

2024-04-28 Sermon

"Imprisoned for the Gospel"

Acts 12:1-24

# Sermon Summary

In this week's passage, we see Herod persecuting the Church, killing James and imprisoning Peter to do the same. However, God miraculously rescues Peter so that he can continue to share the gospel.

Herod appeared free and powerful on the outside, but inside, he was imprisoned by his sin. On the other hand, Peter was physically imprisoned, but his soul was free from the bondage of sin and from the fear of death.

True freedom is on the inside, and it comes from Jesus.

# Sermon Summary

The world tells us that being free means not having anyone tell us what to do.

But Peter's life shows that true freedom comes from giving God the control; to be "enslaved" to the One who loved us to the point of death.

By allowing Him to put the right boundaries in our lives, we can channel our freedom in the right direction and flourish!

# Discussion Questions

First, re-read today's passage and notice anything unusual or interesting.

1. Do you have any real-life experience where too much external freedom ended up being a bad thing for someone? Share.
2. When you hear the word "slave," what thoughts or feelings come up for you? Paul says following Jesus means being a "slave" of Christ. Do you agree? Does that describe your life? If so, how?
3. What is something that would be really hard for you to give God control on? (ex. Academic success, comfort, independence, financial stability, physical location, etc.) Share why it's so important to you. Now, also share when God has proven Himself as wise and trustworthy. Now, can you trust Jesus with it?

Pray and ask God to help you surrender ALL aspect of your life into His loving hands.

# Sermon Slides for Reference

# Imprisoned for the Gospel











# Recap

Acts 1:8 ...you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”



Acts 1:8 and you will be my witnesses in **Jerusalem,...**”



