Intro: Warren Wiersbe wrote, “Charles Darwin said that belief was ‘the most complete of all distinctions between man and the lower animals.’ If this observation is true, it suggests that lack of faith on man’s part puts him on the same level as the animals!” Here we have unbelief and thus rejection of the Messiah by those who would have known Him well. They had every reason to believe in Him but failed to do so. We need to beware lest we have a heart of unbelief and depart from Him; Heb. 3:12 “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

Mark moves quickly to Jesus sending out His apostles which would at least partly be done to produce faith. We are then moved to see Herod’s view of Christ and the death of the forerunner of our Lord. In these accounts, Jesus and His life and works always produce some response. Our response is to be brought to faithful obedience to our Lord and Savior.

I. CHRIST’S CONTEMPT BY HIS COUNTRYMEN

A. Mark 6:1-6 “And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. 4But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. 6And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.”

B. Jesus returns home.
1. He comes to Nazareth.
   a. He had just raised Jairus’ daughter in Capernaum.
   b. Would have been about 20 miles southwest of Capernaum.
   c. This is where He was raised and His relatives lived.

2. He comes as a Rabbi or great Teacher.
   a. Rabbi’s moved around the country accompanied by their disciples.
   b. Jesus came with His disciples.
   c. His rejection here might serve as an example of what His disciples might expect on the limited commission.

C. Going into the Synagogue.
1. He goes into the synagogue on the Sabbath.
   a. The Sabbath day was Saturday.
   b. The Sabbath was a day of rest and worship for the Jews; Exo. 20:8-11 “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 8Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 9But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 10For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

2. The Jews would be gathered at the synagogue and provide an immediate opportunity of an audience.

3. Jesus, living under the Law of Moses would go to the synagogue on the day of worship, observing the Sabbath.
   a. The Law has now been taken out of the way by the death of Christ on the cross.
b. Eph. 2:15-16 “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
   16And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:"

c. Col. 2:14 “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;”

4. The ruler of the synagogue invited Jesus to speak to the people.

D. The effect of His teaching.

1. The ruler of the synagogue invited Jesus to speak.
   a. This was a common practice; Acts 13:15 “And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.”
   b. Jesus used the opportunity to teach, as we should use any occasion to teach others.

2. Many were astonished.
   a. Wuest points out that this word means “‘to strike out, expel by a blow, to strike one out of self-possession,’ in a passive sense, ‘to be struck with astonishment.’ The discourse and the miracles of our Lord struck them so forcibly that they were astonished to the point of losing control of themselves. The verb is imperfect, showing that this condition of being beside themselves with amazement continued for some time. It is, ‘they were continuing to be beside themselves with amazement.’...they were completely flabbergasted. This is the English word that adequately translates the Greek word.”
   b. The astonishment was caused by 2 things.
      (1) His wonderful wisdom and where He received it.
      (2) His mighty works or miracles.
      (3) They wanted to know the origin since they knew His background.
   c. It was “given” Him by God.
      (1) He did not possess the formal training of the Rabbis of His day.
      (2) “Mighty works” refers to His miracle working ability.
         (a) It is from the Greek δύναμις (dunamis) meaning “power, strength, or ability.”
         (b) It refers to the power which caused the deed to be done.
      (3) John 3:2 “The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”

3. They did not believe.
   a. He was too ordinary for them.
   b. His occupation:
      (1) The carpenter’s son.
         (a) Mat. 13:55 “Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?”
         (b) A father would teach his children his occupation.
         (c) Joseph being a carpenter would have taught Jesus that trade.
      (2) Adam Clarke writes: “Among the ancient Jews, every father was bound to do four things for his son. 1. To circumcise him. 2. To redeem him. 3. To teach him the law. 4. To teach him a trade. And this was founded on the following just maxim: ‘He who teaches not
his son to do some work, is as if he taught him robbery!’ It is therefore likely that Joseph brought up our Lord to his own trade.”

(3) Prior to His earthly ministry Jesus probably practiced this trade in this city.

c. His family:

(1) Mary’s son.
(a) Joseph is not mentioned as one would expect.
(b) Probably said disparagingly.
(c) Walvoord and Zuck state: “The phrase Mary’s Son was also derogatory since a man was not described as his mother’s son in Jewish usage even if she was a widow, except by insult (cf. Jud. 11:1-2; John 8:41; 9:29).”
(d) Probably indicates that Joseph was dead.

