

1 **ACTS Session 11: The Church in Antioch**

2 Welcome back to the Acts of the Apostles. We are in chapters 11 and 12 for this session, and it's an
3 exciting session. Let's begin with prayer: In the NAME of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
4 Lord Jesus, once again we thank you for the opportunity to study your word. And we pray, Lord, that
5 You would give us insight into your Word and a practical application for everyday life. We thank You,
6 Lord, for the privilege of being conformed to your image, and asked you to help us in this area. Now, all
7 the areas of our life that need to be conformed to you, we ask You, Lord to do that. And may we fight
8 vice with virtue. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. In the NAME of the Father and the Son, and the
9 Holy Spirit ACTS 11-12; we're going to take both of them on this week and they are exciting chapters,
10 two very different chapters. Chapter 11 deals with kind of the remnant of chapter 10, the fallout of
11 Cornelius the first Gentile convert, and the challenge to Peter as to why he ended up going to a
12 barbecue. Why he ended up eating with Gentiles. And he gives a defense of this in chapter 12, and it
13 gets into a very interesting look at the early church, as a church that is reliving the life of Christ and
14 continuing a theme that we want to talk about today and that is the new Exodus. In Luke 12, Luke gives
15 us a really interesting kind of veiled insight into the continuation of the new Exodus and the church's
16 responsibility to continue what Jesus began. **In the new Exodus, you know about the Old Testament
17 exodus of the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. But in the New Testament, Jesus leads a new
18 Exodus, which is an exodus from the bondage of sin.** And the church is going to perpetuate this and
19 we're going to look at that in chapter 12 in a way that perhaps you've never seen before. And today,
20 we'll give you a look at just how not just clever but just how artistic God is using Luke to write the book
21 of Acts. Because originally, Luke and Acts were one book. And it's kind of funny, because when you go
22 into stores to get a commentary on ACTS, it's harder to find one on ACTS; you usually will see
23 Luke/ACTS. You'll see them together because Luke wrote them both. And they're kind of meant to be
24 looked at together. There are mirrors of each other in many ways. We don't have the time to go into
25 that in great detail, but it's a really interesting, interesting study.

26 Well, after ACTS 10: 11-18 includes the bringing of Cornelius into the church. All of this involves the
27 conversion of the first Gentile through Peter and the initial Jewish response. Now God in today's
28 chapters 11 and 12, is going to orchestrate the first Gentile outreach to the world from **Antioch and
29 Antioch will act as sort of a staging ground, a hub for Paul's three missionary journeys, Antioch of
30 Syria.** So, I want to take a look just briefly at the first 17 verses or so of the 11th chapter. We're not
31 going to read them all, but they are in response to the Cornelius incident in chapter 10. ACTS 11: 1, *Now
32 the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of
33 God. So, when Peter went up to Jerusalem and the Circumcision Party criticized him saying, Why did you
34 go to uncircumcised men and eat with them? Then Peter began and exclaimed, explaining to them in
35 order. I was in the city of Joppa, praying, and in a trance, I saw a vision.* And he goes on and he explains
36 again, he reiterates again, what happened with Cornelius. And then moving over to verse 17, he
37 concludes, and he says, *If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the
38 Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God. When they heard this, they were silenced, and
39 they glorified God's saying, then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life.* Then from
40 there in chapter 11, verse 19, *Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over
41 Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch speaking the Word to none except Jews. But
42 there were some of them men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Greeks also,
43 preaching the Lord Jesus.* Now it mentions there that *due to the persecution of Stephen*, earlier in

