

Book of Acts

Session 16: Acts 12-13

Pride leads to persecution, which leads to prayer

1. Read Acts 12. The love of human praise led both to Peter's arrest and to Herod's death. Explain.
2. Give evidence that makes it appear the jailers were well aware of what happened the last time Peter was thrown into prison (See Acts 5:18, 19.)
3. Notice the response of the people in Mary's house who were praying for Peter's release? Why is it sometimes surprising when God answers our prayers?
4. Why did the Lord put Herod to death?
5. The apostle James died by Herod's sword. The apostle Peter miraculously escaped from prison. Why does God ensure that Peter lives but allows James to die?
6. In the past, pastors often remained with their flocks in times of plague or persecution. They wanted to serve their people with the Word. Was it wrong for Peter to leave Jerusalem?

Paul and Barnabas begin their first missionary journey

7. Acts 13:1-12. The gathering of believers at Antioch was well served by a diverse group of five spiritual leaders. What new plan did the Holy Spirit have for this congregation?
8. Read God's marching orders for the apostle Paul in Acts 9:15. To whom would Paul speak about the Lord's name? How did Paul begin carrying out this assignment already on Cyprus?
9. Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, was well aware of the miracle Paul had worked. What was it, however, that amazed him? What role did the miracle play in this process?
10. The devil works hard to present error in a good light. He calls false doctrine "just another perspective." He calls sin an "alternative lifestyle." He presents those holding to and promoting error as simply having "a different point of view." Look at the labels Paul applies to Elymas in verse 10. As we face false teachers in our day, of what truths do these labels remind us?

Through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you

11. Acts 13:13-47. The Jewish congregation in Antioch began their worship service with readings from the Law and the Prophets. In his sermon Paul refers repeatedly to the Law and Prophets and quotes from them. Explain why this was important as Paul introduced Jesus to these people.
12. Spend time examining Paul's sermon. The verse references break Paul's sermon into smaller segments. Try to isolate the main point in each section. Note how Paul drew every part of his sermon from the Scriptures the Jewish people held sacred.
- Verses 16–20
 - Verses 20–22
 - Verses 23–25
 - Verses 26–31
 - Verses 32–37
 - Verses 38–41
13. The message Paul shared was good news. Jesus had died for the sins of everyone there. After such a "positive" message, why did Paul go on to speak a harsh warning? (verse 41)
14. Read Acts 12:47. These words are from Isaiah 49:6. Who is this a prophecy concerning? Why/ how can Paul usurp the words and say they are about himself and Barnabas?