(2) His brothers and sisters:
(a) Perpetual virginity of Mary.
   i) Roman Catholic Church doctrine stating Mary remained a virgin her entire life.
(b) They must explain the brothers and sisters of Jesus.
   i) Epiphanian view.
      a) Joseph had children by an earlier wife.
      b) Makes them the half-brothers of Jesus.
   ii) Hieronymian view (Jerome’s Greek name).
      a) They were cousins to Jesus.
      b) The children of Alphaeus and Mary (the supposed sister of Mary the mother of Jesus; John 19:25 “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.”).
   iii) The Langerian view.
      a) Similar to the Hieronymian view.
      b) Jesus cousins through Joseph rather than Mary.
      c) Hegesippus, a Jewish Christian in the second century says that Clopas was Joseph’s brother.
   iv) The Theophylactian view.
      a) Clopas died childless.
      b) Joseph by Levirate marriage law raised up children to his brother.
      c) They would be legal sons of Clopas and natural sons to Joseph.
      d) Thus, legally cousins to Jesus while natural brothers to Him.
   v) The Helvidian view.
      a) Jesus had actual brothers who were younger children of Joseph and Mary.
      b) Pfeiffer states, “There is no Biblical reason whatever for not understanding these four
men and their sisters to be the children of Joseph and Mary, born some time after Jesus.”

c) Terminology:
1) Mark uses the common words for actual brothers and sisters: ἀδελφὸς (adelphos) and ἀδελφή (adelphe).
2) Paul uses another word for kinsmen (συγγενής, suggenes) in Rom. 16:11 “Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.”

c) Nothing is known of Joses and Simon.

d) James:
ii) A leader in the church at Jerusalem.
a) Acts 15:13 “And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:”
b) Gal. 2:6, 9 “But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:... 9And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.”

iii) Juda (Jude) is the probable human author of the epistle of Jude.

e) During Jesus earthly ministry his siblings did not believe in Him.
i) John 7:5 “For neither did his brethren believe in him.”
ii) After His resurrection they came to believe in Him.

d. His humble origin caused people to be offended.
1) “Offense” is from the Greek σκάνδαλιζω (skandalizo).
2) Strong’s says it means: “to put a stumbling block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall, metaph. to offend.”
3) Jesus was a stone of stumbling to them.
a) Rom. 9:32-33 “Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”
(b) 1 Pet. 2:8 “And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

e) They could not explain Jesus so they rejected Him.
E. Jesus response:

1. The proverb that a prophet does not have honor at home.
   a. Our similar one: “Familiarity breeds contempt” which goes back to Publius the Syrian, who lived in 2 B.C.
   b. These proverbs are not absolute, but it was true in this case.
   c. It shows more about the people than it does our Lord.
   d. Matthew Henry says that “the advancement of one that was an inferior begets envy, and men will hardly set those among the guides of their souls whose fathers they were ready to set with the dogs of their flock.”
   e. By this statement Jesus claiming to be a prophet or spokesman for God.

2. He did not perform many miracles—He did heal some who were sick.
   a. It was as a result of their unbelief.
   b. Why did He not do many miracles.
      (1) Lack of power.
         (a) No one actually states this.
         (b) Many teach it by implication.
         (c) The Pentecostal view that the recipients must have faith to have the miracles avail.
            i) This is an attack on the power of the one doing the miracle.
            ii) Jesus did not have the power to perform a miracle if the recipient did not have faith.
         (d) Jesus could perform a miracle on someone whether or not they had faith.
      (2) One purpose for miracles was to produce faith.
         (a) Here instead of producing faith it became a hindrance to faith.
         (b) The miracles were a stumblingblock to them.

3. He marvelled, wondered, or to be amazed at.
   a. Warren Wiersbe said, “Twice in the Gospel record you find Jesus marveling. As this passage reveals, He marveled at the unbelief of the Jews, and He marveled at the great faith of a Roman centurion, a Gentile (Luke 7:9).”
   b. Faith caused Christ to marvel.
      (1) Finding it where you would not expect it—a Roman soldier.
      (2) Not finding it where you would expect it—His own hometown, Jews.
      (3) He had presented plenty of evidence to prove who He was, yet they refused to accept the evidence.

4. He continued teaching.
   a. Jesus would not allow others to deter Him from His work.
   b. While He did not stay in Nazareth, He went to all the surrounding villages teaching the people.

II. LIMITED COMMISSION

A. Mark 6:7-13 “And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.
And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.”