# Acts 1:8 and in **Samaria**,...









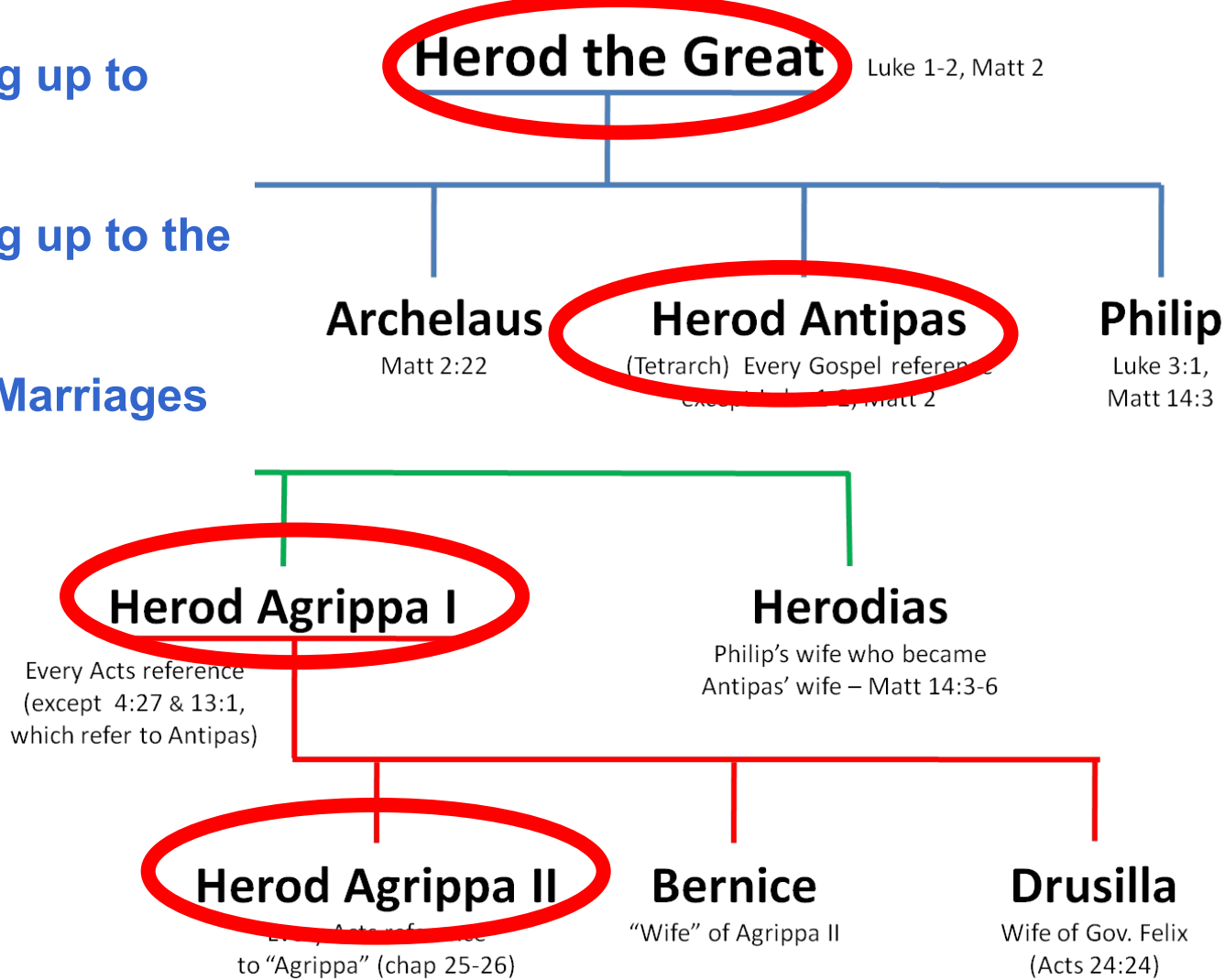




King Herod!



- Sucking up to Rome
- Sucking up to the Jews
- Incest Marriages



# King Herod #3!



Acts 12:1 [paraphrase]...King Herod arrested some believers, intending to persecute them.



Acts 12:2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.



Acts 12:3 When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews,...



Acts 12:3...he proceeded to seize Peter also.  
This happened **during the Festival of Unleavened Bread.**





Acts 12:4 ...Herod intended to bring him out for public trial **after the Passover.**

