

John the Baptist

John's Last Days

Introduction

- John has been imprisoned by Herod Antipas for speaking against his marriage to Herodias amidst the political turmoil it caused.
- Two events occur in relation to his imprisonment that are worth special note.

Messengers from John

- There are a few possible interpretations for why John sent these messengers:
 - John had begun to doubt that Jesus was the Messiah.
 - John wanted to direct his followers to Christ.
 - John had a misconception about the role of the Messiah.***
- Their question is answered by:
 - Testimony of miracles – Luke 7:21
 - Fulfillment of Scripture – Compare Isaiah 35:5-6 to Matthew 11:5 and Luke 7:22
- Christ's message to John is to trust in the Messiah as He is, not as he wanted Him to be – Matthew 11:6, Luke 7:23
- Christ then speaks to the people about John.
 - He praises John's character – Matthew 11:7-8, Luke 7:24-25
 - He praises John's role – Matthew 11:9-11, Luke 7:26-28
 - The people responded their ascent – Luke 7:29
 - Still people rejected John, Christ, and the Gospel message – Matthew 7:12-19, Luke 7:30-35

The Death of John

- Herod originally intended to execute John but did not because of his popularity – Matthew 14:5.
- Herod appears to have interacted with John during his imprisonment – Mark 6:20
 - Herodias seems to be the instigator of John's imprisonment – Mark 6:17,19,
 - Herod seems to have been impressed by John's character and message to the point that he had at least reconsidered his execution – Mark 6:20
 - I would go so far as to say that Herod was influenced by John in some areas ("he did many things") but not the extent to deal with the *one thing* he needed to, his marriage to Herodias.
- Herodias hatches a plot to have John killed.

- The setting is a great celebration of Herod's birthday – Matthew 14:6, Mark 6:21
- The feast concludes with a dance by Herodias's daughter.
 - Salome
 - Her name is given by Josephus, not the Gospels.
 - She is the daughter of Herodias and her first husband, Herod II.
 - Sadly, she also has family ties to the Hasmonean dynasty through her great-great-grandmother Mariamne (Herod the Great's second wife)
 - She later marries her uncle Philip the Tetrarch, and then after his death marries her cousin Aristobulus of Chalcis.
 - Her dance
 - Such debauched entertainment is common among the elite of the ancient world.
 - What is highly unusual is that a princess is taking part in this.
- Herod grants the girl a boon in reward for her dance – Matthew 14:7, Mark 6:22-23
- Herodias instructs her daughter to ask for John's head (execution) – Matthew 14:8, Mark 6:24-25
- Herod is remorseful but his oath among so many witnesses binds him to see it through – Matthew 14:9, Mark 6:26
- John is beheaded and his head given to Salome, who delivers it to her mother – Matthew 14:10-11, Mark 6:27-28
- John's disciples bury the rest of his body and inform Christ – Matthew 14:12, Mark 6:29

Christ's Reaction

- Christ and his disciples go into the less populated areas around the north side of the Sea of Galilee – Matthew 14:13, Mark 6:30, Luke 9:10, John 6:1
- Undoubtedly the people are troubled at the news of John's death.
- Christ miraculously feeds 5,000+ - Matthew 14:14-21, Mark 6:31-44, Luke 11-17, John 6:2-13