

BUT THE WORD OF GOD GREW AND MULTIPLIED

Acts 12:1-25

Introduction:

- A. Growing things normally have conditions of growth
 - 1) Vegetables vary in their needs
 - 2) Type of soil, acid soil, water, sun
 - 3) Marriage, house, money, cars

- B. The Lord's work is a growing thing
 - 1) There are hardly any conditions of growth
 - 2) The things we would set forth are seldom needed in order for church growth
 - 3) Elaborate buildings, teaching tools

- C. The church as it is seen in the book of Acts, "grew and multiplied"
"word of God" Vs. 24
 - 1) What were it's circumstances?
 - 2) What did it have?

- I. It Grew in the Midst of Vexation Vs. 1
 - A. "Now about that time Herod the King stretched for his hands to vex certain of the church."
 - 1) Herod, a mighty man, a king
 - 2) "stretched" = epiballo = "to throw or cast upon"
 - 3) "vex" = kakoo = "to do evil to anyone", "to harm"

 - B. Sometimes things produce more when "vexed"
 - 1) Rubber trees in India, must be cut deeply
 - 2) Grape vines, must be pruned severely
 - 3) Jesus promised us, "persecution"
 - 4) We must let God do it. He and he alone knows how to prune without killing us.

II. It Grew in the Midst of Death Vs. 2

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

- 1) Evil always progresses
- 2) One step at a time, vexation to murder

B. He responded to public opinion

- 1) Vs. 3 "He saw it pleased the Jews"
- 2) "he proceeded further"

III. It Grew in the Face of Imprisonment

A. Herod placed Peter in prison Vs. 4

- 1) "apprehended" = piazo = "to catch", "lay hands on", "to apprehend in a violent or hostile manner"
- 2) "quaternion" = tetradion = "a guard of 4 men"
- 3) "Easter" = Pascha = "a sparing", "to spare", "hense Passover",
(based on movement of heavens)

East'er.

Originally the spring festival in honor of Eastr or Ostara, the Teutonic goddess of light and spring. As early as the eighth century the name was transferred by the Anglo-Saxons to the Christian festival designed to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. In the A.V. it occurs once, viz., in Acts xii. 4, but is a mistranslation. The original is pascha, the ordinary Greek word for passover. The R.V. properly employs the word passover.

B. Some of the church's greatest works have come from those imprisoned for the faith.

- 1) Paul, Phillippians
- 2) John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress
- 3) Go to prison and write a book!

IV. It Grew in the Face of Doubtful Praying

- A. "Prayer was made without ceasing of the church for him" Vs. 5
 - 1) His security Vs. 6
 - 2) Rhoda was considered to be "mad" Vs. 15
 - 3) "mainomai" = to be crazy
 - 4) "It is his Angel"
 - 5) They were "astonished" = existemi = "to be amazed", "to be beside one's self"

- B. There are different kinds of prayer
 - 1) "Prayer without ceasing"
 - 2) "Praying, nothing doubting"
 - 3) "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief"
 - 4) Pray anyway!

V. It Grew in Spite of Tension Vs. 17b

- A. Peter's escape caused serious problems
 - 1) "there was no small stir" Vs. 18
 - 2) "stir" = tarachos = "commotion", "disturbance"
 - 3) The keepers were put to death Vs. 19

- B. Peter's life was under threat
 - 1) He must live a wanted man
 - 2) He must live a hunted man
 - 3) All who helped him were in danger
 - 4) His travel and work is hindered

VI. It Grew in the Midst of Idolatry

- A. Herod was deified Vs. 20
 - 1) "He made an oration unto them" Vs. 21
 - 2) In celebration of the Emperor's birthday, probably in August
 - 3) "It is the voice of a God and not of a man" Vs. 22

B. God was not to be mocked Vs. 23

- 1) The angel of the Lord smote him Vs. 24
- 2) He was eaten of worms
- 3) It was "immediately"
- 4) Sometimes God works instantly, not always

VII. Christianity was Alive and Well Vs. 24

A. "But the word of God grew and multiplied" Vs. 24

- 1) "grew" = auxano = "to receive increase", "grew up"
- 2) "multiplied" = plethuno = "to make full"

B. Paul and Barnabas fulfilled their ministry Vs. 25

- 1) Vs. 25
- 2) They did all God required of them
- 3) "fulfilled" = pleroo = "perform fully", "complete", "accomplish"

C. We can do all God has called us to do!

- 1) We are in the world
- 2) We are capable and have opportunity

D. THE Word can grow!

- 1) The size of the body may not!
- 2) Truth cannot be chained
- 3) The Lord may "purge" His church
- 4) John 15:2 - "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."
- 5) "purgeth" = kathaio = "to cleanse from filth", "as grain by winnowing, or a tree by pruning."

HEROD THE KING - Josephus calls him simply Agrippa. Both names are generally combined, and he is designated Herod Agrippa I., to distinguish him from Herod Agrippa II., before whom Paul was tried. Agrippa I. was the son of Aristobulus, son of Herod the Great and Mariamne, granddaughter of Hyrcanus. He was educated in Rome with Drusus, son of the emperor Tiberius, and Claudius (Antiq. xviii. 6, 1 and 4); but the death of Drusus and lack of funds led to his return to Judaea (2). In A.D. 37 he made another journey to Rome to bring accusations against Herod the tetrarch (Antiq. xviii. 5, 3; War ii.9,5). He did not return when his business was transacted, but remained in the metropolis, cultivating the acquaintance of people who might be of use to him in the future. Among others, he ingratiated himself with Caius, son of Germanicus, who shortly became the emperor Caligula (Antiq. xviii. 6, 4; War ii. 9, 5). For rash words spoken in favor of Caius, Tiberius cast him into chains; but six months later Caius became emperor, and appointed Agrippa to be king of the tetrarchy which his late uncle Philip had governed, and also of the tetrarchy of Lysanias (Antiq. xviii. 6, 10). In A.D. 39 the emperor banished Herod the tetrarch, and added his tetrarchy, which was Galilee, to the kingdom of Agrippa (7,2). Agrippa left his kingdom for a time, and resided at Rome (8, 7). During this sojourn at the capital he prevailed upon the emperor to desist from his determination to erect his statue in the temple at Jerusalem (8, 7 and 8). When Caligula was assassinated, and Claudius, against his own will, chosen in his room, Agrippa, who was then at Rome, acted as negotiator between the senate and the new emperor, whom he persuaded to take office. As a reward, Agrippa had Judaea and Samaria added to his dominions, which now equaled those of Herod the Great (Antiq. xix. 3-5; War ii. 11, 1-5). He commenced to build a wall about the northern suburb of Jerusalem, so as to include it in the city, but was ordered to abandon the work (Antiq. xix. 7,2). He slew James, the brother of John with the sword (Acts xii. 1, 2), imprisoned Peter (3-19), and at Caesarea, immediately after he had accepted divine honor, was miserably eaten up of worms (20-23; Antiq. xix. 8, 2). He died A.D. 44, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, leaving four children, of whom three are mentioned in Scripture, Agrippa, Bernice, and Drusilla (War ii. 11, 6).

