

POPPY SUCCEEDS

Acts 12

Poppy shrugged his angel shoulders as he stepped into line after passing through St. Peter's Gate. Always impatient, he hemmed and hawed as he slowly proceeded to the core group being formed of the newbies. He was convinced about the importance and joy-filled experience he was privileged to be part of, here in heaven. But sometimes the more serious angels seemed too holy, too mature to be able to become friends of his.

A bell rang, announcing that another angel had just received his wings. His job must have been accomplished and everyone who knew him was celebrating his accomplishment. Poppy wondered when and if he'd ever be in that state. Could he do the job that awaited him? Would he be brave enough? Holy enough? Committed enough?

As each angel newby had to choose one active evangelical member of the body on earth to follow and learn from, Poppy had picked Peter whom he related to as a thoroughly humanly based but heavenly influenced individual. Poppy watched Peter every chance he got. In fact, in Acts 11:13, it was Poppy who saw the angel who appeared in Caesarea and said, "Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved." Following that angel, Poppy watched as the group of Apostles was dispersed, some with Stephen to Phoenicia and Cyprus to tell the Jews about Jesus, some to Antioch to tell the Greeks about the good news of the Lord. Barnabas and Saul met and taught great numbers of people in Antioch.

This was about the time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He put James, the brother of John to death by the sword. Because this pleased the Jews, Herod seized Peter, arrested him and handed him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Peter was scheduled for public trial after the Passover feast.

Poppy knew all this because of his vigilant shadowing of Peter. In the few minutes he had to himself, Poppy worried, asked forgiveness for worrying, and

searched for ways he could be of help to Peter. He knew nothing about the workings in Herod's palace or the prison system enforced in Antioch.

There was a break in the heavenly peace when Michael the Archangel summoned Poppy to meet with him on his private cloud. Poppy nervously received the call and prepared to meet Michael. Wondering if Michael had a task for him and if he could possibly be ready and able to meet the task kept Poppy busy until the time came.

Poppy knew that Peter was in prison. Looking down on him, Poppy saw that two soldiers bound Peter with chains and sentries also remained at the entrance. Any escape seemed impossible.

Michael reviewed Peter's situation, calling on Poppy to watch it carefully with him. Asking Poppy what they could do for Peter, Poppy shook his head and then an idea struck him. Risking his position in the community, Poppy spoke out and explained his heaven-shaking idea to Michael, who listened with care.

Poppy readied himself for his descent to Peter, taking his angel wardrobe, and angel backpack with him, including his newly acquired heavenly high beam light.

Landing rather well in the cell next to Peter, Poppy shined his light into Peter's cell. He bumped Peter in the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said to Peter and his chains fell off from his wrists.

Then Poppy said, "Put on your clothes and sandals." Peter obeyed Poppy, who was overcome with excitement. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," angel Poppy told Peter. Peter followed him out of the prison as he began to wonder who this small energetic creature was. Poppy's backpack slung back and forth on his shoulders slapping Peter at every turn. 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 Poppy returned to heaven. He had grown wings that carried him right up to Michael's cloud home!

If we could hear Peter now, he said "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

Feeling heroic, but not too proud he hoped, Poppy relived his great adventure many times. Michael recommended him for his permanent wings, and the bell rang for Poppy.

Angels show up at the most significant times in our lives. Rejoice and be glad!

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