:51-52;)

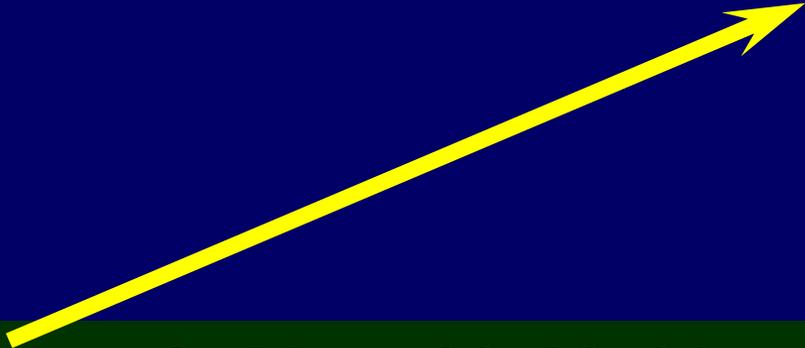
**Acts 12:12;(b) “he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark.”**

**Mark is his Latin name,  
while John is his Hebrew name.**

**Mark was a good disciple to the point where Peter called him “My Son” (1 Peter 5:13;), an expression which likely means that Peter led John Mark to become a Christian.**

# Acts 12:12; House of Mary Praying!

12 When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where **many people had gathered and were praying.**



**Corporate prayer? Matt 18:19-20;**

19 “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.  
20 For **where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.**”

**Acts 12:13; “And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate,  
a girl named Rhoda came to answer.”**

**This is a house that before reaching the main door,  
has a previous door at the gate, or maybe the porch.**

**The knock at the door could mean:**

**Soldiers looking for Christians.**

**Enemies of the cross, Pharisees and Sadducees,  
and it could have been many other things.**

**Peter? No, that is not possible!**



**Acts 12:13;** “And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate,  
a girl named Rhoda came to answer.”

A girl opened the door. Old girl? Young girl?  
Because of her actions, we can probably conclude  
that she was a young girl.

**Rhoda** is a Greek name signifying “**ROSE**”

**Peter** had been a visitor in this house before  
because of the fact that **Peter’s voice was familiar**  
to the servant girl. Peter must have been calling out,  
“**Hurry, open the door!**”

**Acts 12:14; “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.”**

**Do you blame Rhoda? She loved Peter and we can tell that they were praying for Peter because as soon as she heard that voice, she was full of joy!**

**In her joy, she ran inside and left Peter outside calling:-  
Rhoda please open!**



**Acts 12:15-16; They are astonished!**

**15 “You’re out of your mind,” they told her.**

**When she kept insisting that it was so,  
they said, **“It must be his angel.”****

**16“But Peter kept on knocking, and  
when they opened the door and saw him,  
**16they were astonished.”****

**Quantity of their faith:- = unimportant Luke 17:6;**

**Not the amount of faith, but the object of faith!**

**GOD the FATHER**

**ACCESSED THROUGH CHRIST the SON!**



## **Acts 12:15-16; They are astonished!**

**“It must be his angel.” They seemed to believe that a person has a **guardian angel** that takes on the visual appearance of the person he guards.**

**Jewish people had a common belief that every Israelite had a guardian angel.**

**Apparently, with this comment, they all **assumed** that Peter was already dead and that his angel had come to take his body.**

## **Acts 12:15-16; They are astonished!**

I believe the Bible teaches that God's people are guarded or served by angels.

(Psalm 91:11; Referring to Jesus in prophecy.”

Angels care for the young in faith! **Mat 18:10;**  
Perhaps angels assist in answering the prayers of the saints! **Rev 8:3-4; 5:8; Dan 10:12-14;**  
Cornelius prayed and an angel directed him to Peter! **Acts 10:2-3;**

But whether each angel is assigned to guard or serve a particular individual, I'm not sure.

One thing we need to have clear is that angels **MUST NOT BE PRAYED TO!** That is forbidden several times in the New Testament. **Rev 19:10; 22:8-9; Col 2:18;**

# **Acts 12:16; Shock of Answered Prayer!**

**12:5; “Peter was therefore kept in prison, but **constant prayer** was offered to God for him by the congregation.”**

**12:16; “Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.” (NKJV)**

**The fellowship was astonished  
that Peter was released!**

**How easy it is to miss ANSWERED PRAYER!  
WE NEED TO:- Recognize it.  
Appreciate it. Remember it.**

**Acts 12:16; Do we pray believing or hoping?**

Compare **Messianic** to **Charismatic**.

