

Herod Murders John the Baptist

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[0 : 00] We're going to be jumping back into the book of Mark, but kind of a few more things. Back on this issue one that's being voted on here in a few weeks, and early voting has already started. Am I getting that right? Didn't early voting start this last week?

This is a major issue. This is about killing little baby boys and girls whose lives we should protect. Of all the people whose lives we should protect, who's the ones who we should be focused on protecting the most?

The weak, the vulnerable. And this is a specific issue. Not just a law being passed that can be overturned with another law. This is an amendment to the Constitution in Ohio.

You can't just pass another law to undo that. You have to amend the Constitution again to do that. We've got plenty of signs out there. I think there must be 40 or 50.

And so if you haven't already, take one home, put it in your yard. Take two, put one in your neighbor's yard. No, don't really, unless they're willing to do that.

[1 : 03] But there's, you know, lots of spots you can put these signs. I've been somewhat heartened, at least in our area. I've seen mostly these no on issue one signs, which is great.

Very few of the yes. Of course, I was just in Columbus. I saw a lot more there of yes on one. So this is a battle, and it's worth fighting. And, you know, some people say, oh, you shouldn't talk about politics.

You know, when you're killing little baby boys and girls, you have to talk about that. You know, in the church, but everywhere else. It's an issue that's important that we need to discuss.

And this is one thing that we can do to try to fight against this disease of abortion that has invaded our country, you know, in the last 50 years.

And now we're kind of at a state-by-state here battle, that we're battling here in Ohio. So a few other kind of announcements.

[2 : 04] Let me see. I can find my notes here. I love those songs, by the way, this morning. Thanks again to everyone.

Well, I think that's it. The other thing I just wanted to bring up, we've got this whole thing going on in Israel. And it brings up lots of questions. And, man, is it nasty? You know, of all the things when it comes to war, I think the most profound statement I ever heard about war was from General Patton. Does anybody remember what General Patton said about war? War is hell. That's what he said. And, you know, nothing, it's just horrible.

And there's, you know, sometimes war is necessary. Sometimes fighting back is necessary and required. But there's questions about what's going on in Israel. Is this a sign of the end times?

You know, what should Israel do? What should their response be? Should America be involved in this in any way? Is Israel's response? Is it just? And, you know, you don't necessarily have to have an opinion on all those things, right?

[3 : 17] Lots of, there's lots of talking heads that talk about these things. We have our own battles here in Ohio, right? And it's important that we understand the principles of justice and truth and that we be concerned for all things going on in the world.

But there is constant fighting, battles, and murder, and political intrigue, and terrorism going on all over the world constantly.

And so, but, you know, because this is Israel, it has a lot of people's attention, especially Christians. So maybe in the future weeks we'll spend some time and talk about it. But for this morning, we are going to talk a little bit about politics, but we're going to be talking about the political intrigue, the politics of Israel back in Jesus' day.

So if you've got your Bibles, open them up to Mark chapter 6, which is where we're at as we're studying through the book of Mark. We're just going through the book of Mark. If you haven't been here, verse by verse, looking at the life and ministry of Jesus.

And, you know, instead of just doing sermons on topics where we can kind of look in the Bible and try to form an opinion about a certain topic, we're just letting the Bible speak for itself and trying to clarify and bring different things out as we go verse by verse.

[4 : 43] And hopefully we're doing a great job or a good job in interpreting well, interpreting correctly. Last week we looked at Jesus sending out his 12 disciples.

He was, Jesus had his own teaching ministry, his own miracle ministry. And then he started saying out his 12. Now we're going to be, this morning we're going to be looking at John the Baptist.

And kind of his role. And then a guy named Herod. And his question about who is this Jesus guy. And that's a big question. It comes up constantly. And it's really a theme of the Gospel of Mark is who is this guy Jesus. And in our passages today we're going to be really looking at focusing on Herod.

And Herod's got this question. Well, who is this guy Jesus? We're going to be looking at Herod. And this whole idea of this guy Herod is confusing because like Herod dies and then you hear about Herod again.

[5 : 52] And then he dies and then you hear about Herod again. Like what's going on? Is Herod being resurrected all over the place? Oh, yes. While I start, while I'm continuing on here, I'm sorry.

I printed out some little half sheets with like a little graph or a diagram. So if you guys can start passing those out.

Because this whole thing with Herod can be quite confusing as you read the Bible. And we're going to try to explain it as best we can. We're going to be looking about the political situation at the time.

And then we'll talk a little bit about John the Baptist and his faithfulness to do what he was called to do. I'm going to ask a question. I'm going to start off with this. Who likes a good birthday party?

You guys like birthday parties? What do you have at birthday parties? You have cake and ice cream and what else? Presents. Yeah, singing.

[6 : 54] Your family's all there. Has anybody ever been to a birthday party where somebody brought a severed head on a plate? No?

Birthday parties usually aren't that gruesome. But welcome to the household of the ruler of Israel during the time of Jesus. This is what happened at a birthday party here in Israel at the time of Jesus.

