

It was the best of times it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.

CHARL



ES DICKENS



The Lord's Church is built to flourish in the face of opposition.







About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. ² He killed James the brother of John with the sword, ³ and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. ⁴ And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. ⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.





ACTS 12:1-8



⁶ Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. ⁷ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. ⁸ And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me."









Peter was able to rest because he knew two things – **future promise** and **past performance**.



.."Peter when you were young you went where you wanted, did what you wanted to do. When you get old you'll stretch forth your hands and another shall gird you and carry you where you wouldn't go."







In Greek: Ektenos

It comes from the root word *ektenēs*, a medical term for **stretching a muscle to its limit**.





GOD SUPERNATURALLY INTERVENED

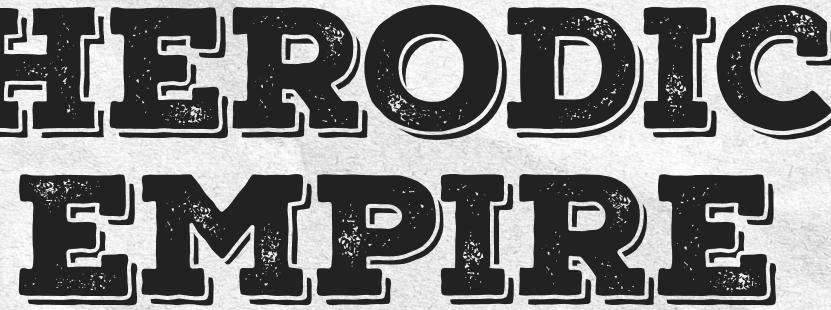
²¹ On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. ²² And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" ²³ Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.

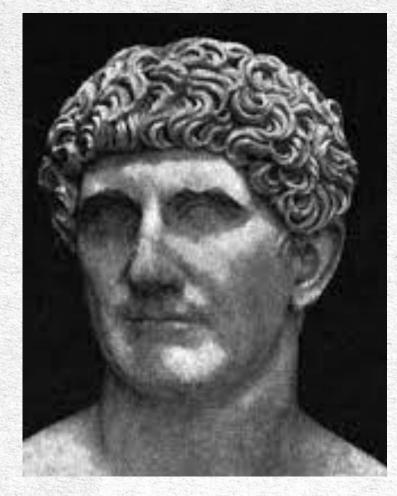


ACTS 12:21-23









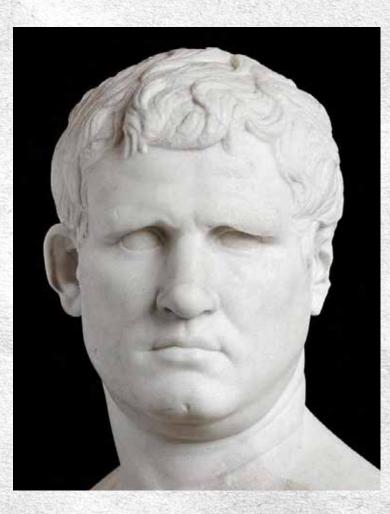
Herod the Great







Herod Antipas



Herod Agrippa





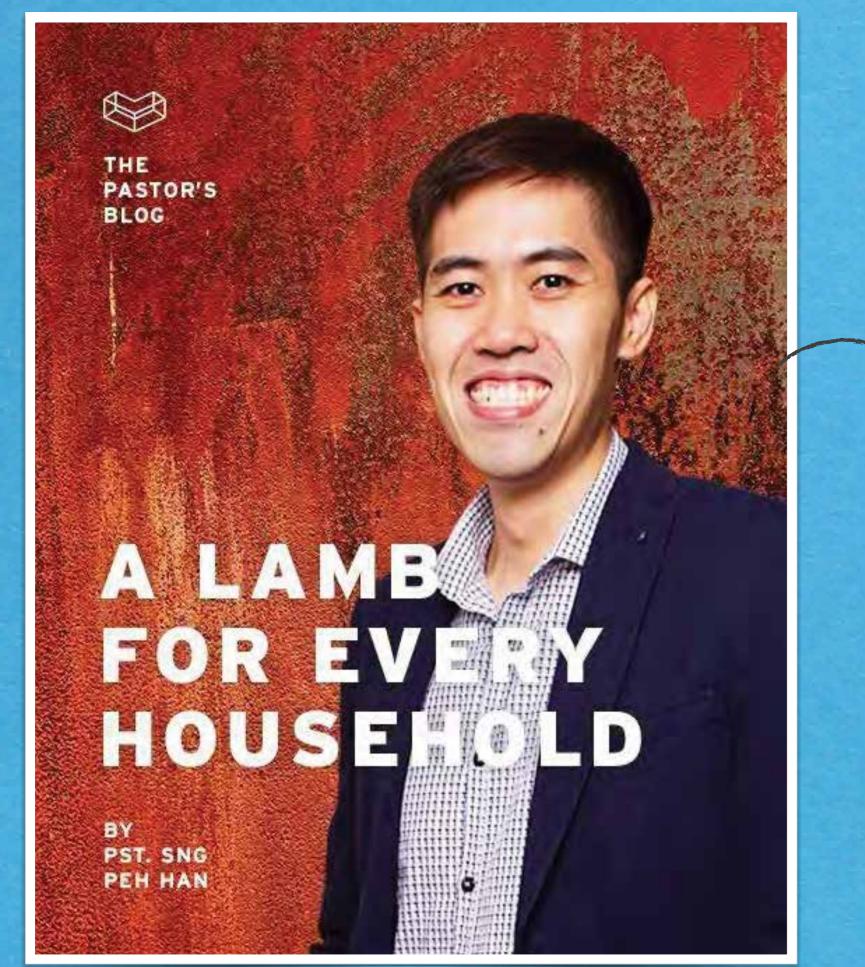
1. There is a spiritual battle for our minds.



A Christian never falls asleep in the fire or in the water, but grows drowsy in the sunshine."

BERRIDGE





"Without a vision of seeing our families come to the Lord, we'll settle for surviving each day – instead of a planted field that eventually yields a plentiful harvest. However, we may have to sacrifice, persevere, and undergo painful moments for a brighter future."



PASTOR PEH HAN, The Pastor's Blog | March 2020





2. God is **always** working behind the scenes.

GENESIS 3:15

He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.



ROMANS 6:17

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.





3. Go against your default.

ACTS 12:24

But the Word of God increased and multiplied. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.



ACTS 4:29

Radical hospitality and radical generosity.







- "But the Christians, O King, they know and trust in God ...
- ... they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem;
 - ... they take him in to their homes and rejoice over him as a very brother
- ... they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food
 - ... something divine in the midst of them."





ACTS 12:12

When he realised this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.



4. Never stop praying.

They needed to know God was still in control

They needed to know that their prayer changed things

