

**God With Us**

## A Study of Matthew: "Can You Handle the Truth?"

## Matthew 14:1-12

"For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John had been saying to him, It is not lawful for you to have her." (Matthew 14:3)

**I. The Evil Herods**

- a. The Herod family is mentioned often in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. All of the Herods were descendants of Esau. They were not Jews, but Edomites.
- b. They practiced the Jewish religion when it helped them gain wealth and political power.
  1. Herod the Great founded the dynasty. He had nine wives and thought nothing of killing his wives or own sons. He had the infants killed in Bethlehem. (Matt. 2:13-18)
  2. Herod the Antipas also *tetrarch*, which means "ruler of the fourth part of the kingdom." He was selfish, loved luxury and was ambitious.
  3. Herod Agrippa imprisoned Peter and killed James (Acts 12). He was the grandson of Herod the Great.
  4. Herod Agrippa the II tried the Apostle Paul (Acts 25:13). He was the son of Agrippa I.
- c. Herod the tetrarch was guilty of egregious sin. He had a long term affair with Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip I. Herod the tetrarch divorced his own wife.

**II. The Voice of the Prophet**

- a. John the Baptist, boldly warned Herod and called him to repent. John knew the sin of the ruler would pollute the land and encourage sin among the people. As the king goes, so does the kingdom.
- b. Instead of listening to God's servant, Herod arrested and imprisoned John the Baptist.
- c. It was Herodias who held a grudge against John the Baptist (Mark 6:19).
- d. Salome had an evil agenda, danced an evil dance to solicit an evil request, to cause an evil act.
  1. John became the first N.T. martyr for the cause of truth and righteousness.
  2. John the Baptist lost his life for standing up for the sanctity of marriage.
- e. Women in this story are unique. No woman is reported to have denied Jesus in the Gospels, but Herodias and Salome are so twisted that they can order the head of another on a plate.
- f. The reputation of Jesus had made Herod Antipas think that John had come back from the dead to haunt him. Hostility and aggression increased against Jesus after John's death.

**III. What practical lessons can we learn from this text?**

- a. John the Baptist faced the type of bitter death that O.T. prophets experienced.
  1. When it comes to morality, public opinion polls seldom line up with the Word of God (The truth).
- b. Herod's heart was like the first soil in the Parable of the Soils. He was so filled with fleshly lust that he had little soil left over for the Word of God. Evil birds in the form of lust snatch the Word.
- c. It is not popular to speak the will of God. Everyone does not want to hear the truth about themselves or their actions.
- d. As Christians, we do not stand on opinions but on truth. Know *the truth* for yourself.
  1. Truth is not simply whatever works.
  2. Truth is not what makes people feel good. Unfortunately, bad news can be true.
  3. Truth is not defined by what is intended. Good intentions can still be wrong.
  4. Truth is not how we know; truth is what we know.
  5. Truth is not simply what is believed. A lie believed is still a lie.
- e. When we take time to look deeply into the Word of God it will reveal to us the truth about ourselves. Have you looked into the deep lately?