We're going to read starting at verse 14 and down to 29. We'll read this and then we're going to go back through and talk about it. Now King Herod heard of him for his name. He's talking about Jesus.

Had become well known. And he said, John the Baptist is risen from the dead and therefore these powers are at work in him. Others said it is Elijah and others said it is the prophet or like one of the prophets.

But when Herod heard, he said, no, this is John the Baptist who I beheaded. He's been raised from the dead. For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

[8 : 04] For he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, it's not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not.

For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and a holy man and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly. Then an opportune day came when Herod, on his birthday, gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers and the chief men of Galilee.

And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, ask me whatever you want and I will give it to you.

He also swore to her, whatever you ask me, I will give you up to half my kingdom. So she went out and said to her mother, what shall I ask? And she said, the head of John the Baptist.

Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter. And the king was exceedingly sorry. Yet because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.

[9 : 18] Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl. And the girl

gave it to her mother.

When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb. Wow, what a story. You know, most of the accounts, most of the stories or accounts in the gospel of Mark especially are specifically about Jesus.

Here we see it starts off, well, who is this Jesus? But then it gets into this little bunny trail, which is important and interesting and important, I believe. About John the Baptist and then this guy, Herod. So I want to take just a big picture step back here. And I'll say, who is this Herod guy anyway? So wasn't Herod the guy who was the king during the time of Jesus?

And he heard that there was this king being born and wanted to kill him? Well, yeah, that's true. But that's actually a different Herod.

[10:27] And we'll find out that there are actually many, many Herods throughout history. And the Bible actually speaks about five of them.

And we're going to get and talk about all five. I want to take like a big step back and just look at Israel at this time. Even go back a few hundred years. Remember that Israel, the people of Israel, had been dispersed.

They were a conquered nation, conquered by the Babylonians and the Syrians. But they were eventually allowed to come back into their land and build their temple and kind of reestablish themselves.

And there was this 400-year period. We call it the intertestamental period from the last prophet Malachi to when this account of Jesus, the time of Jesus, begins.

During that intertestamental period, there was a time where the Jews were still kind of somewhat conquered people.

[11:28] There were other nations who kind of oversaw at least the state of Israel and the people of Israel. But there was this certain hundred-year period where Israel had quite a bit of independence and freedom.

And during that time, Israel actually conquered, we can put it that way, this group of people that we call, I'm trying to remember the name, the Edomites.

The Edomites. And the Edomites actually go back to who? Does anybody know? Maybe shout it out. Esau. Yeah, remember Jacob and Esau, two brothers, that Israel was formed through Jacob only, not Esau.

But the people from Esau ended up being called the Edomites. So Israel, during this period, conquered this group of people called the Edomites and said, Hey, listen, if you want to keep your land, then you have to convert to Judaism.

And what does that mean to be a Jew? Well, the big thing is you have to be circumcised. You've got to circumcise all your boys. And so many, if not most, of the Edomites did this. They became Jews as proselytes through circumcision.

[12:46] They weren't biologically Jews, but they became through really forced conversion. Well, there was this guy whose name was Antipater who was one of these Edomites.

And he was somewhat of a political guy. He was artful in his politics and ended up kind of growing up through the ranks in Israel.

And then eventually the Romans kind of start to take over this whole land of Judea. And Antipater finds some opportunity here to cozy up to the Romans and make a name for himself.

And eventually, you know, he's given some official positions of power as a Jew. But again, a proselyte Jew.

He was an Edomite over this land of Judea. So Antipater has a son whose name is Herod. And this is where what they call the Herodian dynasty starts.

[13:52] His son, Herod, ends up being known as Herod the Great. Because he ends up being like the patriarch of this whole Herodian dynasty.

Herod the Great started off as a governor over just the region of Galilee. The region where Jesus is from. But eventually, through political machinations, is able to kind of rise in the ranks from governor over Galilee to actually the king over all of Judea.

The land that is recognized as Israel, at least at that time. Now, Rome did not just let these states run by themselves.

They were actually referred to as vassal states. Israel, Judea, was a vassal state. Rome was pretty smart in how they conquered, you know, a big part of the Western world at the time.

They didn't just come in and conquer the people and destroy them completely and then just bring in their own rulers. What they would do is they would, you know, make sure that they secured this land.

[15:09] But then they would allow them to kind of rule themselves, but just under the guidance and oversight of the Roman Empire. So they would find some local person who they could trust, who was loyal to Rome, who could kind of oversee and be a local governor or king or whatever name they were given.

And that was the situation here in Israel. During the time when Jesus was born, Herod was king over Israel. But Herod, he was not an independent king.

He answered to who? He answered to Caesar, Tiberius Caesar at the time. And so he wanted to make sure that he was constantly doing what pleased Caesar.

But at the same time, he wanted to also please the Jews. So you can imagine how that was kind of a balancing act for these, for Herod, King Herod in particular.

Well, you imagine, you know, people like to name children after themselves, and especially when your name has some clout to it. And Herod the Great was somewhat popular.

[16:23] He actually built a lot of things. In fact, the temple that we have today in Israel was mostly built by Herod the Great.

