

Matthew 14:1-12

Death in service



Matthew digs out some recent history as he continues to present his evidence to help us answer the question “What sort of man is this?” (8:27). Curiously (or perversely!) the people of Jesus' own hometown dismiss him (13:54-57), but Jesus' fame has reached the relatively distant palace of Herod Antipas, “tetrarch” (a rank technically somewhat lower than “king”) of the area – but a man haunted (rightly!) by guilt over his treatment of John the Baptist.

➤ **John's repeated statement (4)**

So was John right or unwise (or both) to have repeated his open condemnation of Herod's and Herodias' relationship?

Is Matthew insisting that Herodias *remains* “his brother Philip's wife” (3), despite Roman law saying otherwise?

➤ **Herod - guilt-ridden**

Is Herod feeling “good guilt”?

Herod's guilt gives rise to fear and gives way to superstition.

What other superstitions (particularly religious ones) arise from guilt?

Is your conscience typically over- or under-sensitive?

What's the difference between Satan *accusing* and the Holy Spirit *convicting*?

➤ **Herodias - spiteful**

Why might Herodias have been so sensitive and spiteful?

How often do we come across this kind of calculated hostility to the Gospel nowadays?

➤ **Salome - naive**

The name Salome is not given in the Bible, but in the historian Josephus' later account. We should probably consider that she is in early teens – and therefore at least in part a victim herself of this horrendous plot.

But are we *all* victims, to some extent (2 Timothy 2:24-26)?