Anove Parks 3 of 5, 90 P.M ~ LAKE DOWNMOND Apr. 6, 97 AM. VUJ Night of The Greatest Prison Break

Acts 12

INTRODUCTION:

Our night scenes from the Bible, we consider now an experience in which often times we wonder about the story. Now the early church survived. On the one hand, we see the hand of these servants empowered by the Holy Spirit. Preaching Christ everywhere. And on the other hand, we see the enemies of Christ, empowered by Satan to destroy Christianity.

HEROD BEGINS TO TAKE HOSTILE ACTION TO INFLICT INJURY ON THE unseen beings JAMES, JOHN'S BROTHER, WAS KILLED WITH THE SWORD. look at the BEHIND THIS WAVE OF PERSECUTION WAS THE INFLUENCE OF KING HEROD. e and the sun EVEN THOUGH HEROD AGRIPPA WAS EDUCATED IN ROME, HE SeduLously ens, to give CULTIVATED THE GOOD GRACES OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE BY METICULOUSLY KEEPING THE LAW AND ALL JEWISH OBSERVANCES. FOR THESE REASONS HE WAS POPULAR WITH THE PEOPLE. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE FURTHER e hour of day POPULARITY WITH THE ORTHODOX JEWS THAT HE DECIDED TO TAKE in every STEPS TO ATTACK THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS. ence of the sun THE FAMILY OF HERODS. THE FIRST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT HERODS ns as though IS HEROD THE GREAT. IN POWER FROM 41 B.C. IB.C. HE IS THE as of Heaven. HEROD OF MATTHEW 2 WHEN JESUS WAS BORN. HE WAS MARRIED TEN TIMES.

THE FIRST HUSBAND OF HERODICS rld, one race, 2ND. WAS HEROD PHILIP THE FIRST. WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. HE WAS THE BROTHER OF SALOME.

3RD. WAS HEROD ANTIPAS. RULER OF GALILEE AND PERAEA. THE SECOND HUSBAND OF HERODIAS AND CONSENTED TO THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. HE WAS ALSO THE HEROD TO WHOM PILATE SENT JESUS

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4TH. WAS ARCHELAUS - RULER OF JUDAEA, SAMARIA AND IDUMAEA.
WAS A BAD RULER AND WAS DEPOSED AND BANISHED.

5TH. WAS HEROD PHILIP THE SECOND. RULER OF ITURAEA AND TRACHONITIS.

6TH. WAS HEROD AGRIPPA THE HEROD OUR PRESENT PASSAGE. TO COMPLETE THE LIST, HEROD AGRIPPA WAS THE FATHER OF AGRIPPA THE SECOND BEFORE WHOM PAUL WAS EXAMINED.

BECAUSE OF HERODS DESIRE TO CONCILIATE THE JEWS, JAMES WAS PUT TO DEATH AND PETER WAS ARRESTED AND PUT IN PRISON.

THE PASSOVER FEAST WAS ON THE 14th NISAN; FOR THAT DAY AND THE Led the fire of the SEVEN FOLLOWING DAYS NO LEAVEN MUST BE USED: THAT WEEK WAS Lothed themselves in CALLED THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD. DURING THAT WEEK NO TRIAL so common a garb OR EXECUTION COULD BE CARRIED OUT AND THAT IS WHY HEROD

11.

PURPOSED TO DEFER PETER'S EXECUTION UNTIL THE WEEK WAS FINISHED

It is of our solemn interest in our daily life to know that we may have such unseen witnesses to our conduct.

It enlarges the range of our thoughts. It lifts our desires and aspirations above the earth. And perishable things to know that our present habitation may be

Ittle known by some of us.

(If take Long exomine their night some Doy-hundred in a reached down, such up on he awil of throwing on ground to cool . A tocal Boy-hundred in a reached down, such up on he awil of throwing on ground to cool . A tocal Boy-hundred in a reached down, such up on he was how to have a home shoe!

And that is why we focus on the angel's visit in the night. There are three

or four things that we want to say about this story. First, the prison. Second the prayer. Third, the peace. Fourth, the power.

## I. THE PRISON - V, l - t and l = 1

Y-1

We discover that Peter was put into prison and about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. Persecution in this instance comes from the king. He knew that the band of Christians had stirred up the emmity of the people. He wanted to please the Jews and to be

popular among them. So he stretched forth his hands.