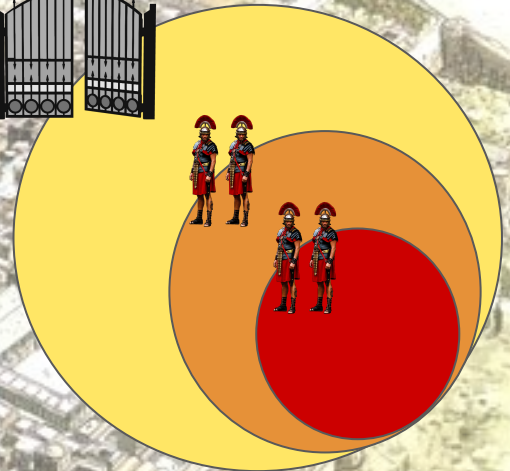




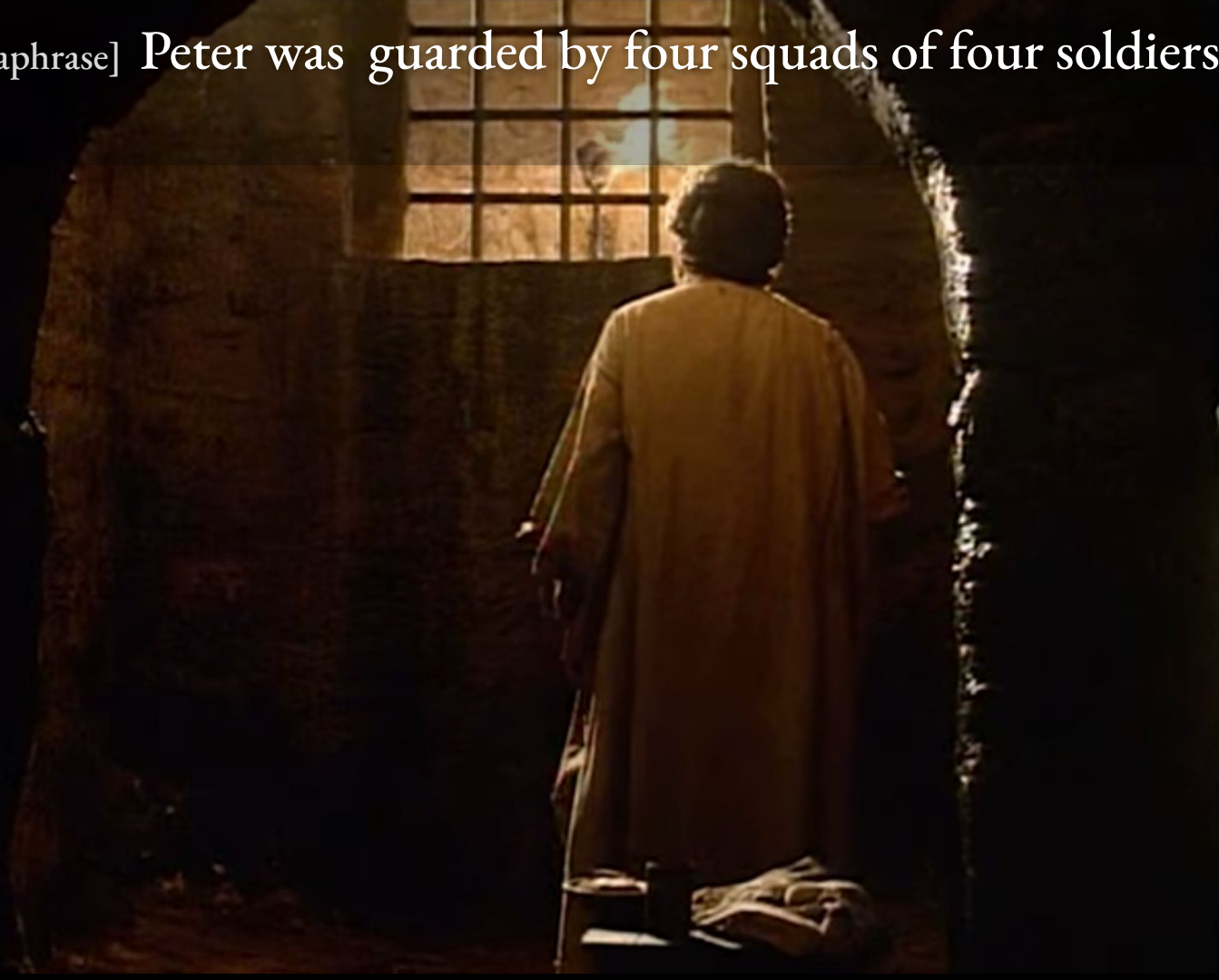


Acts 12:4 ...Herod intended to bring him out for public trial **after the Passover.**





Acts 12:4 [paraphrase] Peter was guarded by four squads of four soldiers each...