Now, remember that before Herod the Great even came on the scene, Israel had come, people had come from the dispersion. They came back to Israel, and they had built the temple. But it was fairly basic.

I mean, they just kind of put the basic structure together. It was actually Herod the Great who came in, had a lot of resources, brought in thousands of workers, tried to do it at least somewhat according to the law, and actually built quite a grand temple.

He took this temple. I think he rebuilt the temple structure itself. But then he expanded this whole platform that today we call the Temple Mount.

It's really this courtyard on which the temple is built. It's on a mountain, a hill, you know, whatever you want to call it. It's this mound. And he built this mound.

[17:24] It's kind of a plateau that has walls all the way around that are these retaining walls.

Today, the most famous part of that wall that's kind of been unearthed is called the Western Wall.

And you've probably seen pictures or videos of Jews who go to the Western Wall, and they call it the Wailing Wall. They will go there, and they'll pray, and they'll put prayers or different things into the wall.

You can go there today. That wall was built by Herod, Herod the Great. Now, I mentioned that there were five Herods.

So, Herod the Great. I'm going to just give a few more facts about him. Getting back to my notes here. Again, he was the ruler of all of Judea, called a king, called the king of Judea at the time, and tried to kill Jesus, if you remember that, and that Joseph and Mary actually fled to Egypt because of this.

Excuse me. Now, one of the things that's going to come into play here is Herod liked his ladies.

Herod was married ten times. He had ten different wives, and I'm not sure, you know, if he had ten wives all at the same time, but over his lifetime, he was married ten times to ten different women.

[18:55] And you can imagine, he liked to name kids after himself, and he ended up naming a lot of his sons Herod as well.

Some of them would become rulers, and we'll read more about them. Others thought, hey, I'd like to become a ruler, and maybe I'll try to make this happen more quickly.

So, they conspired against their father. Herod the Great found out about it, and he had them killed.

And so, there's a lot of drama when it comes to this whole Herodian dynasty.

But Herod liked to name his own sons after him, and then we see this kind of repeated.

You see this a lot, I think, with royalty, right? And then it makes me think of George Foreman.

Anybody know the boxer George Foreman? George Foreman had 12 kids, five sons.

[20:00] George II, George III, George IV, George V, and George VI. Anybody know that about George Foreman? And so, imagine a household like that.

But you had the same thing, except for a lot of these other Herods, they were half-brothers. You know, they had the same father, but different mothers. You can imagine in a royal household, they probably lived separately.

I don't know if they played, these brothers played together, you know, on a regular basis. I don't know if they even saw each other very often. Maybe they did, I don't know. But the first, the other Herod, the next Herod we're going to talk about is Herod Antipas.

Herod Antipas. And that's actually the Herod that we are talking about today in this passage. He, one of the things that happened is after Herod the Great died, he wanted to pass down his whole kingdom to one of his sons, but Rome didn't like that idea.

They were okay with Herod the Great, but they weren't really impressed with his sons to give them power over the whole kingdom. So they ended up setting up what we call a tetrarchy today.

[21 : 14] And so sometimes you'll read in the Bible, Herod the Tetrarch. And a tetrarch is, I'm not sure the root, if it's Latin or Greek or what, but it means a quarter.

That's all it means is a quarter. And so the tetrarchs, Herod's sons, not all of them, but some of them, were set up over quarters, if you will, of this land of Judea.

So Herod Antipas was one of them. Let me see if I can... Philip was another one. And again, this was one, this is a son by a different wife.

Herod Archealos was another one, a tetrarch. And then actually Herod's sister was set up as a tetrarch over another quarter. So after Herod the Great died, there were four tetrarchs over Judea.

Going back to Herod Antipas, he ended up ruling over the region of Galilee, which is why he comes into play so much, because that's where Jesus' ministry was, primarily was in the region of Galilee.

[22 : 20] He's the one that had John the Baptist killed, and he was the one that was around during the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. And we see him involved with Pontius Pilate and all that.

This is Herod Antipas. The next Herod is a little bit confusing in history, because there's someone called Herod Philip.

But sometimes you read, it's called Herod II. And so there's some confusion among historians, because we actually read in this account that Herod's half-brother, in this account, his name was Philip.

But if you go back and read a guy named Josephus, who was a first-century Jewish historian, he references a guy in this same scenario who he calls Herod, or he calls Herod II, I think.

And so, well, what is it? Is it Herod II or is it Philip? And so some people say, well, maybe it was both, because you have lots of Herods, and so sometimes they went by one name, which was distinct from the other Herods, and sometimes by Herod.

[23 : 34] Herod Archealos, which is, again, another son from a different wife, and he ruled over more of the southern parts of Israel.

He's only mentioned once in the Bible, and that's when Joseph returned from Egypt. But it says about Joseph returning to Egypt that he avoided going back to where this Herod Archealos, or Archealos, Wow.

was ruling because he was afraid that he would be like his father. So he ended up going to Nazareth specifically because he thought probably, I guess, that Herod Antipas was a safer bet.