Paston of The Church at Jeruschen, one who write spistleg Ja

V. 2 says that he killed James, the brother of John, with a sword. He was a man of fire and zeal. And James was slain. (Why) did he not deliver James. was a good man. He was a useful servant. The same (ype) of (questions) is asked many times today. I have been called to a home where death has suddenly struck and have someone say to me - my loved one was good and useful. Why did God take him and permit others to live. Who are worth nothing to the world. This is one question we will never be able to answer. But we do know that God never makes a mistake. He allows a sad thing to happen but it is all for the best. Someday we will understand the meaning of it all. We must leave the whole question in the hands of a loving father. Remembering that all things work together for the good of them that love God. Rom. 8:28.

When Jame's mother ask if he could be allowed to sit on the right hand, of our Lord - remember esus said, can you drink of the cup that I drink of. James said that he was able - he did not know what it meant. Now he knows - he knows that the cup was a cup of suffering. And as the sword pierces his heart, his spirit soars up to Heaven. And he has the joy of meeting Jesus. He was the first one of the Apostles to go to Heaven) I can imagine that the reunion was filled with great happiness and that James sat down with (esus) and talked about all the blessings and the wonderful things that happened while they were together in the world. It does not matter whether you live 50 years or a 100 years. matters most about your life is this - that you fill you life with a service to God.

V, 3 \_ The The The The The The The The This pleased Herod And Herod said now if this is so, I'll give them something else, and I'll give them more. And I'll become more popular. You know this is just like a politician. for popularity. They will stifle their convictions and they'll give in to any kind of sin, or any kind of thing to walk with the world to gain popularity. So Herod said, let's catch Peter and have him arrested. And so this is where the prison comes in. He was put in prison and they put him there to wait for the time that he'd be put to death. After Easter, Make Mark Political how, Kall him

4 9 maternion of soldiers

Sixteen soldiers in all, four shifts of six hours each, two soldiers inside chained with the prisoner, two soldiers on the outside, surely every precaution had been taken in the prison. This was a crisis hour for Peter in prison. And he was well guarded without and within.

Now this was a battle between Herod and the church - Satar and God By the imprisonment of Peter, Herod thought that he had worked first to destroy the church. Second, he had pleased the Jews. And thirdly, he was a hypocrite because he was so pious that he was going to regard the pass-over in V. 4, and after that was over he would have Peter put to death. Just like a lot of people give up certain things during Lent. They may stay up til midnight Easter to enjoy the self-indulgence. So here was a battle. He was in prison.

II. PRAYER V5

During thic Krigialian.

During this crisis hour prayer is offered earnestly as though they stretched and strained themselves in agony before God in behalf of Peter. So the answer to the prison was prayer. The threat of the enemy was matched with up lifted hands of intercession. Someone might well ask, what is the good of prayer. How can prayer change anything in this world. That is dominated by military

Think about the Atomic weapons of war. Think about the tyrants today that

V. H

V.4

How church 1' 11 Today 36-6- They Scatter, have in together a fray-

enslave the world and would enslave us. We may not be able to explain it all, but one thing is certain, God works in behalf of those who trust in him.

V. 5 We note that the prayer was funited The church - many were there
V. 12 as noted in V. 12. It was unceasing prayer - without ceasing. That is they
stuck by it. I son't know what They Grayed - They did not tell sook
Thow to do it that for safety a Peter -

It was earnest prayer - earnestly they prayed. Implying the intensity by which participants entered into it. They gave their full length to it.

And prayer was definite it was under God - V. 5. Now there was wonder about the object of this prayer or the subject. There was no doubt about it, they had something definite that they were praying about.

Thank God all the forces of earth and Hell cannot close the door of prayer. This highway is open unto Heaven. This secret is still available to men who will pray. These praying people were carrying on the supreme thing. Now this is human responsibility. It is one thing that it is better to pray than to seek to try to get it by your own strength. He was not released until the very night of the execution.

I think they must have prayed through all the day and the night. And one group gathered in the house of the mother of Mark. Perhaps others in other places to pray because he had stretched out his hand to vex the church. NOW what shall we say against this new force. Here is a praying church. And they are praying. And I am thankful for this story - it cheers me in my own praying. I pray and God knows that I believe in him - and I desire and wonder whether he can. If I challenge my unbelief, it vanishes. These people earnestly prayed and some of them might have been doubtingly - but they were so earnest that they continued to make their netitions and to offer them. List as soon as Peter was

put in prison the word reached these Christians and they called a prayer meeting in Mary's house. They did not pray for a few minutes, they prayed without ceasing. And here we see these two forces at work one the hand of Herod, the power of the Roman government. And the other, the hand of God in the prayer of these people. I wonder what we would have done under these circumstances. Probably we would have tried to wire the government or a Senator, or somebody to use influence. This little prayer band called upon the one who had more power than all the governments of the world.

