

Peter's Prison Ministry

Acts 12:3-19

When Peter was arrested by King Herod, he was closely guarded (*Acts 12:4*). There were two soldiers on each side of Peter, chained to his arms. The other two guards kept watch at the door of the prison, lest he try to escape or someone should come and try to rescue him. This was very tight security. There is a question we might want to ask Peter some day when we are with him in glory: "Peter, were you an effective witness during the time when you were chained to those prisoners?"

The Apostle Paul knew what it was like to be chained to Roman security officers as well. In such situations, Peter and Paul had a "captive audience," hour after hour. Peter had the opportunity for an amazing prison ministry: "Sir, I don't know who you are, but let me tell you about Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the living God, who died for your sins and rose from the dead."

Did these guards understand what a privilege it was to be chained to the Apostle Peter? It was crucially important for Peter to share the Gospel with these men. This would be the last night these guards would be alive. On the very next day King Herod executed all four of these soldiers (*Acts 12:19*).

Why was this done? According to Roman law, any guard who allowed a prisoner to escape would lose his own life. This was an exceptionally strong motivation for each guard to carefully watch his prisoner! Peter's supernatural escape would have dire consequences for these guards. We wonder what Peter told them the night before they died. For these four men, it would be their last night on earth. It is sobering to think of the unsaved people we contact. We do not know when their last day on earth will be.

*~Based on a message by
Dr. John C. Whitcomb*

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