chapter, these people now are moving out. And there's three cities mentioned Phoenicia, which if you look on a map, you'll see the Phoenicians, just northwest of Galilee, and the north, just northwest on the Mediterranean Sea, you have Phoenicia, you also have Cyprus, which is an island off the coast of the Mediterranean coast, in the Mediterranean Sea. It's an island, Cyprus, and then Antioch, which is a city in Assyria, Northeast of, of Israel. So, you have these three, and then in verse 20, it mentions not only Cyprus, but it mentions Cyrene, *But there was some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene*. Cyrene is Northern Africa, right around Libya. So, you have people now that are beginning to spread throughout the whole world. And these people *spoke to the Greeks also preaching the Lord Jesus, and the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number that believe turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch*. Now earlier in Samaria, an official representative from Jerusalem was sent to some area when the gospel went out at that time. And now, just like some areas, when the gospel has gone out into these Gentile nations, there's a representative from Jerusalem that's going to go and confirm the work that God has started in these areas. And in this case, Barnabas is sent, in verses 23 and 24, to confirm. Barnabas was very pleased with the work that was done in Antioch, which is a pattern of the early church. Verse 23, *when he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them to all remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and a faith in a large company was added to the Lord*. So, Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul and when he had found him, he took him to Antioch for a whole year; they met with the church and taught. So, Saul had been in Tarsus, up to this point, you might remember earlier, it was the Hellenistic Jews that were threatening to kill him, and his life was saved, and he fled. And he has been spending quite a bit of time in Tarsus doing what? Well, listening to the tape series of Peter and others studying up on the faith and learning more about it and praying, and now he's being sent to Antioch by Barnabas, to spend some time teaching in Antioch. In fact, he's going to be there for about a year. And it's here in Antioch that they, the people who follow Christ, are first called Christians. And there's a couple of other places in the New Testament where it refers to believers as Christians, and one of those is in Acts 26: 28 and the other which is related to suffering in 1 Peter 4:16. Now in chapter 11, verse 28, this begins, something that's just fascinating to study and I've been looking forward to kind of bringing you through this verse 28 of chapter 11, all the way through chapter 12. We have the introduction of a man by the name of Agabus. And it says in verse 27, now in these days, Prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. So, they have this regular stream of men coming from Jerusalem to Antioch. Some of them have a prophetic gift. One of these men is Agabus and he stood up, and foretold by the Spirit, that there would be a great famine over all the world, and this took place in the days of Claudius. Now you have to ask yourself a question out of all of the things that God could tell us in the Bible, we could have millions of books this size, about God and Jesus Christ and it would just be the beginning. A million books like this, it'd be just the beginning, would even hardly be the beginning yet he chose to give us this much in written form. And out of this, he mentions this prophet by the name of Agabus who comes from Jerusalem to Antioch, and he prophesized that there's going to be a worldwide famine. Now you have to ask yourself, remember, we've said this before Winnie the Pooh theology, think, think, think - we've got to ask ourselves, why? Why would he bring up all of the things that we brought up in a famine? Why? Well, there's a reason why and we're going to circle around later, we're going to come back to this and we're going to see the logic of why, Luke through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wants you to be thinking before we get into chapter 12, about a famine. So that's how you do Bible study, you run into it, you got to ask yourself, *why that God?* Why start asking questions? That's how we get some answers.

Now, this prophet predicted something else in the New Testament, in ACTS 21:10-11, Agabus is going to come back on the scene later, and he is going to predict the imprisonment of Paul in Jerusalem. He's going to warn Paul, this guy is a prophet. But here he predicts a great famine over the world. And what's interesting is that historians like Josephus, Tacitus, and others, all record in their writings that there was indeed a worldwide famine during 40 AD, and this happens to be when Claudius is king when Agabus says, *there's going to be a great famine*. And this took place in the days of Claudius; Claudius reigned from 41 to 54. AD, and Josephus and Tacitus both mentioned this worldwide famine that took place. Well, Agabus was one who prophesied there's going to be a famine. Now that's something natural. When we study the Bible, we look at the **literal**, and then we look at the **spiritual senses**. And we know literally what this is talking about (a famine). But now we have to get under the hood. Now we have to peel back the layers of the onion and find out what's the deeper meaning here? **What is the spiritual meaning how does this relate to Christ? How does it relate to me? How does it relate to the future?** Well, we will get back to that but now we're going to circle back around to Agabus in just a little bit. But continuing on with the rest of this chapter, verse 29. *And the disciples determined everyone according to his ability to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea*. Seems like a small little verse in there, and yet its power packed with so much. These brethren determined that everyone, according to his ability, should give something for the brethren in Judea. What's happening to the brethren in Judea? The brethren in Judea are being persecuted. They're being persecuted, and they are going without. And this is a **great example right here of the church in action and solidarity, that when one member of the body is hurting, we all hurt**. Earlier this evening, before we began this lesson, I mentioned the passing of a dear friend in our parish and I heard several people gasp for a moment, that when one family hurts, it hurts us; there is solidarity. **We have all things in common**, not only in the **communion of the saints** do we have the spiritual realities in common with our brothers and sisters, but we also have the tangible realities of the **church in common**. We are one family; we are one body and so what is the response to the church? We're going to give something; we're going to give. Now, it's kind of interesting, because when you talk about the seven deadly sins, one of the seven deadly sins is **avarice**, or what we would call **greed**. Greed is this need for things, the need to possess things, the need to secure our future with finances, to have something that if we can secure, something we think it's going to give us peace. That's avarice. That's greed. But you know how the church fathers tell us the great philosophers tell us how do you combat greed? You combat greed and you would think literally - generosity, certainly, but chiefly **we combat greed and avarice with Mercy**. **Mercy, because mercy is giving ourselves**, we give of ourselves. We're merciful. And so, these brethren hear about the plight of the brethren in Judea and what do they do? They respond not in greed, but in mercy in giving of ourselves. And that is a wonderful, wonderful thing to do. I wish we had time to go into that in great detail about this effort to help the brethren in Judea. By the way, let me just circle back there for a second, one of the great ways to deal with greed and avarice but right now, this is after the holidays and Christmas where we just spent a lot of time getting, you look underneath probably some of your trees are still set up in piles and presents still underneath them. How do we fight greed in our lives? We give away what we have. We give away what we have literally, Mercy. This is one of the first of two relief efforts from Paul the second one in chapter 24, where he also brings relief. Well, this chapter ends by saying, *they did so by sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul*.

