**​God’s Faithfulness In Persecution**

Hope Chapel Honolulu

Acts 12:1-24

20 Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. 21 On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. 22 And the people were shouting, “The voice of a god, and not of a man!” 23 Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. 24 But the word of God increased and multiplied.

(Acts 12:20-24, ESV)

**Introduction**

The Christian doctrine of submission to authority can be difficult to understand and accept when living under the rule of men and women who abuse their God-given authority. The Jewish kings who ruled locally under the authority of the Roman Empire were such abusers of authority. The King Herod we read of here in Acts 12 is the grandson of Herod the Great who rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem and tried to kill the infant Christ by ordering the execution of all male children under the age of two in Matthew 2:16.

**1. A king attempts targeted persecution. (Acts 12:1-5)**

 a) Who was Herod Agrippa I?

 b) The difference between social pressure or rejection, persecution and targeted persecution.

**2. Angelic assistance and rescue for Peter. (Acts 12:6-19)**

 a) An angelic rescue.

 b) Unbelieving disciples and an angry king.

**3. The death of Herod Agrippa I. (Acts 12:20-24)**

 a) Foolish pride and the abuse of God-given authority.

 b) Another special example of God’s judgment.

**Conclusion**

There are several troubling facts as laid out here in Luke’s historical narrative. Why God allows James to be killed but rescues Peter is one such fact. A second might be the unbelief of the disciples at Peter’s miraculous rescue. A third troubling fact may well be caused by how Luke’s account of Herod’s death is translated into English here: “Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last” (Acts 12:23). However, none of these change the fact that God remains faithful even when we are faithless.

**For our prayerful study, discussion and application:**

1) Read Acts 12:1-19. What was happening to the leaders of the church and how were they responding?

2) Compare Acts 5:1-11 and 12:20-24. What can we learn about the judgment of God from these passages?

3) What are the Word and Spirit of God showing and telling you about God’s power, love and faithfulness?

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