

## Unit 32, Session 4: Peter Was Rescued From Prison

**Big Picture Question: What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.**

**Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 12:12 – Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.**

**Christ Connection: God answered the people's prayers for Peter. God had a plan for Peter and the church, and He rescued Peter from his enemies. Peter knew he would face death because he believed in Jesus, but he kept going so he could share the good news of the gospel.**

### **Bible Passage: Acts 12**

Find the passages together in your Bibles and read through them together. You could also read the paraphrase of all these passages below in blue. For younger kids, you may want to just read the bolded portions.

Following Jesus is a matter of spiritual life or death, and sometimes following Jesus becomes a matter of physical life or death. In the early days of the church, those who did not agree with the gospel message that Peter and the other apostles were sharing had begun to oppose Jesus's followers just as much as they had opposed Jesus. Stephen had already been killed (Acts 7), and Peter, John, and other apostles had already been arrested and imprisoned more than once for telling others about the good news of Jesus (Acts 4-5). The opposition the early believers faced from the Jewish leadership spread to those in governmental authority. Herod, who was the king of Jerusalem at the time, killed John's brother James, and to gain the favor of the Jews, he had Peter arrested (Acts 12:1-3). Once again, all these events are taking place during the Passover celebration, and Peter was about to meet the same fate as his Lord (vv. 3-6). Peter and the other disciples knew what had happened to Jesus; they also knew what had happened three days after Jesus had been buried in a tomb. So, they prayed.

The same power that raised Christ from the dead was the same power at work in the interceding prayers of the church (v. 5). It was also the same power that set Peter free from his chains and led him out of the prison and into the city (vv. 7-10). Who else but the Lord could send his angel to rescue his servant (v. 11)? While the episode with Rhoda is humorous, it shows just how astounding the miracle of Peter's release was. No one was expecting him to come knocking on the door, and Rhoda was so shocked she forgot to let him in! Their prayers had been answered and they hardly believed it until they saw Peter in the flesh before them (vv. 12-17). Though Herod threatened the church, God took care of his people. Herod would receive his reward for his wickedness and pride, and Peter was free to share the gospel again. Peter was learning the cost of following Jesus, but Jesus had promised he will be with us. The cost to follow him may be high in this life, but it's nothing compared to the cost of rejecting him.

**King Herod Agrippa was persecuting believers in the church. He killed James, one of Jesus' apostles.** When the king saw how happy this made the Jews, **he arrested Peter too.** The king put Peter into prison and assigned groups of soldiers to keep guard. **While Peter was in prison, other believers in the church prayed and asked God to help him.**

The king planned for Peter to be killed. **The night before his trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. He was in chains,** and the other soldiers stood guard at the gate of the prison. **All of a sudden, an angel of the Lord appeared** and a bright light shone in Peter's prison cell.

The angel struck Peter on the side and woke him up. **"Quick, get up!" the angel said. The chains fell off Peter's wrists. The angel told Peter to get dressed,** so Peter put on his sandals and his cloak. **Then he followed the angel.** Peter wasn't sure what was happening; he thought he was seeing a vision.

**The angel led Peter out of the prison, past the guards, through the gate, and onto the streets. Then the angel left. When Peter looked around, he realized the Lord had rescued him from prison and from certain death!**

**Peter hurried to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where the believers had gathered to pray. When Peter knocked at the door, a servant named Rhoda answered. She heard Peter's voice and she was so happy she rushed back inside, leaving Peter standing outside. "Peter is here! He is at the door!" she announced.**

**But the others didn't believe her. "You're crazy!" they said.** Peter kept knocking, and **when they opened the door, they could hardly believe it. Peter motioned to them to be quiet, and he told them how the Lord had rescued him from prison.**

"Tell James, Jesus' half-brother, and the other brothers about this," Peter said. Then he left. When the sun came up, the soldiers at the prison couldn't figure out what happened to Peter, and the king punished the soldiers because Peter had escaped.

**If you or your child have questions about what it looks like to follow Jesus in salvation or baptism, Pastor Sam would love to talk with you! Please feel free to contact him at [ssievers@lenexabaptist.com](mailto:ssievers@lenexabaptist.com).**