Consider the **Ark of Covenant**.

(Solid gold mercy seat)

sitting on gold layered wood containing ten words.

**Charismatic. Claim many miracles  
but preach a different gospel.**

**MESSIANIC?** (foundation but no show of power.)

**CHARISMATIC?** (Claims power but no foundation.)

**1st Century Assembly:-  
Foundation and Power.**



**Some Conclusions on Prayer!**

**Prayer is not magic!**

**It is calling on God to do HIS will!**

**It is relating to God!**

**Few Christians are satisfied  
with their prayer lives.**

**(except for the Pharisee type.)**

**Don't waste time wringing your hands.**

**We need to learn to**

**SPEAK TO GOD REGULARILY!**

**Acts 12:17**; “(a) But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.”

**Peter asked everyone in the house to keep it among themselves.**

**Yes, there are many reasons to be happy but for now, it was not at the right time.**

**Peter explained to all of them how the Lord came to his rescue and about how He saved him and brought him out of prison.**

# Summary of Teaching!

**Chapter 9;** – Follow the Word of God instead of the traditions of men!

**Chapter 10;** – Choose Truth of God's Word over other things that you have been taught!

**Chapter 11;** – Expect to be Led by the Spirit through the word of God!

**Chapter 12;** – If we walk in the foundation of God's Word, expect to walk in power and authority as an ambassador!

Acts 12:17 (b) "**Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren.** And he departed and went to another place."

**Which James are we talking about here?**

**James, John's brother?** He is dead! Acts 12:1;

**James The son of Alpheus?** He was also an apostle.

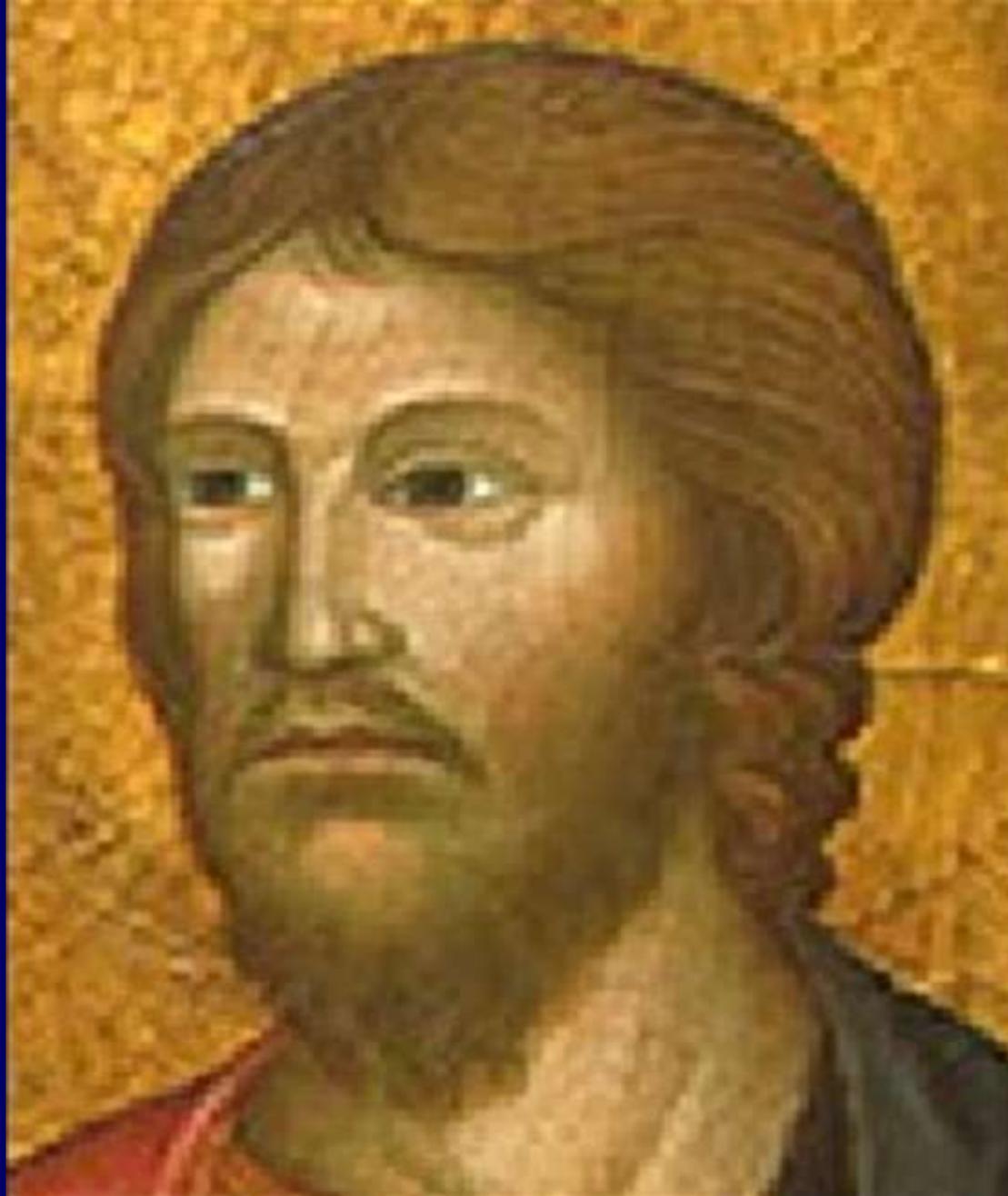
Mark 15:40;

