



## Acts

### Lesson 11, Chapter 12

*The winds of change were blowing in the religious lives of first century Jews. Some of the changes were not just old cultural habits that die hard, but biblical statutes that God had established hundreds of years earlier through their forefathers. The Law, the Temple, the sacrifices, Passover and all the symbolic details were constant reminders of the covenant God had made with His chosen people. Though all of these were still significant and active in their lives, the purpose for following them had changed. No longer did God's wrath need to be appeased by obedience to laws and commands, but now through the blood of Messiah the laws and commands became reminders of His grace and mercy.*

*In chapter 11 the Gentiles, through the ministry of Peter, had received salvation, and years of*

*racial prejudice had been shattered. The God of the Jews was now available to all who would believe and receive Him.*

*Though the Church was growing in numbers and increasing geographically, persecution was still a continual reality. Chapter 12 opens with the death of James, the brother of John, and the arrest of Peter by Herod Agrippa I who was the grandson of Herod who ruled at the time of the birth of Christ. Herod Agrippa's uncle was Herod Antipas who was the ruler that was involved with the trial of Jesus. Yet again the believers are challenged to trust God in the midst of difficulty, and so they set their hearts to prayer. Once more God intervenes, Peter is miraculously released, and "the word of God continued to increase and spread." Acts 12:25*

#### READ CHAPTER 12

1. *Why would Herod care that killing James and arresting Peter would please the Jews? Vs. 3*
  
2. *What were Paul and Barnabas doing during this time according to Acts 11:28-30? Now added to this is the persecution of Herod (12:1-2), so what must life in Jerusalem been like?*
  
3. *Why wasn't it likely that Peter would escape Herod's clutches? Vs.4- 6*

4. *Why do you think Peter's friends that were praying for him were so astonished to see him?*
  
5. *What instruction did Peter give the people before he left, and why do you think he told them to do this?*



*Tyre and Sidon were Canaanite cities in the Old Testament. When the Israelites conquered Canaan, they failed to take Sidon. As a result, the people of that area continued to attack and harass the Israelites. In the time of Jesus most of the inhabitants of Sidon were Greek. Many from that region travelled to Galilee to hear Jesus preach (Luke 6:17). Jesus used these two cities as a rebuke to the Jewish cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida saying how much more readily the non-Jewish cities were responding to Him than the Jewish cities (Matthew 11:20-22). Eerdman's Atlas of the Bible*

6. *Read Mark 7:24-30. Describe Jesus' interaction with the woman from Tyre, and explain how this was a potential foreshadow of what is happening in Acts 12.*
  
7. *Find Tyre and Sidon on the map and give details as to how the people from these cities were involved in Herod's death.*
  
8. *How do the events in the beginning verses (1-5) of chapter 12 contrast with the last several verses (19b-24) of the chapter? What does that tell you about the sovereignty of God?*
  
9. *What mission was Barnabas and Saul returning from? Acts 11:27-30*

***Prayer requests:***

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***Group time notes:***

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