

## PRISON DOORS OPENED BY AN ANGEL

Acts 5:12-32; 12:1-18.

### LESSON 130 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord knoweth them that are his" (II Timothy 2:19).

#### BIBLE TEXTS

##### Acts 5:12-32;

12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with

him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a

Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

### **Acts 12:1-18.**

**1** Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

**2** And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

**3** And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

**4** And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

**5** ¶ Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

**6** And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

**7** And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

**8** And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

**9** And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

**10** When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened

to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

**11** And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

**12** And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

**13** And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

**14** And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

**15** And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

**16** But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

**17** But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

**18** Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

### **Working for Jesus**

In our study of the Apostle Peter, we learned that he worked for Jesus. His work reached to Jerusalem. Probably on every street in Jerusalem and other cities the people talked about

the strange and wonderful things that were happening. Many people were being saved from their sins. The sick people and those who had unclean spirits were healed.

Did you ever notice that as the sun moves across the sky the shadows become longer and longer near the end of the day? Perhaps when the day was nearly over, many people in the City of Jerusalem waited for the touch of the hand of Peter. They may have been thinking: Oh, the day is almost gone and we have not been able to reach him! I must see my son healed. Others might have been thinking: I must see my mother, or my father, or sister, or daughter healed. These people believed that if Peter's shadow might fall across them they would be healed. So they took their sick ones into the streets and laid them on beds and couches that the shadow of Peter passing by might fall upon them. The Lord knew this, and led Peter to go that way, and in verse 16 we read, "They were healed every one."

### **God's Love and Mercy**

How wonderful is the love of Jesus to everyone! When we take one step toward Jesus, He moves toward us. The people brought their sick ones into the streets, and Peter walked along the very streets where the sick people were lying, and the people were healed through the power of God.

### **Angry Rulers**

When the Jewish rulers saw how the Gospel of Jesus was spreading, they became very angry. Perhaps they said, "We must do something quickly to get rid of these preachers." So they took the Apostles and put them in prison. They no doubt hoped the people would soon forget about the teachings of Jesus and the miracles they had seen.

Night came on, and the people slept. But an angel of the Lord was watching these men of God who were locked in the prison. During the night the angel opened the prison doors and told the Apostles to go to the Temple and talk to the people about Jesus as they had done before. So early in the morning they went to the Temple and taught the people as Jesus Himself had taught them.

The high priest and his helpers met and sent officers to the prison to bring the Apostles before them. But the officers returned from the prison and told the high priest, "The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within." How surprised the officers must have been to learn that the Apostles were standing in the Temple teaching the people about Jesus as bravely as before!

### **Rulers Afraid**

The rulers were afraid to treat the Apostles roughly, for the people who stood listening were friendly to them. So they had Peter and the other Apostles brought to the high priest. The high priest asked them if they had not been told not to teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter, who was a true man of God, and his friends answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men." The Lord had told Peter what to do. The high priest had also told him to do something else, but Peter loved the Lord and wanted to obey Him rather than the words of man.

The Lord had work for Peter, and that work was to teach the people to repent and be saved from their sins, and live for Jesus. Peter did the work the Lord had laid out for him to do, and the Lord took good care of Peter. When God has work for us to do, let us obey His voice and do it at once.

### **Iron Gates Opened**

At another time a wicked king, Herod, cast Peter into prison. On the night before Peter was to be brought before the people, perhaps for trial the Christians gathered in a house and had a prayer meeting. No doubt they had heard about the time the angel opened the prison and let Peter out. They knew that Jesus was able to help Peter out of the prison once more. All night long they prayed and waited.

As Peter lay sleeping between two soldiers, bound to each of them by chains, suddenly a light shone in the prison. An angel of the Lord awoke him and said, “Arise up quickly.” As he arose, the chains fell from his hands. The angel told Peter to put on his clothes and his sandals and said, “Follow me.” The angel led the way past all the guards, and to the iron gate. But even iron gates cannot hold God’s people when the Lord sends His angel to open them. The iron gate swung open for Peter and the angel! Up through the street walked Peter with the angel. Then, as the angel disappeared, Peter realized that he had been brought out of prison. It was so wonderful that he had thought it was a vision. But he now understood what had really happened: he was a free man! He had no chains on his hands!

### **Answered Prayer**

Peter hurried to the home of Mary. That is where the prayer meeting was being held – the Christians were praying for Peter. Here was the answer to their prayers!

Did you ever pray for something, and before you finished praying you had the answer to your prayers? It seems almost too good to be true when the Lord answers prayers so quickly. But that is the way Jesus works sometimes for those who have faith in Him. We read in Isaiah 65:24: “And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”

When Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a little girl named Rhoda came out. She was so happy when she heard Peter’s voice that she did not stop to let him in, but ran to tell the others that Peter was at the gate. The people in the house told her it could not be Peter, for Peter was in prison! Here they had been praying – no doubt for Peter’s deliverance – and when Jesus answered their prayers, they could hardly believe it had really happened.

Peter continued to knock. When they opened the door they saw it was really Peter, for whom they had been so earnestly praying. They must have been very happy and excited to see Peter stand before them again. He told them how the angel of the Lord delivered him.

God punished the wicked king who had put Peter in prison, and who, no doubt, had planned to kill him. Peter lived many years and worked for Jesus.

