

*The Gospel According to*

SAINT MATTHEW

SAINT MARK

SAINT LUKE

SAINT JOHN

CHAPTER 14, VERSES 3-5	CHAPTER 6, VERSE 17 - 20	CHAPTER 3, VERSES 19-20	NOTHING RECORDED
<p><b>14:3</b> - For Herod<sub>1</sub> had laid hold<sub>2</sub> on John<sub>3</sub>, and bound him<sub>4</sub>, and put him in prison<sub>5</sub> for Herodias'<sub>6</sub> sake<sub>7</sub>, his brother<sub>8</sub> Philip's<sub>9</sub> wife<sub>10</sub>.</p> <p><b>14:4</b> - For John<sub>3</sub> said unto him<sub>11</sub>, It is not lawful<sub>12</sub> for thee to have her<sub>13</sub>.</p> <p><b>14:5</b> - And when he would have put him to death<sub>14</sub>, he feared<sub>15</sub> the multitude<sub>16</sub>, because they counted him<sub>17</sub> as a prophet<sub>18</sub>.</p>	<p><b>6:17</b> - For Herod<sub>1</sub> himself had sent forth<sub>19</sub> and laid hold<sub>2</sub> upon John<sub>3</sub>, and bound him<sub>4</sub> in prison<sub>5</sub> for Herodias'<sub>6</sub> sake<sub>7</sub>, his brother<sub>8</sub> Philip's<sub>9</sub> wife<sub>10</sub>: for he had married her<sub>20</sub>.</p> <p><b>6:18</b> - For John<sub>3</sub> had said unto Herod<sub>1</sub>, It is not lawful<sub>12</sub> for thee to have thy brother's wife<sub>10</sub>.</p> <p><b>6:19</b> - Therefore Herodias<sub>6</sub> had a quarrel against him<sub>21</sub>, and would have killed him<sub>22</sub>; but she could not<sub>23</sub>:</p> <p><b>6:20</b> - For Herod<sub>1</sub> feared<sub>15</sub> John<sub>3</sub>, knowing<sub>24</sub> that he was a just man<sub>25</sub> and an holy<sub>26</sub>, and observed him<sub>27</sub>; and when he heard him<sub>28</sub>, he did many things<sub>29</sub>, and heard him<sub>28</sub> gladly<sub>30</sub>.</p>	<p><b>3:19</b> - But Herod<sub>1</sub> the tetrarch<sub>31</sub>, being reprov'd<sub>32</sub> by him for Herodias<sub>6</sub> his brother<sub>8</sub> Philip's<sub>9</sub> wife<sub>10</sub>, and for all the evils<sub>33</sub> which Herod<sub>1</sub> had done<sub>34</sub>,</p> <p><b>3:20</b> - Added<sub>35</sub> yet this above all<sub>36</sub>, that he shut up<sub>37</sub> John<sub>3</sub> in prison<sub>5</sub>.</p>	

**CHRONOLOGY:** Between **November** and **December 27CE**. ["There is no New Testament account of any act or word of either Jesus or John from the summer of A.D. 27, when John the Baptist bore his wondrous witness, to November or December of that year, when Herod Antipas reached forth the Roman arm of power and imprisoned the son of Zacharias." (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 326).]

**LOCATION:** John was imprisoned in the Desert fortress of **Machærus**, East of the Dead Sea. We assume that John was preaching in **Peræa**, along the Eastern banks of the Jordan River, up to his imprisonment, since this area was part of the province controlled by Herod Antipas. It is possible that John visited Herod Antipas in the Galilean capital **city of Tiberius**, though the most probable site of their meeting would have been in the Peræan **City of Livias**, the record is not clear.

**COMMENTARY:** John the Baptist was preaching in the River Jordan Valley north of the Dead Sea, maybe as far north as Ænon near Salim and as far south as Bethabara near the mouth of the Dead Sea. He had been preaching and baptizing in this region for about a year. Somewhere along the way, he had a face-to-face confrontation with the vassal ruler of Galilee and Peræa, Herod Antipas. Herod had unlawfully married his niece, without properly divorcing his wife. The niece, named Herodias, had left her husband Philip without a proper divorce as well. John reprov'd the two, and called them to repent. The reproving was not taken well, especially by Herodias. She was angry. She wanted John the Baptist killed. Though Herod was displeased by John's words, he was slow to retaliate against John. He knew John was a prophet. We assume that he felt something in John's words. Herod endured the repeated requests of his wife until he finally issued an order to arrest and imprison John the Baptist. Even so, the order of execution was withheld, at least initially. John was bound in shackles and placed in the prison dungeons of Machærus east of the Dead Sea. He would endure there for many months, ten or more, before Herodias would devise a plan to commit Herod Antipas to issuing an order to kill the great prophet.

**FOOTNOTES:**

**1- Herod** – The name Herod was also used as a title. Both are translated from the Greek word "Ἡρώδης" or "Hērōdēs". The name means "heroic". This footnote references a man named Antipater, though his name is not mentioned in this portion of the Biblical account. His Father was the famed Herod the Great, a man despised by the Jews, but nevertheless famous in his own right. Herod's descendants bore his name as a title of rule. Hence, Antipater was officially called Herod Antipater. Antipater also had a nicknamed; "Antipas". **"Antipas, a contraction of Antipater."** (The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor – Merrill C. Tenney, page 49). He is sometimes, maybe most often, called Herod Antipas. Herod the Great's father was named Antipater, using the shortened name helps the reader to differentiate.

Herod Anipater/Antipas was born sometime before 20BCE. As stated, he was the son of Herod the Great. His mother was Malthace, a Samaritan woman who was one of Herod the Greats many wives. Simple math would dictate that Herod Anitpas was at least 47 years old at the time of this chapter. The dates of his mother and father's deaths are somewhat speculative. Most feel that Herod the Great died in 4BCE, though this author believes Herod the Great died on January 26, 1BCE. Malthace died around the same time.



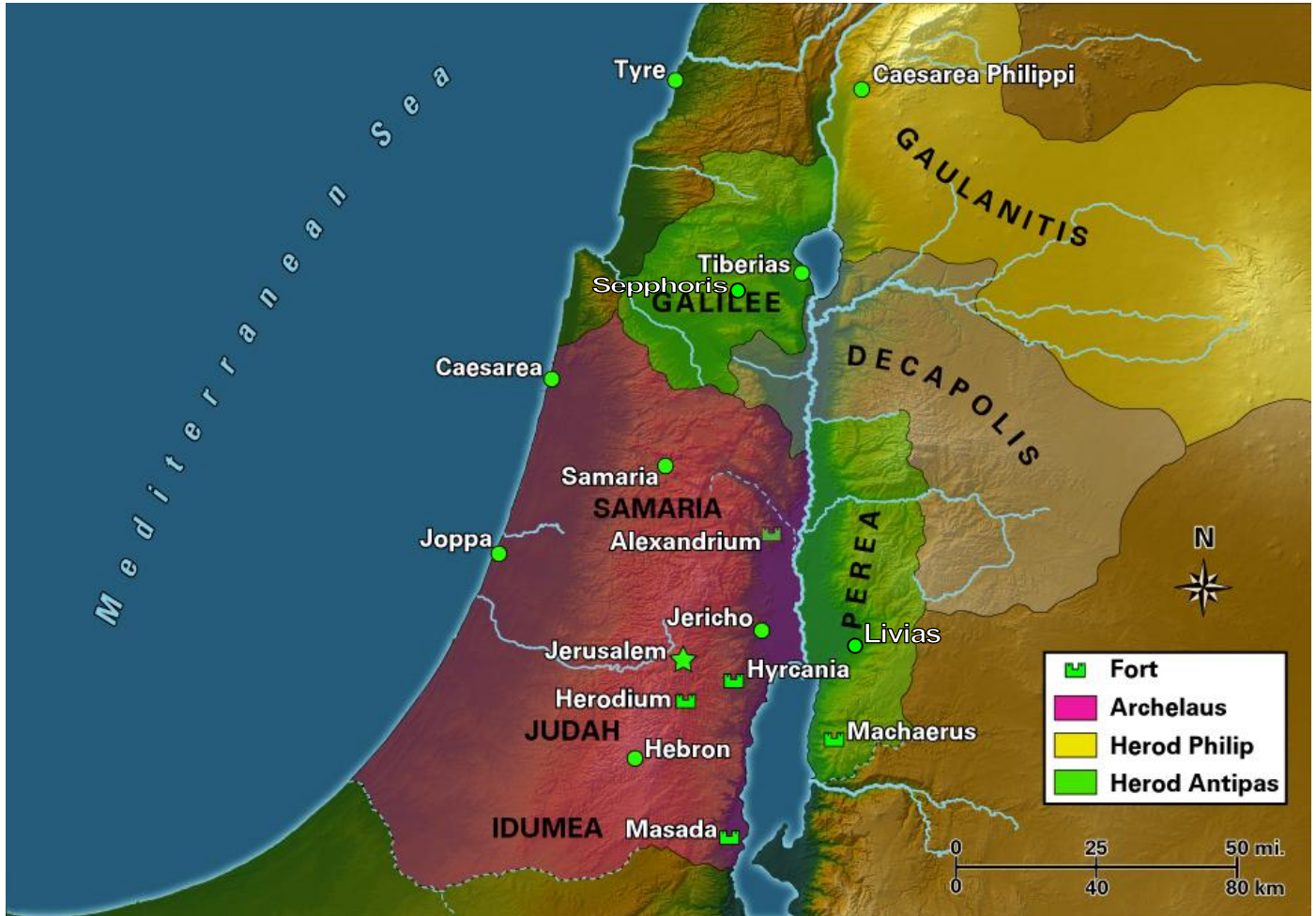
HEROD ANTIPAS COIN, AN IMAGE OF ANTIPAS IS ON THE FRONT

After Herod the Great's death, a political battle ensued over the rule of Palestine. Herod Antipas' brother Herod Archelaus made a play to assume his Father's role as vassal King.



