

MARK 6:14-29

REVIEW:

INTRO:

- This is a story of one sin, a half repentance and one martyrdom.
- We have no recorded report or details of the recent mission.
- Nothing about healings, raisings from the dead or deliverances.
- But what we do have is proof of a great success which they would have experienced as they went forth as the ambassadors of Jesus.
- We know this from VS. 14; "King Herod heard of Him that is Jesus, for His name had become well known.
 - Mt. 14:1 Herod heard the report about Jesus,
 - Luke 9:7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him.
- Also the fact that Herod thought John the Baptist had risen from the dead and powers were reported to be worked so much that others thought Elijah had risen, or a great prophet.
- Notice the faithless heart of man as displayed in Vs 14-15. They will not just acknowledge that Jesus himself was the miracle worker but were quick to attribute something to the spectacular, something more miraculous.
- Their faith found it easier to attribute the wonders to dead men raised to life, whether John Baptist, or Elijah or one of the prophets, but not the living Christ, the carpenter of Nazareth.
- Some went so far as to say, "he is "like" one of the prophets, but himself not a prophet, but only "like" one.
- Perhaps Herod had heard of the glorious reports of Jesus from his steward Chuza,
 - Lk. 8:3; and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.
- Or perhaps Manaen his foster brother,
 - Acts 13:1, Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch
- Or perhaps something from the noble man, of the men Herod had invited to his birthday party, whose son Jesus healed. John 4:46.
- John by this time has been imprisoned for about a year. This was a day to celebrate the birth of one man and ended up with the death of another.

JOHN THE BAPTIST:

- The birth of John was the first miraculous thing to happen in Israel for 400+ years.
- He was filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb.
- His was the first prophetic voice Israel had heard since Malachi, 400 years earlier. See **Mal. 4:5, 6.**
- He was the great forerunner, the Elijah, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, a true "friend of the Bridegroom.
- Of whom Jesus testified, "among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.
- While the religious leaders in Israel kept quiet about Herod and Herodias, John the Baptist did not waver but spoke out boldly. He is made of straighter, stronger metal.
- John with his unbending, uncompromising manhood stood freer in his dungeon than Herod did on his throne.
- John reigns while Herod pines. Who is the prisoner?

HEROD:

- Mark calls Herod a king, which proud Herod would have loved, where in fact he was not a king but only a tetrarch. That is a ruler over 1/4 of a nation.
- When Herod the great died, (the Herod of Jesus's birth.) the Romans divided his territory up among his 3 sons and one other. Philip, Aristobulus, father of Herodias, and Herod which we are now looking at who was Herod Antipas and made ruler over Perea and Galilee.
- Herod Antipas was of the family of Herod the great, (who sought to slay baby Jesus.)
- They were Edomites, that is descendants of Esau by blood, Jews by religion, heathens in morality.
- Jesus called him "that fox." (Lk. 13:32) sly, not trustworthy.
- The same Herod Antipas that tried Jesus. (Lk. 23:6-12.)
- In Luke 9:9 Herod said of Jesus, "Who is this of whom I hear such things?" So he sought to see Him.
- Herod did see Jesus, at Christ's trial He stood before this Herod.
 - **Lk. 23:6-8**
- Herodias married successively 2 of her uncles, Philip and Herod Antipas.
- Herod divorces his wife to marry his niece Herodias.
- Both Herod's divorce and Herodias leaving her husband were illegal, both to the Jew and the Roman. But as we know sometimes laws don't apply equally to all people.
- John preaching had a great effect on Herod, though it was mostly emotion, but what a day of crisis was his birthday and I am afraid he was ignorant of the importance of it.

- He was at a crossroads and his soul was passing through the valley of decision.
- Like Pilgrim in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan writes that Beelzebub shoots arrows at those who come up to "wicket gate." (Christ and His cross.) to attempt to kill them or drive them from the gate.
- Here Herod seems to be almost saved even like king Agrippa who declares in response to Paul's preaching, "thou almost persuade me." (Act. 26:28)
- Herod protected John from the hatred of Herodias and for fear....
- But Herod exchanges his day of salvation for a party, showing off, and exalting in his pride in front of his men of power.
- Thus he lowers his guard and protection for John, and for his own soul as well, and moving against his conscience he takes John's life, saving face but losing his soul. (Like Belshazzar's feast)
- Herod is so guilt ridden about the murder of John that when he hears of the success of the disciples he does not waiver but jumps to the conclusion of who this is by voicing, "this is John whom I beheaded."
- In the end Herod loses the favor of Rome for in A.D. 39 Herod Agrippa, nephew to Herod denounced him to the Roman Emperor and Herod Antipas with Herodias was deposed, sent to exile in Gaul died in obscurity and dishonor.

THE SIN:

- Herod had put away his former wife that he might take Philip's half-brother's wife to wed. Her name is Herodias.
- Herod's conclusion that the John he beheaded was now risen from the dead speaks of the guilt and conviction in his heart due to what he had done against his conscience when he murdered him.
- Herod had sold himself out to those men of power whom he sought to entertain and appear powerful.
- His oaths and promises indebted him to them and Herodias. Thus he becomes their prisoner and slave.
- See the irony, the evil daughter performing a lewd and voluptuous dance, (forbidden by both Jew and Romans), wins the praise and a gift up to half of the ruler's kingdom, while the prophet seeking only the welfare of the ruler's soul is given death and martyrdom.
- We should not be surprised when righteousness provokes persecution.
 - (Mt. 5:10; Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven)
- Herodias hates John even as Jezebel hated Elijah, she does all she can to destroy him, to stop his voice.
- She plots and plans for John's death and when the opportune time comes she puts her plan into action.

- Lest Herod heart soften and he waiver regarding his judgement on John, Herodias presses Herod to bring the head "at once."
- And in Mt. 14:8 it says bring it here... no delay I want to see it done "now." As though she is standing and waiting to receive it.
- Herod had no right to take John's head, it was not his nor part of his kingdom. John was from Another's kingdom.

LESSONS:

- Herod's lust for praise and pleasure drove him to sin against God's anointed and kill him.
- So it is with us when our love of lesser things are acted upon, murdering our purer desires, thus grieving the Holy Spirit the Anointed of God.
 - **James 1:14, 15**; But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.
- Herodias resented and hated John because he had spoken out and stood against what her and Herod were doing. (Vs. 19)
- She wanted the voice of God stilled, her conviction relived, and the source of her guilt stopped.
- She did not want anyone telling her what she could or could not do. What was right and what was wrong.
- She demanded that no one should speak against what she saw as good and with her all should celebrate.
- Her sin should be exalted, her freedom of choice worshipped. To do less was an offence to her and must be destroyed and put down.
- Does this not sound like the sin of today?
- They say no one has the right to speak for God, except me.... I must have my way and woe to anyone or anything who stands in the way of what my view, my will is. Not the unborn, my gender, my mate.
- There are no absolutes; everyone is an absolute to themselves.
- The spirit that breathed in Herodias is live and well in America today for it is the spirit of self, of man, of antichrist.
- It is a day that teaches us to be careful with whom and what we attach ourselves to.
- This scripture teaches us a half conversion is not a conversion and will lead to damnation.
- Or good intentions without follow through will end in bitterness for us.
- In Herod's life he had both the greatest prophet who lived and the incarnate Son of God stand before him, yet unsaved, unrepentive.
- What an sentence shall he receive and what dullness covers the heart of men.
- Let us be sensitive to the visitations of the Spirit of God to our souls.