B. Christ sending out His disciples.

1. Jesus selected 12 men.
   a. They were His apostles or ambassadors.
   b. “Send forth” is from the Greek ἀποστέλλω (apostello).
      (1) Wuest defines this as “to send forth as an ambassador on a commission to represent one and to perform some task.”
      (2) He does not send them to the entire world, but only to the Jews; Mat. 10:6 “But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

2. He sends them 2 by 2.
   a. Keener writes, “It was customary to send heralds, or messengers, by twos, in both Greek and Jewish culture.”
   b. They would be able to encourage each other during difficult times.
   c. It also took 2 witnesses for words to be established, so for the confirmation of their words.
      (1) Deu. 17:6 “At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.”
      (2) Deu. 19:15 “One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.”
      (3) Confirmation of their word would come by the miracles they performed.
   d. It would also provide safety for their journey.

3. He sends them with power or authority over unclean spirits.
   a. They could command the unclean spirits to come out of those whom they inhabited.
   b. This power confirmed they and what they said were from God.
   c. “Power” or “Authority” (ASV) is from the Greek ἐξουσία (exousia).
      (1) Some have claimed that elders have no authority expect that of example.
         (a) They appeal to this word in Mat. 28:18 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”
         (b) They argue that since Jesus has all authority, elders have none.
      (2) Here Jesus delegated His authority to His apostles, He can delegate that authority to others today.

C. God’s provisions for them.

1. God would take care of them and He will providentially take care of His children today.
   a. Mat. 28:20 “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
   b. Rom. 8:28, 31 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.... What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”
c. Heb. 13:5-6 “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

2. Their provisions:
   a. What to take.
      (1) Take a staff to aid in walking.
      (2) Wear sandals which is ordinary footwear of the day.
      (3) Walvoord notes: “The two concessions of a staff and sandals are unique to Mark. Both are forbidden in Matthew 10:9-10, and the staff is forbidden in Luke 9:3. Matthew used ktaomai (‘to procure, acquire’), instead of airo (‘to take’); so the disciples were not to acquire additional staffs or sandals—but to use the ones they already had.”
   b. What not to take.
      (1) Bread which would represent food.
      (2) A bag: could either be:
          (a) a travellers bag for provisions
          (b) a beggar’s bag
      (3) Money (small copper coins easily put into their cloth belts with a value of just less than a farthing).
      (4) An extra or second coat or tunic which is the inner garment which would be used as a covering at night.
   c. Hospitality.
      (1) A sacred duty in Eastern nations.
          (a) It was the duty of the citizens to offer hospitality.
          (b) It was not the duty of strangers to find it.
      (2) When the apostles went into a town they were to go into a home and remain there
          (a) They were to make that home their base of operations.
          (b) They were not to go looking for better facilities.

D. Reactions to their preaching
1. Jesus prepared the apostles for rejection.
   a. This might be why He took them to His hometown.
   b. In rejecting the apostles teaching, they would be rejecting Christ and God.
      (1) The apostles were Christ’s ambassadors.
          (a) 2 Cor. 5:20 “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”
          (b) An ambassador is an official representative of one to another, who speaks for them.
2. In failing to hear the apostles, they were failing to hear Christ.
3. The apostles were to shake the dust off their feet as a sign of their blood being upon their own head.
   a. Eze. 3:17-19 “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. 18When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 19Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he
turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

b. Eze. 33:1-9 “Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: 3If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. 5He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. 9Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

c. By their preaching they had delivered their soul.

d. Barclay says, “The Rabbinic law said that the dust of a Gentile country was defiled, and that when a man entered Palestine from another country he must shake off every particle of dust of the unclean land. It was a pictorial formal denial that a Jew could have any fellowship even with the dust of a heathen land. It is as if Jesus said, ‘If they refuse to listen to you, the only thing you can do is to treat them as a rigid Jew would treat a Gentile house. There can be no fellowship between them and you.’”


a. Some translations do not have the latter part of verse 11.
   (1) It is based on a textual conflict.
   (2) It is in harmony with the Bible; Mark 10:15 “Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.”

b. Universality.
   (1) Those who reject the apostles message would be at the judgment with those from Sodom and Gomorrha.
   (2) 2 Cor. 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”
   (3) We will also be there.
      (a) If we live righteously, we will be welcomed into heaven.
      (b) If we have not lived faithfully, we will be cast into hell.

c. Degrees of punishment.
   (1) Those who reject Jesus and His message will receive a greater punishment than those in Sodom and Gomorrhah.
   (2) With greater opportunity comes greater responsibility; Luke 12:48 “But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”
      (a) We have the completed, perfect Will of God today.
      (b) We have greater responsibility than those in Sodom and Gomorrhah.
E. The apostles’ actions.