Now, chapter 12 begins this second wave of persecution. The **first wave of persecution was targeted toward the laity**. (ACTS 8) Remember that clear back in chapter eight? The first persecution was Stephen, the laity. And remember, Gamaliel said, *Do not bother Peter and the leaders*, so they didn't,

but they went after the laity here in chapter 12. In the **second wave of persecution, they're going to focus on the leadership**. And this time the leadership will consist of Peter and James. And so, it starts off and says, *about that time, Herod, the king laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He killed James, the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it was to please the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also, this was during the days of leaven bread.* Oh, back up for just a moment kind of unpack this Herod the king, which Herod are we talking about? We're talking about the grandson of Herod the Great. This is Herod Agrippa. Herod Agrippa is the grandson of Herod the Great who ruled Palestine from 41 to 44 AD. For those few years, he ruled, and he is going to be he's going to be violent towards the Christians. Now, earlier in chapter 11, it says that they were first called Christians at Antioch. You know what that word **Christian** literally means? It's a Latin word which means **partisan of Christ**, a partisan of Christ. We talk about partisan politics, as politics where we're one sided. We have a particular view, a particular agenda. But we're partisan to Christ; we're partisan religious people. We are partisan to Christ, we are Christians. That's where the word comes from. And this is causing no small stir at this time. And Herod is going to squelch it. And he is different than the earlier leaders. He's going to go after the leadership, so he takes James now. James is the son of Zebedee and one of the 12 disciples. He is the second to be martyred. Stephen was the first. Now tradition tells us that all of the disciples were martyred. Of course, Peter was crucified upside down. Others were skinned alive. Others were crucified and beheaded, burned alive. But John is the only one who wasn't murdered. The writer John banished Patmos, the island of Patmos and they tried to boil him alive in oil and he wouldn't die. But all the rest died a martyr's death. And it says about James the son of Zebedee, one of the sons of thunder died with a sword. Now that term **with the sword** is an important term because that means that this is **capital punishment**. And not just capital punishment, but capital punishment for the worst of crimes, the sword, was reserved for the worst of crimes. And one of the **worst crimes** was that somebody could commit was **apostasy**, to leave the faith. And so, James is undergoing capital punishment, because he's being accused of leaving the faith, leaving the faith. Now, what's interesting about capital punishment, The Church does not actually teach against capital punishment. Nowhere in our tradition really does it teach against capital punishment. But currently, in the age we're living in now, it is **very much discouraged**. And the reason is not because of tradition, but because of injustice, with the American bishops and the Holy Father, Pope John Paul the second and now Benedict, the 16th. would be against capital punishment, for the simple reason that many innocent people are on death row, and that we cannot take the chance on killing the innocent. And so, we're very careful with capital punishment and the Catechism of the Catholic Church mentions that it should be used ~~actually~~ the language used is extremely rare, extremely rare. There's more to say about that, if you want to read about it, you can read Paul's take on the role of the Roman government as the instrument of God to carry out punishment in Romans 13: 4. We are not going to get into that but it's an interesting side road if you ever want to go down that road. Notice that after James is martyred, he is not replaced as Judas was replaced. **Judas was replaced because Judas disqualified himself from that office, James fulfills the office, and the office is not replaced**. There's apostolic succession that goes out from all of the apostles, but that office is not replaced. So as each apostle dies, the number of the original 12 dwindles. But the apostolic succession continues. On an interesting little note, I was reading a commentary on ACTS by the venerable BEDE,¹ and he mentions in his commentary on ACTS about Clement of Alexandria, and this martyrdom of James at the hands of Herod. Listen to this. it is kind of interesting. Clement of Alexandria reports a certain memorable story. He says that the man who turned James in, the man who turned James over to judgment of martyrdom, was himself moved to confess himself a Christian. Both were led

