

NOON BIBLE STUDY: ACTS 12

ACTS 12:1-5

HEROD THE KING = HEROD AGRIPPA I

HEROD WAS HEROD AGRIPPA I, A GRANDSON OF HEROD THE GREAT (SEE NOTE ON MATT. 2:1). HE WAS REARED IN ROME, AND BECAUSE OF BOYHOOD PLAYMATES WHO LATER BECAME EMPERORS HE WAS GRANTED RULE OVER VARIOUS TERRITORIES IN JUDEA UNTIL HIS KINGDOM REACHED THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS GRANDFATHER'S TERRITORY (A.D. 41—44). SEE MAP. HIS PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS MAY HAVE BEEN AN ATTEMPT TO CURRY FAVOR WITH THE JEWS (CF. ACTS 12:3). (ESV STUDY BIBLE, ACTS 12:1)

V. 2 - JAMES (SON OF ZEBEDEE, BROTHER OF JOHN) EXECUTED.

MARK 10:35-39 - JESUS FORETELLS THE SUFFERING OF JAMES & JOHN

V. 5 - PETER KEPT IN PRISON. CHURCH PRAYED FERVENTLY

ACTS 12:6-12 - PETER FREED BY ANGEL

ACTS 12:12-17 - PETER REJOINS BELIEVERS

V. 12 - JOHN MARK'S MOTHER'S HOME. JOHN MARK IS WHO WROTE THE GOSPEL OF MARK

V. 17 - PETER ASK FOR THIS NEWS TO BE REPORTED TO "JAMES AND THE BRETHREN"

- JAMES, THE BROTHER OF JESUS (SEE MARK 6:3) NOW CONVERTED & LEADER IN JERUSALEM CHURCH.



JAMES HERE IS THE BROTHER OF JESUS, NOT JAMES THE BROTHER OF JOHN (WHO WAS KILLED BY HEROD, ACTS 12:2). FROM THIS POINT FORWARD IN ACTS, JAMES SEEMS TO HAVE THE MOST PROMINENT LEADERSHIP ROLE AMONG THE APOSTLES IN JERUSALEM (SEE 15:13—21; 21:18). THOUGH JAMES WAS NOT ONE OF THE ORIGINAL TWELVE, HE APPARENTLY BECAME AN APOSTLE AS WELL (CF. 1 COR. 15:7; GAL. 1:19; 2:9). THE BOOK OF JAMES ALSO SEEMS TO BE WRITTEN ON HIS OWN (APOSTOLIC) AUTHORITY, NOT AS A SPOKESMAN FOR SOMEONE ELSE (SEE JAMES 1:1). FOR SOME REASON PETER NO LONGER REMAINED THE LEADER AND SPOKESMAN FOR THE APOSTLES IN JERUSALEM BUT WENT TO ANOTHER PLACE. LUKE DOES NOT SPECIFY WHERE PETER WENT (SOME HAVE SUGGESTED EITHER ROME OR ANTIOCH); HE WAS BACK IN JERUSALEM LATER FOR A CONFERENCE (ACTS 15:7—21). (ESV STUDY BIBLE, ACTS 12:17)

ACTS 12:18-19 - HEROD LEARNS OF PETER'S ESCAPE. KILL RESPONSIBLE GUARDS.