The next Herod that we read about in the scriptures is Herod Agrippa, who ends up eventually becoming Herod Agrippa I because there's a Herod Agrippa II.

And Herod Agrippa was a grandson of Herod the Great through a totally different wife. We read about him, especially in Acts 12, about the persecution of the early church.

[24 : 43] This Herod Agrippa was the one that had James killed. He persecuted the church. He had Peter put in prison. And the Bible says that he received praise as being more than a man, more like a God.

Does anybody remember what happened to him right after that? Yeah, he fell dead. And the Bible says that he was eaten by worms. Interestingly enough, Joseph, or Josephus, Clavius Josephus, who wrote a history of the Jews in the first century, basically he talks about this account that we're reading about in John and also talks about this Herod Agrippa and how he died of a stomach ailment.

He doesn't talk about worms specifically, but he talks about how he received praise from men and how this Agrippa realized that God was killing him because of that.

A lot of synchronicity between what Josephus wrote and what we find in the Bible. And then Herod Agrippa II, he's only referred to in the Bible as Agrippa, not Herod Agrippa, though.

In other historical texts, he is referred to as Herod Agrippa. He's the son of Herod Agrippa I, and he's the one who heard from Paul.

[26 : 07] This is later on, as Paul made his appeal to Caesar, and he's making his way through the chain, if you will, up to Caesar. And up that chain, he makes his way to this King Agrippa.

This is not the first King Agrippa, but the second King Agrippa. He's the one that famously said of Paul, after Paul preaches the gospel to him, he said, you almost persuade me to become a Christian, Paul.

Like I said again, we know much of what we know about the Herodian dynasty is from the Bible, and also from Josephus.

Josephus wrote a history of the Jews. He was commissioned to do so, actually, by the Romans. He was a Jew himself, and wrote a very interesting, if you ever get the chance to read it, it's quite intriguing.

All right, we talked about the Tetrarchy. All right, so with that as the setup, we know about who all these Herods are, and we're talking today about Herod Antipas, Herod Antipas, who was just a Tetrarch over the region of Galilee.

[27 : 21] And so he asked this question, going back to verse 14. He heard about this guy, Jesus. It says, Now King Herod heard of him, for his name had become well known. Jesus was becoming famous in the area and well known.

And he was convinced, he's like, this has got to be John the Baptist risen from the dead, because of the powers that I'm hearing that are coming from this man. He heard about the miracles done at Jesus' hand.

But other people said, well, maybe it's Elijah. And we'll talk about that in a second. Or the prophet. Or one of the, one like one of the prophets.

So let's talk about that in a second. What is this? So he's talking and saying, I think it's John the Baptist. But others are saying, no, I think it's somebody else. Well, why would anyone think that Jesus is Elijah?

I mean, Elijah died a long time ago. Well, interestingly enough, in the very last prophet in Israel, it was named Malachi. He has a short book, just a few chapters, at the end of the Old Testament in your Bible.

[28 : 27] The very last section of his prophecy, he mentions, and this is Malachi chapter 4, verse 5. He says this, Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

And so the Jews read this and studied their Bible. He's going to send Elijah back. And nobody knew, is he going to raise him from the dead? Is he going to be somebody like Elijah?

Who knows? But Elijah, or somebody like Elijah, a prophet like him, is coming back. And so they were expecting that. And so that's why people might say, oh, this is Elijah.

In fact, Jesus speaks specifically about this. And he actually names who Elijah was that was talked about in Malachi. And who was that? It was John the Baptist.

He says in Matthew 11, 14, about John the Baptist, he says, if you're willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. That's what Jesus said about John the Baptist.

[29 : 31] Well, what about the prophet? They said, well, some people said it's Elijah. Some people said it's the prophet. Notice how it doesn't say a prophet. It says the prophet.

Well, what are they talking about there? Well, if you go back in your Bible to the time of Moses, Moses, and this is in Deuteronomy chapter 18, and I'm going to be quoting here in a second from verse 15, Moses had said to Israel, to the whole nation of Israel, as he was giving the law, there is somebody coming in the future that you need to listen to.

This is what it says. The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear. Deuteronomy 18, 15.

Him you shall hear. There will be a prophet risen up like me in the land of Israel, from your midst, from among the Israeli people, from the Jews. And so, people knew this.

They had read the books of Moses, and they knew that there was a prophet that would be risen up. Who was that prophet that he was talking about? That was Jesus. Jesus. Jesus is that prophet that they were supposed to hear.

[30 : 52] And so, whoever guessed that, they got it right, didn't they? And then the other thing that people said was, well, like one of the prophets.

And I think that's just an indication of, well, maybe it's just some prophet like the other prophets that we've had in the past. The interesting thing is, how long had it been since there had been a prophet

in Israel?

It had been 400 years. There was silence, prophetic silence. No one spoke for God. I'm sure there were people who said, I'm speaking for God over that time, but they found out to be frauds.

Kind of like we have a fair bit of that today. Okay. Excuse me.

But why would Herod himself say and think, I think that this Jesus guy is John the Baptist risen from the dead. I mean, it's kind of a silly thing to say because, I mean, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.