The result was a heated meeting in Rome with Caesar Augustus himself. Caesar granted Herod Antipas rule over Galilee and Perea. He divided Herod the Great's kingdom into quarters and rather than holding the title of King, Antipas became a "tetrarch" or "ruler of a quarter". Herod held a powerful position, but was subject to the edicts of Rome. Herod's rule offered him great comforts. His revenues were recorded. "As for the rulers' revenues, which allowed their vast expenditure, Josephus provides several details. He calculates the revenues of Herod's successors, among whom his kingdom was divided (Ant. 17:2.96). He says that Herod Antipas received 200 talents in revenue, Philip 100 talents, Archelaus 400 or 600, and Salome 60. This would mean a revenue from the whole kingdom of 760 or 960 talents." (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period, Joachim Jeremias, page 91). Similar amounts are recorded by Sanders. (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 84). If a talent represented a life time of wages for a common laborer, Antipas received the equivalent of 200 lifetime salaries per year. This in addition to the perks of rule.

## The Empire of Herod Antipas & Philip



At some point, Herod Antipas married a woman by the name of Phasaelis. She was the daughter of King Aretas IV of Nabatea. We know very little of Pharaelis, but her father appears to be of a questionable character. He ascended to the Nabatean throne after the king was poisoned. Many suspect that it was his doing. Nabatean was located south of Palestine, with Petra as its capital. It was a rich trading hub, and might explain why Herod Antipas was married to its princess. We don't know the date of the marriage between Antipas and Phasaelis. We do know that Phasaelis was the first wife of Antipas.

Initially, Herod Antipas appears to be a mild mannered king. When Mary and Joseph returned from Egypt they intended on returning to Bethlehem. They turned away because Herod Archelaus was ruling. They settled in Nazareth located in Galilee, because a more tolerable Herod Antipas was ruling there. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus had no recorded difficulties with Herod Antipas during the years prior to the ministry of Jesus.

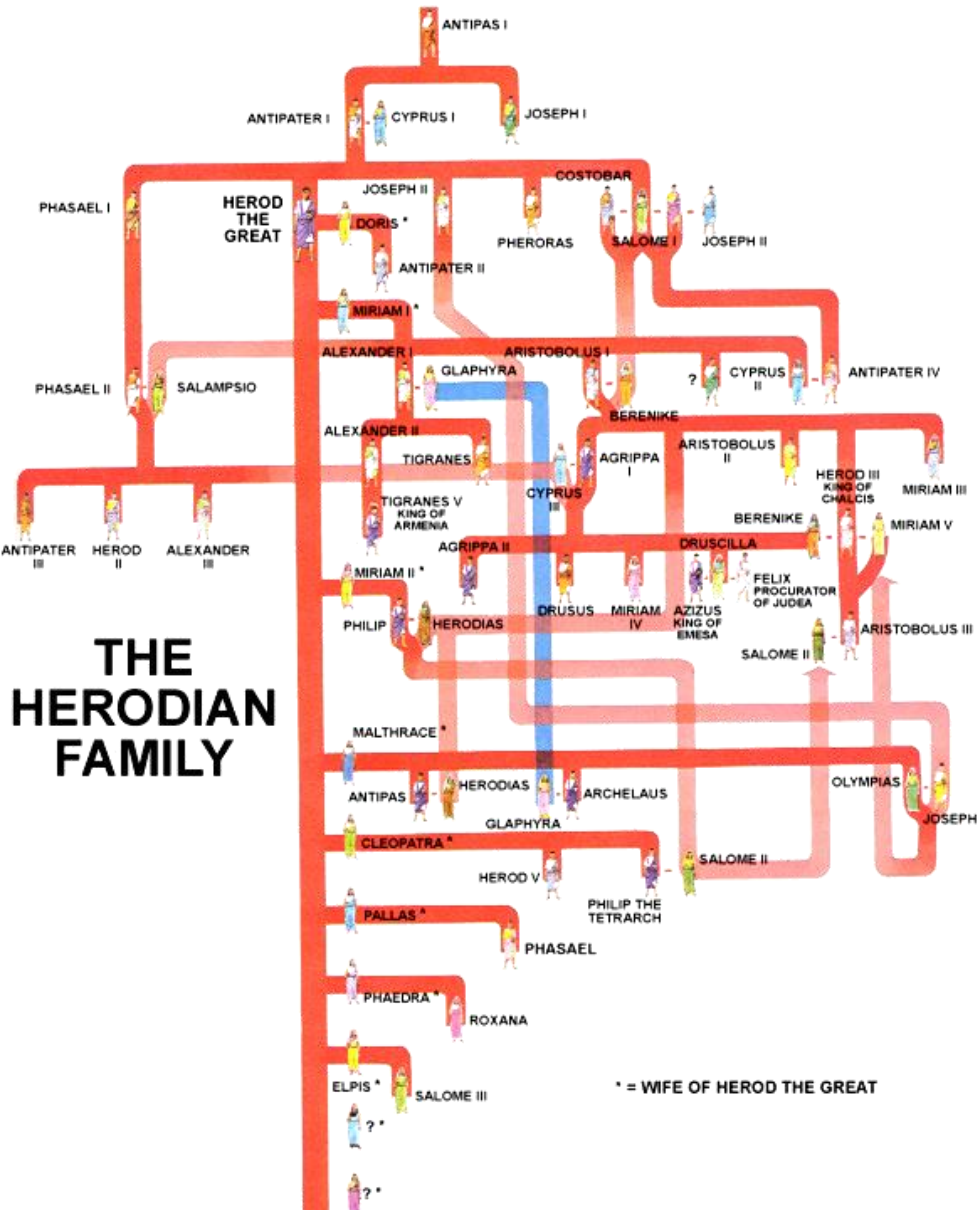
At some point, Herod Antipas developed inappropriate feelings for his Half-Brother, Philip's wife. Philip was also a son of Herod the Great, but through a different wife. Philip's mother was Miriam II. Philip had married a woman by the name of Herodias. She was the daughter of Aristobulus IV and his wife Berenice. Aristobulus IV was yet another son of Herod the Great and a wife named Miriam I. That makes Herodias a niece to both Philip and Antipas through their half brother Aristobulus IV. Philip was



married to Herodias, when an affair ensued between Herodias and Antipas. Antipas divorced his wife, Phasaelis, and sent her back to her father, which became a huge political mistake. He then took his half brother's wife, Herodias, and married her. Unfortunately, Philip and Herodias were not divorced when the marriage took place. This enraged Philip, Antipas' half-brother, and King Aretas IV of Nabatea.

Herod Antipas had to have felt the repercussions of his selfish actions. His ex-father-in-law was threatening war. His half brother was threatening war. The Jews were disapproving. Finally, John the Baptist had publically and openly condemned Herod Antipas' actions. It would appear that this angered Herod Antipas, but enraged Herodias.

This brings us to this chapter. The rest of the story will unveil itself in later chapters. Hereafter is a very complicated family tree of Herod the Great. Barclay wrote, "The marriage tangles of the Herod family are quite incredible, and their inter-relations are so complicated that they become almost impossible to work out." (The Gospel of Mark, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 149). At times it looked more like spaghetti than a family tree.



Like his Father, Herod the Great, Herod Antipas became a builder. His first major building project was the City of Sepphoris, which lies just a few miles from Nazareth. This was to be Herod Antipas' capital and home. He finished his renovations of Sepphoris in 10CE. Assuming that he started his renovations and building soon after he assumed the rule over Galilee and Peræa, he would have taken over 10 years on the project. On a side note, Joseph, the husband to Mary, may very well have worked on the renovation of Sepphoris.

Sometime towards the completion of Sepphoris, Herod Antipas undertook another large scale project. He built a city in Perea. He named the city Livias after Caesar Augustus' mother. Livias is just east of the River Jordan, near Bethany. This would be a logical, and convenient location for Herod Antipas and John the Baptist to meet eye to eye.

Finally, Herod Antipas undertook his crowning project. He built a city for Caesar. On the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he built the city of Tiberias. He even renamed the Sea of Galilee to be the Sea of Tiberias, a name that hasn't stuck. Out of the 12 cities that the Herodian family had built, Tiberias should be considered as one of the most important. It was the first city in Jewish history to be founded within the municipal framework of a Greek polis (Greek for city). It was built in honor of the reigning Emperor Tiberius. It is important to note that while they were building the city of Tiberias they struck upon a cemetery. Antipas destroyed the cemetery and because of that the Jewish authorities considered it unclean and Antipas had difficulty in getting any Jews to settle there, let alone the devout Jews. He offered free houses and lands and exemption from taxes for the first few years if anyone moved into the new city. It was completed 23CE and became Antipas' capital.

During the time of this Chapter, 27CE, Antipas would have had his principle residence in the city of Tiberius.

