

*Recap of 10/17/21 message by Chris Sommerfield – Acts 12:1-24:*

### **God's Sovereignty on Display**

In the midst of persecution, pain, and political pressures it can be common to ask, "where is God?" Yet even in circumstances that appear desperate and alone, God is there, God is in control, God is sovereign.

- This passage give us a picture of God's sovereignty and helps us rest in His plans. It also serves as a hinge chapter in the book of Acts pointing to the continued rejection of Jesus by the Jews in Jerusalem. From this moment on in Acts the focus turns more and more toward the Gentiles.
- Luke uses contrasts and irony throughout to highlight God's sovereignty.
  - The wicked King Herod who tries to exercise his own sovereignty by persecuting Christians in order to garner praise for his own self-exaltation and self-glory is contrasted with the true King who is actually sovereign over all. The True King can free Peter no matter how many soldiers Herod orders to watch over him, or how many gates block his path. The True King puts Herod to death when he receives praise and adoration as a god from the people of Tyre and Sidon.
  - The chapter begins with the death of James (the brother of John, one of the sons of Zebedee) At first glance it may give the appearance of Herod succeeding, but the divine deliverance of Peter just after shows that James (the first Apostle to be martyred) is only put to death if God allows. God is sovereign and in control.
    - The question then is why did God allow it? He could have stopped it. Why does God allow persecution, pain, and political pressures to harm his people? The answer is difficult in that we don't always know. His ways are higher than our own, and in some cases we see God's divine work in the deliverance of others through the hardships of those that are faithful to Him.
    - There are examples of missionaries who have given their lives in seemingly meaningless moments when we later discover there were manifestations of angels present and it was used to convert people once hostile to God. Read about Jim Elliot, Steve Saint, and John G. Paton. These are just a few missionaries who's stories give confidence in their faithfulness to God even amidst terrible persecution, God is sovereign and in control.