

Casual Cruelty
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Acts 12:2-3: "[Herod] killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread."

It's almost a casual cruelty. It's pandering. Here we have the first death of an Apostle, and Luke doesn't record for us any story. He doesn't tell us details like he had with Stephen and his stoning. It's just... there. Herod had James killed. Soldiers ran him through. No specific cause, no ruckus caused. The Church was helping the poor in the midst of a famine, and that was making the government look bad, so James is dead.

And what makes it worse? Herod sees the response, and there's enjoyment over this. That James had been an annoying little Christian, and the mob liked it. So Herod arrests Peter, but this time there will be a show, there will be entertainment and spectacle associated with things. No, Jesus rescues Peter out of jail, so Herod doesn't get his way totally. Still, it's a bunch of senseless hatred and violence and death.

You may see things that are hateful and senseless this week. And in fact, you'll probably see far more of it than you need to because this sort of stuff still pleases the crowd, and they are more than willing to share it. Some of it may splash on you, some of it you may be delivered from. Thus is the way of life in this world.

But you, O Christian, are not merely of this world, not merely of sin and unrighteousness and rage and jealousy. You are Baptized, you belong to Jesus. As such, you have His righteousness and His love and His life at all times, and the world and sin cannot change that. Even in the worst times, you remain forgiven and redeemed. You remain an instrument of God's love, and He will use you to accomplish His good and gracious will, even if people love drama and angst more.

Jesus isn't deterred by the rantings of the world or the wickedness therein. He went to the Cross and died and rose to defeat all that. He did so for James, He did so for you. Nothing can change that fact. Therefore, have a great week in Him!