Oh how the church needs so many thingstoday. The best way to get them is by prayer. If all our people came together in one spirit and prayed earnestly, God would provide every need.

We notice that God did not answer their prayer immediately) There was a day that slipped by and the pass-over came nearer. And the time Herod was going to bring Peter out and kill him. The faith of these Christians was being tested. They continued to pray and they held on to God. Our challenge tonight is to hold on to God. If he does not answer your prayer, first, do not give up.

Keep on praying.

Keep on praying.

How will may get thin out a dail? Farmer Viret Nethon at Barn Sawing how will may get thin out a dail? Because my mule this his held every time he has the wint showe work, small stable, why doing that? Because my mule this his held every time he see in a out stable - well, why doint sig the Hoorout, he easier than tawing hot day - alt aint his seet that it history, alto her head, The farmer rand a went on sawing.

How get Peter out of Prown

III. PEACE - V. 6

This unusual thing is stated. Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. Down and bound with two chains. And there were keepers before the door. Now it is not a picture of peace - not the kind that we think about. But how did this take place. Peter didn't seem to be worried, and he was not afraid. Because death was staring him in the face - he was sleeping. He was at peace. He was bound by two heavy chains and a soldier was sleeping on either side of him.

Peter knew God wanted him to continue his work. He would deliver him and

let him live. If not, he was ready to meet his Lord.

This picture of peace is very much like the old Baptist Publication Society that had a seal - a picture of an ox standing beside the altar and the plow. This picture is telling us that the ox is ready to serve by pulling the plow. Or he is ready to die on the altar. It was even so with Peter. And it ought to be so with us. We ought to be able to say, Lord, I am ready to serve you. If that's what you want me to do = I am ready to die, if that is it.

Someone said that reter was the only Christian in the city who was sleeping that night. He could sleep because he had left everything in the hands of God.

Why should we stay awake all night and worry when God wants us to turn all of our troubles over to him.

I heard about a certain man who made himself sick-over a troublesome matter.

He simply could not sleep at night. One day he walked through the cemetary and saw an inscription on a tomb. Underneath are the everlasting arms. That night he decided to rest on these everlasting arms. When he went to bed so he turned all his troubles over to God and was able to sleep. Psalm 121:4 says "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. When God is awake there is not use for us to stay awake also. We are to do like Peter. We are to trust God for today and tomorrow - and for whatever may come in the days in the future. It was well known that Argyle the martyr had to be awakened out of his sleep that mourn that he was going to be executed. Yes, only when they have peace of conscience and mind, and a pardoned heart and a pure conscience and a perfect trust can we have the conditions to sleep in the situation as Peter here. So he was in prison.

Prayer was being made for him. And thirdly, peace was in his mind and heart.

From - Payer - Power -

V. POWER

But (God) He could sleep be against any sort of deliverance. never too late. His conscience was clear. because he knew he belonged to God. And he had Now when we come to think about the mighty power here confidence in God. involved in this story - this deals with the visit at night by the angel. The deliverance of Peter from prison by the angel of the Lord shows that his mighty visitants from the other world have little regard for pomp or earthly a prophet had come and said the day before that on the night -(Suppose) mighty being from God's empire would visit Jerusalem. that night, special mission Now, the only man in all that city to receive that honor

Behold I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers of the desert. (Isaiah 43:19)

It is the power of God at work in us that I want us to be open to.

Some years ago, Sara and I were in Yellowstone National Park. We went to see "Old Faithful" and it is spectacular. A large digital clock stands near the geyser, and it announces that every 24 minutes Old Faithful will erupt and send hot water and steam hissing up into the air! We were having lunch in the great dining room there with those huge glass windows, and I was watching that digital clock move around to the magic moment. We experienced that and got back home and read a book by Philip Yancey, a Christian writer, who was there some years ago with his wife. They were waiting to see the eruption, and when the clock signaled one minute before the geyser did its thing, they got up to walk out to stand nearer with everyone else. They were not disappointed, as we were not. It went off on schedule and there was applause, but Yancey glanced back over his shoulder and this is what he saw: "I saw not a single waiter or bus boy looking out the large windows. Old Faithful, grown entirely too familiar, had lost its power to impress them!"

and get on that shuttle and ride toward the church? Do you really expect anything to happen? You had better! God is very likely to do His thing right in this place among us.

it man would have been. A man on the prison floor ained on his right hand and on his left hand to

besides Peter for an angel to see - there were other angel to visit. The king) in Jerusalem at that re been great. The season with all the festivity the devout men of every nation that had come to angel could have gone to the temple. The angel could have gone to the combs of the sited those consecrated men of faith. The one man 1 had come from a distant world to see was shut up tone floor, bound with iron chains, only waiting for id mocked and murdered by the king.