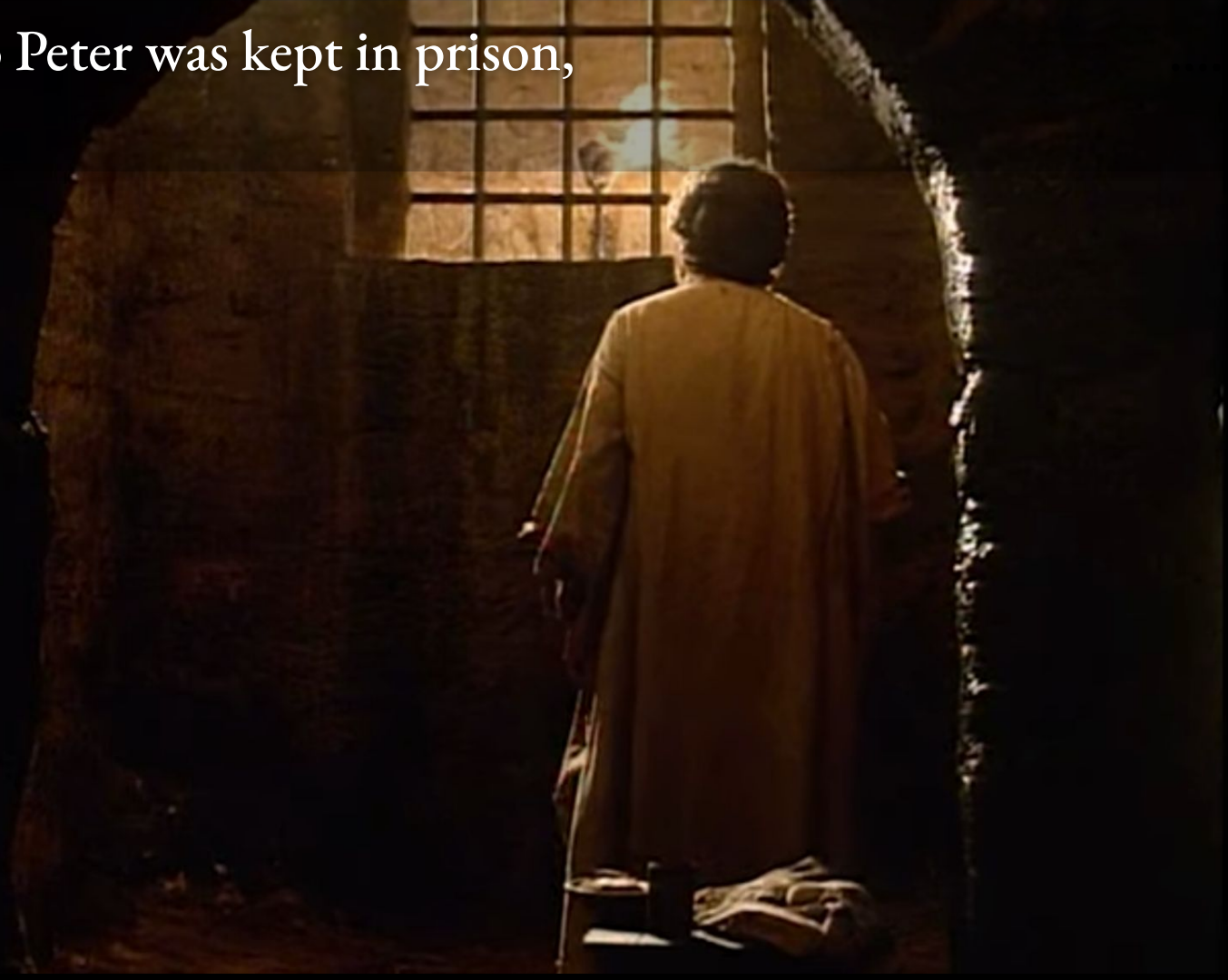
a soldier was stoned to death or killed with a club