

Bible Story 10: THE LORD'S ANGEL RESCUES PETER FROM PRISON

SCRIPTURE: Acts 11:19-30; 12:1-19, 24-25

MEMORY VERSE(S): Psalm 46:1, Romans 12:13, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 or 1 Peter 4:16

BIBLE STORY:

After the church's leader Stephen died, some of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem scattered. Some went to Antioch where they shared the good news to Jews. Others shared the good news of Jesus to the Gentiles (non-Jews) in Antioch. The believers in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch to see what was happening. Barnabas was a good man of great faith and filled with the Holy Spirit. He was glad to see how the Lord was working among the people in Antioch. Many more people believed in Jesus.

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to find Saul (Paul) and took him to Antioch with him. For a year they taught the believers. In Antioch, the Lord's followers were first called **Christians**.

Some prophets said that a severe famine was coming. The followers of Jesus wanted to help. So they sent relief contributions with Barnabas and Saul to the church leaders in Jerusalem to help those in need in the area.

The ruling King Herod killed the apostle James, the brother of the apostle John. This pleased the non-believing Jews. So King Herod arrested Peter during the Passover Week, a yearly Jewish religious observance. King Herod ordered soldiers to guard Peter. After the Passover, Peter was to be judged.

Meanwhile the church prayed earnestly to God for Peter while he was in prison.

The night before being judged, Peter was sleeping in the prison cell. He was under heavy guards. Peter's hands were chained to soldiers, one on either side of him. At the entrance were more soldiers.

Suddenly a light shown in the cell as an angel of the Lord appeared. The angel shook Peter and woke him up. The angel said, "*Peter, quickly get up!*"

Peter obeyed. The chains fell off his hands.

Then the angel said, "*Now get dressed! Put on your sandals and coat! Follow me!*"

Peter thought all that was happening was just a dream. He put on his coat and sandals, and followed the angel. They walked by the soldiers at the entrance of the prison. When they came to the iron gate to the city, the gate opened by itself. As they walked down the street, suddenly the angel disappeared.

Peter realized what happened was not a dream. He said to himself, "*The Lord protected me from King Herod and the non-believing Jews by having His angel rescue me.*"

Then Peter went to the house of the mother of John Mark. The believers inside were praying for Peter. When Peter arrived, he knocked on the gate. The servant Rhoda went to the gate. Hearing Peter's voice, she was overwhelmed with joy. In her excitement, she left him outside, ran into the house and said, "*Peter is standing at the gate!*"

Everyone said, "*She's seeing things! It's his angel!*"

Peter kept knocking. Finally they opened the gate and were amazed to see Peter standing there. Peter shared his story of how the Lord rescued him. Afterwards Peter said, "*Tell James and all the believers what happened.*" Then Peter left.

The next morning the soldiers who guarded Peter wondered where Peter was. Herod had his soldiers look for Peter, but they could not find him.

Barnabas and Saul gave the relief contributions to the church in Jerusalem. Then they went back to Antioch, taking John Mark with them. The Good News of Jesus kept spreading.

A Christian

is a follower of Jesus Christ.

(Read

Matthew 16:13-16;

John 1:40-42;

2 Corinthians 1:3-4.)

The non-believers in Antioch were trying

to degrade the

believers of Jesus

by calling them

Christians.

However, among

Jesus' followers, it

was an honor to be

called a Christian.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Ask questions appropriate for your group of listeners.)

PERSONAL QUESTIONS:

1. What did you learn from this story?
2. How can you apply this story to your life?

GENERIC QUESTIONS:

1. What do you like about the story?
2. Who are the main characters in the story?
3. What problems did the people face? What happened?
4. Have you had any similar problems you would like to share? What happened?
5. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Barnabas and Saul (Paul) stay in Antioch with the believers?
 - Why should we study and grow in our knowledge of Lord Jesus Christ?
 - What are some ways we can help others grow in their knowledge of the Lord?
2. Who is a Christian?
 - What are some things a Christian can do to live a "Christ-like" life?
3. Why did the believers in Antioch send a contribution to believers in Jerusalem?
 - What are some ways we can help needy people who are going through a crisis, such as a famine; loss of home because of a fire, hurricane or tornado; etc.
4. Prison:
 - Why was Peter in the prison?
 - How was he guarded in prison so he could not get away?
 - How did God rescue Peter from prison?
 - What did the Lord's angel do?
 - How did Peter respond to the Lord's angel?
 - Where did Peter go after he was rescued from prison? What happened?
 - What are some difficult situations people face today?
 - How does God help people who are facing difficult situations?
 - How can we help people who are going through difficult situations?

LIFE LESSONS: (Choose Life Lessons appropriate for your group of listeners.)

1. **Believers need to grow in their knowledge of the Lord and teach others about Jesus.**
Barnabas was a mentor to Saul (Paul). Barnabas and Saul taught the believers in Antioch about Jesus. We need to grow in our knowledge of the Lord. Fellow believers need to help teach and train others about God's Word, teachings of Jesus, how to live for Jesus, how to share Jesus Christ with others, etc.

2. **Believers should help those in need.**
The believers in Antioch sent a contribution to ones in Jerusalem who were facing a famine. We need to help those in need with food, water, clothing, shelter, etc.

3. **God helps people in difficult situations.**
God sent His angel to rescue Peter from prison. God gave strength and courage to the church's leader Stephen and apostle James when they faced death. God is willing to help us face difficult situations in our life. Examples: face conflicts in our home, job or school; overcome drug additions; face persecution for being a believer; etc.

PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES: (Choose an activity or activities appropriate for your group of listeners.)

PANTOMIME STORY:

- Tell the Bible story. Then ask for volunteers to act out the main characters in the story.
- As the story is being retold, the volunteers act out their characters' roles without speaking.

WHO AM I ?

- Tell the Bible story.
- Ask the group, "Who were the characters in the story?"
 - Retell the story and give emphasis on the names of the characters in the story.
- Afterwards, say, "I am going to describe a character in the story and I want you to tell who it is in the story." Then describe the character and allow them to tell who it is in the story.

	Description of the Character in the Story	Character
1.	I died for sharing Jesus with others. Some of the followers in Jerusalem scattered to Antioch and shared Jesus with people living there. <i>Who am I?</i>	Stephen
2.	I went and got Saul (Paul) to come with me to Antioch to teach the people about Jesus. <i>Who am I?</i>	Barnabas
3.	The followers of Jesus Christ were first called this name in Antioch. <i>Who am I?</i>	Christians
4.	I persecuted the believers. <i>Who am I?</i>	King Herod
5.	I was persecuted and killed by King Herod, because I shared Jesus with others. <i>Who am I?</i>	James
6.	I was put in prison because I shared Jesus with others. <i>Who am I?</i>	Peter
7.	We guarded Peter in prison so he would not escape. <i>Who are we?</i>	Soldiers
8.	I appeared in Peter's cell and rescued him from prison. <i>Who am I?</i>	Angel of the Lord
9.	I heard Peter's voice at the gate. So I ran to tell others that Peter was outside the house. <i>Who am I?</i>	Servant Rhoda
10.	Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch and took this person with them. <i>Who am I?</i>	John Mark