

## THE HEROD FAMILY PLOT

Text: Acts 12:21-23

INTRO: One of the most influential families during the personal ministry of Jesus & for about 70 years thereafter is that of the Herods. The Herods were descendants of Esau but had been brought into Judaism as all the Edomites had as a result of the war in which the Jews obtained final & absolute victory over Edom.

Of the Herods, 7 men & 4 women are mentioned in the N.T. In this lesson we will note a few significant facts about the 4 most notable men of the Herod family from the N.T. standpoint--& from them we may learn that no matter who you are or who you know or how powerful you may be in worldly politics, you can't fight against God and win.

I. HEROD THE GREAT. The most powerful of all the Herods, & the one who set the stage for their cruelty & ruthlessness.

A. Was looked up to by many of the Jews because he restored the temple, altho he did not live to finish that work.

Then the Jews said, "It has taken 46 years to build this temple & will You raise it up in 3 days?" (JN 2:20).

B. Historical accounts of his life tell us that he murdered at least one of his 10 wives, along with her grandfather & her brother. He also killed three of his own sons.

C. History further records that he devised a plot to make sure there would be mourning at the time of his death. He imprisoned a large number of import influential members of society & gave orders that when he died, they were to be put to death, so that the people of his territory would be sad when he died. Fortunately, when he did die, his attendants refused to carry out this plot.

D. The N.T. record also bears out his ruthlessness & selfishness, Matthew 2:1-16.

- E. A summary of his impact, an epitaph for his tombstone, might be, "Those who sought the young child's life are dead." (MT 2:19-20).

## II. HEROD ANTIPAS, Son of Herod the Great.

- A. This Herod is perhaps best known for his murder of John the Baptist, Mark 6:17-28.
- B. Under guilt of conscience, he imagined Jesus to be John, come back from the dead, Mark 6:14-16.
- C. The Pharisees claimed he wanted to murder Jesus.  
READ LUKE 13:31-33
- D. Later, Herod Antipas yearned to meet Jesus personally, & finally did so when Pilate sent Jesus to him to be tried, Luke 23:8-12.

NOTE: Herod Antipas had to face the same question Pilate had to face: What will I do with Jesus? [MT 27:22]. Some day, the tables will be turned, and Herod will stand before Jesus--& so will we.

- E. Perhaps the tombstone of Herod Antipas should simply bear the nickname--"That Fox."

## III. HEROD AGRIPPA, I. Grandson of Herod the Great, nephew of Herod Antipas.

- A. He murdered James the brother of John, intended to murder Simon Peter, Acts 12:1-3.
- B. Later, when Peter was released from prison by an angel, Herod had the guards executed rather than admit the hand of God in Peter's release, Acts 12:18-19.
- C. The Bible records his final act of rebellion against God.  
READ ACTS 12:21-23a.

- D. A summary of his impact (or lack of impact) of posterity:  
"He was eaten by worms & died, but the word of  
God grew." (Acts 12:23-24).

IV. HEROD AGRIPPA, II. Son of Herod Agrippa, I.

- A. Believed the Scriptures, Acts 26:27.
- B. But he was not willing to obey God's will, vs. 28.
- C. Not even a king is acceptable to God without faithful  
obedience to God's will, vs. 29.
  
- D. His case is summarized in his own words--among the  
saddest words of the Bible, "You almost persuade me  
to become a Christian." (Acts 26:28). "Almost  
Persuaded."

CONCLUSION: We learn from the Herod family a lesson that is repeatedly observed: You can't fight against God & win. You must be both almost & altogether persuaded to become & remain a Christian, for the sake of your soul, & for the benefit of those who look to you for an example.

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