

GOD BLESS  
*Mothers*

— PHILIPPIANS 4:19 —

THE BOOK OF  
**ACTS**  
LIFE IN THE SPIRIT



**Acts 12: 1-25**

**Message + Mission + Multiply**

## **Acts 12: 1-2 NIV**

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*It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.*

# Question

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**Who was James?**

**He was one of the inner  
three of James, John, and  
Peter. He was the son of  
Zebedee, the brother of  
John the apostle.**

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***Please turn to***  
***Matthew 20: 20-23***

# Matthew 20: 20-23 NIV

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*Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."*

## **Matthew 20: 20-23 NIV**

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*“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”*

*“We can,” they answered.*

## **Matthew 20: 20-23 NIV**

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*Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."*

# Question

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**What cup do you think  
Jesus is telling James  
he will drink of?**

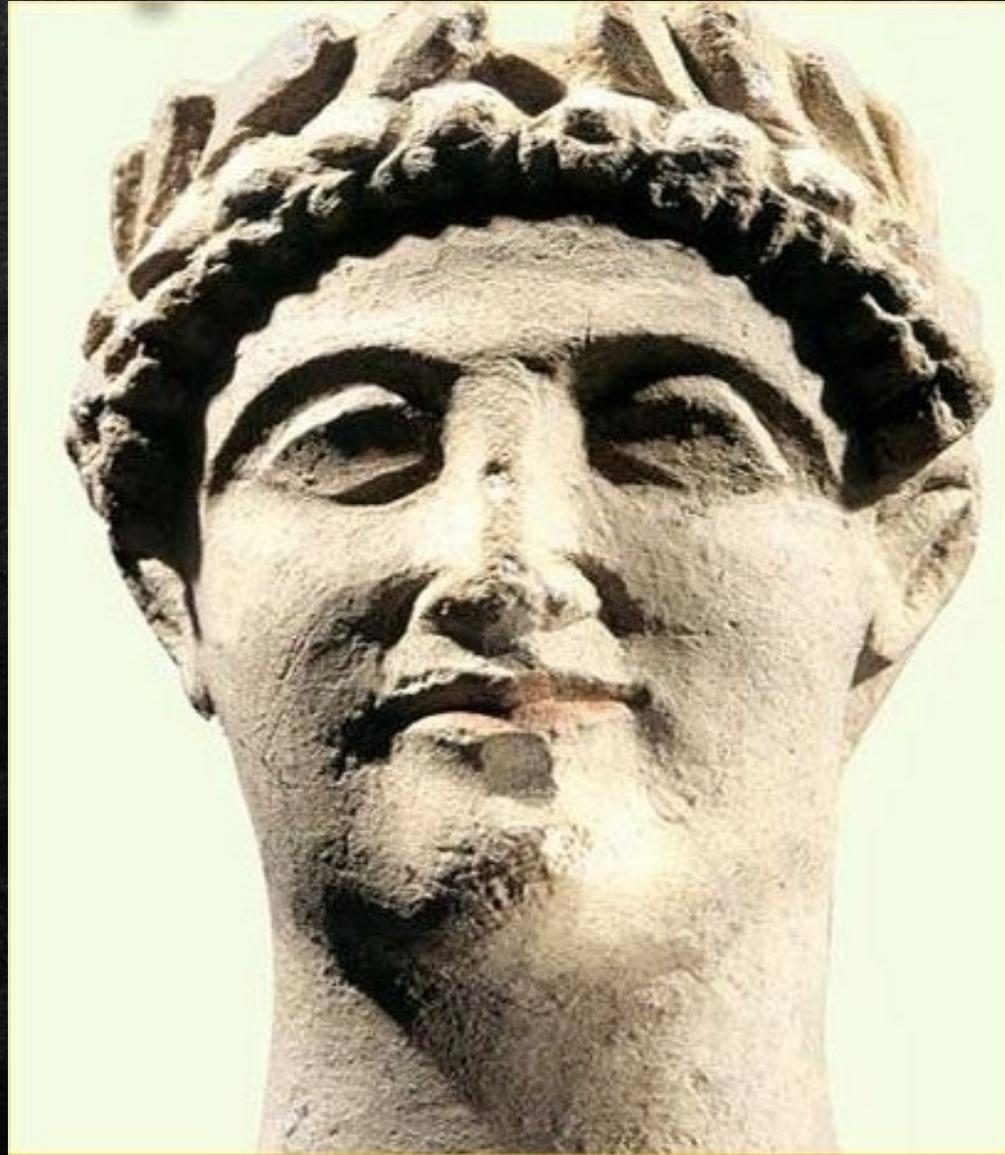
# Question

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**Who was King Herod?**

# Herod the Great

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**Herod the Great was the king of Judea at the time Jesus was born. He is the one who had all the male children killed in hopes of killing Jesus. He is the grandfather of King Herod Agrippa who is the one who had James killed.**