**James the father of Judas?** (Not Iscariot.) Luke 6:16;

**James The Brother of Jesus?**

**Which of the four is the one?**

**The James** he asks them to tell about his escape  
is a **younger brother of Jesus,**  
also **brother of Jude,** author of the Epistle of Jude.  
(Matt 13:55-56; Jude 1;)



**James the Just.** The brother of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 12:17 (b) "**Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren. And he departed and went to another place.**"

At first Jesus' brothers did not believe He was the Messiah. (**John 7:6;**) His resurrection must have convinced them. (**Acts 1:14; 1Cor 15:7;**)

Then later **Jesus brother James** became one of the leaders in the Jerusalem church. **Acts 12:17; 15:1-2, 13; Gal 1:19; 2:9; Acts 21:18;**

**Peter** left there because he knew if he stayed he would bring trouble upon them.

**It was the leaders, not ordinary Christians that Herod was trying to kill.**

**Acts 12:18;** “Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter.”

Imagine the noise and the turmoil  
that took place due of Peter’s **“escape.”**

The soldiers were making a lot of noise because  
all of the Jews were waiting for this moment  
**With “expectation” and now, the prisoner is gone.**

**No one knows where he is,  
or where he went!**

**Now, the consequences would be tragic!**

**Acts 12:19;** “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.”

**In Roman law,** a guard who allowed his prisoner to escape was subject to the same penalty the escaped prisoner would have suffered.

No wonder that in the morning when Peter's escape was discovered, **"there was a great commotion among the soldiers."**

**Herod frustrated** by his lack of success, **ordered the guards to be taken out to execution.**

## **Acts 12:18-20; Herod's men hunt for Peter!**

The fact that the guards were executed because they had allowed a prisoner to escape was standard policy in the Roman Empire. (Acts 16:27;)

This is important because it shows that Peter's escape was a miracle and **not the result of a bribe or rescue by any human agency.**

**Herod** then went down from **Judea** to **Caesarea** and after a few days he went up the coast to **Phoenicia** to speak with **the citizens of Tyre and Sidon.**



**COIN OF HEROD AGRIPPA 1**

**Acts 12:20**; “Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon;”

History does not tell what **the problem** was **between Herod** and those from **Tyre and Sidon**. All we know that they came to some agreement and they were looking for peace with these men.

**Herod is the king of Judea** remember that, and the **people from Tyre and Sidon are not Jews**.

**Agrippa appears to have left Jerusalem for Caesarea shortly after the Jewish Passover, perhaps because of frustration over Peter's escape.**



1 Sidon

River Litani

Mt Hermon  
2814 m

2 Tyre

3 Caesarea  
Philippi

River Jordan

4 Capernaum

Mt Carmel  
528 m

Tiberias

Sea of Galilee  
(Lake Chinnereth)

Cana of Galilee

Nazareth

6

Nain

Mt Tabor  
588 m

Valley of Jezreel

River Jordan

Caesarea  
(Maritime)



**Acts 12:20;** “Having secured the support of **Blastus**, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.”

21 “On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people.”