### **God’s Care over Us**

God has given His angels charge over us to keep us in all our ways (Psalm 91:11). His angels take good care of us, even though we cannot see them. Should we not love Jesus for the care He gives us? Should we not work for Him? We should do everything we can to show Jesus we love Him and that we are thankful for the things He does for us, and for His watchful care over us. He knows when we love Him. He knows when we have a purpose in our hearts to do good to everyone, as Peter and the Apostles did.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. How many times was Peter delivered from prison by an angel? Acts 5:19; Acts 12:7.
2. Whom did Peter say we ought to obey? Acts 5:29.
3. How did the angel awaken Peter? Acts 12:7.
4. Where was a prayer meeting being held? Acts 12:12.
5. What little girl answered the door when Peter knocked? Acts 12:13.

## LESSON RESOURCES

### TITLE

# PRISON DOORS OPENED BY AN ANGEL

Lesson 130

Acts 5:12-32; 12:1-18



MUSIC

# Jesus, My Refuge And Shelter

WATCH & PRAY 33

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SONG

# **Jesus, My Refuge And Shelter**

**Jesus my Refuge and Shelter,**

**Jesus my Friend and Companion**

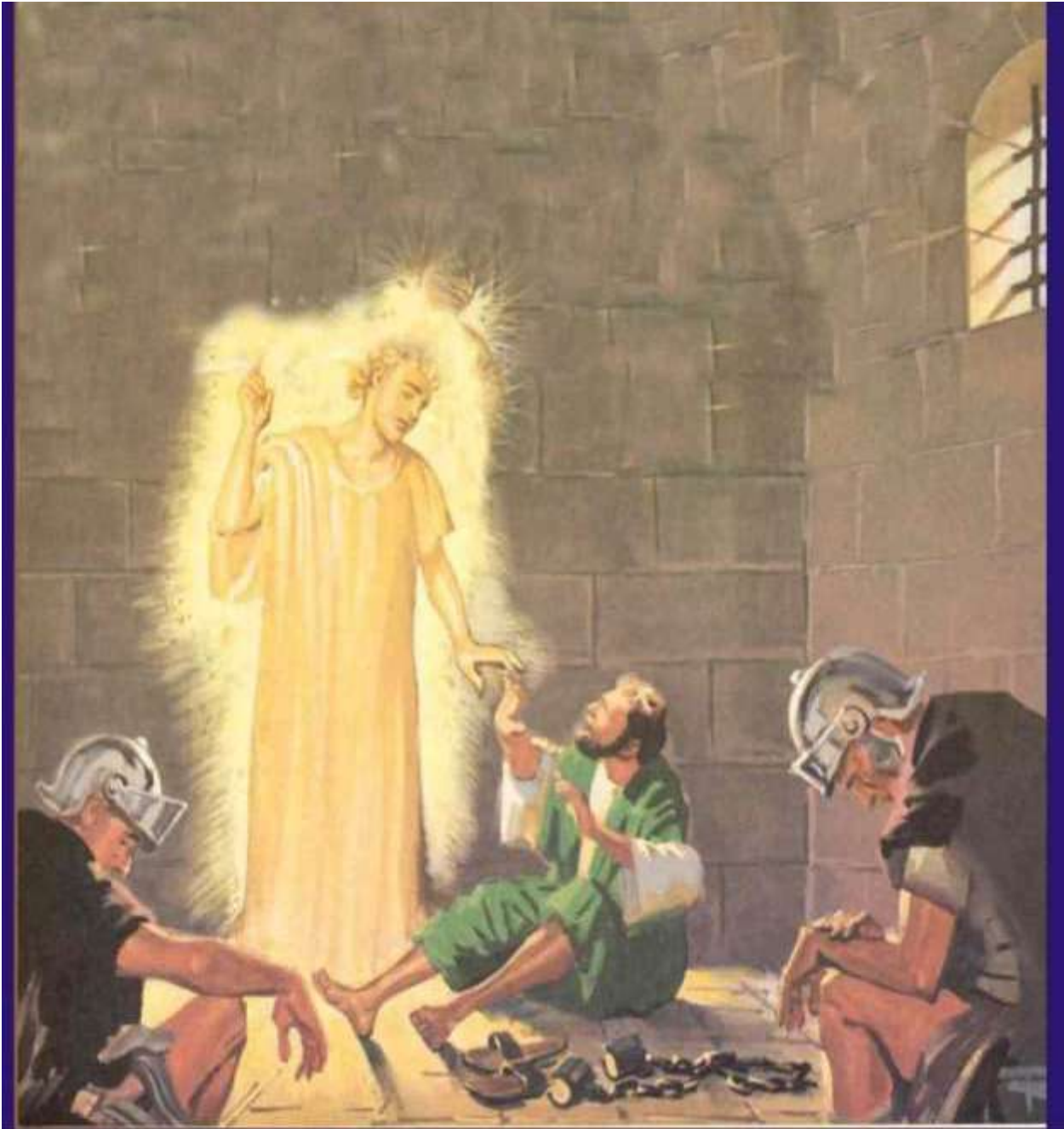
**Jesus my Comfort in time of need**

**My Saviour when hope is all gone**

**Jesus my Fortress and Stronghold**

**A wonderful Friend indeed**

**PICTURE 1**



**PICTURE 2**





**PICTURE 3**

