

# ACTS: To the Ends of the Earth

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## Study 26: When God's People Pray

**READ** Acts 12:1-25 and **LISTEN** to the [sermon](#) by Pastor Craig.

In Acts 12 the persecution against the church in Jerusalem reaches another new high. The church earnestly prays as James is killed by the hand of Herod Agrippa I and Peter is miraculously saved from prison and likely death. Yet, Herod's opposition is short-lived as God judges him for taking God's glory and opposing God's people. In our passage Luke wants us to understand the importance of prayer in the life of the church as she submits herself to the sovereign will of God. He also wants to illustrate the dangers of being a believer in Jesus and the danger of opposing God's work.

**Big idea:** God answers His people's prayers according to His sovereign plans that often seem confusing and surprising.

### Questions:

1. Do you pray believing God will answer your prayers? Share a time when God answered one of your prayers in a surprising way.
2. How would you answer someone who says, "I don't pray since God is sovereign, and He will do what He wants despite my prayers"?
3. Which Herod is mentioned in v. 1? Was this the Herod who tried to kill baby Jesus and presided over the trial of Jesus? See back page.
4. Why do you think Herod wanted to persecute the church (vv. 1-4)? How does this help you understand people's motivation in persecuting believers?

5. What was the response of Rhoda and the gathered believers to the news of Peter's miraculous release? What do you learn from this?

6. Herod liked to exalt himself (vv. 20-23). What does it mean to be a self-exalter? How can we fight against the temptation to be one?

7. From 1 Peter 2:22-23, how did Jesus respond when persecuted?

How does what occurred to Herod (vv. 20-23) uphold Jesus' response, exalt God and encourage you?

8. Regardless of all that was happening to the believers at this time, how did God move His kingdom forward (v. 24)? How might that encourage you as you face loss, difficulty, persecution, and/or hardship?

9. Notice the diligence of the church at that time to see God's gospel expand through proclamation, prayers and fellowship. What might be the next steps you need to take to be more engaged with God's mission through Christ's church?

### STOP AND PRAY:

**Praise:** God for His sovereign rule and control over every circumstance of your life

**Thank:** the Lord that He hears and answers your prayers according to His perfect will

**Pray:** that you may be given the grace to trust God in your difficulties and hardships

**1**  
**Herod the Great**  
Governor of Galilee (r. 47–37 B.C.E.)  
King of the Jews (r. 37–4 B.C.E.)

**Jesus**  
HE TRIED TO KILL

*OTHER WIVES*

- Doris
- Phaedra
- Pallas
- unknown
- Elpis
- unknown

**Herod the Great's Family Tree**