for desertion or neglect of duty



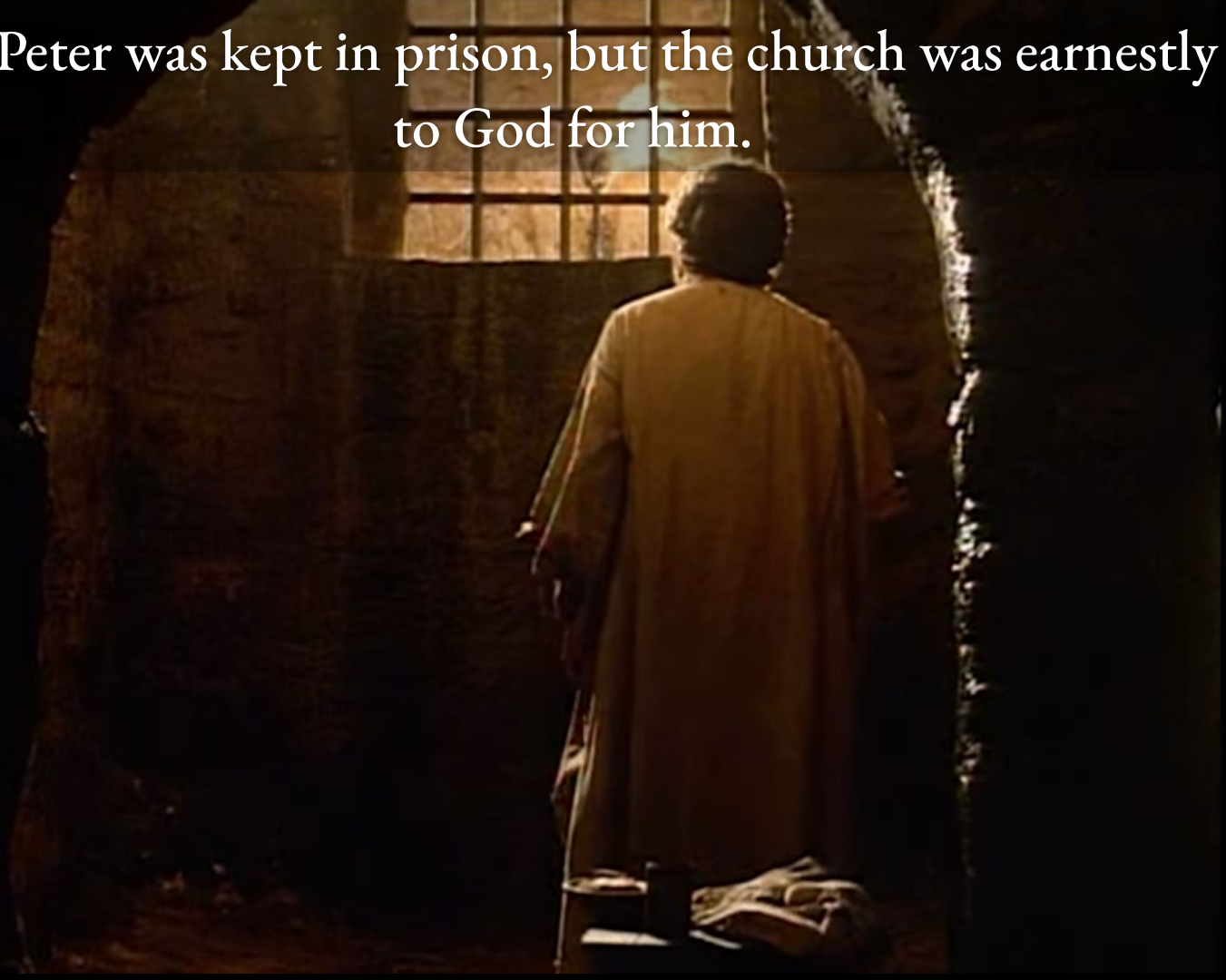
7 days passed...