Establishing Herod Antipas' primary residence doesn't help much in establishing where he was residing when he confronted John the Baptist or arrested him. Herod Antipas ruled over two principle areas; Galilee and Peræa. Most scholars believe that Herod Antipas was residing in his palace in Livias during his conflict with John. Edersheim wrote, "**For, although Galilee belonged to Herod Antipas, it was sufficiently far from the present residence of the Tetrarch in Peræa. Tiberias, his Galilean residence, with its splendid royal palace, had only been built a year or two before; and it is impossible to suppose, that Herod would not have sooner heard of the fame of Jesus, if his court had been in Tiberias, in the immediate neighbourhood of Capernaum. We are, therefore, shut up to the conclusion, that, during the nine or ten months of Christ's Ministry in Galilee, the Tetrarch resided in Peræa. Here he had two palaces, one at Julias, or Livias, the other at Machærus. The latter will be immediately described as the place of the Baptist's imprisonment and martyrdom. The Julias, or Livias, of Peræa must be distinguished from another city of that name (also called Bethsaida) in the North (east of the Jordan), and within the dominions of the Tetrarch Philip. The Julias of Peræa represented the ancient *Beth Haram* in the tribe of Gad, a name for which Josephus gives *Betharamphtha*, and the Rabbis *Beth Ramthah*. It still survives in the modern *Beit-harân*. But of the fortress and the palace which Herod had built, and named after the Empress, 'all that remains' are 'a few traces of walls and foundations. Supposing Antipas to have been at the Peræan Julias, he would have been in the closest proximity to the scene of the Baptist's last recorded labours at Ænon.**" (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, pages 657).

Many feel that Herod Antipas was greatly influenced by the Jewish hierarchy, specifically the Pharisees. Jeremias wrote, "**The Pharisees could always make their voice heard on the Sanhedrin during sessions and had close relations with Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee.**" (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period, Joachim Jeremias, page 263). Unfortunately, Sanders writes extensively that Antipas sided with the Sadducees, and not the Pharisees. Others believe that Antipas used both sides to accomplish his selfish desires, but actually sided with neither. This would be right in line with the example his father set. The fact is, we have no reliable sources that dictate Herod's allegiances to the Jews. What we do know is that he was a man of poor moral character. Farrar wrote, "**Herod Antipas, to whom, on the death of Herod the Great, had fallen the tetrarchy of Galilee, was about as weak and miserable a prince as every disgraced the throne of an afflicted country. Cruel, crafty, and voluptuous like his father, he was also, unlike him, weak in war and vacillating in peace. In him, as in so many characters which stand conspicuous on the stage of history, infidelity and superstition went hand in hand. But the morbid terror of a guilty conscience did not save him from the criminal extravagances of a violent will. He was a man in whom were mingled the worst feature of the Roman, the Oriental, and the Greek.**" (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., pages 243-244).



image of  
HEROD ANTIPAS

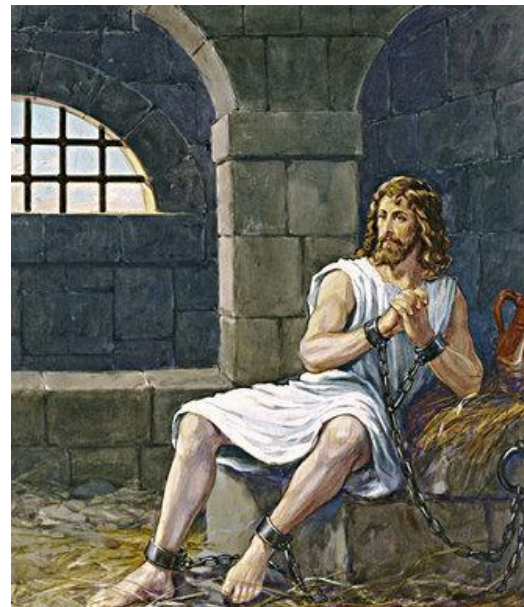
Many speak of Herod Antipas' demise, but fail to mention that he reigned for a particularly long time. Most of the Herods, following Herod the Great, didn't last long on their respective thrones. Herod Archelaus, the successor to the reduced province of Judaea, lasted only 10 years before he was banished by Caesar Augustus. "**Antipas fared much better than Archelaus. He lasted for forty-three years, until his second wife, Herodias, persuaded him to seek the title king; the result of the request was that he was deposed and exiled.**" (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 34). "**Antipas was banished to Spain. Herodias accompanied him, and died there.**" (The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor – Merrill C. Tenney, page 352).

- 2- **laid hold** – The phrase "laid hold" is translated from the Greek word "κρατέω" or "krateō". It means to hold, to hold in hand, to hold fast, retain or restrain. The Codex Sinaiticus replaces the phrase "laid hold" with "having taken". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 14, Verse 3, page 37). In Mark, the Codex Sinaiticus simply replaces it with "taken". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 6, Verse 17, page 79).

Herod Antipas had his own army, aside from the Roman legions which he could surely call upon in time of need. Although details are sketchy, his soldiers were likely Jewish and Gentile mercenaries, like his father's army. Even so, they should not be underestimated. Many were career soldiers. Though we have no sources recording the arrest of John the Baptist, it was likely carried out by soldiers from Herod Antipas' army. Arrests of such types were made in daylight. Jewish law prohibited night arrests, and even the Romans were apt to respect that law. The offender was typically placed in metal shackles and taken to a prison to await sentencing. Prisons were not used as a form of sentence, like they are today. The Jews had no sentence that prescribed prison time. They preferred indentured servitude, death, or monetary penalties.

So why was John arrested? "**John was so plain and blunt a preacher of righteousness that he was bound to run into trouble. In the end Herod arrested him. Josephus says that the reason for the arrest was that Herod 'feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it in his power and inclination to raise a rebellion; for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise.'**" (The Gospel of Luke, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 35). There are many theories as to exactly why Herod Antipas arrested John, but no source is absolute. The most popular theories are as follows;

1. John was arrested to appease Herodias, who was offended by John passing judgment on her and Herod Antipas.
2. John was arrested because Herod was fearful that John would turn the people against him, and incite a rebellion.
3. John was arrested because Herod wanted to silence a voice that was exposing his sin and beckoning his conscience.
4. John was arrested because the Jewish leaders were influencing Herod Antipas, and they were threatened by John's preaching.



- 3- **John** – The name "John" is translated from the Greek word "Ἰωάννης" or "Iōannēs". Translated literally, the Greek name means "Jehovah is a gracious giver". The Greek name is a transliteration of the Hebrew name "יְחֻזְכָּנָן" or "Yowchanan". The Hebrew name means "Jehovah has graced". We have spoken of John at great length in previous chapters and therefore will not expound much at this point. Suffice it to say that we are speaking of the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. Elizabeth and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were cousins and therefore "**Jesus and John were blood relations. And Origen speaks of a tradition which says that Jesus and John closely resembled each other in appearance.**" (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 106). John was called to be a prophet of God. He held the Holy Priesthood, and had the patriarchal right to it through his lineage. His call was not only to prophesy, as all prophets are called to do, but John had a special call to serve as Elias. He was to prepare the way. His was a special and sacred call to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah in the Flesh. We are now entering the end of John's earthly mission.



- 4- **bound him** – The word "bound" is translated from the Greek word "δέω" or "deō". It means to bind tie, fasten, fasten with chains, or to throw into chains. Though the passage is not clear as to how John was bound, the typical method was metal shackles. Shackles varied in style and type. They were not mass produced and therefore varied by blacksmith and area. Most fastened to the wrists, limiting hand movement. Many shackles fastened to the ankles and some around the neck.



roman shackles

Though the year is most probably 27CE, Sanders feels that John found himself in chains due to his teachings. He wrote, **"About 30 CE John the Baptist appears in Galilee preaching the practice of 'righteousness' towards one another and 'piety' towards God, and his sermons excited the crowds. Antipas feared insurrection and had him executed (antiq. 18.117-119)."** (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 39).

- 5- **prison** – The word "prison" is translated from the Greek word "φυλακή" or "phylakē". The word means guard, watch, of a place where captives are kept, or a prison. **"Prison...most Heb. and Greek words used have an idea of restraint."** (The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor – Merrill C. Tenney, page 684).

Ancient prisons were horrible places. They make modern prisons look like country clubs. They were typically below ground, but not always. They were normally cut out of stone, with a narrow entrance hole. They were dark, cold and extremely dirty. The prisoners were typically placed in prisons with their shackles on and chained to rings fastened into the rock walls. Some prisoners were fastened standing, with chains so tight as to prevent sitting or laying. There were no bathrooms. A prisoner was required to defecate where he stood, or was lucky enough to lay. The guards provided no food. In John's case, it was likely that he relied on his followers to eat. Additionally, if the prisoner was fortunate, friends would be allowed to bring fresh clothing, straw to lay on, and to remove human waste. Though we have no specifics on the conditions of John's prison, it can be safely said that it was an unpleasant and trying stay. John deserved no such treatment.

