

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

## An Angel Delivers Peter

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread).

And when he had approached him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaterions of soldiers to keep him: intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

And the angels said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garments about thee, and follow me.

And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through the street; and forthwith the angel departed from him

—*The Acts*, 12:1-10.

Many of the early Christians gave their lives that the teachings of Christ Jesus, imbued with the leaven of Love, might become the imperishable heritage of humanity. James, the brother of John, was one of these martyrs, sacrificed in the clash between the old regime of law and selfishness and the new order of love and brotherhood.

Among the comforting rewards that came in those trying days and that still

come to the followers of the Cross is that of aid from the Angels. The loving ministry of these shining ones brought solace and comfort to many, and upon numerous occasions they accomplished a physical release or otherwise gave assistance that relieved a serious situation. They are motivated entirely by love, and are therefore ever ready to serve wherever they can.

A powerful factor in attracting the aid of angelic ministers is prayer. We note here that "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." The prayer of people united and dedicated to a single purpose can accomplish seeming miracles. A communication with God is established and Divine Life and Light flow into and illumine those who pray properly.

True prayer, born in praise and adoration, lifts the higher self to the very throne of God and brings down a spiritual outpouring. This outpouring may set new forces to work in the life, or so direct the old forces that situations are changed in a seemingly miraculous manner. This is the basis of overcoming evil with good. It is a conscious cooperation with and use of the spiritual forces all about us. It is a magic key that opens the way for loving ministrations from the angelic hosts.

This experience by Peter may also be interpreted in the light of esotericism to indicate the powers that come to the spiritual aspirant as he reaches certain stages on the Path. He evolves the soul body and learns to function in it. Love and faith enable him to transcend physical law and control the lower nature. The soldiers and the door to the prison may be thought of as phases of the lower nature which are overcome as the powers of the Spirit are developed.