1. They went out and preached for men to repent.
   a. They preached the same message preached by John the Baptist and Jesus.
      (1) Mat. 3:1-2 “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
      (2) Mat. 4:17 “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
   b. Repentance
      (1) What is repentance?
         (a) It is a change of mind.
         (b) It is making the decision to no longer live according to sin and to live according to God’s Word.
         (c) It then causes us to change our actions to conform to the Truth.
      (2) God desires all to be saved.
         (a) 1 Tim. 2:4 “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”
         (b) To be saved one must repent; 2 Pet. 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
         (c) Thus all men must repent; Acts 17:30 “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”
      (3) Luke 13:3 “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

2. They worked miracles.
   a. They cast out demons.
   b. They anointed with oil those that were sick and healed them.
      (1) The means by which they healed them was miraculous.
      (2) Why did they anoint with oil?
         (a) It served several purposes.
         (b) medicinally; Luke 10:34 “And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.”
         (c) appointing someone to an office
         (d) protection of the body as one went into the weather and to soften the skin
         (e) used in foods
         (f) as fuel for lamps.
      (3) I think it was prefatory to the person returning to his common lifestyle.
      (4) The sick person was miraculously healed by the power of God and they anointed him with oil to go out and resume his normal life.
III. JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED

A. Identity of Jesus.

1. Herod Antipas’s thinking.
   a. He was one of 3 sons of Herod the Great.
   b. He is called a king.
      (1) Technically tetrarch but probably king is used here loosely as one
          who rules or a local custom reflecting Herod’s ambitions.
      (2) Wuest says that Mark was writing “for the Roman world, and this
          title was applied freely in the Roman world to all eastern rulers”
   c. His conscience disturbed him for he had John beheaded.
      (1) He knew Jesus had to be some great person because of the miracles
          He did; John 3:2 “The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi,
          we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles
          that thou doest, except God be with him.”
      (2) He thought John had been raised from the dead and that is why
          Jesus was able to do these great works.
      (3) He thought John had come back to condemn him.

2. What others thought about who He was.
   a. Elijah.
      (1) The Jews believed in a Messiah who would come and restore
          physical Israel to her place of prominence within the world.
      (2) Elijah was the great prophet of the Old Testament.
      (3) Elijah would be forerunner of the Messiah.
         (a) He would be coming in the spirit and power of Elijah.
         (b) Mal. 4:5 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming
             of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:”
   b. A prophet.
      (1) They did not want to make a commitment to a specific prophet.
      (2) One raised from the dead and returned to this world.
   c. One of the prophets; God had raised a new prophet equal to those of the
      Old Testament.

3. They had to have some way to explain Him, yet they rejected what He taught about
   Himself.

4. Herod
   a. He insists that Jesus was John come back from the dead.
   b. Herod had John’s head cut off.
      (1) He did not do it personally, he ordered.
      (2) What one does through his delegated subjects, he is credited with
          doing himself.

B. John’s death.

1. Herod put John in prison to satisfy Herodias.
   a. R. E. Brown writes, “According to Josephus (18.5, 2 § 116-19), Herod
      imprisoned John in the fortress of Machaerus on the E side of the Dead Sea,
      where eventually he was put to death.”
   b. Herodias.
      (1) She was the grand-daughter of Herod the Great.
      (2) She was the daughter of Aristolulus and Bernice.
      (3) She was Herod Antipas’ half-niece (as well as Philip’s half-niece).
(4) She first married Philip (the son of Herod the Great and Mariamme called the Boethusian).

c. Herod

(1) Herod Antipas (this Herod) was the son of Herod the Great and a Samaritan woman named Malthace.
(2) He first married a daughter of Aretas, king of Petra, and lived with her for several years.
(3) Herod claimed to be a Jew (actually was an Idumean) and claimed respect for the law of Moses.

d. Herod and Herodias’ marriage.