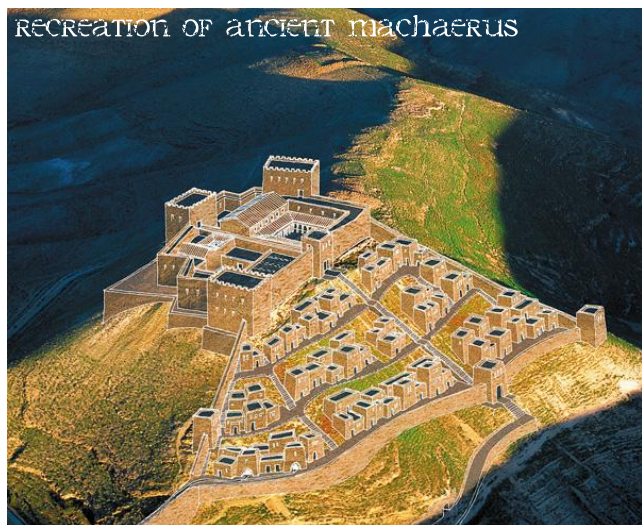


RECREATION OF ANCIENT MACHAERUS

Barclay writes that the prison dungeon where John is to have been kept can still be seen among the ancient ruins. **"First, let us look at the scene. The scene was the castle of Machaerus. Machaerus stood on a lonely ridge, surrounded by terrible ravines, overlooking the east side of the Dead Sea. It was one of the loneliest and grimmest and most unassailable fortresses in the world. To this day the dungeons are there, and the traveller can still see the staples and the iron hooks in the wall to which John must have been bound. It was in that bleak and desolate fortress that the last act of John's life was played out."** (The Gospel of Mark, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 148). Edersheim writes a very similar descriptions. Speaking of the ruins of Machærus, Edersheim wrote, **"There are scarcely any remains of it left. A well of great depth, and a deep cemented cistern with the vaulting of the roof still complete, and - of most terrible interest to us - two dungeons, one of them deep down, its sides scarcely broken in, 'with small holes still visible in the masonry where staples of wood and iron had once been fixed!' As we look down into its hot darkness, we shudder in realising that this terrible keep had for nigh ten months been the prison of that son of the free 'wilderness,' the bold herald of the coming Kingdom, the humble, earnest, self-denying John the Baptist."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 660).

The scriptures do not state where John was imprisoned; however, the Jewish Historian Josephus sheds some light on the matter. It is his record that modern scholars rely on for the source of John's prison. Ogden and Skinner write, **"The New Testament itself cites no specific place for the imprisonment and execution of the Baptist. For that information, we have to rely on the accuracy of the historical report of Josephus, who wrote, 'John, because of Herod's suspicions, was brought in chains to Machaerus...and there put to death (Antiquities XVIII.119)."** (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, page 128).

Josephus' record reads as follows, **"...of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist: for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do any thing he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Machærus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death."** (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18, Flavius Josephus, Chapter 5, Verse 2, Page 982).



even its natural position as unassailable. The highest point of the fort was on the west, where it looked sheer down into a valley. North and south the fort was equally cut off by valleys, which could not be filled up for siege purposes. On the east there was, indeed, a valley one hundred cubits deep, but it terminated in a mountain opposite to Machærus." (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 659).





RUINS OF THE HERODIAN PALACE AT MACHAERUS



RECREATION OF COURTYARD OF  
ANCIENT MACHAERUS



6 - **Herodias** – The name "Herodias" is translated from the Greek word "Ἡρώδις" or "Hērōdias". Like the name Herod, Herodias literally means "heroic", as it is the feminine form of the masculine name "Herod".

There were undoubtedly other Herodias', as the Herodian family was prone to repeat the use of the name in a sort of egotistical pride. We shall speak of the Herodias that was married to Herod Antipas. In reference to Herod Antipas, Barclay writes, "Note who Herodias was: (a) she was the daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus, and therefore his niece; and (b) she was the wife of his half-brother Herod Philip, and therefore his sister-in-law. Previously Herod Antipas had been married to a daughter of the king of the Nabataeans, an Arabian country. She escaped to her father who invaded Herod's territory to avenge his daughter's honour and heavily defeated Herod. To complete this astounding picture Herod the Great finally married Cleopatra of Jerusalem, by whom he had a son called Philip the Tetrarch. This Philip married Salome who was at one and the same time (a) the daughter of Herod Philip, his half brother, and (b) the daughter of Herodias, who herself was the daughter of Aristobulus, another of his half brothers. Salome was therefore at one and the same time his niece and his grand-niece." (The Gospel of Mark, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 150).

We know nothing of Herodias' childhood. Raised in a Herodian family, we might speculate that she was exposed to all manner of sin and poor morals. She was most likely raised to be like the rest of the Herods. Barclay describes her adulthood well. He wrote, "There is Herodias. As we shall see, she was the ruination of Herod in every possible sense, although she was a woman not without a sense of greatness. At the moment we simply note that she was stained by a triple guilt. She was a woman of loose morals and of infidelity. She was a vindictive woman, who nursed her wrath to keep it warm, and who was out for revenge, even when she was justly condemned. And—perhaps worst of all—she was a woman who did not hesitate to use even her own daughter to realize her own vindictive ends. It would have been bad enough if she herself had sought ways of taking vengeance on the man of God who confronted her with her shame. It was infinitely worse that she used her daughter for her nefarious purposes and made her as great a sinner as herself. There is little to be said for a parent who stains a child with guilt in order to achieve some evil personal purpose." (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 105).



In addition to a lifestyle that surely incorporated a variety of sins, Herodias married Herod Antipas in an act of adultery and incest. This was not foreign to the Herod's, but none the less offensive to the laws of heaven. She was following the practices of her family. "In the Hellenized circle of the princely Herodian families, it often happened that a woman left her husband. Thus Herodias left Herod (Ant. 18.136; Mark 6.17 —where Philip is mistakenly named in place of Herod). In the same way all three of Agrippa's daughters left their husbands: Berenice left Polemon of Cilicia (Ant. 20.146); Drusilla left Azizus of Emesa (20.142); Mariamne left Julius Archelaus (20.147). It must be remembered that the last two were cases of betrothals of children." (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period, Joachim Jeremias, page 371). Herodias married her uncle, no she married two uncles. She was the daughter of Aristobulus. She married Aristobulus half brother Philip, and then left him, without a legal divorce to marry another half-brother of Aristobulus, Antipas. She has no violated the Jewish law of incest two times. Making matters worse, not only did she commit adultery by marrying Antipas, Antipas was married as well, resulting in the ruin of two marriages.

Herodias made things even worse, by schooling her own daughter in the ways of wickedness. She married her daughter Salome to another Philip. This Philip was another son of Herod the Great by a different mother, Cleopatra of Jerusalem. Herodias had been married to Philip, the son of Herod the Great by his wife Miraim II. Salome was consequently married to her Great Uncle. Upon Philip's death, Salome then married her father's brother's son. Josephus records, "But Herodias, their sister, was married to Herod [Philip], the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high priest, who had a daughter, Salome; after whose birth Herodias took upon her to confound the laws of our country, and divorced herself from her husband while he was alive, and was married to Herod [Antipas], her husband's brother by the father's side, he was tetrarch of Galilee; but her daughter Salome was married to Philip, the son of Herod, and tetrarch of Trachonitis; and as he died childless, Aristobulus, the son of Herod, the brother of Agrippa, married her; they had three sons, Herod, Agrippa, and Aristobulus..." (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18, Flavius Josephus, Chapter 5, Verse 4, Page 984).

There is some confusion surrounding the man named Philip. We will discuss this issue in greater detail in footnote #9 in this chapter. Suffice it to say that the pedigree chart of the Herods is so twisted it is difficult to keep the branches of the tree separate. The question is; was Herodias married to Herod Philip, the son of Herod the Great who was disowned by his father or was it Philip the Tetrarch, the Grandson of Herod the Great by his wife Cleopatra. Marcus explains, "Herodias was the granddaughter of Herod the Great. Her first husband was a son of Herod the Great (hence her uncle); his name, according to Josephus, was also Herod; Mark, however, calls him Philip, perhaps confusing him with Philip the Tetrarch, Herodias' son-in-law. (Luke seems to be aware of this error, since he drops the name 'Philip' in Luke 3:19). Herodias divorced this Herod and then married his half brother Herod Antipas, who was her uncle too. (She seems to have liked uncles and men named Herod - and there were a lot of both around, thanks to Herod the Great). Thus Salome, Herodias' daughter by her first marriage, was at the same time Antipas' niece (on her father's side), his grandniece (on her mother's side), and his stepdaughter." (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, pages 394-395).

Regardless of the family history, Herodias was just bad news. She was a bad lady, with wicked motives. Farrar taught, "Herodias became from the first the evil genius of his throne. The people were scandalized and outraged. Family dissensions were embittered. The Arabian princess, without waiting to be divorced, indignantly fled, first to the border castle of Machærus, and then to the rocky fastnesses of her father Hâreth at Petra. He, in his just indignation, broke off all amicable relations with his quondam son-in-law, and subsequently declared war against him, in which he avenged himself by the infliction of a severe and ruinous defeat." (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 244).

- 7- **sake** – The word "sake" is translated from the Greek word "διὰ" or "dia". It means by reason of, on account of, or because. The Codex Sinaiticus replaced the phrase, "for Herodias' sake" with "because of Herodias". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 14, Verse 3, page 37). So here is a cause for debate. Did Herod Antipas arrest John the Baptist to protect John for Herodias' murderous intentions? Was Herod Antipas issuing an arrest as an act of mercy? The translation may suggest just that. Marcus explains, "On account of. Gr *dia*. Herod is so favorably disposed towards John is Mark's account that it is even possible, as Freeman suggests, that this *dia* indicates that Herod arrests John in order to protect him against Herodias' murderous resentment. The Baptist's confinement in Herod's dungeon means that he is not susceptible to assassination by others and can only be executed by Herod's express order." (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 394). Some would argue that the Antipas would never have protected John, but as we shall see in several other footnotes in this chapter, Antipas may have done just that. He might have opposed John's harsh words, while at the same time recognized him as a prophet. The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

We do know that Herodias had evil intentions with regard to John the Baptist. Herod Antipas was evil, but his motives appear to be different than Herodias. Farrar taught, "The sole temptation on his side was an impotent sensuality; on hers an extravagant ambition. She preferred a marriage doubly adulterous and doubly incestuous to a life spent with the only Herod who could not boast even the fraction of a vice-regal throne. Antipas promised on his return from Rome to make her his wife, and she exacted from him a pledge that he would divorce his innocent consort, the daughter of the Arabian prince." (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 244).

