

They said to her, "You are out of your mind!" But she kept insisting that it was so.
They kept saying, "It is his angel."

Acts 12:15

Ye of Little Faith



WE LIKE TO THINK that faith has never been so fragile as it is in this modern age. At the same time we imagine that faith has never been so strong as it was in the first century, a time vibrant with the ministries of the men who had walked and talked with the Lord Himself.

Both, however, are misconceptions. As the wise but cynical King Solomon wrote, “There is nothing new under the sun.”

...but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.

King Herod Agrippa was enjoying an orgy of persecution. He was taking great pleasure in harassing and terrorizing the church. But he was also going well beyond mere intimidation.

And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.

Acts 12:2

When he realized that his beheading of James “pleased the Jews,” he arrested Peter with the intention of making a showpiece out of him once the Passover was out of the way. He assigned four, four-man squads of soldiers to guard Peter: working in shifts, with two chained to the prisoner and two standing guard at the entrance.

After Peter’s arrest the church, understanding the peril he was in, went into action, earnestly praying for him unceasingly. On the eve before his trial, as a prayer meeting for Peter was being held at the home of John Mark’s mother, the Lord sent an angel to spring Peter from prison. His chains fell away from his wrists, the prison gate swung open by itself, and Peter found himself standing alone on the street. The angel had done his work, then disappeared. Now fully awake, the apostle realized that he had not been dreaming at all, but was really free!

“You are out of your mind!”

And now we have the comic relief. Peter knew that he had to get off the street, so he went quickly to Mary’s house.

When he knocked at the door of the gate, a servant-girl named Rhoda came to answer.

Acts 12:13

Rhoda was so relieved and overjoyed that their prayers had been answered, she forgot to open the gate for Peter! Instead, she immediately ran inside to tell the others the good news. Did they rejoice with her, praising God for answering their prayers, thanking Him for His mercy? No,

They said to her, “You are out of your mind!” But she kept insisting that it was so. They kept saying, “It is his angel.”

Acts 12:15

How can we even call it “faith” when the Lord’s specific answer to prayer—in the affirmative—is rejected? Peter’s shackles had been flung away, but the people in that prayer meeting were still bound by theirs. They remained shackled by doubt, disbelief, and amazement.

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

Acts 12:16

So soon after Jesus had walked among them, and their belief was still fragile. Or was it *because* Jesus had walked among them? Perhaps it was too easy for them to think that since He was gone—

raised from the dead, yes, but gone from their midst—that the miraculous had left with Him.

It may be that we, today, have the advantage over those earlier followers of The Way, for the Lord Jesus in flesh never walked alongside anyone living today. We have not witnessed His miracles, His healings. We never saw Him raise the dead, so our faith is not diminished because He no longer does this in our presence.

Still, there are newer shackles that bind us; the Father of Lies is still at work. Faith is still challenged, so trust remains a necessary component of prayer.

Let us not reject His gracious answers.