# Chapter 9:32-43



The account of the growth of the Church



# Herod Agrippa I

Herod Agrippa I, was grandson of Herod The Great (the paranoid murder of the Bethlehem babies). He was born 10 BC and spend his childhood in Rome and had influential Roman friends, who became emperor's: Caligula 37-41 AD and Claudius 41-54AD. His sister was the infamous Herodias, whose marriage to her husband's half brother, Herod Antipas, was denounced by John the Baptist and led to John's beheading (Mark 6).

Agrippa persecuted Christians not because of any personal dislike for them but in order to please the Jewish leaders who oppose them, hoping to solidify his position with the vast majority of the population.

It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. <sup>2</sup> He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

<sup>4</sup> After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. <sup>5</sup> So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

<sup>6</sup> The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. <sup>7</sup> Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

8 Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. 9 Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision.

<sup>10</sup> They passed the first and second quards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. 11 Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."

12 When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. 13 Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. 14 When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

<sup>15</sup> "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." 16 But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. 17 Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this," he said, and then he left for another place.

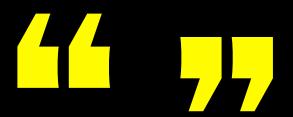
<sup>18</sup> In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. 19 After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed. Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.

<sup>20</sup> He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply. <sup>21</sup> On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people.

<sup>22</sup> They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." <sup>23</sup> Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. <sup>24</sup> But the word of God continued to spread and flourish. <sup>25</sup> When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.



#### Sleep Tight!





Have courage for the great sorrows of life and patience for the small ones, and when you have labored and accomplished your daily tasks, go to sleep in peace, God is awake.





#### Sleep Tight!

Psalm 3:5 David when he fled from his son Absalom.

I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.

Psalm 4:8 In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.



#### Sleep Tight!





Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.



"Here they are praying, and full of faith, trusting in God, and yet when the prayer is answered, they tell the servant that she's crazy!"



### Prayer

Jesus tells us that we should pray boldly, keeping in mind that it's His will, not ours is always best!

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#### boldly

(Matt. 7:7-11; Heb. 4:16; James 1:6-8; 1Jn 5:14-15)

#### His will

(Matt. 6:10; Lk 22:42; Heb 10:7; 1 Jn 5:14)

### Prayer

There is a balance. One cannot insist that God should always work miracles. On the other hand, one should not rule out that God can work miracles!

All followers of Messiah, have to maintain a difficult balance. We live in a natural world, guided by natural laws, yet we serve a God, who can, and sometimes it does overrule the laws of nature. For the most part, we must accept circumstances at face value. Good people get sick and die. Hard-working people go

bankrupt. Honest businesses go under. Innocent people are mistreated, convicted, and punished.

#### Chuck Swindoll

Living Insights NT Commentary: Acts pg. 227-8

In many situations, God does not supernaturally intervene to prevent misfortunes, yet we must not view life strictly from a human perspective. Miracles rarely occur. Whether or not the Lord chooses to intervene. Miraculously, he remains in control, and has promised to work out or events and circumstances for

events and circumstances to our good, and for his glory, (Romans, 8:28)

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## Faithfulness?

We live in a world that tends to value upward progress; making more money this year than last. Advancing in your career. Moving to a bigger house in a nicer neighborhood. Having our kids succeed and progress in work and family.

Peter's life reminds us that God's purpose and work in our lives is rarely a elevator ride up, but more like a roller coaster. The goal is to follow on the tracks God is leading you on - each day - and the journey will be full of ups and downs. Following is the Goal!