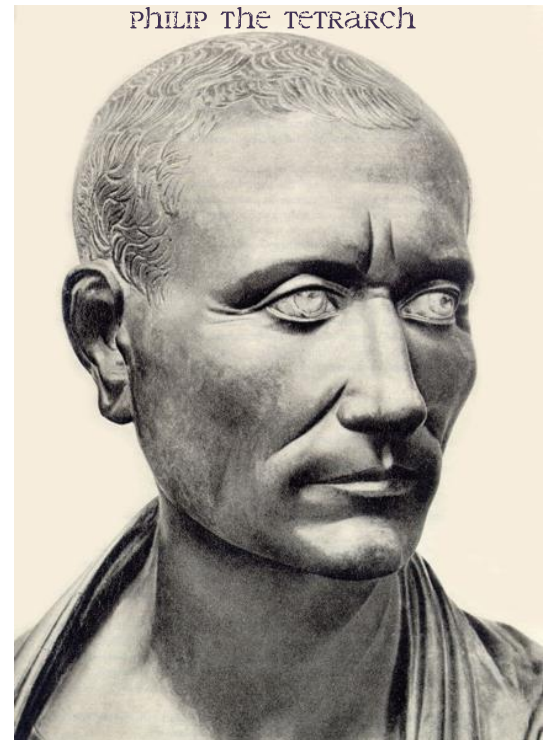
- 8- **his brother** – The word "brother" is translated from the Greek word "ἀδελφός" or "adelphos". Normally, the word means a brother, whether born of the same two parents or only of the same father or mother. It can also be used to refer to a fellow countryman, one of similar faith, employment, or anything else that would cause a bond of affection. In this case, the word refers to Antipas' half-brother, Philip. Philip and Antipas had the same father, Herod the Great. The Philip referred to in this chapter was married to Miriam II. Philip the Tetrarch is also a son of Herod the Great by his wife Cleopatra of Jerusalem. Elder McConkie appropriately separates the two. He wrote, "Lechery and lust were a way of life with the Herods, and Antipas, like his father before him, felt free to take and reject wives at will. Divorcing his first wife, he married Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip (not Philip the tetrarch)." (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 326).

- 9- **Philip** – The name "Philip" is translated from the Greek word "Φίλιππος" or "Philippos". Translated literally, the Greek name means "lover of horse". The literal meaning of his name doesn't appear to have any application here.

Philip was a son of Herod the Great. Josephus recorded the wives and children of Herod the Great as follows, "Now the king had nine wives, and children by seven of them; Antipater was himself born of Doris, and Herod Philip of Mariamne, the high priest's daughter; Antipas also and Archelaus were by Malthace, the Samaritan, as was his daughter Olympias, which his brother Joseph's son had married. By Cleopatra of Jerusalem he had Herod and Philip; and by Pallas, Phasaelus; he had also two daughters, Roxana and Salome, the one by Phedra, and the other by Elpis; he had also two wives that had no children, the one his first cousin, and the other his niece; and besides these he had two daughters, the sisters of Alexander and Aristobulus, by Mariamne." (The Wars of the Jews or The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem, Book 1, Flavius Josephus, Chapter 28, Verse 4, Page 65). It is clear to see the confusion in Herod's family tree. There are two Antipaters, one Josephus calls Antipas, which is helpful. Unfortunately, there are two Philips and they are differentiated only by their mothers.



COIN OF PHILIP THE TETRARCH



There are those that believe that the Philip referred to in the Gospels is Philip the Tetrarch. Alfred Edersheim, one of my favorite Biblical Scholars, wrote, "...one of their principal cities was Caesarea Philippi (called after the Roman emperor, and after Philip himself), where Peter made that noble confession, which constituted the rock on which the Church was to be built (Matt 16:16; Mark 8:29). It was the wife of this Philip, the best of all Herod's sons, whom her brother-in-law, Herod Antipas, induced to leave her husband, and for whose sake he beheaded John (Matt 14:3, etc.; Mark 6:17; Luke 3:19). It is well to know that this adulterous and incestuous union brought Herod immediate trouble and misery, and that it ultimately cost him his kingdom, and sent him into life-long banishment." (Sketches of Jewish Social Life, Alfred Edersheim, page 9). Caesarea Philippi was built by Philip the Tetrarch. Philip the Tetrarch was the son of Herod the Great by Cleopatra of Jerusalem. He was never married to Herodias, but did marry her daughter Salome. Salome's father was Herod Philip. That makes Herodias the mother-in-law to Philip the Tetrarch and Herod Philip the father-in-law. Now tell me that isn't confusing. The bottom line is, even the foremost experts of the Bible may have this wrong. Edersheim seems to be referencing the wrong Philip.

Josephus seems to be unsure of the two Philips. The translators of Josephus added a footnote to try and clarify the ancient historians words. The footnote states, "This Herod seems to have had the additional name of Philip, as Antipas was named Herod- Antipas: and as Antipas and Antipater seem to be in a manner the very same name, yet were the names of two sons of Herod the Great; so might Philip the tetrarch and this Herod-Philip be two different sons of the same father, all which Grotius observes on Matthew 14:3. Nor was it, as I with Grotius and others of the Philip the tetrarch, but this Herod-Philip, whose wife Herod the tetrarch had married, and that in her first husband's lifetime, and when her first husband had issue by her-; for which adulterous and incestuous marriage John the Baptist justly reprov'd Herod the tetrarch, and for which reprov'd Salome, the daughter of Herodias by her first husband Herod-Philip, who was still alive, occasioned him to be unjustly beheaded." (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18, Flavius Josephus, Footnote 15 at the end of chapter 9, Page 1005).

The confusion between the two Philips is so strong that many manuscripts omit the name Philip and simply use the title Herod, which is also not accurate. "Some manuscripts omit Philip, presumably because it is probable that Herodias was not the wife of Philip but of another Herod who was half-brother to Antipas." (Matthew: A New



translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, page 176). This statement makes things even worse. Apparently, there are those that believe it might have been another Herod altogether and the name Philip doesn't belong in either case.

The most preferred theory is that the first husband of Herodias was indeed Herod Philip. Herod Philip had fallen from grace as Herod the Great suspected him of conspiracy. Herod Philip had sought exile from his father, Herod the Great, in Rome. He was struck from his father's will. Albeit, they retained wealth and luxury. In Rome, Philip lived without fear of his father. He had married his niece, Herodias, and they lived a life free from fame and thrones. That is where Herod Antipas comes into the story. Barclay wrote, "**Herod Antipas was married to a daughter of the king of the Nabatean Arabs. He had a brother in Rome also called Herod; the gospel writers call this Roman Herod, Philip; his full name may have been Herod Philip, or they may simply have got mixed up in the complicated marriage relationships of the Herods. This Herod who stayed in Rome was a wealthy private individual, who had no kingdom of his own. On a visit to Rome, Herod Antipas seduced his brother's wife, and persuaded her to leave his brother and to marry him. In order to do so he had to put away his own wife, with, as we shall see, disastrous consequences to himself. In doing this, apart altogether from the moral aspect of the question, Herod broke two laws. He divorced his own wife without cause, and he married his sister-in-law, which was a marriage, under Jewish law, within the prohibited relationships. Without hesitation John rebuked him. It is always dangerous to rebuke an eastern despot, and by his rebuke John signed his own death warrant. He was a man who fearlessly rebuked evil wherever he saw it. When John Knox was standing for his principles against Queen Mary, she demanded whether he thought it right that the authority of rulers should be resisted. His answer was: 'If princes exceed their bounds, madam, they may be resisted and even deposed.' The world owes much to the great men who took their lives in their hands and had the courage to tell even kings and queens that there is a moral law which they break at their peril.**" (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, pages 104-105).

One last point of confusion. Matthews indicates that Herodias' first husband, Philip, had died before she married Herod Antipas. This is questionable, to say the least. Matthews wrote, "**He later divorced her in order to marry Herodias, the wife of his deceased, half brother, Philip. John the Baptist was one of the many voices raised against this illegal marriage.**" (Manners and Customs in the Bible, Victor H, Matthews, page 211). Farrar explains that Herod Antipas met Herodias while a guest in Herod Philip's home in Rome. This would support the fact that Herod Philip was very much alive when Herodias left him. Farrar wrote, "**It was the policy of the numerous princelings who owed their very existence to Roman intervention, to pay frequent visits of ceremony to the Emperor at Rome. During one of these visits, possibly to condole with Tiberius on the death of his Son Drusus, or his mother Livia, Antipas had been, while at Rome, the guest of his brother Herod Philip - not the tetrarch of that name, but a son of Herod the Great and Marianne, daughter of Simon the Boëthian, who, having been disinherited by his father, was living at Rome as a private person. Here he became entangled by the snares of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; and he repaid the hospitality he had received by carrying her off. Everything combined to make the act as detestable as it was ungrateful and treacherous.**" (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 244).