[32 : 00] How could he be, John the Baptist risen from the dead, if they were kind of around at the same time? Well, I think, probably, you know, Herod had just heard about Jesus.

He didn't know all the details. He just heard about this guy who's doing miracles and healings and those kinds of things. He didn't know a lot of the details. So that's probably why he would have made such a, kind of a bad guess or come up with that idea.

But John the Baptist was also a prophet, right? He knew that. He had a personal experience with John the Baptist. And the other reason, I think, that kind of was on his mind was that because of what he had done, and he mentions it here, that this is the John the Baptist that I killed.

And we get from the story that he didn't really want to kill John the Baptist, did he? He was kind of, his hand was somewhat forced into it. And he probably had a lot of, he had dread about what he had done and what are going to be the repercussions of that.

So when he heard about this other guy who was doing miracles, he was like, oh no. This guy's come back from the dead. Another question that some people ask is, well, you know, this is a book, this is an account about the life of Jesus written by Mark.

[33 : 31] And we talked in the beginning of this series about who Mark was and all that, but how would Mark know what Herod said? It seems, it seems privately, I don't know, about who he thought John was.

So just a couple ideas. Jesus, so Jesus, he traveled around with his 12 disciples. But it wasn't just his 12 disciples, he actually had other people, it's somewhat of an entourage traveling around with him.

And there were actually women who helped, women who traveled with him, who helped support him and his disciples in various ways. In Luke chapter 8, it talks about a few of these specific ladies who helped out the ministry of Jesus.

And it says this, Luke 8, verse 3, it says, And Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for him from their substance.

These were ladies who, for whatever reason, had some amount of substance so they could support Jesus and his 12 disciples in some way. But it mentions specifically this lady named Joanna who was married to a dude named Chusa.

[34 : 50] And it says that he was Herod's steward. And well, what does that mean? Well, a steward was somebody who was over a house, a household. Now, that was a big job.

Herod didn't have, you know, just a studio apartment that he lived in. Herod had a huge household with lots of servants and homes, probably multiple homes and different things.

And so this guy was actually fairly far up. Now, stewards were typically slaves. And we don't know if that's the case here or not.

But he would have had probably close access to the man that he served, right? And so it's very possible that he had heard, you know, through his own ears, Herod talk about his ideas about who John was and then passed it on to his wife, Joanna.

And eventually, you know, word got spread around. But the other possibility, right, is that Herod could have just made his views known publicly about who he thought John was.

[36 : 01] We actually read, not here, but in another account, this is in Matthew 14, it says that when Herod opined or shared his views about who John the Baptist was, it says in Matthew 14, 1, 1 and 2, it says that he said this to his servants.

And so, this guy, Chusa, would have been one of his servants. So, in verse 17, going back to Mark, chapter 6, verse 17, for Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John and he bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, for he had married her.

So, here's another character kind of coming into this whole scene. Herodias, just so funny, right, because Herodias is basically the feminine version of Herod.

Well, who is Herodias? Now, this is, it just keeps getting weirder. Now, all these Herods, these half-brothers, well, Herodias is Herod's half-brother's daughter.

What do we call that? That's his niece. So, Herod, I don't know, is half-niece a word? Can you call somebody a half-niece? I don't know. But, his half-brother's niece.

[37 : 30] And, we find out from here that she was actually married to Philip, who was Herod's, Herod Antipas' half-brother. So, we actually have three brothers here.

They're all half-brothers. None of them have the same mother. They all have three different mothers. But, the one has, he has a daughter.

So, among these three half-brothers, one has a daughter, and this daughter ends up being married to two of the other brothers. According to Josephus, Josephus actually gives some details about how this kind of played out.

it says that Herod actually went to go visit his brother Philip. Hey, coming for, and then while he was there, I don't know, maybe him and Herodias were playing footsie under the table or something, and he ends up getting the hots here for Herodias, and he goes to her and he says, hey, why don't you come join me and you can be married to me instead of my brother?

brother. And for whatever reason, she thinks that's a great idea and ends up moving out. You know, we don't know if there was any kind of, you know, divorce papers run up or whatever, if these people are just like, whatever, just flouting against the law of Moses.

[38 : 43] I mean, we see that, obviously, they're completely negligent of the law of Moses. But then in verse 18, it says, you know, it says, because John had said to Herod, it is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.

And, you know, first of all, well, were they buddies? Was like John the Baptist and Herod buddies? Like, did they just kind of talk, you know, get beers together or something? And then John says to Herod, hey, you know, really, this is against the law.

Well, no, that's certainly not what happened. But John the Baptist had a public ministry. And he just publicly proclaimed, almost certainly, hey, what's going on right now in front of God and everybody that Herod and Herodias are doing, this is wrong.

And he said it's not lawful. And it's not lawful. Now, this just comes across to anybody, whether you're religious or not, whether you're a Christian or really anything.

And getting married to your brother's wife, that just feels weird. Doesn't it feel icky? But, it's more than just that. There's actually, if you look in the book of Leviticus, there's lots of laws about who you're allowed to marry and who you're not allowed to marry.

