

Acts 12:1-23 (Favell Lee Bevan Mortimer) 162312

Peep of Day, Lesson 51: Peter in Prison

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Acts 2:12:1-23

WHO had Jesus promised to send when He went to His Father? The Holy Spirit.

And He did send the Holy Spirit, as He promised. Then the disciples began to speak of Jesus to all the wicked people. They said to them, 'You have crucified the Son of God. He is alive, and has gone up to sit on His Father's throne. If you believe on Him, He will forgive you and give you the Holy Spirit.'

Some of the wicked people were sorry for what they had done to Jesus, and begged God to forgive them. But some of the wicked people were not sorry, and they tried to kill the disciples.

A wicked king caught James and cut off his head with a sword. Then he shut up Peter in prison. He was going to kill him too.

Have you ever seen a prison? It is a dark place, with great doors and bars, and walls all round it.

Some soldiers took Peter and put chains on his hands and chains on his feet. Then they locked the door of the prison. Some soldiers sat at the door so that no one could get in.

Peter's friends were very unhappy because he was in prison, but they could not take him out. Yet there was one thing they could do; they could pray to God to save Peter, and so they did. Peter's friends sat up at night and prayed to God.

The wicked king said, 'Tomorrow I shall have Peter killed.' But God would not let Peter be killed. So God told one of His beautiful angels to go and let Peter out of the prison. The angel could go into the prison without opening the doors.

It was night when the angel came. Peter was asleep. On each side of him there was a soldier, and Peter was chained to them both. You would not like to sleep in a prison with soldiers near you, and chains on your hands. But Peter knew that God loved him, and that he was safe.

So the angel came. It was dark in the prison.

Could Peter see the angel?

Yes; for the angel was bright like the sun, and made the prison light.

The angel touched Peter on the side and lifted him up. At once the chains fell off Peter's hands and feet. He told Peter to put on his clothes, and Peter did so.

Then the angel said, 'Follow me.' So the angel walked out first, and Peter followed him. They went through the prison.

But the men at the doors did not see Peter go out, because God made them sleep.

Peter was quite surprised; he thought he was dreaming and that he did not see a real angel.

At last Peter came to a big iron gate. It was locked, but the angel did not need a key to open it. It opened itself, and Peter and the angel could go through it.

Now they were in the street. Still the angel went on, and Peter came after him. But they did not speak a word.

All the people were asleep, and did not know that a bright angel was walking in the street. The angel only walked down one street. Then he went back to heaven and left Peter standing alone in the street, in the dark.

Peter stood some time thinking to himself, 'What a wonderful thing has happened! I was shut up in prison, but God has sent His angel to let me out. The king meant to kill me tomorrow, but now I shall not be killed.' I know that Peter thanked God for His kindness.

Peter did not stay all night in the street. He went to the house of a good woman he knew, and he knocked at the door. Were the people in the house asleep?

No, they were all awake, though it was night.

Why were they not in bed?

This good woman had heard how the king was going to kill Peter the next day. So she and her friends were praying for Peter. While they were praying, they heard a knock. It was a strange thing to hear a knock in the night, but they never guessed who it was.

A maid named Rhoda went to the door. But she did not open it. She heard Peter speak, and how happy she was! She knew his voice. She did not say, 'Are you Peter?' She was sure it was Peter. She was so much surprised that she forgot to open the door; but ran back to the good woman and the rest of the disciples. She told them, 'Peter is standing at the gate!'

But they said, 'No, it cannot be Peter. He is shut up in prison.'

The maid said, 'It is Peter. I am sure it is.'

While they were talking, Peter was standing outside. And he went on knocking, because nobody opened the door. Soon his friends ran and opened the door, and when they saw Peter they were very surprised.

'How did you get out of prison?' they asked him.

Then Peter made a sign with his hand so that they would all be quiet. Then he told them how he got out of prison.

'God sent an angel,' said Peter, 'who brought me out of the prison. Go and tell all my friends what has happened, for I must go away.' So Peter went and hid himself in a place where the wicked king could not find him.

What do you think the soldiers said when they could not find Peter in the morning?

They were very frightened. They saw his chains, but they did not see Peter. They found the gates locked. They could not think how Peter got out of prison.

So the king sent for Peter. This was the day when Peter was to be killed. All the wicked people in Jerusalem were expecting to see him. The king's servants asked, 'Where is Peter? Bring him out.'

The soldiers answered. 'We cannot tell where Peter is. He is not here.'

The servants went and told the king that Peter was not in the prison. The king was very angry. He said, 'Bring the soldiers to me. They must have fallen asleep.'

When the soldiers came, they could not tell the king how Peter got away. But you know why. God made them sleep when the angel came for Peter. The king was in a great rage and said, 'The soldiers must be killed.'

What a wicked king this was! He loved to do wickedness. He was very proud. He hated God and God's people. He only cared to please himself. At last God sent an angel to kill him, and worms ate up his flesh until he died.

God sends angels to punish the wicked, and to help people like Peter, who love Him.

Questions

What did the disciples tell the wicked people in Jerusalem?

Were any of the wicked people who had killed Jesus sorry for their wickedness?

What happened to James at last?

Where was Peter shut up?

What were Peter's friends doing for him when he was in prison?

Who came to Peter one night?

How did Peter get out from his chains?

How did he get through the big doors?

Where did the angel leave Peter standing alone?

Where did Peter go then?

What were the people in the house doing when Peter knocked?

How did Rhoda know it was Peter knocking?

Why did she not open the door?

What did Peter tell all the friends when he had made them quiet?

Where did Peter go then?

Why were the soldiers frightened in the morning?

Why did the wicked king send for Peter?

What did the king want to do to the soldiers?

How did God punish this wicked king at last?

How the righteous are saved from danger

A verse from the Bible for you to learn:

“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” Psa. 34:7.

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