

THE CONTINUING ACTS OF THE CHRIST

**Week Thirteen - Long Live the King****A Note to the Parents/Teachers**

Chapter 12 is a pivotal turn from the Church spreading through Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, to now going to the ends of the earth (Gentiles). As a connecting chapter between these two sections of Acts, Luke focuses on the contrast between the growing kingdom of Jesus and the opposing kingdom of Rome and Herod. Help our kids see the opposing kingdoms of today and see how God's Kingdom is better.

- **Big Idea:** When Jesus is King, we find rest. When we try to be king, we bring death.

Starter**Evidences of Grace**

- Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.
- **Discussion:** School is starting back up for the students. Take some time to ask them about how they're feeling, what they're excited about, and what they're nervous about. Take a moment to pray over them, asking the Spirit to send them into their schools as ambassadors of Jesus.

Sing Together

Story - from Acts 12:1-24

As the early Church began to grow, a severe famine came upon the mighty Roman empire. About this time King Herod arrested some people in the church. He had James, the brother of John, put to death by the sword. When he saw that the Jews approved of this, he had Peter captured also. He put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod wanted to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

The night before his trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, with guards at the entrance. 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.

Then the angel said to him, *"Put on your clothes and sandals and follow me."*

Peter followed him out of the prison, but he thought all of this was just a vision or a dream. They passed the guards and came to the iron city gate. It opened for them by itself, and they went through. Suddenly the angel left him and Peter came to himself and said, *"Now I know the Lord has sent his messenger and rescued me from Herod."*

Peter went to Mary's house, the mother of John Mark, where many people had gathered to pray. He knocked and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter, she was so overjoyed she forgot to open the door and ran back shouting, *"Peter is at the door!"*

"You're out of your mind," the others told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, *"It must be his messenger."*

But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. Peter 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.

After Herod searched and could not find Peter the next day, he ordered that the guards be executed. Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. As he spoke they shouted, *"This is the voice of a god, not of a man."*

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.

But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- ▶ As the Church grew, the Roman empire began to suffer from a famine. What do you think Luke was trying to tell us in this first part of the story about the difference between Jesus' kingdom and Rome's?
[Help them think about how God is the Provider. Even though the early Church did not have much power in the Roman world, God had all the power. His Kingdom is better.]
- ▶ Why do you think Peter could sleep easy, knowing Herod wanted to kill him the next day?
- ▶ Do you remember the time Jesus slept when everyone else around him was worried about death? *[On the sea, during the storm]* — Do you think Peter learned anything about how to trust Jesus in these moments?
- ▶ What do you think happened to James after he was killed by Herod?
[Just as Peter rested in the hope of Jesus in his cell, James entered into rest with Jesus eternally because he also trusted him]
- ▶ What work did God's people have to do in this story?
[pray, listen, tell of what happened — Who did the rest of the work?]
- ▶ The kingdom of Herod and of Rome were built on pride and arrogance and they brought pain, suffering, and death. God's Kingdom brings rest. Which kingdom do you want to live in?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, thank You for being a good King. Thank You that we can live and rest in Your good Kingdom forever, because of Jesus. Give us Your Spirit and help us to trust You more. Amen!

Craft:

- Use the coloring sheet attached
- Use different colored construction paper, scissors, and either tape or glue to help the kids make chains like in the picture. Talk about how resting and trusting in Jesus releases us from our chains.



BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the Listen rhythm. As God's people prayed for Peter to be rescued, Peter had to listen to God's messenger. Rhoda listened for the voice of Peter knocking at the door. The others had to listen to Rhoda when she said Peter was safe.

How can you listen to others well this week?

How can you practice listening to God's voice?