ACTS 12:20-23 - HEROD AGRIPPA'S DEATH

JOSEPHUS: JEWISH ANTIQUITIES 19:343-350

"NOW WHEN AGRIPPA HAD REIGNED THREE YEARS OVER ALL JUDEA HE CAME TO THE CITY CAESAREA, WHICH WAS FORMERLY CALLED STRATO'S TOWER; AND THERE HE EXHIBITED SPECTACLES IN HONOR OF CAESAR, FOR WHOSE WELL-BEING HE'D BEEN INFORMED THAT A CERTAIN FESTIVAL WAS BEING CELEBRATED. AT THIS FESTIVAL A GREAT NUMBER WERE GATHERED TOGETHER OF THE PRINCIPAL PERSONS OF DIGNITY OF HIS PROVINCE. ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE SPECTACLES HE PUT ON A GARMENT MADE WHOLLY OF SILVER, OF A TRULY WONDERFUL TEXTURE, AND CAME INTO THE THEATER EARLY IN THE MORNING. THERE THE SILVER OF HIS GARMENT, BEING ILLUMINATED BY THE FRESH REFLECTION OF THE SUN'S RAYS, SHONE OUT IN A WONDERFUL MANNER, AND WAS SO RESPLENDENT AS TO SPREAD AWE OVER THOSE THAT LOOKED INTENTLY UPON HIM. PRESENTLY HIS FLATTERERS CRIED OUT, ONE FROM ONE PLACE, AND ANOTHER FROM ANOTHER, (THOUGH NOT FOR HIS GOOD) THAT HE WAS A GOD; AND THEY ADDED, "BE THOU MERCIFUL TO US; FOR ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HITHERTO REVERENCED THEE ONLY AS A MAN, YET SHALL WE HENCEFORTH OWN THEE AS SUPERIOR TO MORTAL NATURE."

UPON THIS THE KING NEITHER REBUKED THEM NOR REJECTED THEIR IMPIOUS FLATTERY. **BUT HE SHORTLY AFTERWARD LOOKED UP AND SAW AN OWL SITTING ON A CERTAIN ROPE OVER HIS HEAD, AND IMMEDIATELY UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS BIRD WAS THE MESSENGER OF ILL TIDINGS, JUST AS IT HAD ONCE BEEN THE MESSENGER OF GOOD TIDINGS TO HIM; AND FELL INTO THE DEEPEST SORROW.** A SEVERE PAIN AROSE IN HIS BELLY, STRIKING WITH A MOST VIOLENT INTENSITY. HE THEREFORE LOOKED UPON HIS FRIENDS, AND SAID, "I, WHOM YOU CALL A GOD, AM COMMANDED PRESENTLY TO DEPART THIS LIFE; WHILE PROVIDENCE THUS REPROVES THE LYING WORDS YOU JUST NOW SAID TO ME; AND I, WHO WAS BY YOU CALLED IMMORTAL, AM IMMEDIATELY TO BE HURRIED AWAY BY DEATH. BUT I AM BOUND TO ACCEPT WHAT PROVIDENCE ALLOTS, AS IT PLEASES GOD; FOR WE HAVE BY NO MEANS LIVED ILL, BUT IN A SPLENDID AND HAPPY MANNER." WHEN HE HAD SAID THIS, HIS PAIN BECAME VIOLENT.

ACCORDINGLY HE WAS CARRIED INTO THE PALACE, AND THE RUMOR WENT ABROAD EVERYWHERE THAT HE WOULD CERTAINLY DIE SOON. THE MULTITUDE SAT IN SACKCLOTH, MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN, AFTER THE LAW OF THEIR COUNTRY, AND BESOUGHT GOD FOR THE KING'S RECOVERY. ALL PLACES WERE ALSO FULL OF MOURNING AND LAMENTATION. NOW THE KING RESTED IN A HIGH CHAMBER, AND AS HE SAW THEM BELOW LYING PROSTRATE ON THE GROUND HE COULD NOT KEEP HIMSELF FROM WEEPING. AND WHEN HE HAD BEEN QUITE WORN OUT BY THE PAIN IN HIS BELLY FOR FIVE DAYS, HE DEPARTED THIS LIFE, BEING IN THE FIFTY-FOURTH YEAR OF HIS AGE AND IN THE SEVENTH YEAR OF HIS REIGN.

HEROD AGRIPPA WAS VERY FAMILIAR AND ACQUAINTED WITH JEWISH LAWS AND PRACTICES. HE OFTEN CELEBRATED WITH HIGH PRIEST IN TEMPLE ON HOLY DAYS. SO FOR HIM TO RECEIVE THE PRAISE OF A GOD, WOULD HAVE BEEN KNOWN BY HIM TO BE WRONG. (CP. ROMAN IMPERIAL WORSHIP).

V. 24 - WORD CONTINUE TO GROW AND BE MULTIPLIED (IN SPITE OF PERSECUTION OR RESISTENCE).

V. 25 - BARNABAS AND SAUL RETURN (TO ANTIOCH) FROM JERUSALEM WHERE THEY HAD DELIVERED AND DISTRIBUTED THEIR RELIEF COLLECTION (SEE ACTS 11:29-30)