176 away together to punishment. And while they were being led on the way, he asked James to forgive
177 him, he (James) considered for a moment and said, *Peace be to you*, and kissed him. And so, both were
178 beheaded at the same time. **That's a tradition.** And Clement of Alexandria continues this and mentions
179 that, *Yes, this is what we have heard, that the man that turned in James was so convicted by it, and by*
180 *James' life and his holiness, that he asked for forgiveness and went with him in chains. And they were*
181 *both beheaded.*

182 Now, I want to shift gears here slightly, and look at ACTS 12:3 because here things really shift. And if I
183 were to put a name on chapter 12, I think I would have to call it *the new Exodus continues*, and this is
184 going to be a display in creative writing and insight into scripture on Luke's part that is really interesting.
185 It says in verse three, *and when he saw that it pleased the Jews*, (this killing of James) *and he proceeded*
186 *to arrest Peter also*. So, in other words, Herod says, *Wow, when I beheaded James, this went over so well*
187 *in the streets, that I am going to keep this thing going. This is raising my popularity, people like this*. But
188 he pauses for a second. Why? Because it was during the **Days of Unleavened Bread**. Now we have to ask
189 yourself, it's during the Days of Unleavened Bread. What does that mean, *the Days of Unleavened*
190 *Bread*? It's speaking of Passover followed by six other days of unleavened bread. And so, in the midst of
191 this, where he's going to say that they seized Peter, (verse four), put him in prison, and delivered him to
192 four squads of soldiers to guard him and intending after Passover, to bring him out to the people. So,
193 Peter was kept in prison, but **earnest prayer** for him was made to God by The Church and we have to
194 ask ourselves, why did Luke feel that it was important to mention in the context of Peter being
195 imprisoned, that it's the Passover. Why? Why, why? Why does he do that? That's a question to keep in
196 the back of your head. The fact that Peter is imprisoned during Passover week is going to recall
197 something. It's going to recall the Exodus. Remember we studied in the Gospel of Matthew that one of
198 the major themes of Jesus ministry is he is leading the new. **Jesus is leading the new Exodus, which is**
199 **not an exodus from the bondage of Egypt, but the bondage of sin.** And the work that Jesus begins in
200 this new Exodus is going to be perpetuated by The Church and continued by The Church. Now, here's
201 what is really interesting, all of this begins to fit together as I'm going through the rest of chapter 12.
202 Think in your head about the Exodus and all of the corresponding details between this story and the
203 Exodus 4:20 and it seems to me, they put him in prison, delivered him to four squads of soldiers, (four
204 squads are four shifts of four, so you got four soldiers guarding Peter, which back in those days, this is
205 called maximum security, four squads of four, that are going to be watching Peter, and guarding him,
206 making sure that he doesn't escape. And because Herod saw that killing James went over so well, he's
207 going to wait and do an encore after the feast is over with, then it goes on and it says, *After the Passover*
208 *to bring him out to the people*, so Peter was kept in prison. But **earnest prayer** for him was made to God
209 by The Church. I want you to think about that for a second. Peter is in prison, but **earnest prayer** is going
210 up. The Church is praying, and there's a number of things that we want to take a look at here. But I want
211 to back up for a second. In order to understand what's happening here and how Luke is showing you
212 that the early church is continuing the new Exodus, and it blends so well into the Old Testament, **you**
213 **have to understand that Luke is casting the unbelieving Jews in the role of the Egyptians.** And the role
214 of Pharaoh is the role of Herod in the role of Pharaoh. So, you've got the unbelieving Jews in the role of
215 the Egyptians. You've got Herod in the role of Pharaoh in the Old Testament, and we'll see what
216 happens here. Now you say, did you come up with that, Jeff? No, I did not come up with that. I wish I
217 did. I'm not that smart. But I'm standing on the shoulders of church fathers who have dug out so much
218 we have to be so grateful for them. Notice in verse five Peter is kept in prison, but earnest prayer for
219 him was made to God by The Church. Do you remember back in the Old Testament how the Exodus

