CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
FEBRUARY212026

Scripture Story: Acts 12:1-23; 1 Peter; 2 Peter.
Commentary: The *Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 15, 51, 52.

evidence of conversion



Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

"It was after Peter had been led to self-renunciation and entire reliance upon divine power, that he received his call to act as an undershepherd. Christ had said to Peter, before his denial of Him, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' Luke 22:32. These words were significant of the wide and effectual work which this apostle was to do in the future for those who should come to the faith. For this work, Peter's own experience of sin and suffering and repentance had prepared him. Not until he had learned his weakness, could he know the believer's need of dependence on Christ" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 515).

keytext

"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

(2 Peter 1:3, NIV)

what do you think?

Below are a few statements of miracles, grace, and love. Which ones do you believe completely? (Circle these.) Which ones do you have doubts about? (Put a question mark by these.)

a. I believe in miracles.
b. Every life is a miracle.
c. Miracles occur more for people of faith.
d. Grace is impossible to fully grasp.
e. I am 100 percent positive that I am saved by grace.
f. I believe that God loves all people equally.
g. I believe that only people filled with the Holy Spirit are capable of fully loving others.

did you know?

Most scholars believe that First and Second Peter were both written by the apostle Peter. He addressed the letters to Jewish Christians throughout Asia Minor who were being persecuted for their faith. First Peter is a message of comfort and encouragement to remember that through all the suffering in this world Jesus offers hope. While he wrote his first letter to teach about prevailing through persecution (external trials), he wrote the second letter to teach about handling heresy in the church (internal trials).

INTO THE STORY

"It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

"So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

"The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. 'Quick, get up!' he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

"Then the angel said to him, 'Put on your clothes and sandals.' And Peter did so. 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,' the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

"Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.'

"When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, 'Peter is at the door!'

"'You're out of your mind,' they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, 'It must be his angel.'

"But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison."

(Acts 12:1-17, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read the passages in the Into the Story *section and answer the following questions:*

What is the irony in verses 13-15?

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How much faith did the believers at that prayer meeting really have?

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If you were a defense attorney, how would you defend these Christians?

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How might the scene of Peter's knocking at the door and their reluctance to believe it was Peter be impacted by the detail provided in verse 2?

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What part did their prayers play in Peter's escape? Explain.

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Why do you think God chose to perform a miracle on behalf of Peter?

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What does this suggest about Peter's importance to the early Christian church?

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punch lines

"Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News" **(Philippians 1:27, NLT).**

"Now that I am old and gray, do not abandon me, O God. Let me proclaim your power to this new generation, your mighty miracles to all who come after me" **(Psalm 71:18, NLT).**

"But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God" **(Acts 20:24, NLT).**

"Then Jesus began to denounce the towns where he had done so many of his miracles, because they hadn't repented of their sins and turned to God" **(Matthew 11:20, NLT).**

"Who can list the glorious miracles of the Lord? Who can ever praise him enough?" **(Psalm 106:2, NLT).**

further insight

"Trial is part of the education given in the school of Christ, to purify God's children from the dross of earthliness. . . . Trials and obstacles are His chosen methods of discipline, and His appointed conditions of success."

—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 524

Sabbath

Read Psalm 106:2.

Review the statements in the *What Do You Think?* section that you have questions about. Review each one and write next to it why you question it.

Sunday

Read Acts 20:24.

Think about all the stories you know of the apostle Peter—walking on the water, denying Christ, asking Jesus to drench his entire body at the Lord's Supper, and so on. Next, read through First and Second Peter. Scan the book of Acts, looking for additional stories about Peter. Finally, read the story of Peter's escape from prison in the Into the Story section. What are three lessons that you can take from Peter's life that can be of help to you? Write them below.

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Monday

Read 2 Peter 1:3.

Review the *Key Text*. Make a list of everything you need. Next, claim the promise contained in the Key Text and believe that God will do as He says and meet all your needs.

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Tuesday

Read Matthew 11:20.

Review the *Flashlight* section and reflect on these questions:

Why do you think Peter first had to be "led to self-renunciation" before receiving his call from God?

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Does Jesus' statement in Luke 22:32 suggest that Peter was not converted when he was a disciple of Jesus? What must happen for genuine conversion to take place?

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What do you think God is preparing you to do through your "experience of sin and suffering and repentance"?

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Wednesday

Read the verses in *Punch Lines*. Circle the verse that speaks especially to your life today. Why is this verse meaningful to you? Think about somebody who might be encouraged by the same verse and pass it along by sending an e-mail, a text message, or a good old-fashioned hand-addressed note in the mail.

Thursday

Read Psalm 71:18.

How am I "advancing by faith toward the heights of Christian perfection"?

"For many years Peter had been urging upon the believers the necessity of a constant growth in grace and in a knowledge of the truth; and now, knowing that soon he would be called to suffer martyrdom for his faith, he once more drew attention to the precious privileges within the reach of every believer. In the full assurance of his faith the aged disciple exhorted his brethren to steadfastness of purpose in the Christian life. 'Give diligence,' he pleaded, 'to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' Precious assurance! Glorious is the hope before the believer as he advances by faith toward the heights of Christian perfection!" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 533).

What do you think Ellen White means by "Christian perfection"?

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Friday

Read Philippians 1:27.

What can I learn about miracles from Peter?

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Do you believe that the same miracles (walking on the water, escaping prison, healing the crippled beggar, etc.) that Peter experienced could happen to you? Why or why not?

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If the only story in the Bible that you knew was the story of Peter, how would you finish this sentence?

Love is: _____

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this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 15, 51, 52.

* Unlikely Leaders is a special adaptation of *The Acts of the Apostles* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.