

March 26, 2020

In Acts 5 the high priest and associates wanted to stop Jesus's disciples from teaching in His Name. So they arrested them and threw them in jail. During the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and set them free. And the gospel continued to be preached and spread throughout Jerusalem and beyond.

In Acts 12:1 Herod arrested some of those who belonged to the church. And he had James the brother of John executed the next day. As James sat in prison I wonder if he was expecting an angel to set him free like the last time. But nothing happened no angel came and instead of being warned and released he was executed.

Herod saw that this pleased everyone so he had Peter arrested and put in prison. During that night an angel came and released Peter Acts 12:8. Just a day or so separated the execution of James and the miraculous release of Peter. WHY? Why did God do this? Why did he allow James to be executed and then miraculously release Peter?

That is the question that I would ask - but someone challenged me think about it differently. The last night he was with His disciples Jesus prayed...

**John 17:24** (NIV) **Father, I want those you have given Me to be with Me where I am**, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

Jesus prayed this for all His disciples that night before He died. By His death James became the first of the disciples to experience the wonder and the joy of seeing the answer to that prayer. James was delivered from this earth with all its difficulties, pain, and suffering. Instead he was delivered into the presence of the Lord. Peter was released, but in God's time he too experienced firsthand the answer to the prayer of Jesus.

“There will come a time when Jesus's prayer for us to be with Him will overrule our prayer for prolonged earthy life. And when it does, we will experience a life so far better, richer, fuller, purer, and more joyful that we will shake our heads in wonder that we ever pleaded to stay. May God increase our ‘desire ...to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better’ Phil. 1:23.” J. Bloom

Pastor Mark Kieft