

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

## Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 02.14.2021

### THE REVEALING OF THE HIDDEN – Acts 12:20-13:3

#### Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Persecution had been increasing against the church. Herod beheaded the Apostle James which pleased the Jewish leaders. Then he arrested Peter and put him in jail. Herod was an evil wicked man. We often ask the Lord when he will bring justice against wicked leaders. But we know that God will bring judgement against such men. This truth is illustrated in the death of Herod. God does not always bring retribution this quickly, but you can be sure the Judge of all the earth will do what is right. The Jewish historian Josephus tells us this took place in this beautiful Roman Theater in Caesarea on the Mediterranean Coast. Herod came with this fabulous robe made of silver cloth. So, he came in like a shining god, and the people cried 'the voice of a god, not a man' And because he did not give God glory he was smitten by an angel and there died. Let's get into our study...

1. What stood out to you during this week's study?
2. How do you define "success"?
3. What role does obedience to God play in your definition?

Many times we think of success in terms of winning, achieving, or possessing. Success in our culture is often measured by fame and wealth. Success in God's economy, however, is always measured by our faithfulness to Him, which brings Him glory in the process. This study focuses on two Scripture passages. In Acts 12, we learn about a man who gained worldly glory but died because he claimed for himself the honor and glory that belong only to God. In Matthew 5, Jesus taught His followers that the goal of life is to live for the glory of God and to seek first His kingdom.

#### Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

##### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 12:20-25

1. In addition to his unexplained anger toward the citizens of Tyre and Sidon, what do we know about Herod (see Acts 12:1-4)?
2. Why were the citizens of Tyre and Sidon eager to meet with Herod? How does Acts 11:28 add context to the situation? What does this reveal about Herod's character?
3. Do you think the assembled people were sincere in their response to Herod's speech in verse 22? Explain your answer.
4. What do you make of Herod's death (v. 23)?

On an appointed day, Herod wore royal robes and sat on his throne (v. 21). The Jewish historian Josephus wrote about this incident, that Herod's garment was made wholly of silver and when the sun's rays hit it, it was so resplendent that the people were awestruck. Herod arranged to receive praise from his subjects, but God had other plans (v. 23). Herod dressed in such a way as to project his own glory but suffered an ignoble, humiliating death. Herod died because he claimed for himself the honor and glory that belongs only to God. Herod was dead, and the word of God flourished and multiplied.

Herod had attacked the church at Jerusalem (vv. 1-4), thinking he could stop the advance of the gospel. But James died for the sake of the gospel (v. 2), and God got the glory in Peter's imprisonment and miraculous escape (vv. 6-11).

## Visitation/Restoration in 2021

5. How does the example of Herod serve as a warning to us?

The Lord will not give His glory to another (see Isa. 42:8). If we seek to exalt ourselves, God will eventually humble us. God does not immediately punish all sin, but he will judge everyone (see Heb. 9:27).

6. How can we guard against the temptation of pride and conceit?

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 13:1-3

The Holy Spirit appears 59 times in Acts, and in 36 of those appearances, we see Him speaking through someone. Empowering prophetic speech is the primary thing the Spirit does in Acts.

1. How do you think the men listed in verse 1 had come to be seen as “prophets and teachers”?
2. What role do you think worshiping the Lord and fasting played in helping these early believers become receptive to the Holy Spirit’s voice?
3. Who “sent . . . off” Barnabas and Saul in verse 3? Who “sent them out” in verse 4?
4. What do these verses tell us about how the Holy Spirit works among and through His people?
5. The text does not specify how the Holy Spirit spoke to the early believers. How do you think they recognized His voice?

The Spirit of God is still moving and speaking in the church. His movements never contradict Scripture, nor do they add to its message. But the Spirit’s presence in the church today guides His people in the application of His message and the execution of their mission.

### Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

The life of Esther is an example of how God brings retribution and justice to those who persecute His people. Mordechai’s words to Esther were “For such a times as this!” Purim is the plural form of the word Pur which means ‘lot’ (dice). Haman cast lots to see which day the Jews of Persia should be killed 13th of Adar, the last Jewish Feast in the year. But this would be Reversed! What is interesting is that the book of Esther is the Only book in the Old Testament that does not mention the name of God! (Some wanted to keep it out of the canon because of this). But the Truth is that the idea of God’s Sovereignty and Providence are clearly seen through the entire story! The Gallows that Haman built to hang Mordecai became the gallows that he and his ten sons were hung on! This is the great reversal! We can trust that God’s justice will prevail.

1. Herod accepted the praise of the people instead of giving glory to God. Whose glory are you living for? Explain.
2. Where within your sphere of influence do you need to serve as salt and light?
3. When have you sensed God speaking to you in a powerful and personal way? (cc Acts 13:1-3)
4. In what ways can we better prepare ourselves to be used by the Spirit when we gather together as a group?

PRAYER - Ask God to give your group members a strong sense of anticipation to hear His voice every time you gather together. Pray for the Spirit to use each person to speak truth into others’ lives. Ask God to help you all be open to His Spirit’s prompting when He wants you to speak words of wisdom and knowledge to other believers..

*“But the word of God grew and multiplied.” (Acts 12:24)*