



## ACTS OF GOD

God's First churches

### YES, NO & MAYBE:

1. It wouldn't shock me if some of the people in this room were arrested and put in prison some time in the future.
2. I've experienced more trials in my lifetime than the people sitting on either side of me.
3. God allows bad things to happen in our lives because, in the bigger scheme of things, He is more concerned with the afterlife experience.
4. If God sent me an angel, it would never cause me pain, it would be sent to guard me from it.
5. God helps everyone who prays for it.

### NOTES:

### DIG DEEPER:

Ø Have you, or someone you love, experienced a painful trial? At that time, what questions did that raise about God's character?

#### § READ Acts 12:1-11 (NIV)

*1 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. 4 After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.*

*5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.*

*6 The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.*

*8 Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. 9 Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10 They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.*

*11 Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."*

#### Ø Why the trials came:

‡ Herod, the grandson of Herod the Great

Ø **James...put to death with the sword** - [Ἰακωβον...ἀνείλεν μαχαίρη - Iakobon...aneilen machairéi] The same fate that this Herod's uncle pronounced upon John the Baptist.



## NOTES:

## DIG DEEPER...continued:

∅ Why was the trial after Passover?

∅ The angel of the Lord comes across as quite a gruff character—especially the way he wakes Peter up! Why do you think the angel acts the way that he does? Does this reflect God's consistent character, or does it contrast it?

∅ Why does God choose to spare some followers' lives, and not others? James, the brother of John, Stephen and many others were not rescued, but Peter was. Why? What does that say about God?

∅ Perhaps you've had to wrestle with this element of God's character within your lifetime, in a very personal way. How have you come to grips with this?

## MY PRAYER THIS WEEK:

1. How do I view the trials in my life?
2. What am I doing to be a peace in the midst of the trials?
3. What new things do I see of God's infinite character now?