Exegetical Notes, Acts 12:19b-25
“A Miserable End”
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(The story of Herod Agrippa’s death is also recorded in the secular history, The Antiquities of Josephus 19.8.2)

Acts 12:19b-25

Verses 19b-20
Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. 20 He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king’s country for their food supply.

• Following James’ execution and Peter’s escape from prison (See Acts 12:1-19a), Herod Agrippa left Judea and went to Caesarea, the official seat of the Roman government in that area. The people of Tyre and Sidon, cities now located in the area of modern Lebanon, came to him. These cities depended on grain from the area controlled by Agrippa and they were arguing with him over the price of it. Blastus was the treasurer of Agrippa’s government.

Verses 21-23
On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22 They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.” 23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

• According to Josephus, the “appointed day” was a festival for honoring Claudius Caesar. Josephus says that Agrippa, wearing a shiny silver robe addressed the crowd.
• The crowd, impressed by Agrippa, proclaimed him to be a god, a claim which he did not deny.
• According to Josephus, he was seized by overwhelming abdominal pain and carried to his bed. Five days later he died.
• Acts says that this happened because of Agrippa’s arrogance and his opposition to the Church.

Verses 24-25

But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.

When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

• But the opposition, even that of powerful men like Herod Agrippa, did not stop or even slow the spread of Christianity.
• In fact, the Church appointed Barnabas and Saul as the first team of evangelists. John Mark (see Acts 12:12 and Mark 14:51-52) accompanied them as their aide.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled A Miserable End. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)