

Acts against the Church
Acts 12
By Russell Earl

Thesis: I want to remind us of the fact that the church has always been under persecution.

- Intro:
1. I want to show how the church has been under attack since the beginning.
 2. Acts against the church have always been real.
 3. Acts 12 is just one reminder of that face.

I. What happened to James?

- A. Herod's Violence (Acts 12:1-2)
 1. "Harass" to make evil, vex or hurt. **(v.1)**
 2. His hatred for the church was strong even that he committed murder **(v.2)**.
- B. He didn't stop with James (Acts 12:3-4)
 1. The wicked acts of Herod pleased the Jews, how scary that those who profess godliness can be so wicked **(v.3a)**.
 2. Their encouragement in wickedness only propelled Herod to also go after Peter. **(v.3b)**
 3. His intention was to bring Peter before the people, similar to how they treated Christ. **(v.4)**

II. The Lord Intervened

- A. The rescue of Peter (Acts 12:5-10)
 1. People of God must understand the power of prayer **(v.5)**
 2. Escape with help from a messenger **(v.6-10)**
- B. The reaction (Acts 12:11-19)
 1. Peter new his escape was because of God **(v.11)**.
 2. The reaction of the faithful. **(v.12-18)**
 3. Herod's response **(v.19)**
- C. Herod's end (Acts 12:20-23)
 1. Herod was killed **(v.20-23a)**
 2. He did not give glory to God, this wasn't the first time obviously **(v.23b)**

III. Lessons for us today.

- A. Persecution against the church & Christians has always been common
 1. **2 Timothy 3:12**
 2. The Word of God grew despite the actions of Herod and his death **(Acts 12:24)**.
 3. We too must realize the work of the church must continue despite persecution.
- B. Christians must prepare for persecution, including the extreme.
 1. The Christian is to be prepared for as much as possible.
 - a. Persecution
 - b. Hardship
 - c. The 2nd coming
 - i. Preparedness is a necessity.
 - ii. Preparedness does not stop persecution but it can discourage it **(Heb 11:7)**.
 2. We are also told to be sober minded **(1 Pt 5:8)**.

Application & Conclusion:

1. Let us realize the necessity of preparedness.
2. Let us also realize that we are not the first to face persecution and we may not be the last.
3. Full Invitation

Non-Christians must:

Hear – James 1:22, Romans 10:15,17

Believe – Jn 12:44, Jn 8:24, Mt 16:16

Repent – Luke 13:2-3

Confess – John 12:42, Romans 10:9

Be Baptized – 1 Pt 3:21, Acts 22:16, Col 2:11, Mk 16:16, Rom 6:3-4

Live faithfully – John 14:15, Rev 2:10

Christians must:

Repent: Acts 17:20, Acts 8:37, Lk 13:3

Pray: James 5:16, 1 Jn 1:9