**Herod the Great was a Jew and  
was a descendent of the  
Idumeans that had converted to  
Judaism in the time of the  
Maccabees.**

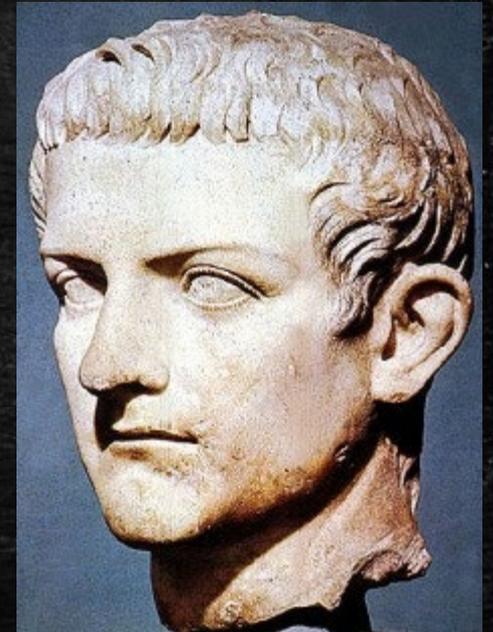
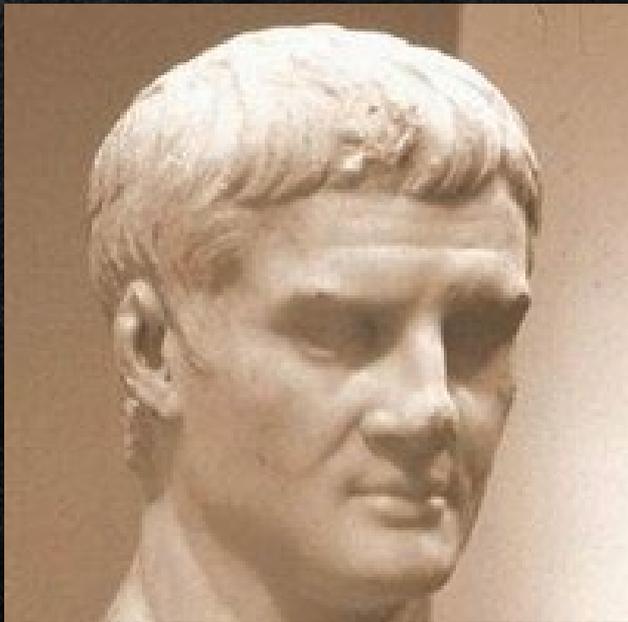
*Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 13:9:1*



King Herod's legacy as an innovative builder was established by structures such as the imposing fortress of Masada nestled in the Judean cliffs.

# Herod Agrippa I

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**King Herod Agrippa I was a clever diplomat who, through his friendship with the Roman imperial family, obtained the kingdom of his grandfather, Herod the Great. He displayed great diplomatic skills by reconciling the Romans and the Jews.**

## **Acts 12: 1-2 NIV**

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*It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.*

# Note

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**The Jewish Talmud requires death by the sword (beheading) as the mode of execution when someone is found guilty of leading the people to worship other gods.**

## Question

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**How do you think the Jews felt about King Herod Agrippa following Jewish Law and killing one of the leaders in the Church?**

## Question

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**What does this reveal  
to us about King  
Agrippa's motives for  
wanting to kill leaders  
in the Church?**

## Acts 12: 3 NIV

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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.

# Question

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**What do you think  
King Herod is planning  
to do with Peter?**

## Acts 12: 4 NIV

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*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.*

# Question

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**Who do you think will  
make up the jury in  
this public trial?**

# Question

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**How many soldiers are  
guarding Peter?**

## Acts 12: 4 NIV

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*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.*

**It is believed that each squad of four soldiers would rotate shifts with two soldiers chained to Peter a third soldier stationed at the prison cell door and the fourth soldier guarding the prison exit at all times.**

# Question

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**What will happen to the soldiers if the prisoner escapes?**

# Acts 12: 5 NIV

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*So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.*

# Question

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**What was the Church  
doing?**

## **Acts 12: 6 NIV**

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*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.*

# Question

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**What was going to happen to Peter in the morning?**

# Question

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**What is Peter doing?**

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***Please turn to  
Matthew 8: 23-26***

## **Matthew 8: 23-26 NIV**

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*Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. **But Jesus was sleeping.***

## **Matthew 8: 23-26 NIV**

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*The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"*

*He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.*

# Question

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**Who is sleeping in Acts  
12:6 now?**

# Question

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**What happened to  
Peter to give him such  
courage?**

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***Please turn to***  
***John 21: 18-19***

## **John 21: 18-19 NIV**

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*Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."*

## **John 21: 18-19 NIV**

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*Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"*

## Acts 12: 7 NIV

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*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.*

# Question

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**What does that fact that the angel had to hit Peter to wake him up tell us about how well Peter was sleeping?**

# A wake-up call on sleeping pills

By David Lazarus, Los Angeles Times on May 6, 2019 at 3:18 p.m.