begins? Remember that the Exodus begins with the people in bondage, and they began to cry out and ask God for deliverance. Remember that? They cried out and God heard their cry and sent Moses to deliver. And that's what's happening here in a more marvelous way. They're in **earnest prayer**. I want to pause there just for a second; break away from the Exodus motif and talk to us about something practical for a moment. What is the response of the early church during persecution? What is our response during persecution? What is our response when we hear bad news? When difficulties happen in our life, what is our response? Do we moan and complain and say, *why me*? You know that kind of thing? Or do we do what happens here in the New Testament? Their initial response is prayer. They begin to pray earnestly. They pray. And **this is where the battle is won, in prayer** and in our lives. When we face difficulties in our lives, what do we do? Pray. In fact, whether people mean it religiously or sacrilegious one of the first words to come out of anyone's mouth, if first hearing of bad news is **Oh, my, oh, my God**; they turn to God in prayer immediately. And I asked myself, Why do we do that? Well, it's like a child. When a child feels threatened, when a child is emotional, not sure what's going on, is scared, depressed, discouraged or frightened, whatever it might be, what do they do? They immediately go to their mother. And they literally shadow their mother, they don't want to be away from their mother. They don't want to be away from their father. They feel safe and secure there. When children are faced with difficulty and they're scared, whatever might happen, they don't go wandering off. They don't go, *I can handle this myself*. They run to mom, or they run to dad, in an adult way. We as Christians, what do we do when we have bad news and difficulties come upon us? We begin to pray immediately to the Lord. Why? Because there's nothing like being by our mother as a child. As an adult, there's no better place to be when difficulty comes our way than to be in the will of God. I can go through anything if I know Jesus, you are with me. And so immediately when bad things happen, we begin to pray, we begin to intercede. Why? We want God's will. That's the best place to be in the midst of difficult situations. I've heard people say before, and I would concur, *I would rather be on the frontlines in Iraq in God's will, than out of God's will, sitting on Miami Beach with a beer. I would rather be in God's will, because that's the best place for me to be*. That's the most secure place for me to be. And so here is their leader, the first vicar, Peter, arrested. And Herod has already shown us what he likes to do. He likes to be head leader. He gets a kick out of it. It's popular for him. And Peter has been arrested, you can play out the scenario of what's going to happen to Peter. He is going to lose his head and what's their first response? They begin to intercede in the NAME of Jesus; they begin to pray. And that should be our response as a church. I think about all the different times where I've heard tragic news. And I have to tell you, it's like **written into the spiritual DNA**. And I know that many of you, most of you are like these two. The minute something happens, what do we say? *Let us pray*. Why do we say that? Because **the best place to be in a difficult situation is in the will of God**. Right now, I don't want to be outside of the will of God. You hear something about your child, in the hospital? Maybe there's a sickness, whatever it might be an accident. What do we do? Pray. Pray. Now the Catechism of the Catholic Church has some wonderful things to say about this in the fourth pillar of the Catechism in Article 2634. Three different articles here. They're all wonderful. Listen to what it says under **intercession 2634 to 2636, *Intercession is a prayer of petition, which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners. He is able for all time, to save those who draw near to God through Him since He always lives to make intercession for them. The Holy Spirit Himself intercedes for us and intercedes for the saints, according to the will of God. Since Abraham, intercession - asking on behalf of another - has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God's mercy. In the age of The Church, Christian intercession participates in Christ's, as an expression of the communion of saints. In***

intercession, he who prays looks **not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others**, even to the point of praying for those who do him harm. The first Christian communities live this form of fellowship intensely. Thus, the Apostle Paul gave them a share in his ministry of preaching the gospel, but also intercedes for them. The intercession of Christians recognizes no boundaries, **for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions**, for persecutors for the salvation of those who reject the Gospel. So, think of it for a second, it's a wonderful thing, we have the opportunity - no boundaries. We're not limited by authorities, we're not limited by geography, we're not limited by wisdom. We are **unlimited prayer** in the difficulties of the world, and God uses His body as we pray in His name and works with us to deal with the challenges in life. And that is a wonderful, wonderful thing to participate in. That's what the early church is doing here. They are earnestly praying for him, though it will circle around to that again at the very end and also to fill in this exodus motif -prayer, and what is our role in the great exodus.