[40 : 08] And it says this, Leviticus 18, verse 16, you shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife. It is your brother's nakedness.

Well, that kind of sounds weird. Uncover somebody's nakedness? Well, that's actually just a figure of speech. It's talking about sexual morality. In the law of Moses, it specifically says, hey, no hanky-panky with your brother's wife.

That's really messed up. Don't do it. In the law of Moses, this is Israel's law. Who's supposed to be the king, you know, overseeing, make sure that the law of Moses is instituted in this land.

It's King, well, not King Herod, Herod the Tetrarch in this case. And so, when John the Baptist calls him out, he's like pointing to the law of Moses.

Hey, this isn't just bad or wrong. I'm sure Herod did all kinds of immoral things. But here, I can point to chapter and verse. I can point to black and white in the law of Moses. This is wrong.

[41 : 14] You can't do this. So, you know, eventually he ends up getting thrown in jail. We'll talk about that in a second.

Herodias is irate. I can do whatever I want, and I don't want some guy who calls himself a prophet telling me what I can and can't do.

I'm the queen, or I don't know, I guess he's not king, I'm whatever. I'm a princess or whatever. She's got a princess complex. So I can do whatever I want, and my husband has all this political power, and we can do whatever we want.

She didn't like it. So I think you should be dead. So here's a question. Here's a question people ask today. As Christians, should we, is it appropriate to call out political leaders when they do things that are wrong or messed up?

And I think without a doubt, this is something we see that John the Baptist is doing. Some people say, oh, you know, the Bible just says that we should pray for our leaders. And is that true?

[42 : 26] Yeah, we should. We should pray for our leaders because, you know, we want things to go well for us and our nation especially. But that doesn't mean, that doesn't, that's not to the exclusion of criticizing, protesting against, calling out sin, wickedness, hypocrisy among our leaders.

Interestingly enough, Jesus also called out Herod. In Mark, chapter 18, verse 15, it says this, then he charged them, this is Jesus saying, take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

It says, watch out for those Pharisees, they're corrupt, and watch out for Herod, because he's corrupt as well. It's good and right and appropriate to criticize our political leaders.

But I do want to say this, it's not obligated, we don't have to, is there any short, is there any lack of opportunity to criticize political leaders? It's a full-time job.

You know, just looking at the White House, you could spend all day, and you know, some people, they've turned that into a job, right? We call them talking heads or whatever, and you know, it's interesting, and I think it would be a fun job.

[43 : 44] There's so many things to criticize, it's so easy to do. It's not a hard job, but we don't have to, but it's certainly right and good and appropriate, especially when it's some things that are important, right?

But we also see in the Bible, there are times where people just kept their mouth shut, and I think that's okay too. We don't have to constantly be criticizing people.

I look at Daniel. Daniel, he was taken out of Israel, and he was taken into captivity, and he actually served in the household or in the court, I guess, I don't know how to put it, of Nebuchadnezzar.

He was a king. He was a Gentile king. He was not a Jewish king. And Daniel, he did get into trouble a few times, but did Daniel ever publicly proclaim, Nebuchadnezzar, you did this?

No way, and why not? That's just, you don't do that. You're gone. You don't publicly say that kind of stuff.

[44 : 52] I mean, it's difficult enough. He had to resist certain laws, right? And he got thrown in the lion's den. His friends got thrown in the furnace. God saved them from those things. But they didn't even get up in public and like, I mean, if you were going to criticize somebody at that time in that kingdom, you better do it really quiet, and you better be sure you trust the people you're talking to.

And that's how it is in most of the world. It's kind of a unique circumstance here in America and maybe the West where we kind of had this freedom to criticize our leaders. And this is the way that it was back then in Judea.

I find this interesting. This is in Proverbs. Proverbs 20, verse 2 says this, The wrath of a king is like the roaring of a lion. Whoever provokes him to anger sins against his own life.

Now, I don't think that's saying, well, you should never provoke a king to anger. Did Jesus provoke kings to anger? He did. He did. He provoked through the things that he said and did.

But what this proverb is saying is saying, hey, listen, if you're going to do this, you're sinning against your own life. You're not sinning against God. You're not sinning against other people. You're putting your life at risk when you do that.

[46 : 07] And that is true. And so, it's not always obligated for us to always, you know, call out, you know, whatever leaders are among us.

It's risky. You know what it makes me think of? I'm running out of time, so maybe I won't get into it. But this whole, you know, even in our day, we feel somewhat safe, right, criticizing our leaders.

But there are certain things, and certain people specifically, you better watch out. I'm just going to leave it at that for time's sake. But I do think it's easy to, because there's so much opportunity to criticize our leaders, to get too caught up and focused on what our leaders are doing.

People have been doing this for centuries, for millennia. This has been happening. And it's good that we uphold justice and make sure that we stand up for justice, stand up against these things like issue one.

And when people are doing evil, wicked things, call them out on it. But one of the things that I notice in the Bible is that when people are called out, usually it's kind of our own people.

