



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Impossible Prayer Answered with Little Faith

MARCH 3, 2016

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**Acts 12:12-19** *“So when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. 13) And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a servant-girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14) When she recognized Peter’s voice, because of her joy she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter was standing in front of the gate. 15) And they said to her, ‘You are out of your mind!’ But she kept insisting that it was so. And they kept saying, ‘It is his angel.’ 16) But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, they saw him and were amazed. 17) But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, ‘Report these things to James and the brethren.’ And he departed and went to another place. 18) Now when day came, there was no small disturbance among the soldiers as to what could have become of Peter. 19) And when Herod searched for him and had not found him, he examined the guards and ordered that they be led away to execution. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea and was spending time there.” (NASB)*

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“THE SERVANT MAID, RHODA, ALONE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD REAL FAITH. WHILE THE STORY REBUKES OUR TOO COMMON UNBELIEF, IT MAY ENCOURAGE US TO KNOW THAT GOD OFTEN GRANTS GRACIOUS ANSWERS TO PRAYERS OF QUITE IMPERFECT FAITH.”

CHARLES ERDMAN

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Why does Peter, at the risk of being recaptured, consider it so important to tell the church of his miraculous escape? Does Peter’s continual knocking in the dead of night threaten his escape? Who probably related this detailed account to Luke?

Why do these prayer warriors have such little faith? What are we to make of their thinking it was Peter’s “angel?” Were they threatening Peter’s capture again with all their noise when he came in the gate? On what basis were the soldiers executed? Why did Herod leave Jerusalem and move back to Caesarea?

### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- MARCH 10: SELECTED SCRIPTURES APOLOGETICS WITH DELEGATE NICK FREITAS
- MAY 11-13: ACTS 12:20-24 THE FOOLISH LEADER WHO FOUGHT AGAINST GOD

Herod Agrippa had planned Peter’s arrest, trial and execution perfectly. The Passover arrest guaranteed the maximum number of Jews to witness the execution of this preeminent Apostle. The seven day imprisonment provided maximum anticipation for this event. Maximum security was used in the deepest dungeon of the prison with three patrolled checkpoints and a rotation of sixteen guards to ensure Peter’s captivity, with two guards constantly chained to each arm of the Apostle. All was planned for the maximum pleasure of Jews harboring a boiling hatred for the Christians, denying they had legally murdered their Messiah. Maybe these soldiers guarding Peter had earlier been posted at the tomb of Jesus Christ and had been bribed to lie, saying the disciples had stolen His body (Mt. 28:12-15). The Apostle James was dead and they thirsted for the blood of Peter, the great leader.

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“AT THE TIME WHEN THE JEWS WERE CELEBRATING THE DELIVERANCE OF THEIR NATION THROUGH GOD’S INTERVENTION, A HERALD OF GOD’S CLIMACTIC ACT OF DELIVERANCE WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY TO PLEASE THE JEWS. WHILE THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN CELEBRATING A GREAT SALVATION, THEY WERE HOPING TO INFLICT A GREAT PUNISHMENT ON THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SAVIOR.” AJITH FERNANDO

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### BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM—PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM—BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 4:30 PM—BIBLE STUDY – GAB 330-SENATOR CARRICO’S OFFICE

# Virginia

## Impossible Prayer Answered with Little Faith

### I. ANNOUNCEMENT OF ESCAPE ACTS 12:12-14

In prison Peter had probably been concentrating on his trial the next day and specifically on the words of Christ which anticipated this precise circumstance: “*You will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles?*” (Mt. 10:18, Mk. 13:9, Lk. 21:12). When he is supernaturally delivered from prison, his first thought was “*Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people*” (v. 11). As Peter continued to consider his escape, his first priority was not to quickly get out of Herod’s reach, but instead to tell the believers, whom he knew would be praying for him, to rejoice in the Lord’s miraculous deliverance from prison. So he especially wanted to go to Mary, the mother of John Mark’s house because he knew that there a group of believers would be in prayer. He must have knocked softly at first so that only the alert ear of the maidservant, Rhoda, seemed to hear and she quietly approached the door. No doubt fearing further arrests, she must have inquired who was there at this time of night. When she heard Peter’s voice, she became so excited she neglected to unlock the door. Rhoda raced inside to announce to this faithful group of powerful prayer warriors, watching through the night, that God had answered their prayers!

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“PETER MADE HIS REPORT TO THE FAITHFUL WHO HAD BEEN PRAYING FOR HIM. IT IS IMPRESSIVE THAT HE DEEMED THIS MORE IMPORTANT THAN TAKING IMMEDIATELY TO FLIGHT. HE OWED IT TO HIS BRETHREN TO MAKE CONTACT BEFORE SEEKING HIS OWN SAFETY.”  
EVERETT F. HARRISON

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### II. AMAZEMENT OF THE EARNEST ACTS 12:15-17

Suddenly with a burst of excited joy she interrupts those who have persisted through the night and into the early morning in earnest prayer. “*Peter is standing in front of the gate!*” she exclaimed, while probably dancing with

excitement. The praying stopped and they looked at her in disbelief! “*You are crazy!*” is the only response from these fervent faithful prayer warriors. But that wasn’t going to stop Rhoda. She stuck to her story and insisted that it was Peter at the gate because she recognized his voice! This unbelief prevailed for some time because Rhoda literally “*continually emphatically asserted that it was so!*” Instead of believing her, they decided that Peter must have already been killed and his angel was at the gate. So they literally “*kept saying, It is his angel.*” It is probable that Peter overheard all this commotion while he knocked!

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“THE ANSWER TO THEIR PRAYERS IS STANDING AT THE DOOR, BUT THEY DON’T HAVE FAITH ENOUGH TO OPEN THE DOOR AND LET HIM IN! GOD COULD GET PETER OUT OF PRISON, BUT PETER CAN’T GET HIMSELF INTO A PRAYER MEETING!” WARREN WIERSBE

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Finally, they all go to the gate and open the door and are astounded that it really is Peter! If they were still noisily arguing as they approached the gate, they would have been even noisier when they all wanted to greet him and ask him how he got out. So Peter, alarmed at all the noise bringing him greater risk, gestured quietly for them to be quiet, and probably in hushed tones told them quickly the story and told them to pass it on to James and the others.

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“IT IS POSSIBLE, BECAUSE OF I PETER 1:1, TO SAY HE WENT TO ASIA MINOR.” STAN TOUSSAINT

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### III. ANTICIPATION OF EXECUTION ACTS 12:18-19

The guards panic the next morning when they find Peter is gone. Herod does all that he can to find Peter, but suffers maximum embarrassment. The guards are executed as Peter would have been. Herod is so frustrated, he no longer cares about the Jews and leaves.

#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Do you pray even when you don’t feel like it or think you have enough faith?
- 2) Do you believe that God could do a transforming work in our capitol enough to pray?
- 3) Will you faithfully pray for the salvation of your fellow legislators, witnessing and trusting God to answer?