(35) Fearful Herod Beheads John the Baptist (Mt. 14:1-12; Mk. 6:14–29; Lk. 9:7-9)

1. The synoptic Gospels all record Herod's fear as a "flashback" to his execution of John the Baptist.
   a. Herod the Tetrarch.  Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great and Malthace (a Samaritan).  Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (Lk. 3:1).  Married the daughter of Aretas IV (King of Nabataea), but divorced her in order to marry his brother's wife.
   b. Herod Philip, private citizen living in Rome.  Son of Herod the Great and Mariamne II.  Not to be confused with Herod Philip the Tetrarch, who would later marry Salome.

2. The growing public acclaim for Jesus sparked rumors.
   a. Rumor #1: John the Baptist had returned (Mk. 6:14; Lk. 9:7).
   b. Rumor #2: Elijah had arrived (Mk. 6:15a; Lk. 9:8a).
   c. Rumor #3: He is a prophet like one of the prophets of old (Mk. 6:15b).
   d. Rumor #4: He is one of the prophets of old returned (Lk. 9:8b).
   e. Herod's guilt over executing John the Baptist led him to insist upon Rumor #1 (Mk. 6:16; Mt. 14:2).

3. The Flashback.
   a. John the Baptist had made a public proclamation against Herod's marriage to Herodias (Mt. 14:4; Mk. 6:18).
   b. Herod arrested John, but kept him in custody and enjoyed listening to him (Mk. 6:20).
   c. Herod feared the spiritual (Mk. 6:20) and political consequences of executing John (Mt. 14:5).
   d. Herodias schemed to have John put to death, and Salome was her tool for this manipulation (Mt. 14:8,11; Mk. 6:19,24,28).
   e. Salome was also Herod's tool for the entertainment and manipulation of his nobles (Mt. 14:6,7,9; Mk. 6:21-23,26).

Principle: Prophets of Israel were specifically accountable to the Lord for the rebuke of kings in His earthly theocracy (1st Sam. 15:1–3,10–35; 2nd Sam. 7:5; 12:1ff.; Isa. 7:3ff.; 37:5–7,21–35).  John the Baptist's rebuke of Herod is in keeping with that precedent.  Dispensation of the Church application for such activity however is not established by New Testament Scripture.