[47 : 21] And so even in this scenario, John the Baptist is calling out the Tetrarch of Israel. This guy is supposed to be a Jew. I mean, he's living in stark hypocrisy, what he's doing.

He's not calling out like Tiberius Caesar. Now, Tiberius Caesar was a total perv. And just like the things you read about Tiberius Caesar, the guy was just a complete maniacal, evil person.

It was like so many things to call out about him. We don't really see that. Maybe John the Baptist called stuff out. But really, he's focused on my nation, the ruler over my people who's supposed to be faithful to the Lord.

Anyway, we'll keep going just for the sake of time. Verse 19 here, Mark 6, verse 19. Therefore, Herodias held it against him.

She didn't like John the Baptist. And she wanted to kill him, but she could not. And this is the reason she could not. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and a holy man, and he protected him.

[48 : 30] And when he heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly. It says here that he feared John. He feared John. He realized that John was just and a holy man. He wasn't just some wild, crazy dude.

He was actually a holy man. Somebody maybe actually sent from God. And so he protected him. And how did he protect him? Well, he threw him in prison. Well, thanks.

Thanks for the protection. And who was he protecting him from? He was protecting him from his wife. There's this phrase, kind of the last part of this verse.

He did many things and he heard him gladly. As I read through it, I'm like, what in the world does that mean? And I looked at a few different translations and kind of the underlying Greek there. The Weymouth translation says this.

After listening to him, he was greatly, he was in great perplexity and yet he found a pleasure in listening. I think that's kind of the best way to kind of translate or interpret really that passage.

[49 : 35] So it's like he found John, like, fascinating and interesting and he actually liked listening to what he had to say. He took pleasure in listening to what he had to say, but did Herod actually respond in any positive way?

No. He didn't. And this really gets to the whole thing with Herod, Antipas, this specific Herod. He was a total coward. He knew John was right.

He knew he was in the wrong to merit Herodias. I mean, it's right there in black and white in the law. But he was afraid to kill John. But he was too much of a coward to actually turn from his ways.

You know, he had too much invested in his power. And then this new woman. And then, you know, the people maybe that were looking on and watching. I'm not going to, like, do what this guy tells me.

I mean, who's he? You ever meet people like this? They just got too much invested. This is something that relates directly to the gospel message. You tell people, you know what?

[50 : 44] You can have eternal life. All you have to do is humble yourself and tell God you're sorry and I'm going to receive your gift of forgiveness and everlasting life. And righteousness and all of that because Jesus died for me.

All you have to do is say yes. That's really it. Humble yourself and say yes. That's it. Well, you know, that sounds pretty good. You almost persuade me to become a Christian. but I get too much other things going on.

I can't do that. I remember a friend of mine, he's witnessing to his friend at work and his friend is kind of married. He wasn't married, actually. He was shacking up with some lady, a girlfriend.

I think he had come from a Christian background so he was telling, you know, you need to get your life, you know, you need to turn to God and you need to, like, you know, get married or stop living together with your girlfriend.

And he kept telling him over and over, you know, you're right, I should. You know, you're right, I shouldn't be living with her. You know, you're right, I should turn back to Jesus. He never did. I mean, as far as I know, last time I heard him talk about this, just for years.

[51 : 55] You're right, but just never does anything about it. The other thing I think about is this couple, Herod and Herodias.

who does it sound like in the Bible from the Old Testament? It sounds like Ahab and Jezebel, right? Anyway, we want to expound on that.

Verse 21, then an opportunity, an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. So it's his birthday and he invites, you know, all these upper class people, these ruling class people to come to the party.

And it says, and when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, ask me whatever you want and I'll give it to you.

Now this is really creepy and weird.

This is his stepdaughter. And she comes and she dances. Now, almost certainly, she's not like a six-year-old girl in her ballerina outfit, you know, doing spins and twirls at Herod's party.

[52 : 58] It says that he was pleased with her. And so most people think that she was probably in her teenage years, because you typically get married pretty young, and she was not married, probably in her teenage years, and she's dancing provocatively among Herod and his friends.

What a perv. What a total pervert. By the way, this kind of thing is actually somewhat common when it comes to step-parents.

We see this with like Cinderella, right? And her evil step-mother. And people who are godless, and I'm not saying by any means that this always happens when it comes to step-parents, but you see this consistent pattern, especially among the godless, where when you have somebody who marries into an existing family, they don't have the same amount of concern and care for the children that end up becoming their step-children as they would for their biological children.

And I don't know if Herod had his own biological daughter, but just what a sick dude to just basically treat his step-daughter that way.

He said this, He also swore to her, Whatever you ask me, I will give to you up to half my kingdom.

And I think that's just a really a figure of speech. He wasn't really willing to give half his kingdom, but just something substantial. So she went out and said to her mother, so just to kind of, you know, we've kind of already read through this.

[54 : 37] Goes to mom, mom says, I want the head of John the Baptist. And because, it says here, that he was exceedingly sorry. He didn't want to do it. But because of the oaths, and because of those who sat with him, he also did not want to refuse her.