- 10 - **wife** – The word "wife" is translated from the Greek word "γυνή" or "gynē". It means a woman of any age. It can be used to refer to a virgin, married or widow woman. It can also be used to refer to a wife or a betrothed woman. Herodias became a so-called wife of Herod Antipas, but the union would have been considered illegal under Jewish law. Whether she was a legal wife or not, their relationship was sinful and violated God's law. Herod Antipas, acting as the local law, probably felt as though he could define the law as he saw fit. Unfortunately, this does not work under the eternal scheme of things. Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught, "**Man's laws cannot make moral what God has declared immoral. Commitment to our highest priority—to love and serve God—requires that we look to His law for our standard of behavior.**" (General Conference, "No Other Gods", Dallin H. Oaks, October 2013).

Regardless of how you classify the union between Herod Antipas and Herodias, they were living together in a sinful relationship. "**From the very beginning Herod's illegal and immoral alliance with Herodias brought him nothing but trouble. But the influence of Herodias was not to stop there. The years went by and Caligula came to the Roman throne. The Philip who had been tetrarch of Trachonitis and Ituraea died, and Caligula gave the province to another of the Herod family named Agrippa; and with the province he gave him the title of king. The fact that Agrippa was called king moved Herodias to bitter envy. Josephus says, "She was not able to conceal how miserable she was, by reason of the envy she had towards him" (Antiquities of the Jews, 18. 7. 1). The consequence of her envy was that she incited Herod to go to Rome and to ask Caligula that he too should be granted the title of king, for Herodias was determined to be a queen. "Let us go to Rome," she said, "and let us spare no pains or expenses, either of savor or gold, since they cannot be kept for any better use than for the obtaining of a kingdom." Herod was very unwilling to take action; he was naturally lazy, and he also foresaw serious trouble. But this persistent woman had her way. Herod prepared to set out to Rome; but Agrippa sent messengers to forestall him with accusations that Herod was preparing treacherously to rebel from Rome. The result was that Caligula believed Agrippa's accusations, took Herod's province from him, with all his money, and gave it to Agrippa, and banished Herod to far off Gaul to languish there in exile until he died. So in the end it was through Herodias that Herod lost his fortune and his kingdom, and dragged out a weary existence in the far away places of Gaul. It is just here that Herodias showed her one flash of greatness and of magnanimity. She was in fact Agrippa's sister, and Caligula told her that he did not intend to take her private fortune from her and that for Agrippa's sake she need not accompany her husband into exile. Herodias answered, "Thou indeed, O Emperor, actest after a magnificent manner, and as becomes thyself, in what thou offerest me; but the love which I have for my husband hinders me from partaking of the favour of thy gift; for it is not just that I, who have been a partner in his prosperity, should forsake him in his misfortune" (Antiquities of the Jews, 8. 7. 2). And so Herodias accompanied Herod to his exile." (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, pages 107-108).**



- 11 - **said unto him** – The word "said" is translated from the Greek word "λέγω" or "legō". It means to say or to speak. We do not know when or under what circumstance, but John and Herod Antipas, and most probably Herodias herself, met face to face. It would appear that the great prophet John the Baptist confronted the sinful couple and spared no words in his divine rebuke. Elder McConkie wrote, "**And so, apparently in a face-to-face encounter, the voice sent to cry repentance in a wilderness of sin, the voice of John,**

reproved Herod for all the evils he had done... The gauntlet had been hurled; the issue was set; Herod and Herodias must repent or be damned. John was a legal administrator, and he had delivered his message." (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 327). The setting was reminiscent of Ancient Old Testament prophets confronting evil kings. John the Baptist followed the pattern set for him by prophets over the centuries. Farrar wrote, "How Herod had been thrown first into connection with him we do not know, but it was probably after he had seized possession of his person on the political plea that his teaching, and the crowds who flocked to him tended to endanger the public safety. Among other features in the character of Herod was a certain superstitious curiosity which led him to hanker after and tamper with the truths of the religion which his daily life so flagrantly violated. He summoned John the Baptist. Like a new Elijah before another Ahab - clothed in his desert raiment, the hairy cloak and the leathern girdle - the stern and noble hermit stood fearless before the incestuous king. His words - the simple words of truth and justice - the calm reasoning about righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come - fell like flakes of fire on that hard and icy conscience." (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., pages 244-245).

- 12 - **not lawful** – The word "lawful" is translated from the Greek word "ἐξεστι" or "exesti". It means "it is lawful". It should be remembered that Jewish Law was also, in theory, the Law of God. To the ancient Jews, there was no separation between church and state. Violating God's Law was a violation of governmental law. The Old Testament was the law, specifically the Books of Moses or the Pentateuch. Marcus wrote, "Lev. 18:16 and 20:21 forbid a man to have sexual intercourse with his brother's wife...Later Jewish law specifies that the prohibition includes the wife of a half brother, as in the present case (see b. Yebam 55a). It is interesting that the Damascus Document of Qumran forbids marriage with a niece (CD 5:8-11)." (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 395). The passages referenced by Marcus are as follows;

"Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness." (Leviticus 18:16).

"And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless." (Leviticus 20:21).

"And each man marries the daughter of his brother or sister, whereas Moses said, You shall not approach your mother's sister; she is your mother's near kin (Lev. xviii, 13). But although the laws against incest are written for men, they also apply to women. When, therefore, a brother's daughter uncovers the nakedness of her father's brother, she is (also his) near kin." (The Dead Sea Scrolls, translated by Geza Vermes, The Damascus Document, 4Q279, 5:8-11, pages 167-168).

Herod appears to be doing that which has been done in prior generations, and generations thereafter, until even today. He is defying the laws of God, and justifying his behavior to satisfy his own carnal desires.

- 13 - **for thee to have her** – The word "have" is translated from the Greek word "ἔχω" or "echō". It means to have, possess, or to own. In the case of a relationship, it meant that have sexual relations or relations that would be equated to those of husband and wife. Herod Antipas and Herodias entered into an inappropriate relationship, illegal according to Jewish law. Elder McConkie wrote, "Herodias, the mother of Salome by Philip, was a granddaughter of the original Herod, and so married, in turn, her uncle Philip, and her uncle Antipas. Under Jewish law the marriage of Herod Antipas and Herodias was scandalous, incestuous, and adulterous, and was so viewed by the people." (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 327). The people knew it, John the Baptist knew it, and God knew it. Consequently, God sent His prophet John to call the sinful couple to repentance. John, a faithful servant, delivered the unwelcome message apparently without concern for what consequences would follow.
- 14 - **put him to death** – The word "death" is translated from the Greek word "ἀποκτείνω" or "apokteinō". It means to kill in any way, to destroy, or to allow to perish. The Codex Sinaiticus replaces the phrase "When he would have put him to death" with "And intending to kill him". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 14, Verse 5, page 37).

There is some debate as to who wanted John the Baptist dead. It is pretty well accepted that Herodias wanted him killed. The debate is centered on Herod Antipas. Albright wrote, "In the Markan account, it is Herodias who wished for John's death, and Herod who resisted it out of his regard for John. Matthew lays the blame at Herod's door. Such variations in the tradition give us a perspective which enhances or respect for the independence of the gospel records. If all accounts tallied on every score, then we would have every right to entertain great suspicion that the whole account had been 'rigged' or manipulated in the interest of unanimity." (Matthew: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, page 176). Talmage gives the idea that Herod Antipas was tom. He definitely wanted John permanently silenced, but he appears to fear the backlash of the populace who largely loved John. Talmage wrote, "Moreover, Herod feared an uprising of the people in the event of John being slain by his order." (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 187).

It would appear the Herodias talked Antipas into pursuing John's death. This would have started with an arrest, followed by a trial, and then an execution. John was arrested, but Antipas delayed thereafter. People were not traditionally held for extended periods of time in prison. Days, maybe even weeks, were normal prison stays. Months and years were not normal prison stays. John was imprisoned for at least 10 months, maybe longer. Elder McConkie taught, "Herodias demanded the death of John, and Herod agreed. But in the providences of the Lord, there were yet further tests and added spiritual experiences for the forerunner of the Son...He must drain the cup and do all he was sent to do; he must yet suffer to the full for the testimony of Jesus. He must languish for more than a year in the dungeons of Machaerus." (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, pages 327-328).

This is a great example of bad things happening to good, seemingly undeserving people. When these things happen to us, we typically ask why, and struggle to understand the eternal purpose. It is clear that John was not being punished for a sinful life, but rather, the Lord was purifying His worthy soul for eternal progression. It may not seem fair to our finite mind, but the progress that is made in these circumstances are divine. God loves us enough to reward us with that which we need, even if that involves trials and tribulations.

- 15 - **feared** – The word "feared" is translated from the Greek word "φοβέω" or "phobeō". It means to put to flight by terrifying, or to scare away. It can be used to mean fear. The Codex Sinaiticus replaces the word "feared" with "afraid" in the Book of Matthew, but not in Mark. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 14, Verse 5, page 37).

Any Politian will tell you that public opinion will make or break someone holding public office. Should the people turn on Herod Antipas, it could lead to riots and protests. Caesar expected the vassal rulers to keep the peace. There was no quicker way to get removed than to have unrest in your province, especially if Caesar could see that you had mismanaged the politics of the region. The last thing Herod Antipas wanted was to lose control of the people. The people generally didn't like the Herods, but tolerated them so long as they accommodated the people needs. Killing John might cross a line for the people.

Though Herod feared the people, there may have been a secondary fear imbedded in his heart. Herod may have feared that John's words had some truth to them. Herod Antipas was a selfish person, and the words John spoke threatened Antipas' eternal peace. If John was right, Antipas had something to fear. Elder McConkie taughts, "Thus, when Herod 'would have put [John] to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet', and so the decree, for the present, was one of imprisonment only. Not only did Herod fear the multitude, but he also personally feared John...How often it is that adulterers and sinners of the vilest sort, knowing in their hearts that their course is evil, turn to religion of one kind or another, seeking to find peace of mind of some sort. yet how often, as with Herod, the seeds of repentance die in the stony soil of sin where they were first grown." (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 328).



