

(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.
 - c. Herodias. Daughter of Aristobulus and Bernice. Accompanied Herod Antipas into Gaul when Caligula exiled him.
 - d. Salome. Daughter of Herod Philip of Rome and Herodias. Danced for her step-father's political ambitions and married her ½ uncle Philip the Tetrarch.
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).

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.

- 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).
Origin comments on [The Dancing of Herodias](#) with reference to Herodias' daughter. Barclay comments on [An Evil Woman's Revenge](#) in his commentary on Mark.

Herod's family tree simplified. The names underlined are those principally discussed in the article HEROD. (NBD p. 480)