Again, he was a coward. He was going to just do what this young lady, what this young girl said, which really came from his new wife, because, well, the people who were watching.

And because of his, he was probably drunk, right? This is what happens at parties. And he had been too loose in kind of what he was promising and saying. But then they did it, and they went, and they had him executed immediately, and brought his head on that platter, and brought it into the party for everybody to see.

Oh, isn't this fun and exciting? And I'm sure there were people in the audience at the party who were like, okay, I think it's time for me to go home. This is getting dark.

And it says this, when his disciples heard of it, they came and they took away his corpse, and they laid it in the tomb. They wanted to honor his body, which we see is a thing that happens throughout the Bible.

[55 : 50] When someone dies, we don't treat their body as just meat. We honor their body as a way to honor them. So, a few things in conclusion here to kind of wrap up this whole gruesome, lurid account.

one of the things that I think of, this is John the Baptist. You know, Jesus said of John the Baptist that among those born of women, among prophets born of women, he said, none was greater than John the Baptist.

He loved John the Baptist. He was his cousin. He loved him. He was faithful. You'd never read anything about John. There was some, you know, John the Baptist wasn't quite sure if Jesus was really like the Messiah.

But, you know, that wasn't him doubting. He was just like, I don't know. But, Jesus really thought John the Baptist was a faithful guy.

He was faithful to his mission. And, what an interesting thing that John the Baptist said in his ministry. He said, you know what? This guy, Jesus, is coming. He must increase and I must decrease.

[57 : 02] And, we see that actually happening. John the Baptist, who was so famous over all of Israel. He was more popular by far than Herod. People loved him. But, he had to decrease because someone more important was coming in.

And, that decrease ended up, I mean, he decreased all the way to losing his own head. And, I, you know, even to this day, I think the Lord has a special, special love for John the Baptist and his faithfulness to the very end.

And, the last thing to kind of end with, it says in Psalm chapter 2, this, why do the nations rage? And, the people plot a vain thing?

And, the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us.

the nations are constantly raging. We see this in Israel and Palestine or the Gaza Strip today. But, it's not just there.

[58 : 11] That's just what happens to be in the news. It just happens to be a huge event that just happened recently. But, you have stuff going on in Africa and other parts of the Middle East, in Asia and China, oppression, nations raging against truth and justice.

against God himself. And, the last verse, or verse 4 in Psalm 2 says this, He who sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall hold them in derision.

All these things are going on and we think, the world's coming to an end. And, maybe it is. That would be great, actually. But, despite all these things, it's easy to get caught up in what's going on and just overwhelmed with worry and concern.

And, you know, these things, sometimes, are things to be concerned about. You know, what do I do? Should I move to a different country? Some people are making that decision right now in the Middle East. So, we should have concern when things do affect us.

But, we need to be faithful to one thing above all else. And, that's the word of the Lord. There's the account of Agrippa, who, again, was another Herod.

[59 : 27] The one who killed James and he imprisoned Peter. And, as I was actually, you know, studying up on all the Agrippas this week, I found this verse and thought it was a great way to end. It talked about how he set himself up, you know, as a God, the people praised him as more than a man and he kind of received those words and didn't refute them.

and he was killed by the angel of the Lord. And, it says, then, he was eaten by worms. And, you know what the next verse says? But, the word of God grew and multiplied.

All the things going on in the world, you know, it seems like the world is coming to an end sometimes. And, it's really seemed like that for thousands of years. people, you know, but despite all the political intrigue and power plays and drama going on in the world, his word of grace, the word of the gospel, the word of his cross, the death of Jesus for sinners will and must continue to grow and multiply across the earth.

We can't let these other things distract us. We have it all possible. Sometimes it's inevitable. You know, we're impacted directly and we have to deal with them. We keep pushing forward the word of God.

And, back then, that word of grace, it started so small. We see the impact of those who have been faithful. Some people doing it from prison, spreading the word of his grace from a prison cell.

[61 : 05] Others, while hiding in their homes from terrorists, they continue to share the grace of God with those around them, that others might trust in Jesus and his word.

And there's blood that he shed for all of us. So let's, you know, despite all the things going on around us, make that our top priority.

we have the things that we do need to deal with and we need to address, but our top priority needs to be promoting and spreading that word, the word of his grace. Let's pray.

Father, we love you. Thank you for your word and the opportunity we have to have insight into what was going on during the life of Jesus. this. We pray that we would be able to take lessons from the things that we've learned today.

The top, the highest lesson or the top lesson being to that your word does and will endure forever.

[62 : 11] and that it must and will go forth despite all the things going on around us. I pray that you would embolden us and passion us to be the sowers and the harvesters when it comes to your word and your grace.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Thanks, everybody. Okay, yes? Oh.

Okay. I'll repeat that. On the sound booth back there is copies of the wording of issue one. If you're wondering, well, what does it say? Look at that.

It'll tell you right there. It's really short. It's not that long. So you can see exactly what it says.

Thanks, everybody. Don't forget the signs if you'd like to take some home with you. Have a great week.

Have a great week.