- 16- **the multitude** – The word "multitude" is translated from the Greek word "ὄχλος" or "ochlos" It means a crowd, a throng, a multitude, a large group of people. **"Matthew had a somewhat different feeling about Herod Antipas. Matthew believed that the only thing which saved John's life was Herod's fear of 'the multitude', because they counted him a prophet."** (The Days of the Living Christ: Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, pages 159-160). Josephus appears to support Matthew's view. he wrote, **"According to Josephus, the Jewish historian, Herod Antipas was embarrassed by this arrest, but excused himself to the inhabitants of that region by saying that John had created a division among the people and that he had arrested John to prevent an insurrection."** (The Days of the Living Christ: Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, page 159).
- 17- **they counted him** – The word "counted" is translated from the Greek word "ἔχω" or "echō". The word means to have, to hold, or to possess. The Codex Sinaiticus replaced the word "counted" with "held". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 14, Verse 5, page 37).
- 18- **a prophet** – The word "prophet" is translated from the Greek word "προφήτης" or "prophētēs". In Greek writings, the word is used for an interpreter of oracles or of other hidden things. The word is used to describe one who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence His spokesman, solemnly declares to men what he has received by inspiration, especially concerning future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation. Regardless of the beliefs of the Pharisees, the Sadducees or the Sanhedrin itself, the populace viewed John as a Prophet like unto those recorded in the Old Testament. We know that the general population felt he was a prophet because of at least two scriptures in the New Testament. Matthew later records, **"But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet."** (Matthew 21:26). Additionally, Luke later records, **"But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet."** (Luke 20:6).
- 19- **sent forth** – The word "sent" is translated from the Greek word "ἀποστέλλω" or "apostellō". It means to order one to go to a place appointed, to send away, or to dismiss. **"Sent out. Gk aposteilas, the verb that is used for Jesus' sending out of messengers to heal and proclaim good news in the previous story (Mark 6:7), and one that is cognate with 'apostles' in the following story (Mark 6:30). This contrast between the two sendings-out is part of a motif of demonic caricature that runs through the passage."** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 394). There is an interesting play on words here. John was "sent forth" like the "apostles", both being derived from the same word.
- 20- **he had married her** – The word "married" is translated from the Greek word "γαμέω" or "gameō". It means to lead to marriage, to take to wife, to marry or to give a daughter in marriage". **"Herodias had been and legally was still the wife of Herod's brother Philip, from whom she had never been lawfully divorced; and her pretended marriage to Herod Antipas was both adulterous and incestuous under Jewish law."** (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 187).

- 21- **quarrel against him** – The word "quarrel" is translated from the Greek word "ἐνέχω" or "enechō". The word means to engage with, to set one's self against, or to hold a grudge against someone. The Codex Sinaiticus replaced the phrase "quarrel against him" with "was angry with him". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 6, Verse 19, page 79).



JOHN THE BAPTIST BEFORE  
HEROD ANTIPAS & HERODIAS

The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi taught, **"the guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center."** (1st Nephi 16:2). This is exactly where we are at with Antipas and Herodias. John spoke the truth to them. It was hard for them because they were guilty and they knew it. They had no desire to change, and the words cut so deep that they produced guilt, anguish, fear, and overall displeasure. They could have humbled themselves, and fixed the problem but that was not their choice. Instead, they chose to become angry. Talmage explains, **"The Baptist had fearlessly denounced this sinful association; to Herod he had said: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Though Herod might possibly have ignored this stern rebuke, or at least might have allowed it to pass without punishment, Herodias would not condone. It was she, not the tetrarch, who most hated John; she "had a quarrel against him," and succeeded in inducing Herod to have the Baptist seized and incarcerated as a step toward the consummation of her vengeful plan of having him put to death."** (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 187).

In footnote #2, we discussed the motives for Herod's actions. Elder McConkie wrote, **"From an earthly perspective, three motives appear for the course Antipas chose to take. For one, with the fires of conscience burning at her vitals, and having an implacable hatred against one who had held her up to popular contempt and ridicule, Herodias sought his imprisonment and death. For another, and Josephus is the source of this view: 'The Tetrarch was afraid that his absolute influence over the people, who seemed disposed to carry out whatever he advised, might lead to a rebellion. This circumstance is also indicated in the remark of St. Matthew, that Herod was afraid to put the Baptist to death on account of the people's opinion of him.'** (Edersheim 1:657). And finally, there can be little doubt that pharisaic intrigue played its part. the Pharisees, those masters of deceit and of opposition to revealed truth, opposed Jesus and had broken with John who bore witness of Jesus. The clear inference is that they used their persuasive powers to make Herod their tool of terror against John, just as they would make Rome their weapon to crucify the one greater than John, when the Lord Jesus was lead as a lamb to the slighter. (Edersheim 1:657-58)." (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 328). Though there were probably many motives, possible multiple occurring simultaneously, for the actions of Herod Antipas and Herodias. I would simplify the whole by

saying that the biggest motive was to cover their sins. Like many of us, they wanted to do whatever seemed to please them, and did not want anyone questioning their actions. Unfortunately, these are the very thoughts that precede great evil. And it did.

- 22 - **would have killed him** – The Greek word for "killed" is the same word used to translate the word "death" in footnote #14. The Codex Sinaiticus replaces the phrase "would have killed him" with "desired to kill him". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 6, Verse 19, page 79). See also footnote #14, of this chapter.

**"Prophets are always persecuted for telling the truth, for 'the guilty taketh the truth to be a hard thing, for it cutteth them to the very center' (1 Nephi 16:2)."** (The Doctrine New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 150). The pattern was clearly followed here. John's utterance of the truth was followed by extreme persecution. **"It is believed that John was held in prison for approximately a year and a half. The fact that Herodias eventually had to use deceit and intrigue to get John killed suggests that Herod Antipas intervened to protect John during that period."** (The Days of the Living Christ: Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, page 160). But that just extended the duration of John's persecution. After a long period of horrible prison conditions, John would eventually be killed. Herodias wanted John killed, and eventually she got what she wanted. When she finally got her way she bypassed all the stops. **"According to the gospels, Antipas decided to execute John the Baptist without trial (Mark 6:17-19)."** (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 487). We often hear that only Rome had the ability to issue a death sentence, and surely only Rome could do so without a trial. We must remember that the Herod Antipas was Rome's regent in Galilee and Peraea. Other Herod's acted similarly. Herod the Great did so regularly. **"Archelaus used his troops against the Jerusalem populace with a mandate from the 'Sanhedrin'."** (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 487). This would be John's eventual fate.

- 23 - **she could not** – The word "could" is translated from the Greek word "δύναμαι" or "dynamai". The word means to be capable of doing something. the Codex Sinaiticus replaces the phrase "she could not" with "was not able". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 6, Verse 19, page 79).

Initially, Herod Antipas would not give Herodias what she wanted. She could not kill John, because it was not within her authority. It was within Herod Antipas' authority. He had hoped that John's imprisonment would fill her desires. **"But during all this time, the hatred in the heart of Herodias continued to fester as she contrived her murderous plot by which she eventually intended to have John executed. As we shall see in a later chapter, her diabolical scheme finally succeeded."** (The Days of the Living Christ: Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, page 160).

- 24 - **knowing** – The word "knowing" is translated from the Greek word "εἶδω" or "eidō". It means to see or perceive with the eyes.

John's condemning words must have stirred something in Herod Antipas, for he "knew" something of John after he was done. The beginning of a testimony was forming. **"Even the wicked and ungodly fear and respect holy men who serve God and keep his commandments."** (The Doctrine New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 150). Unfortunately, like a seed, a testimony must be nurtured and fed or it will die. Herod had no desire to change, but sadly, he knew.



- 25 - **a just man** – The word "just" is translated from the Greek word "δίκαιος" or "dikaios". It means righteous or one who observes divine laws. The Codex Sinaiticus replaces the word "just" with "righteous". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 6, Verse 20, page 79). Joseph Smith adds some clarity with his translation of this verse which reads, **"...and a holy man, and one who feared God and observed to worship him; and when he heard him he did many things for him, and heard ..."** (Joseph Smith Translation of Mark 6:21). John was righteous. He was of God. He was a Saint. He was indeed Holy.

- 26 - **an holy** – The word "holy" is translated from the Greek word "ἅγιος" or "hagios". The word means a most holy thing or a saint. **"The tetrarch had some regard for John, having found him to be a holy man; and many things had Herod done on the direct advice of the Baptist or because of the influence of the latter's general teaching. Indeed, Herod had listened to John gladly..."** (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 187).

- 27 - **observed him** – The word "observed" is translated from the Greek word "συντηρέω" or "syntēreō". The word means to preserve, to keep from being lost, to keep to one's self or to keep from perishing. The LDS edition of the scriptures clarifies the word observed in a footnote that states the Greek word means "protected". The Codex Sinaiticus replaces the phrase "he observed him" with "he kept him in safety". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 6, Verse 20, page 79).

This oddly translated passage could very well indicate that Herod Antipas felt enough of the workings of the spirit that he was compelled to protect John from execution. Even so, when we fail to fully adhere to the direction given from God, we become dull to future prompting. Eventually, Antipas continued down a path of lust and sin, which gave way to the death of John.