What do you expect to happen when you park your car ne extremity of the situation. All appearances But God is never too late.

> Another thing to consider is the ease with which the angel overcame walls, chains, gates, and soldiers.

into his mother's tongue - we would direct every stranger to that prison and to that castle. Because everyone would like to see it.

And vet here on this earth, some of the most rude and crude homes have been made holy because men have learned to walk with God. And live in sympathy with him. When we let the love of Christ become the law and the life of everything we do. Peter slept so soundly upon the stone floor with both hands chained, and a guard upon both sides that the light which shone from the presence from the celestial messenger did not awaken him.

Paul Harvey, Now for The rust of The story

The Bible says he must hear the angel's voice. And V. 7 - It tells us that he smote Peter on the side. He must feel the touch, of the angel. And he must hear the voice saying, arise up quickly, and the chains fell off. What new life and liberty for the soul to stand forth released from the suffering body. But here was a good man with a good conscience. He can sleep on a very hard bed. And the anxiety and the perils and the worries and treads of life will wear you out. It is much easier to go on with your daily duties. With high and happy faith, as God's people even in prison.

If we fully believe that God has given his angels charge over us, to keep us in all of our ways, we could fulfill our day of duty without fear.

The doctors sometimes say that sound sleeps comes on good digestion. And why I do not deny that - I know another thing quite as well as the doctors.

A good digestion depends greatly upon a good conscience. To be in the best health of body, soul, and mind, we must be at peace with him. He satisfies our mouth with good things. And doth our strength like the eagles.

And he maketh very little difference how humble and exalted the chamber in which we lie down to rest - if we have done our duty well, and if we have trusted

so every link in the two chains which bound Peter that night every stone in the wall of his prison, every bolt in the triple gates, and every one of his l6 guards proved to us that the power enlisted for the defense for the religion of Jesus Christ is mightier than the armies of kings.

Peter was accustomed to miracles. He had seen them in behalf of men. And yet I do not wonder that he was bewildered that night. And thought he had seen a vision.

Imagine with me tonight if possible, the circumstances - that we may better understand his feelings. He is suddenly awakened from a deep sleep. And his cell which had never seen a sunbeam is all ablaze with light. And there stands one before him radiant with celestial beauty) He hears a voice and he cannot choose but obey, arise. He lifts his hands and they are no longer in chains. He stands on his feet and he is free. Again the voice tells him, gird thyself, Peter. And bind on thy sandels And so he did. And he said unto him, cast thy garment about thee. He ties on his cast-off sandels without knowing where he found them - without even looking.

And then he stands bewildered wondering what next. The armed soldiers are still. As if they had been changed to stone on that floor. The voice speaks again and says cast thy garments about thee. He does not know, what he is doing - and the voice says, follow me. And the angel moves toward the closed and bolted door. All the while Peter, who has before has always been talking, had little or nothing to say. He steps over the guards who are asleep and awake - as though he did not see them. And they did not know what he was doing. And he moves after a strange guide.

V.10

- it is shut. They are on the outside of it - and They pass it Peter does not know. He has not seen it open It was before them and it is now behind them - and they move on. There are soldiers within and soldiers without. But they give no heed when the Apostle and his guide pass by. They approach the second gate on the other side of the court of the prison - that too is shut, and guarded within and without. They have already passed it and everything is behind. No creaking of hinges, no clanking of bolts. No sign of alarm or attention from the fourfold guard. is all light as day about the man and the angel. The bolts, the gates, have lost their substance and reality. He passes on.

And then he comes to an outer (iron gate) For that swings open and he can't see the motion. And the two pass out into the public street. There is no sound or unbolting, or look of soldiers who guard within and without. And the gates is shut the moment the angel and the man are out on the street. Peter follows his guide bewildered.

V.101B

No lights shine from the blank walls of the homes. The streets are silent The splendor which flows from his mysterious guide is gone. The bewildered man begins to come to himself. Because he wished not what had been done in V. 9.

