

Acts 12:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

Analysis

Herod 'stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.' The verb 'vex' (Greek kakoo, to harm or afflict) shows deliberate hostility. This Herod (Agrippa I) persecuted Christians to gain favor with Jewish leaders. Satan continues attacking the church through political authorities hostile to the gospel. Reformed theology recognizes that persecution is normative for the church (2 Timothy 3:12) - the world hates Christ and His people. Yet God's sovereign purposes prevail despite human opposition, using persecution to refine and strengthen His church.

Historical Context

Herod Agrippa I (grandson of Herod the Great) ruled Judea AD 41-44. He cultivated Jewish favor by observing traditions and persecuting Christians. This persecution occurred circa AD 42-43, intensifying opposition beyond earlier Sanhedrin actions.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. Why does political power sometimes align with religious opposition to Christianity?
2. How should believers respond to governmental persecution?
3. What purposes does God accomplish through allowing persecution of His church?

Interlinear Text

Κατ' ἐκεῖνον δὲ τὸν καιρὸν ἐπέβαλεν Ἡρώδης ὁ
about **that** **Now** G3588 **time** **stretched forth** **Herod** G3588
G2596 G1565 G1161 G2540 G1911 G2264

βασιλεὺς τὰς χεῖρας κακῶσαί τινας τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς
the king G3588 **his hands** **to vex** **certain** G3588 **of** G3588
G935 G5495 G2559 G5100 G575

ἐκκλησίας
the church
G1577

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 24:9 (Parallel theme): Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

John 15:20 (Parallel theme): Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also.

Luke 22:53 (Parallel theme): When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

John 16:2 (Parallel theme): They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