**An appointed, public day.** This was the second day of the sports and games which Herod celebrated in Caesarea **in honour of Claudius Caesar.**



**Acts 12:22;** “And the people kept shouting,  
“The voice of a god and not of a man!”

**‘The Voice of a God.’**

Many of them were considered as Deity's  
among the people, such was the case of  
**Nero, Domitian, Titus, Vespasian.**

**These people were maybe being nice with Herod  
probably for the food supply they need and not  
because they really believed that he was “a god.”**

**23 “Immediately, because Herod did not give praise  
to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down,  
and he was eaten by worms and died.”**

## **Acts 12:20-23; Herod's death!**

The Jewish historian **Josephus** records the fact that **Herod died** miserably from **worms**.

Rom. 12:19; Deut. 32:43; Luke. 18:7;

**Josephus** says **Herod** lingered on in great pain for 5 days.

**It seems that the striking down was what was immediate and the death came later.**

**The Scriptures only say he was struck immediately.**





## **Acts 12:20-23; Herod's death!**

**Herod's death was caused by an angel but is attributed to his being eaten by worms.**

**This was a supernatural event so I don't think we can deduce a natural explanation for the worms, how they entered his body, what kind they were or how quick or painful his death was.**

**Under the Jewish law Herod presumed himself to be under, idolatry was punishable by death.**

**Claiming to be a god is the height of idolatry. He accepted worship that was proper only for God.**

## Contrast the action of Herod with:-

4 "Aeneas," **Peter** said to him, "**Jesus Christ heals you.** Get up and take care of your mat." Acts 9:34;

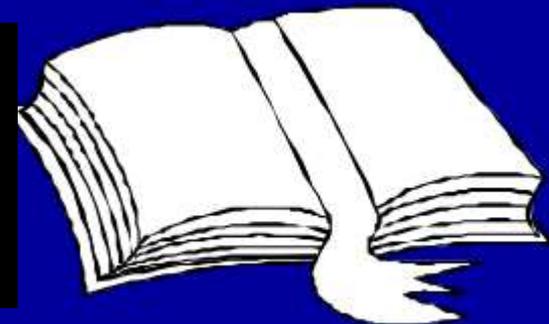
8. "I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of **the angel** who showed me these things.

9. But **he said to me,** "**Do not do that.** I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God." Rev 22:8-9;

Acts 14:8-18;

The healing of the crippled man at Lystra!

"Therefore, as it is written:-  
**'Let him who boasts  
boast in the Lord.'**" Cor 1:31;



# Acts 12:24-25; Word of God increases!

24 “The word of God continued to increase and spread.”

25 “When **Barnabas** and **Saul** had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.”



## **Conclusion!**

Many things have happened to God's people since they had been called out through the gospel on that Pentecost Day.

**Thousands of Jews** have been **added** to the family.

**Gentiles** have come into the family through faith, repentance confession and baptism **without having to obey any kind of Jewish law.**

**Persecutions** of the leadership has caused the murder of **Stephen**, one of the first servants and **James** the Apostle.

**Peter** has been repeatedly jailed and threatened with death.

# Conclusion!

The chief persecutor of Christians has become one of the leaders of the people he persecuted.

The **first congregation** made up of mostly **Gentiles** has been established in a country outside Palestine in Antioch of Syria.

**Barnabas** has gone there and worked with the congregation to build it up and **many souls** have been **converted to Christ**.

This congregation has become **the first** among the **Gentiles to send help** to the saints in Judea to provide food for them in the famine predicted by **Agabus**.

# Conclusion!

In our next lesson we will find **Paul and Barnabas** being **sent out into the Gentile world by the Holy Spirit** on the **first of three missionary journeys** led by **Paul** that have been recorded in Acts.

We have learned many important biblical principles about how God does His work in this world, how spiritual gifts were transmitted and the work of angels.

Another thing, we noticed is that in every case of conversion, **baptism in water** has been **required for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.**

**In God's Kingdom. By Ellis Jones.**



**In God's Kingdom There must be No hint of Partiality;**

**No male or female,  
Jew or Greek;  
No race distinctions  
Should we seek.**

**Just love, good will  
And unity,  
With faith, with hope  
And charity.**



**The Law, a barrier,  
He tore down,  
He who wears  
The High Priest's crown.**

**And now He sits  
On David's throne.  
God willed that He  
Should reign alone.**



**And when this kingdom  
Age is past,  
God will be  
All-In-All at last.**



# **Acts 11:19; to 12:25; The Gospel Spreads Despite Persecution.**

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**Next in the series:-  
Acts 13; The First Missionary Journey.**