

Prayer: Releasing Captives

Acts 12:1-12



1. The War Against the Saints (1-4)

Rev. 13:5 The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. **6** It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. **7** Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation, **8** and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.

Rev. 13:9 Let anyone who has an ear listen:

10 If you are to be taken captive,
into captivity you go;
if you kill with the sword,

with the sword you must be killed.
Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

Acts 12:1 About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. **2** He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. **3** After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (This was during the festival of Unleavened Bread.) **4** When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. (NRSV)

2. The Fervent Prayer of the Saints

Rev. 5:6 Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. **7** He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. **8** When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. **9** They sing a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed
for God
saints from every tribe and language and people and
nation;
10 you have made them to be a kingdom and priests
serving our God,
and they will reign on earth.”

Acts 12:5 While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him.

3. Prayer That Prevails (6-12)

Rev. 8:1 When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. **2** And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

Rev. 8:3 Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that is before the throne. **4** And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. **5** Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth; and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

Acts 12:6 The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. **7** Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his wrists. **8** The angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." He did so. Then he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." **9** Peter went out and followed him; he did not realize that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. **10** After they had passed the first and the second guard, they came before the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. **11** Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

Acts 12:12 As soon as he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many had gathered and were praying.

Ephesians 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

2 Corinthians 1:11 as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.