We move on to verse six, *The very night when Herod was about to bring him out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains and sentries before the door was guarding the prison, and behold, an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. And he struck Peter on the side and woke him saying, **Get up quickly**. And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, **dress yourself and put on your sandals**.* Imagine this for a moment, you're Peter, and you're in prison. You've already caught word of what happened to James, and you're in prison now. And suddenly, an angel of the Lord hits you in the side. You kind of wake up and every time I read this, I think to myself, sometimes angels can be rude, but obviously there is a sense of urgency here. There's a hurry here for some reason. Why might that be? Well, there's the natural and that is we got to get out of the prison, but it also matches the Exodus 3:12 story where God is telling them to hurry in this exodus. We'll take a look at that in just in just a moment. But the venerable BEDE said this about the striking and Peter side. So, I think he's lying there sleeping also. Why get dressed with your sandals on? The venerable BEDE says, and I quote, *the striking of his side was a remembrance of the Passion of Christ, hence of the Passion of Christ from who's wound our salvation poured forth. It's a reminder that salvation is because of Christ in His wounds.* Sometimes I think in our marriages, what you need to do to your husband, or what you need to do to your wife in the midst of difficult situations, you just do that inside? Just a little reminder, why would you do that for? Because the answer is going to come from Christ in the work that he did on the cross. I often receive letters or email saying my husband and I got into a big fight because I like... but doesn't this happen? You know, have a marriage seminar, we talked about marriage, and there's a lot of elbows remembering. So, the angels struck Peter in the side, and he says, *dress yourself and put on your sandals*. Now, most Americans reading now think that's just part of the story. That's really neat. *Put on your sandals and get dressed really fast.* But to those who have read the Old Testament, they're going to ask themselves, *have I heard this before? Someone's in prison, someone's in bondage. People are praying for them. An angel comes and says, dress yourself and put on your sandals.* This is echoing the instructions given to the Israelites to eat the Passover with their loins girded and their sandals on their feet, and to eat in haste, Exodus 12:11. I'd like to just read that to you really quickly. Exodus 12:11 says, *In this manner, you shall eat the Passover, your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.* And so, you have this echoing back to Exodus 12. One commentary that I read actually mentioned that most likely Peter here, in verses seven and eight and nine, says in verse eight, and the angel said to him, *dress yourself and put on your sandals. And he did so. And he said to him, wrap your mantel around you and follow me*, that most likely his mantle was around his feet because he was keeping warm in the cold prison. And the angel says, *Put that mantle on, get your sandals on get dressed, hurry up, we're going to get out of here.* So, the angel of the Lord leads Peter out of the prison, rescuing him from the hand of Herod. Okay, that's what it says. I'll