Acts 12:5 So Peter was kept in prison,



Acts 12:5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.



Acts 12:6 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.



*How is he able to sleep?!*



Acts 12:7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell...



Acts 12:7 ...He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!”  
...and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists.





Acts 12:8 ...“Put on your clothes... sandals...  
Wrap your cloak around you and follow me”



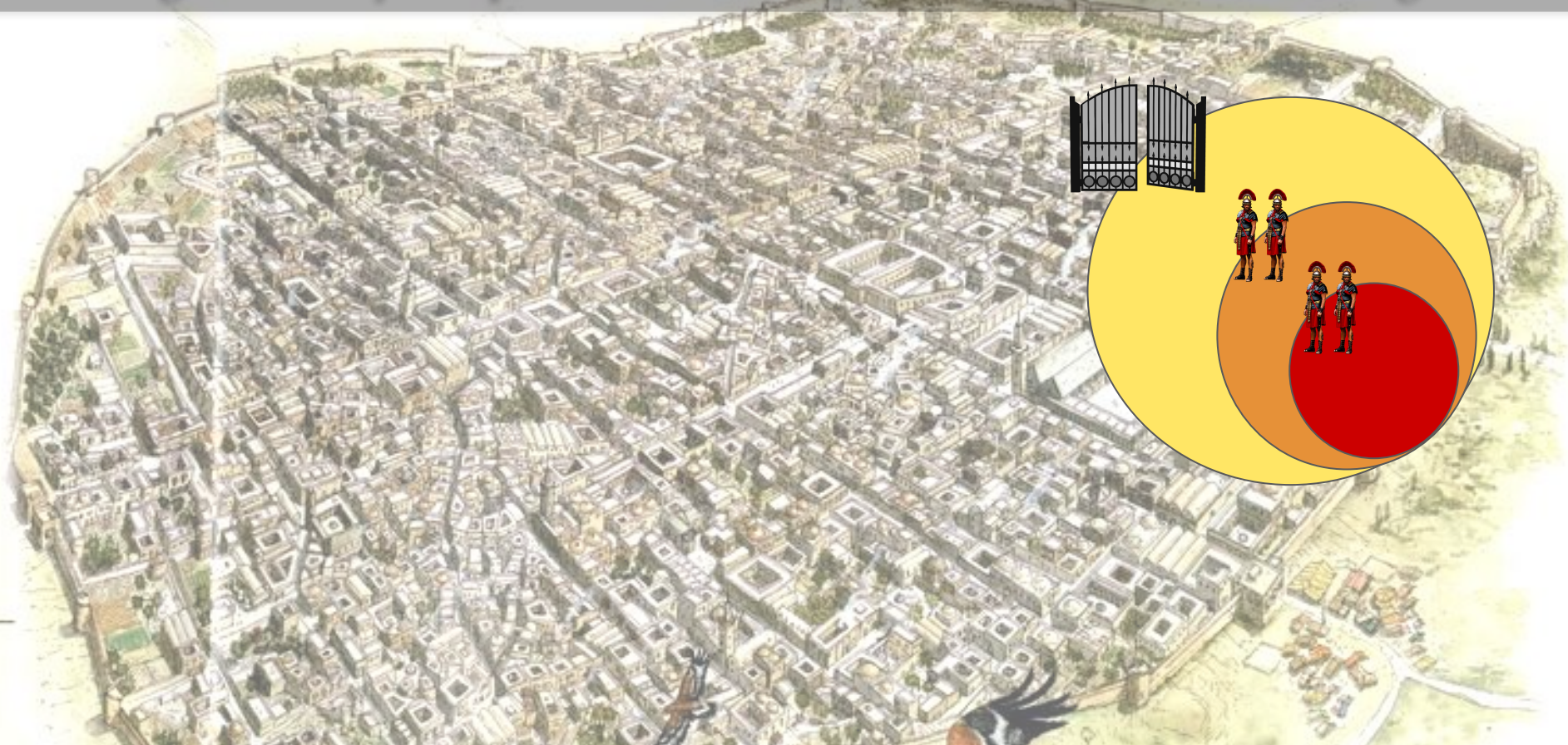




Acts 12:9 ...but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening;  
he thought he was seeing a vision.



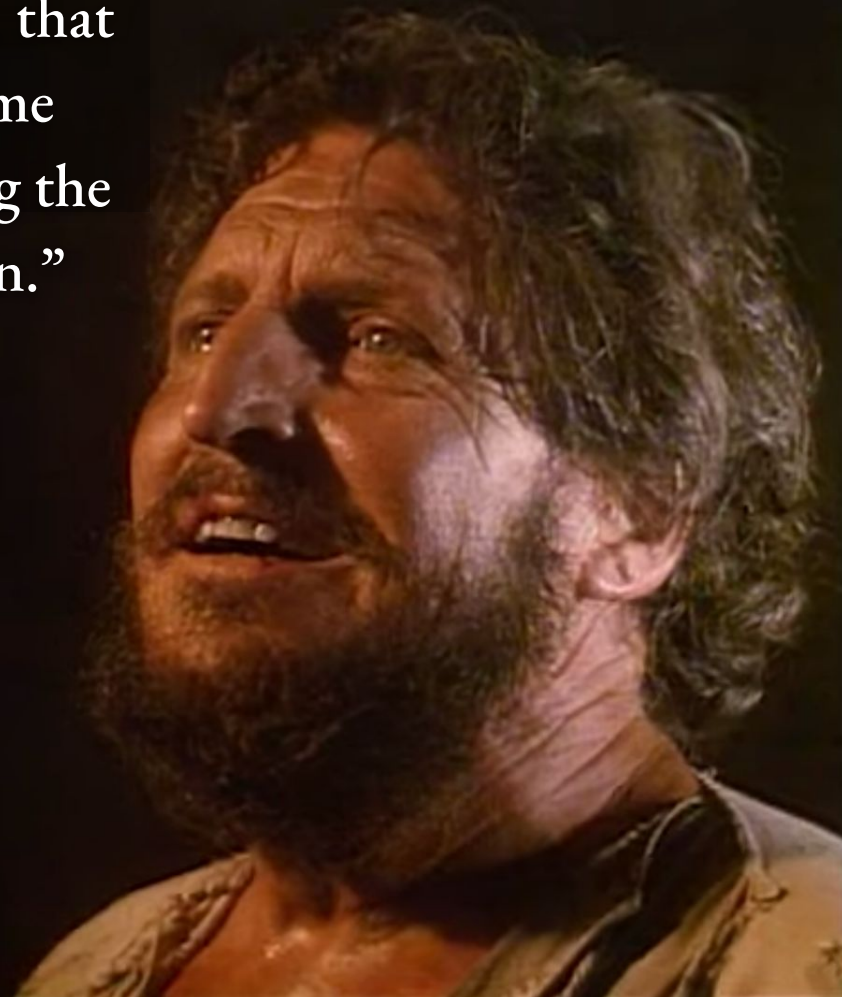
Acts 12:10 They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it...