The FDA is now requiring that the most commonly prescribed sleeping pills carry a notice that these meds may be a lot more dangerous than people realize. (Dreamstime/TNS)

*"There is evidence that sleep medications are over-prescribed, and that not enough attention is paid to the side effects in many cases or alternative approaches"* said Bryce Mander, an assistant professor of psychiatry and human behavior at UC Irvine.

According to the  
Centers for Disease  
Control and  
Prevention, as many  
as 70 million  
Americans "suffer  
*from sleep disorders or  
deprivation.*"

# Question

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**What can Peter teach us about allowing the stresses of life to prevent us from sleeping?**

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***Please turn to***  
***Psalm 127: 1-2***

## Psalm 127: 1-2 NIV

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*Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.*

## **Psalm 127: 1-2 NIV**

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*In vain you rise early  
and stay up late,  
toiling for food to eat—  
for he grants sleep to  
those he loves.*

## **Acts 12: 8 NIV**

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*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.*

## **Acts 12: 9 NIV**

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*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.*

# Question

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**What did Peter think  
was happening to  
him?**

## **Acts 12: 10 NIV**

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*They passed the first and second guards 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.*

## Acts 12: 11 NIV

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*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."*

# Question

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**What were the Jewish people hoping would happen to Peter?**

# Acts 12: 12 NIV

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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.

# Question

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**What just dawned on  
Peter?**

## Question

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**Why were many of the people from the Church praying in the middle of the night at Mary's house?**

## **Acts 12: 13-14 NIV**

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*Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"*

# Question

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**Who does Peter think  
is after him?**

# Question

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**How do you think he feels about being left standing outside in the open?**

# Acts 12: 15 NIV

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**“You’re out of your mind,”** they told her.

When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, **“It must be his angel.”**

# Question

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**From their response do you think they believed their prayers would be answered?**

## Question

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**What does the fact that they thought it might be Peter's angel tell us they thought was going to happen to Peter?**

# Acts 12: 16 NIV

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

# Question

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**What was Peter doing?**

# Acts 12: 17 NIV

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*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.

# Question

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**Why was Peter trying to quiet them down?**

## **Acts 12: 18 NIV**

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*In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter.*

# Question

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**What were the soldiers  
worried about?**

## Acts 12: 19 NIV

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*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.*

## **Acts 12: 20 NIV**

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*He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him.*

## **Acts 12: 20 NIV**

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*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.*

## **Acts 12: 21-22 NIV**

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*On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man."*

**The following was  
recorded by Flavius  
Josephus who was an  
eyewitness to these  
events**

"Now when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Caesarea [...]

There he exhibited shows in honor of the emperor [...] On the second day of the festival, Herod put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a truly wonderful contexture, and came into the theater early in the morning;

at which time the silver of his garment was illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it. It shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him. At that moment, his flatterers cried out [...] that he was a god

## **Acts 12: 23 NIV**

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*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.*

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**The following was also  
recorded by Flavius  
Josephus who was an  
eyewitness to these  
events**

Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. But as he presently afterward looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him;

and he fell into the deepest sorrow. A severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. He therefore looked upon his friends, and said, 'I, whom you call a god, am commanded presently to depart this life; while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me;

and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death. (...)

After he said this, his pain was become violent. Accordingly he was carried into the palace, and the rumor went abroad that he would certainly die in a little time. (...)

Herod's distemper greatly increased upon him after a severe manner, and this by God's judgment upon him for his sins; for a fire glowed in him slowly, which ... augmented his pains inwardly; for it brought upon him a vehement appetite to eating, which he could not avoid to supply with one sort of food or other.

His entrails were also exulcerated, and the chief violence of his pain lay on his colon; an aqueous and transparent liquor also had settled itself about his feet, and a like matter afflicted him at the bottom of his belly. Nay, further, his privy-member was putrefied, and produced worms;

and when he sat upright,  
he had a difficulty of  
breathing, which was very  
loathsome, on account of  
the stench of his breath;  
he had also convulsions in  
all parts of his body."

And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and in the seventh year of his reign."

# Question

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**Why was Herod killed?**

# Question

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**What can we learn  
from this?**

## **Acts 12: 24-25 NIV**

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*But the word of God continued to spread and flourish. When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.*

**Peter fades out of the  
Book of Acts and  
Chapters 13 through 28  
focuses on the ministry of  
Paul to the Gentiles as  
the church reaches the  
world.**

# **Next Week**

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## **Please Read**

## **Acts 13:4-52**