(1) Herod stayed with Philip on a visit to Rome and fell in love with Herodias.
(2) He seduced Herodias to leave Philip (his half-brother) and marry him.
(3) He divorced Aretas’ daughter.
   (a) Aretas was outraged at the insult and waged war against Herod and defeated him resoundingly destroying his army.
   (b) According to Josephus some Jews considered this defeat a judgment of God for Herod putting John to death.
(4) According to the Law of Moses this marriage was sinful.
   (a) Lev. 18:16 “Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother’s wife: it is thy brother’s nakedness.”
   (b) Lev. 20:21 “And if a man shall take his brother’s wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother’s nakedness; they shall be childless.”
(5) According to man’s laws it was permissible.
(6) Man’s laws never supercede God’s law.
(7) John repeatedly told Herod that it was not lawful for him to be married to Herodias.
   (a) John was not a mealy-mouthed preacher.
   (b) He addressed the specific sin in Herod’s life.
   (c) He was not afraid of any consequences, even though it cost him his life.
   (d) He did not try to rework God’s Word to fit the situation to justify their “marriage.”
   (e) Luke 3:19 “But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip’s wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,”

e. Herodias’ hatred for John.

(1) She had a quarrel against him.
   (a) Quarrel is “hold oneself in” and carries with it the idea of setting oneself against.
   (b) It is to have an opposition to and hatred for someone.
(2) Her hatred was so great she continued to have the desire to put him to death.
(3) She had the desire to murder him but not the ability.
(4) She had him put in prison.

2. Herod’s fear of John.

a. Feared is to be afraid (from the Greek phobeo) of John.
b. John did not fear Herod.

c. He feared him because of John’s nature and the people.

(1) John was just.

(a) Just is to be fair or right.

(b) It describes one who is innocent, faultless, or guiltless in his dealings with God and man.

(2) John was holy.

(a) Holy is to be set apart.

(b) It is one who is set apart from sin and set apart for service to God.

(3) The people considered John a prophet; Mat. 14:5 “And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.”

(4) Thus Herod kept John safe (as in ASV; KJV has “observed him”)

d. He repeatedly heard John and enjoyed it.

(1) Keener writes, “It is not incredible that he would enjoy hearing him (cf. Ezek 33:31–33). Many well-to-do Greeks, fancying themselves patrons of intellectual pursuits, supported philosophers more for cultural and entertainment purposes than for ethical edification. Influenced by upper-class Greek ideals, Herod undoubtedly considered himself as open-minded culturally as he was brutal politically.”

(2) Textual discrepancy.

(a) The KJV has Herod doing many of the things John preached.

i) Herod refused to end his fornication with Herodias.

ii) Doing some and rebelling against others is of no value.

iii) All men are amenable to the all the Law of Christ, not just the ones we like.

(b) The ASV has that Herod was perplexed.

i) Perplexed is to be in a confused state of mind, be at a loss, be in doubt, be uncertain.

ii) Herod was not perplexed about what John said or meant.

iii) The uncertainty must come from Herod’s unwillingness to act upon what he heard.

iv) He knew what to do but simply did not want to do it.

3. Herod’s birthday feast.

a. All the important people were invited.

(1) Lords literally is great ones.

(2) High captains would be a commander of a thousand men or a Roman cohort.

(3) The chief men of Galilee.

(4) Those from the government, military, and civil life were there.

b. Herodias’ daughter danced.

(1) Her daughter is Salome.

(a) She was the daughter of Herodias and Philip.
b) Keener writes, “Some scholars suggest that Herodias’s daughter Salome is at this point no longer a young girl and is already married to the tetrarch Philip. Other historical data about her, however, suggest that she may be no older than twelve or fourteen (which was a common age for virgins to marry in Jewish Palestine); it is possible that she is even slightly younger.”

2) Wuest writes, “The point is that it was Herodias’ own daughter who degraded herself in a licentious dance in which only professional actors of loose morals would engage.”

3) Her dance would have been toward the close of the banquet when the men would have been well-drunken.

4) This dance would appeal to the baser desires of man.
   a) What a sad commentary of a mother who sends her daughter out to dance for a group of drunken men to incite them to lust.
   b) What about parents today who allow their children to go to the dance or prom.