V. 11 - And when veter was come to himself he said, now I know of assuredly that the Lord hath sent his angel and hath delivered me What y leter just roll back over + go book to slup God Speaks to min's hearts I'll Deliver you from the bottle or Drugo - your sey He recognizes the place - it was the Very street where the soldiers had taken him a week ago. Where the hostile crowd had sought him. And the people had mocked him. And he had faced the mob.

And he begins to think - and this is Peter. He looks at his swollen wrists

And it is just as real as this. That when God comes and speaks, men should wake up and they should turn to Christ. And they should push these things aside - but they go on in their sins and they come to the end of their way lost and without hope. Now what if Peter had not listened to this angel's voice. God may speak to you through many voices - it may not be some cedestial angel that comes, it may be some neighbor, some friend, some preacher, or some loved one in your family and speaks to you about what is right and what you need to do to get right with God. And to find deliverance. Now that's the voice of God. And so Peter listened.

1,12

Rhada Jerward airl hand knocking Hush whoda Down Rhada Jeware prouping? Jerious Retain Prison you are transported in the large group of the glory for his deliverance. He went to the home where the Christians were praying. And it is so today when people are delivered from their sins, they want to go to the house of God where God's people are. That's why I can't inderstand why some people stay away from church and away from worship and away from the Lord and profess to be Christians. Now listen, when Peter had his deliverance as a result of prayer, he found his way to the people of God. And he found God and thanked God for it, and he told his friends to go and tell about the wonderful experience and that's the way it is and ought to be. And how sweet and wonderful it is for people today.

Peter went on to do much work in this whole world.

Now let us not forget this message tonight - the prison, the prayer the peace, and the power.

The wower of Satan is mighty and we should not discount it. He waits and he watches - he wants to defeat everyone of you.

Second, think about the power of God. God is never too late. He is always complete in his victory. (He) will deliver you. He delivered Peter.

Now the king destroyed and put to death those soldiers in V. 19 - the Bible tells us. And I want to tell you something else - it is payday someday to sin. You look down a little farther in V. 23, and you'll discover that this old king that put the man of God in prison in the first place, you'll see that he is eaten of the worms and he gave up the ghost. How swift and how complete is divine retribution. Herod had willed James, he had Peter in prison, and was going to kill him - and now just as quick as you can say "scat" - the worms crawl over him and eat upon his flesh. Payday has come. The king is reaping what he sowed. It had been the same and has been the same ever since. The man who goes against the Gospel will be eaten of the worms. The great infidels of the world will be given to the worms. The word of God is going to grow and multiply. Herod furnished a banquet for the worms. Friends, look at that wicked man - he was so wicked that when he died, the Bible put this about him.

But think finally about the power of prayer, because these Christians were linked together with his will, his resources were guaranteed.

In prayer they were overcoming Satan. Because when they united - God's victory was certain - it was sure. Freet dives one Built on Prayer Victory was certain - it was sure. I charles in the factor from the Free John Thomas John Charles us! Iron total

This prayer blessed a man because men were ready to pray. Therefore we must use this power of prayer in order to appropriate the power of God against the power of Satan. And we'll be victorious.

I still believe tonight that the angels will come to the many prison doors and the angels will open them still. And many an hour of darkness will be turned to light and someday we'll understand it. The angel of Jehovah encamped around about them, that fear him.

Billy for a

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1-Is the Prayer RATIONAL?
     should deal With Truth Y REASON.
  sti be Personal Sincerity
                                                     them all.
    Would Wife Appreciate Her husband Tapeing
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 exi A Message "I love you very much" she aske him does he love het - says - go Play the Tape
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 how undisciplined the would be.
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  would just PAN-God give Me A STEAK
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 4 STAY out All Night like AN Alley CAT.
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AKE THE LES 1095, While he Prayed py soul in the

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the All Trayers Could Not be Answered hange, than co what ip A CANNIBAL Prayed missionally to eat!

co what ip A CANNIBAL Prayed that Edwood would some more missionally to eat!

A SAVINE, God only does far us what we cannot do for ourselves. Woned Just Pray-God give me A Steak, Medium Well-God here is the Floor-Plan. Deliver me A house. drink Alcoholic ben-smoke drugs of STAY out All Night like AN Alley CAT. 3. Doyon bolieve God has the Power To Arrswer Your Prayers.? how undisciplined the world would be. DAN'T PLAY For good health And STill Would Nevet Nork Would Never develop ANY discipline I'E we got every Prayet ANSwered think

verything grows ent over him

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Missionary to Work with Indians d is it he - like