

*“Then Peter came to himself and said, ‘Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.’” Acts 12:11*

What a fabulous story. There are jail break-outs (think the stealth of Disney’s Robin Hood), travels through the night, angels, kings, and excited housemaids. Oh I love good stories. And this is no exception. Seriously. Go read it.

And now that you have read the story, of course, I am going to tell you that only *one* story here is about breaking Peter out of jail. Look at the opening and closing verses of this chapter; Peter’s prison capers happen only because of Herod’s obsessive need to feel loved by the masses. He kills one disciple (James), which pleased the crowd, so he then put Peter in jail (even better), had the guards killed when they “let” Peter escape, and then was struck down dead himself when he allowed the multitudes to hail him as a god. But the stories don’t end there, either.

I think that one character we often skip over when reading Bible stories, is God. We, of course, assume that God is present and active – some even say things happen because God “wants” it to - but we rarely see God as an actual *being*. A *real* Being with *real* thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions. A true “player” in the story who must also deal with the actions of others. Read this story again as if you were playing the part of God. How do you view the events now? What role did you play in this story, and why? What sorts of world realities and human actions did you have to put up with? What feelings do you have at each verse? Look back through the book of Acts so far. Does reading it from “God’s standpoint” change what the actual story is? Why or why not?

In our own lives, we act with and against God and everything in between. What story have you been a part of?

*Lord, I thank you for your presence. Continue to give me the ability to see you in this world, the mind to know you, and the heart to understand you. Give me courage to live in this world as someone loved by you. Through your Holy Spirit I pray, Amen.*

*The writer:* Sarah Harrold is the Pastor of Evangelism and Mission at Bethel. Sitting in coffee shops, people-watching, speculating on all sorts of topics, and watching movies are particular strengths of hers.

