Battling with God

Acts 12

Introduction: The enemies of God are always present and passive; they can be and often are present and aggressive. The problem was they were battling with God and that is never a good idea.

Herod - Acts 12:1-5, 18-23 Josephus records that Herod lingered for 5 days and died a miserable painful death. (Mark 9:44-48)

Peter - Acts 12:6-17

James – Jesus' brother did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah until after Jesus rose from the dead. This James is the author the New Testament book by his name. James needed to know that Peter had been rescued by God.

Word of God - Acts 12:24-25 – We might see that the falling of the Holy Spirit is replaced by the Word of God increasing and multiplying. This is strategic; it is the truth that is disseminating and making a real impact on people and how they think.

Conclusion: Peterson reminds us that "without explanation, one apostle is executed but another is rescued, teaching the church to live with the mystery of God's providence and to rely afresh in each situation on the mercy and continuing care of God." (362) The people of God must clearly see this; it does not change our emotional response but it should inform our spiritual understanding.

Peter leaves town in fear. There is never any faithful reason to live in fear as a child of God; perfect love casts out fear, we are Christs and he is quite able to care for us until our time to go home. Turn from fear and live by faith.

This chapter brings the first narrative of Acts to an end. Luke now turns to the Church in Antioch and to Saul/Paul as a central character in the expansion of the Church. The mother church is struggling and in time everyone knew it. The Church needed to continue pushing to the ends of the earth or find themselves relegated to the back row.

In Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 we learn that the seed of the Word of God grows best in certain kinds of environments, "*good soil*" and as we process this final story of Jerusalem's environment we must conclude that the soil is more and more challenging. What battled the Church in Jerusalem at first were outside forces and God stepped in from time to time to keep the gospel advancing. That rotates to Paul as he presses forward advancing the gospel across Asia Minor and Macedonia. Jesus said, the harvest is plenty, but the workers are few—so pray to the Lord of the Harvest to bring more workers. The resistance will always be there. The Holy Spirit has control of the Church and its people, our job is to care for the things of God in the Church so that we align with His will.