4. Herod’s vow.
   a. Cause of the vow.
      1) Herod’s lust.
      2) Herod in a drunken state.
      3) Lack of self-control.
      4) It shows the danger of acting without thinking; acting simply upon impulse.
   b. The vow itself.
      1) Herod told Salome to ask whatever she wanted.
         a) Ask is an aorist imperative meaning to ask at once.
         b) He swore to give her up to half his kingdom.
            i) Sware is to place oneself under an oath.
            ii) Keener said, “Herod’s oath is not backed up with adequate authority; as a Roman vassal he has no authority to give away any of his kingdom.”
            iii) Walvoord said, “He used a proverbial saying for generosity which Salome knew was not to be taken literally (cf., 1 Kings 13:8).”
      2) Salome asks Herodias for what she should ask for herself.
         a) Wuest indicates, “‘The verb is in the indirect middle voice in which the subject of the verb acts in his own interest. She said, ‘What shall I ask for myself?’’”
         b) Apparently she did not know the evil plans of her mother.
         c) Matthew condenses the account
            i) Matthew omits Salome going to her mother and simply moves to the request.
            ii) When Salome makes the request, she had been instructed by Herodias for what to ask.
            iii) Matthew’s account does not mean that Salome knew prior to her dance for what to ask.
(d) Herodias tells her to ask for the head of John the Baptist.
   i) Herodias’ scheme had worked.
   ii) She readily instructs her daughter to ask for John’s death.
   iii) She wanted evidence of his death so she asks for his head.

3) Salome immediately returns to Herod with the request.
   (a) She does not hesitate in returning to Herod.
      i) Straightway means immediately or at once.
      ii) With haste means with speed or swiftly or doing something in a hurry.
   (b) There would be a desire to get the request before Herod could change his mind.
   (c) She makes the request for Herod to give her the head of John the Baptist in a charger immediately.
      i) A charger is a platter, dish, or plate on which food would be served.
      ii) Keener writes, “Beheading by the sword was the method of executing Roman citizens and other individuals of status; lower-class individuals were usually executed by crucifixion or other means, unless the matter were urgent. Salome’s asking for John’s head on a platter means that she wants it served up as part of the dinner menu—a ghastly touch of ridicule.”

5. Herod was deeply grieved.
   a. He had respect for John.
   b. He feared the people because they considered John a prophet.
   c. This might be why Herod of not put John to death and refused Herodias’ request to execute him.

6. Herod’s dilemma.
   a. He did not want to execute John.
   b. He had made an oath and felt because of those at the banquet he must.
      (1) It was more important to save face among his friends than to stand up for the principles of right.
      (2) Adam Clarke said, “Probably these persons joined in with the request, and were glad of this opportunity to get this light of Israel extinguished; he being a public reprover of all their vices.”
   c. Herod’s courage.
      (1) Not enough to obey John’s words.
      (2) Not enough to put an end to the wicked request.
      (3) Enough to obey his own oath.

7. Herod fulfills the request.
   a. Herod sent one of his armed bodyguards to execute John.
      (1) According to Vincent, executioner is “One of Mark’s Latin words, speculator. A speculator was a guardsman, whose business it was to watch or spy out (speculari). It came gradually to denote one of the armed body-guard of the Roman emperor.”
Speculators would do errands for the king as is seen here.

Johnson notes, “Under Oriental monarchs the captain of the guard was the executioner”

b. Pfeiffer writes, “Herod’s palace at Machaerus was also a fortress and as such would have contained a prison. Thus the execution scene was not far removed from the banquet room.”

c. It appears Salome remained in the banquet room till the deed was done.

(1) The executioner brings John’s head back on a charger (platter or plate) and presents it to her.

(2) She takes the head and gives it to Herodias.

d. Herodias had finally accomplished her desire.

(1) She was able to silence the voice of John.

(2) She could not silence the message.

(3) It was still unlawful for Herod to have his brother Philip’s wife.

C. Reaction.

1. Disciples

a. It was a time of great sorrow.

b. They retrieve the body and give it a proper burial (a job normally reserved for a man’s oldest son).

c. Mat. 14:12 “And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.”

2. Herod

a. With such a sordid execution, no wonder Herod was tormented by his conscience thinking that Jesus was the resurrected John.

b. Herod could have gone to the tomb and found the body of John, but he did not.

Conclusion: Jesus said that among those born of women there was not a greater than John the Baptist (Mat. 11:11 “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”; Luke 7:28 “For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”). He preached the truth and it cost him his life. Instead of accepting the truth Herod and Herodias tried to silence it. Today there are those who will not accept the truth. However, our only hope is faithful obedience to our Lord’s message. Let us set our hearts to God’s Word, apply it to our lives, and faithfully proclaim it to all people even as John the Baptist did.