

The Life of the Apostle Peter
Study # 41 A
Peter's Deliverance from Prison
(Acts 12:1-19)

Four Quaternions of Soldiers

Luke relates the high level of security placed on Peter. This is not surprising since stories of the arrest and previous escape of the apostles are probably known to Agrippa (cf. 5:17-42). These are most likely Roman soldiers and not the temple guard. It was common Roman procedure to have four squads of soldiers keep watch in succession throughout the night. One Roman writer explains, "And because it used to seem impossible for sentries to maintain successful watches, the watches therefore were divided into four parts by the water clock, so that it not be necessary to stand watch for more than three night-time hours. (*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*)

I. Peter Detained (12:1-4)

1. Herod the Great (37 - 4 B.C.)

NOTES:

2. Herod Antipas (4 B.C. - A.D. 39)

NOTES:

3. Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 37 - 44)

NOTES:

A. The Attacks on the Church (1-2; Luke 23:7-25)

HEROD (Antipas) Luke 23:7-12

PILATE (Luke 23:13-25)

- Herod Agrippa delights in persecuting the church.
- This is further proof of the final rejection of Jesus by the Jewish nation.

James (4 in NT)

NOTES:

Killed (Job 13:15; Mt. 20:20-24; John 21:16-19; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

- Why is James allowed to die and Peter allowed to live?
- May we never forget that this life is temporary.
- Peter would live thirty more years.

With the Sword

B. The Appeasement of the Jews (3)

NOTES:

C. The Arrest of Peter (4; 5:17-25)

ΑΩ

vex (12:1) Gk., κακω, to do injury or harm to, to do evil to.

apprehended (12:4) Literally, this means to take by the hand. It is the exact word used to describe Peter's earlier lifting of the lame man at the Temple (3:7)

four quaternions (12:4) Please note here that Robertson differs from the Zondervan notes found in your book background box on this page. Gk., *tessarsin tetradiois stratioton*. Four soldiers in each quaternion (*tetradion* from *tetras*, four), two on the inside with the prisoner (chained to him) and two on the outside, in shifts of six hours each, sixteen soldiers in all, the usual Roman custom. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*.

CONCLUDING APPLICATIONS FOR THIS SECTION

- Serving God does not guarantee us an exemption from suffering.
- We do not know when our time will come, we must be prepared.
- We should not be surprised at the hatred the rulers of this world have for the church.
- As we shall see, we may rest securely in the knowledge that we are in God's hand!