read it for you here. Verse nine, *and he went out and followed him. And he did not know that what was done by the angel was real but thought he was seeing a vision when they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city, it opened to them of its own accord. And they went out and passed on, through one street passed on through one street. And immediately the angel left, and Peter came to himself and said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod. And from all that the Jewish people were expecting, this also should remind you of something. So, we all we should remember that to study the Bible as a Catholic, is to always be thinking about how this text fits into the rest of the Bible. How does it fit into the rest of the Bible, and to be rescued out of the hands of Herod? It should remind you of something and that something should remind you of Exodus 3:7, which says. Then the Lord said, *I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters*. Remember, earlier here in chapter 12, verse five, Peter was in prison, but the **earnest prayer** for him was made by The Church. Okay. So back in Exodus where God is responding to their prayer; they're in bondage, they need help, and He delivers them. Here, in the New Testament, the same thing. The Lord said, *I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and I've heard their cry because of their taskmasters, I know, their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians*. So that phrase is used, *I've come to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians* is in the same context here in Acts 12. It says that Peter is *delivered out of the hand of Herod*. very, very interesting. So, you have you have the absolute parallel there. Now, just a note on angels because angels are involved in this story. It was believed back then, and it's believed by The Church, that every person has a personal Angel, a guardian angel and in fact, Jesus alludes to this in Matthew 18:10. You can read that on your own. Jesus alludes to the fact that every person has an angel and then in the Old Testament in Genesis 48:16 in dealing with Jacob, Jacob has this same understanding that an angel delivered him. So just kind of earmark that. **You just never know what's going to happen, that there's more to your circumstances than just you and what you can see, that God also has angels that can do marvelous, marvelous things.** Now a couple other points here back to chapter 12, we have a lot more I want to cover here just in 10 minutes. So, move along with me here. Right when he (Peter) is freed in verse 12, where does he go? He goes to Mary's house. Who is Mary? Mary is the mother of John, who is also called Mark. John Mark is a cousin of Barnabas and will later work with Paul and will write the second gospel, the gospel of Mark. He goes to Mary's house, and after convincing the disciples of his identity, Peter describes how the Lord brought him out. Notice in ACTS 12:13 -17 but *motioning to them with his hands to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison*. That Word *brought him out of the prison* is used for Exodus in Greek, in the Septuagint, Exodus, and it's the same word that's used in Exodus 3:8, how God came down to bring Israel out of the land of Egypt. So, you got to look at this carefully and ask yourself, what is Luke trying to get across to us? Obviously, for those that speak Greek, he wants us to think about the Exodus here. And what Exodus? Not the former Exodus, but the new Exodus, the exodus that Jesus began. So, what is our role in this new Exodus? Well, we'll get to that in just in just a moment here. It mentions in verse 17, *they brought him up out of the prison and said, "Tell this to James into the brethren*. So, Peter is said I'm, he explains how he was brought out of prison. And then his next statement is, *go tell this to James, and to the brethren*. And then he departed and went to another place. Now, just as Joseph in the Old Testament was delivered from prison and Israel's exodus from Egypt where foreshadowing of Jesus resurrection, so Peters deliverance from prison, here in ACTS 12, is a retro-reflection of Jesus resurrection. **The servant follows in the steps of the master**. But here's what I want to do. Look how closely these events in chapter 12 recapitulate the resurrection of Jesus. Remember I told you that*

1. Old Testament: you've got the story
2. New Testament: you've got Jesus reliving the life of Israel and he's successful.

3. ACTS: we see The Church living the life of Christ; what happens to Christ happens to us and what he started, we perpetuate, we continue.

This is what Luke is showing us that the work of the new Exodus is continuing on. And it is powered by the resurrection, that God can set people free. Listen to some of the contrast. Look how closely these events recapitulate the resurrection of Jesus, the first persons to encounter Jesus are women.

Parallels:

Rhoda	Women
ACTS: 12:13 – recognized Peter’s voice at gate after his escape from prison; ran to tell Christians that Peter was at the gate	After seeing empty tomb, ran back to tell disciples about Jesus’ resurrection
Disciples did not believe her	Disciples did not believe them
Disciples said she heard a <i>ghost</i> until they ran to gate and let him in	Disciples thought Jesus was a ghost until He ate with them

See the parallels in the two? Finally, they let Peter in. And he told them what had happened and then he said, *report these things to James and the brethren*. Now, if you compare that to Matthew 28, Jesus saying, *go to Galilee and wait - go tell the brethren*, we see uncanny parallels; **both of them departed and went to another place**. So, you see the parallel with the Old Testament Exodus, what’s happening in Peter in prison and coming out of prison in The Church praying, but you also see the resurrection of Christ.

WORLDWIDE FAMINE: Now the Exodus from Egypt is woven into the resurrection of Jesus as background to Peter's deliverance. But think back for just a second. Remember what I said earlier about Agamas? We're going to circle back to see what this means in the context of chapters 11 and 12. There is another broader Exodus taking place in ACTS 12. The story actually begins in Antioch in Acts 11:27. Remember what happened there? Agabus prophesied a world-wide famine. Think, think, think, back to the Exodus. How did they get down into Egypt? A world-wide famine, and Jacob's family had to go down into Egypt. And so, you've **got this story with famine, and leading to bondage to people crying out to God, to God delivering**, *put your sandals on, make haste, I'm going to bring you out Exodus*. It's happening to The Church, the new Exodus is continuing, not from Egypt, but from the bondage of sin. Now Barnabas and Saul go to Jerusalem to take food there. This is the equivalent to the descent of Jacob's family into Egypt. And then at the very end of Chapter 12, what happens? Herod is struck down. ACTS 12:20 Herod was angry. with the people of Tyre and Sidon; and they came to him in a body and having persuaded Blastus, the King's Chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the King's country for food. On an appointed day, Herod put on his royal robes, took a seat upon the throne and made an oration to them and the people shouted, *the voice of a God and not of man*. Problem was Herod thought he believed it. And it says, *immediately an angel of the Lord smote him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died*. **Herod is in the role of Pharaoh and as Pharaoh was struck down because he did not give glory to God, Herod is struck down at the end of this story.**