Acts 12:10 ...suddenly the angel left him.



Acts 12:11 ... “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.”



Acts 12:13 Peter knocked at the outer entrance,...





Acts 12:13 ...and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door.



Acts 12:14 When she recognized Peter's voice,...



Acts 12:14 ....she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it...



Acts 12:14 ...“Peter is at the door!”



Acts 12:15 “You’re out of your mind,” ...



Acts 12:15 ...“It must be his angel.”



Acts 12:16 But Peter kept on knocking,



Acts 12:16 ...and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.





Acts 12:17 Peter...described how the Lord had brought him out of prison.



Acts 12:17 “Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this,” he said,  
and then he left for another place.



*This is the last you hear of Peter*





(Acts 12:21-22, paraphrase) One day, Herod made a public speech.  
People shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.”



Acts 12:23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

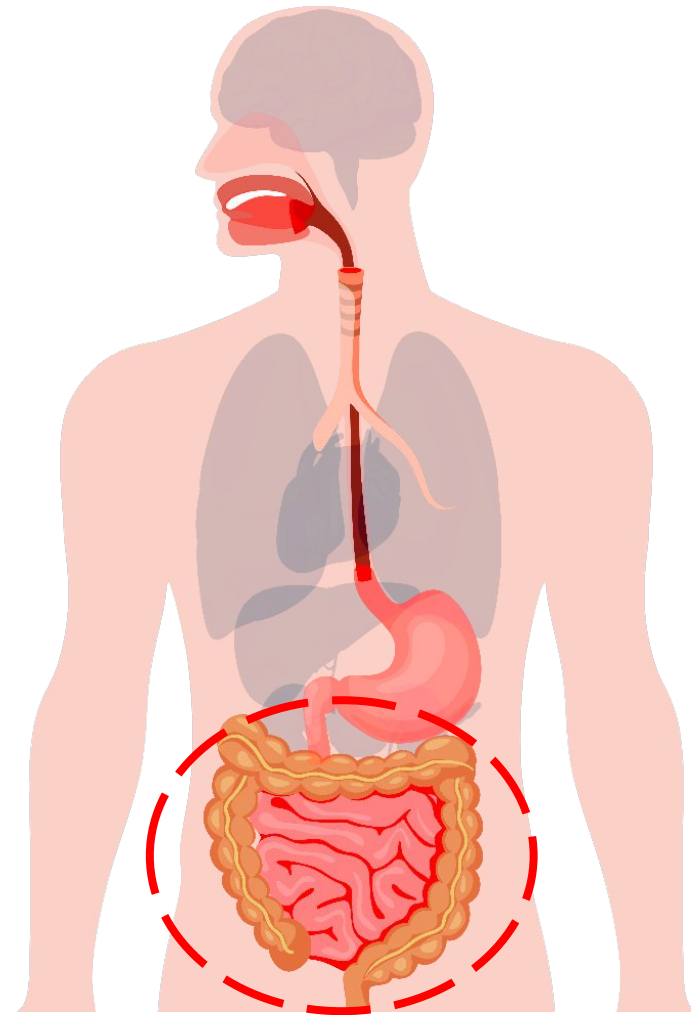


Gangrene is the death of tissue in part of the body



Foul Smelling Discharge

Surface and subsurface discoloration



24 But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.



*Who is more free?*



Don't Tell Me



What to do.



**Across all generation in the U.S. today,  
Gen Z Americans report **the lowest** in  
“thriving”** (Gallup and the Walton Family Foundation)

**Compared to older generations, greater share of Gen Z describe themselves as “poor” or “only fair” in mental health and emotional well-being.**

**Don't Tell Me**



**What to do.**

**Freed** from right and wrong

**Freed** from responsibility

**Freed** from commitment

**Freed** from meaning

**Freed** from purpose

**Freed** from God

**Don't Tell Me**



**What to do.**

**Freed** to be **imprisoned**

by your own Thoughts

Feelings

Vices

# Outwardly **free** Inwardly **enslaved**



“The hardest prison to escape is your mind.”





“Truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.  
So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.



**Outwardly** **enslaved**

**Inwardly** **free**



*In being enslaved to Christ, Peter found true freedom*

