

PERSECUTION AND THE PROSPERITY OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE

Acts 12:1-19 // October 24, 2021 AM

- I. Bloodthirsty opposition leads to fiery intercession (vv. 1-5).
- II. Fiery intercession leads to extraordinary liberation (vv. 6-12).
- III. Extraordinary liberation leads to heavenly exultation (vv. 13-19).

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. Why is prosperity such a dangerous thing, especially in the church? How does Christ use trials to keep us from this danger?
2. What trials are coming upon the church here? And what are these hardships bringing about in the life of the church?
3. What were the marks of the church's praying in vv. 5 and 12?
4. How did Jesus answer the prayers of His church? What do you think this would have been like for Peter?
5. Did the early church have an unhealthy obsession with the miraculous? What does their shock and disbelief concerning Peter's deliverance teach us in this regard?
6. John Newton described how trials lead to prayer and prayer leads to deliverance and deliverance leads to praise and increased faith. Can you remember a time when this pattern has worked itself out in your own life?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. What is my natural tendency in times of peace and prosperity?
2. Are the current trials in my life, church, and nation causing me to look primarily to man or to God? Do I place a high premium, not merely on private prayer, but on the corporate prayer of my local church?
3. How has God used trials in my own life for spiritual good in the past? How does this encourage me to go to Him and trust Him now and into the future?