Now wrapping this all up, what does it mean for us? **It means that you and I are involved in the new Exodus, that what Christ started in his work in the Gospel, we're now perpetuating that new Exodus**, and what is our role? We look out and we see Uncle Fred and Susan, we see our brother Greg, we see our sister, Mary Lou, we see our friends at work, we see fellow neighbors in bondage, and what is our role? Our role is to send up prayer and begin to intercede for the new Exodus, that people would be set free from bondage. The best response that we can have to our relatives who are in bondage is what? Prayer. Pray for them. Pray that God will bring release and he may do that through an angel. He may do

395 that through a friend, you might be the instrument of God, in somebody else's prayer to bring about the
396 new exodus in their life. So, Peter is demonstrating it in the church here and now that's our role to learn
397 from this and to walk in this revelation. So, as you imagine that relative of yours in bondage, in shackles,
398 you say, *Boy, I wish there was something I could do*, there is. Pray, pray and intercede. And as Paul and
399 Barnabas do, they're merciful, and they bring aid to the brethren in Judea. So, there's so much that we
400 can learn here in this story in chapter 11 and chapter 12.

401 Now, did you ever think there was that much there in the story? Early Church Fathers were great at
402 seeing this. I wish I could take credit for it, but I can't. All I can do is pass it on to you and pass it on to
403 myself. And now get on my knees and begin to intercede for those who are in bondage because guess
404 what? **The new exodus has begun, and God is looking for people who will be faithful (available).** Let's
405 pray. In the NAME of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Jesus, we thank you today for
406 this new Exodus. Thank you for delivering us from bondage and sin. Use us, Lord, and in deliverance of
407 those who are imprisoned in their soul, in prison to depression and anxiety and sin into materialism.
408 Help us Lord, help us. We intercede in Jesus' name, Amen. In the NAME of the Father, the Son and Holy
409 Spirit. Amen

410 ¹ Venerable Bede: Born on lands belonging to the twin monastery of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow in
411 present-day Tyne and Wear, Bede was sent to Monkwearmouth at the age of seven and later joined
412 Abbot Ceolfrith at Jarrow. Both of them survived a plague that struck in 686 and killed a majority of the
413 population there. While Bede spent most of his life in the monastery, he travelled to several abbeys and
414 monasteries across the British Isles, even visiting the archbishop of York and King Ceolwulf of
415 Northumbria.

416 He is well known as an author, teacher (Alcuin was a student of one of his pupils), and scholar, and his
417 most famous work, Ecclesiastical History of the English People, gained him the title "The Father
418 of English History". His ecumenical writings were extensive and included a number of Biblical
419 commentaries and other theological works of exegetical erudition. Another important area of study for
420 Bede was the academic discipline of computus, otherwise known to his contemporaries as the science of
421 calculating calendar dates. One of the more important dates Bede tried to compute was Easter, an effort
422 that was mired in controversy. He also helped popularize the practice of dating forward from the birth
423 of Christ (Anno Domini – in the year of our Lord), a practice which eventually became commonplace in
424 medieval Europe. Bede was one of the greatest teachers and writers of the Early Middle Ages and is
425 considered by many historians to be the most important scholar of antiquity for the period between the
426 death of Pope Gregory I in 604 and the coronation of Charlemagne in 800.

427 In 1899, Pope Leo XIII declared him a Doctor of the Church. He is the only native of Great Britain to
428 achieve this designation; Anselm of Canterbury, also a Doctor of the Church, was originally from Italy.
429 Bede was moreover a skilled linguist and translator, and his work made the Latin and Greek writings of
430 the early Church Fathers much more accessible to his fellow Anglo-Saxons, which contributed
431 significantly to English Christianity. Bede's monastery had access to an impressive library which included
432 works by Eusebius, Orosius, and many others.

433

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