

No Earthly Power can Stop the Gospel

Acts 12:1-25

1. What actions have been taken by authorities through the ages to hinder the spread of the gospel?

2. Read Acts 12:1-5. What might have motivated Herod, the political authority, to persecute Christians?

(Aside: how many King Herod's were there in the Bible? Is this the one who condemned Jesus?)

3. What might have motivated the Jewish religious authorities to persecute Christians?

4. Read Acts 5:12-26. What might Peter have been thinking, being in prison for the second time, this time chained to guards?

5. What was the response of the church to Herod's actions?

6. Read Matt 5:43-48. Does the response of the church line up with this teaching?

7. How quickly did Peter, and the church, recognise that God had been at work? In what ways does this demonstrate anything about their faith?

8. Share an example from your life, where it has only been in hindsight that you have recognised God at work.

9. After his second miraculous escape, it appears Peter went and hid from Herod and the Jews. Does this response demonstrate a lack of faith in Gods protection? Discuss.

10. Read Acts 12:19b-24 The Christians “solved” their problem with the authorities by prayer. The people of Tyre and Sidon solved their problem with the authorities by negotiation. Is negotiation ever an appropriate way for Christians to resolve difficulties with authorities? What can we learn about negotiating successfully from the approach of these people? Discuss.

11. Do a quick internet search on persecuted Christians. Share some of your findings, and then pray for them. Finish by praying for each other.