- 28 - **heard him** – The word "heard" is translated from the Greek word "ἀκούω" or "akouō". It means to hear or to hear something. It means to be endowed with the faculty of hearing, not deaf. This passage gives us pause. Did Herod Antipas visit John the Baptist in prison to hear his words? Or, does it refer to the fact that he had heard, past tense, the prophets words? The answer is unclear.

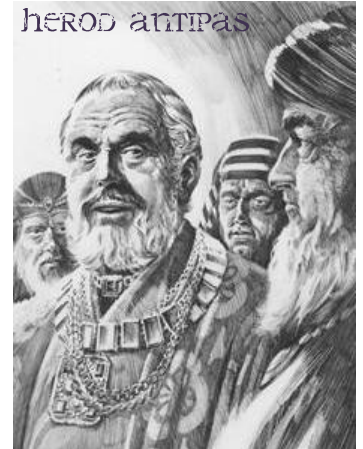
- 29 - **many things** – The phrase "many things" is translated from the Greek word "πολύς" or "polys". The word means many, much, or large. The Codex Sinaiticus replaces the phrase "he did many things" with "he was much perplexed". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 6, Verse 20, page 79). **"He was greatly perplexed. Gr. polla ēporei. Two letters separate this reading from polla epoiei, which is supported by a broad range of Greek and versional**



witnesses and is thought by some to reflect an Aramaic original meaning 'he hear him often'. But *polla ēporei* also has weighty witnesses and uses *polla* in a typically Markan way to mean 'greatly'. *Ēporei*, moreover, must be reckoned the more difficult reading; if Herod was so confused by the Baptist, why did he keep listening to him?" (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 395). Might I suggest that Herod Antipas was confused because he was waging an inward struggle of sizable proportion. His soul was hearing the words of a living prophet calling him to repent. His soul yearned to hear such words, which were words of healing to a sinful soul. His mortal body craved the lifestyle and choices that brought Herod immediate satisfaction and joy. Herod wanted both, but struggled as both could not exist for any real length of time, for one would eventually drive away the other. Anyone that has struggled with repentance can relate to this confusion.

30 - **gladly** – The word "gladly" is translated from the Greek word "ἡδῶς" or "hēdēs". The word means with pleasure or gladly. The Codex Sinaiticus replaced the word "gladly" with "pleasure". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 6, Verse 20, page 79). **"He even did many things gladly because of John. But there was one thing which he would not do - perhaps persuaded himself that he could not do - and that was, give up the guilt love which mastered him, or dismissed the haughty imperious woman who ruled his life after ruining his peace."** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 245).

31 - **tetrarch** – The word "tetrarch" is translated from the Greek word "τετραρχης" or "tetraarchēs". It means a tetrarch. A tetrach is a governor or ruler of a fourth part of a region. Talmage defines a "tetrarch" as follows, **"Tetrarch.--This title by derivation of the term and as originally used was applied to the ruler of a fourth part, or one of four divisions of a region that had formerly been one country. Later it came to be the designation of any ruler or governor over a part of a divided country, irrespective of the number or extent of the fractions. Herod Antipas is distinctively called the tetrarch in Matt. 14:1; Luke 3:1, 19; 9:7; and Acts 13:1; and is referred to as king in Matt. 14:9; Mark 6:14, 22, 25, 26."** (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 196). Barclay gives a very similar definition. He writes, **"Tetrarch literally means the ruler of a fourth part; but it came to be used quite generally, as here, of any subordinate ruler of a section of a country. Herod the Great had many sons. When he died, he divided his territory into three, and, with the consent of the Romans, willed it to three of them. To Archelaus he left Judaea and Samaria; to Philip he left the northern territory of Trachonitis and Ituraea; to Herod Antipas--the Herod of this story--he left Galilee and Peraea."** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 106).



32 - **reproved** – The word "reproved" is translated from the Greek word "ἐλέγχω" or "elegchō". The word means to convict, refute, to find fault with, or correct. The Codex Sinaiticus replaces the word "reproved" with "reproached". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 3, Verse 19, page 111). Basically, Herod Antipas **"was criticized by John. Or 'was accused'. This criticism or accusation of Herod on moral grounds stands in contrast to the political motivation for John's imprisonment supplied by Josephus."** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 477).

Antipas needed to be reprovved. He sat in a very public office, for all to see, and sinned without regard for heaven or earth. He was an example for all to see. Unfortunately, he chose to be an example of sin rather than good. God typically protects the innocent from such men by sending a word of warning. Elder McConkie wrote, **"Herod Antipas, conceived in sin, reared in the household of sin, himself the servant of sin, trumpeted his sinful lusts before all Israel by endorsing and practicing - openly and defiantly - the abominations of adultery and incest. Such a course could not go unreproved. John the Baptist had been sent to cry repentance; he had power to baptize for the remission of sins; and a Herod on his throne was no different from any man. All men - high or low, kings and slaves, Jews and Gentiles, everyone - must repent or they will be damned, and all men are entitled to hear the warning voice from the lips of a legal administrator"** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 327).

33 - **all the evils** – The word "evils" is translated from the Greek word "πονηρός" or "ponēros". The word means annoyances, hardships, something bad, of a bad nature or bad condition. The Codex Sinaiticus replaces the phrase "for all the evils" with "concerning all the wicked things". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 3, Verse 19, page 111). Fitzmyer, speaking of Herod Antipas, translates the passage as, **"all his other misdeeds. Lit. 'and because of all the evils that Herod had done.' The rel. pron., obj. of epoiēsen, is attracted to the gen. case of the antecedent pantōn ponērōn; the latter is incorporated into the rel. cl."** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 478).

We are to understand that John reprovved Herod Antipas and Herodias not only for their unlawful, adulterous and incestuous union, but for all their sins. We are to understand that he didn't stop there, but furthermore called out all the sins of the Herods, the sins of the fathers and the sons. Not only was he reprovved, but warned that his sins would have consequences. Farrar taught, **"But 'our pleasant vices,' it has well been said, 'are made the instruments to punish us; and from this moment began for Herod Antipas a series of annoyances and misfortunes, which only culminated in his death years afterwards in discrowned royalty and unpitied exile."** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 244). He went on to say, **"Sin was punished with sin, and the adulterous union had to be cemented with the prophet's blood. In the gay and gilded halls of any one of those sumptuous palaces which the Herods delighted to build, the dissolute tyrant may have succeeded perhaps in shutting out the deep murmur of his subjects indignation; but there was one voice that reached him, and agitated his conscience, and would not be silenced. It was the voice of the great Baptist."** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar's Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 244).

34 - **done** – The word "done" is translated from the Greek word "ποιέω" or "poiēō". The word means to make or to do. There is a message of agency here. These things were done by Herod Antipas and Herodias' choice. They "committed" sin. no one forced them, or tricked them into their decisions.

35 - **Added** – The word "added" is translated from the Greek word "προστίθημι" or "prostithēmi". It means to add or to put to. **"crowned them all by this. Lit. 'added even to all (of them)."** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 478).

Because of John's actions, Herod Antipas added upon him prison. The world often rewards righteousness with evil, such is the way of wicked mortal men.

Rewards from righteous living are not necessarily issued in mortality. In fact, the real rewards seldom are, for this is a celestial sphere and God's true rewards cannot exist here for they are celestial in nature. Such rewards are referred to as eternal crowns and thrones without end. These are descriptions of things that our celestial knowledge fails to comprehend. There is no doubt that John was deserving of heavenly reward. So, **"Why was John imprisoned? It was with him as with all the prophets. Satan sought to silence his tongue, by death if possible, by imprisonment in any event; and the Lord permitted that evil one to triumph for a season, as part of the refining process that would cleanse and perfect the life of his servant."** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 1, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 328). Through this process, John would be worthy of celestial reward to be "added" to him.

36 - **above all** – The word "above" is translated from the Greek word "ἐπί" or "epi". It means upon, on, at, by or before.

37 - **shut up** – The word "shut up" is translated from the Greek word "κατακλείω" or "katakleiō". It means to shut up or confine. This was done **"by shutting up John in prison. Lit. 'he locked up John in prison'. Josephus recounts that John was taken to the fortress Machaerus in chains. Originally built by Alexander Jannaeus on a precipitous,**

solitary peak on the east side of the Dead Sea between the Wadi Zerqa Ma'in and the Wadi el-Mojib, it was magnificently restored by Herod the Great." (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 478). Skousen feels that Herod delayed in arresting John, "But under the persistent pressure of teasing and nagging from Herodias, Herod Antipas finally felt compelled to have John arrested and thrown into prison." (The Days of the Living Christ: Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, page 159).

John was placed in the prison dungeons of Machaerus east of the Dead Sea. See footnote #5 of this chapter. Zondervan says this of Machaerus; "Machaerus (mā-kē-rūs, Gr. Machairoús), Herod's southernmost stronghold E of the Dead Sea, built by Alexander Janneus (90 B.C.?) (Jos. Ant. 14.5.2). 'The second citadel of Judaea' (Phil. H.N. 5.16). The fort was on the border of Peraea, the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas. To the S lay the domains of Aretas, Herod's father-in-law, King of the Nabataeans. When Herod intrigued to replace the daughter of Aretas by Herodias, the former escaped from Machaerus to her father in the Arnon Valley, 12 miles to the S. In the subsequent troubles Herod occupied Machaerus with Herodias and Salome, and here John the Baptist died (Matt. 14:3ff). In the Great rebellion Jewish zealots were starved out of Machaerus by the Romans and the fort was razed." (The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor – Merrill C. Tenney, page 500).

