

Intertestamental Period & the Herods in the Bible

Written and typed: 4/25/24

- This lesson, we continue our study on the Intertestamental Period and the Herods of the Bible
 - In our previous sermons, we discussed that the intertestamental period (the events that occurred between the writing of Malachi and the writing of Matthew) lasted about 400 years
 - We also discussed a brief timeline of events that led us to this period
 - We then discussed a few of the major historical events that happened during the intertestamental period and how the Herodian family arose to their earthly power
 - In this sermon, we look at Herod the Great
- There are 9 people who are related to Herod in one way or another mentioned in the Bible
 - Herod the Great (Matthew 2)
 - Archelaus (son by Malthace, mentioned in Matthew 2)
 - Antipas (son by Malthace, mentioned in Matthew 14 and the parallel passages)
 - Philip (son by Mariamne, mentioned in Matthew 14 and the parallel passages)
 - Herodias (granddaughter and daughter-in-law, mentioned in Matthew 14 and the parallel passages)
 - Herodias daughter (great granddaughter & also a granddaughter, Salome was her name, mentioned in Matthew 14 and the parallel passages)
 - Agrippa 1 (grandson, mentioned in Acts 12)
 - Agrippa 2 (great grandson, mentioned in Acts 26)
 - Bernice (sister of Agrippa 2, mentioned in Acts 25 with Agrippa 2)
- Herod the Great
 - Herod the Great is mentioned in the Bible in Matthew 2 and Luke 1
 - We know that John the Baptist and Jesus were born during the reign of Herod the Great (Luke 1:5)
 - This would have been towards the end of his reign obviously
 - In Matthew 2, we read of a very cruel event that Herod the Great was responsible for
 - **Matthew 2:16-18**
 - Herod was so paranoid of losing his earthly kingdom, that he ordered the death of all boys in Bethlehem and it's vicinity who were 2 years old and younger
 - His mind was on earthly things obviously
 - Be careful not to keep your mind on earthly things (Matthew 6:21)
 - We've already stated that Herod the Great was an Idumean – a descendant of Esau
 - Herod had 3 brothers: Phasaelus (older), Joseph (younger), Pheroras (younger), and 1 sister: Salome (younger)
 - His father Antipater, as we discussed earlier, was a very prominent political figure at this time – he was an ally of Julius Caesar (ruler of Rome at this time)

- Antipater did a lot of militaristic favors for Julius and as a result, was rewarded handsomely
- Josephus says that Antipater was “*a most courageous warrior; and had many wounds all over his body, as demonstrations of his valor*” (*Wars of the Jews*, Book 1, Chapter 9)
 - Remember, Paul had wounds all over his body as well
 - But for different reasons
 - **2 Corinthians 11:16-29, Galatians 6:17**
 - His wounds were the result of his preaching the gospel
 - Remember in Acts 14, Paul’s first missionary journey
 - He went through Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, Pisidian Antioch (not to be confused with Syrian Antioch), and Iconium, and then he winds up in Lystra in vs 8
 - The Jews in Antioch and Iconium wanted rid of him so bad, that they came all the way to Lystra to stone him – and they thought they had succeeded
 - What does vs 20 tell us? The next day, Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe
 - And after he preached there, where did they go? Back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (vs 21)
 - So if the gospel is so important, that Paul risked his life on numerous occasions to preach it, we should treat it the same way
 - Paul’s wounds were much different than Antipater’s wounds
 - Our persecution may be different than they faced, but we must still be ready to face any persecution that we may face
 - **Galatians 1:10**
 - Are you trying to please men, or are you a servant of Christ
 - In Revelation, this type of attitude (pleasing man) was attributed to those who had the mark of the beast (**Revelation 13:15-17**)
 - Would you fall down and worship the image described here?
 - As Christians, we are called to take up our cross daily and follow Him (Luke 9:23)
- As a result of Antipater’s endeavors on behalf of Rome, Julius named him the 1st procurator of Judea – this is the same role that Pontius Pilate served in Matthew 27:2
- As procurator, Antipater gave authority of Jerusalem to Phasaelus, and Galilee to Herod
- Politically and militaristically speaking, Herod did great things for the people of Galilee
 - He was hard on crime
 - Josephus says that as ruler of Galilee “*he did not abuse his power in any disagreeable manner*” (*Wars of the Jews*, Book 1, Chapter 10)
 - He did such a good job that his older brother imitated his behavior
 - And as Christians, we should do this too

- Our minds should be on eternal things, not the things of this world (2 Corinthians 4:18)
- Herod comes back with the support of Rome, marries his most beloved wife (though not his first) Mariamne (the granddaughter of the guy who took Jerusalem from him – you can't make this stuff up) and they took Jerusalem and Herod officially became the king of the Jews in 34BC
 - Interestingly, he now shares this name with Jesus Christ – though he doesn't know it yet obviously
 - When he found out about this, he tried to fight Jesus' kingship
 - That is very unwise
 - Do not fight Christ – those who deny him in this life, thus fight Him will be squashed by the sword of His mouth (Revelation 2:16)
 - Does that sound like a battle you have any chance at winning?
- Herod was very loyal to his Roman superiors – so much so, to a fault in one instance
 - Cleopatra was very greedy – very power hungry, killed all of her family members so that no one could take her power from her
 - She talked Antony into sending Herod into a war in which she thought Herod couldn't win – thinking Herod will be killed in battle and she'd take over Judea
 - Herod won – and became even more powerful politically
 - Cleopatra and Antony died soon after – had they not, there's a good chance they'd have marched against Herod in Jerusalem (though Antony and Herod were friends and had been allies for a large part of their militaristic careers, Cleopatra was just so power hungry and Antony of course would have sided with her)
 - Herod had no idea of Cleopatra's plot against him, and Antony was just trying to please Cleopatra
 - Similar to what Saul did to David in **1 Samuel 18:17-27**
 - Saul tried to get David killed – "I don't need to kill David myself, allow me to let the Philistines do that
 - Of course, that backfired on Saul
 - David completed the mission
 - Also somewhat similar to what David did to Uriah in **2 Samuel 11:14-17**
 - David was successful in his attempt
 - Uriah – a loyal man to David was betrayed by his loyalty
 - Uriah carried his order of execution to Joab by his own hand
 - How sad
 - Now, it is wise and necessary for the Christian to be loyal to his/her government leaders – as long as their laws do not supersede the laws of God (Romans 13:1-7)
 - At that point – you better be ready to stand firm in the faith and take whatever punishment the government has in mind for you

- At this, Herod's militaristic endeavors were pretty much done (not completely, but mostly) – he was a very good military man – didn't lose many battles, served the Romans well
- Politically and militaristically speaking, Judea was at peace during the bulk of Herod's reign – nobody really wanted to mess with him knowing the fact that he was a very successful military guy, and he had the backing of Rome
 - Being at peace during this time period was a big deal, there wasn't much of that
- He was free to build much infrastructure in Jerusalem: he started making enhancements to the temple (though they never got finished), put a wall around it, Antonia which was a tower that sit just North of the temple, several other towers, palaces, and many more architectural buildings & event centers
- Though Herod bear the same name as Jesus (king of the Jews) – he was no follower of the Lord's – not a faithful Jew unfortunately
- His biggest issue was probably fear – he was absolutely paranoid
 - And perhaps you could argue rightfully so
 - At this day and time, if you were in power politically – you had a target on your back
 - You couldn't even trust your own family members fully
 - So Herod was justified to an extent, but he took it too far

- **Philippians 1:12-19**

- Paul says "I don't care that these other guys are trying to preach solely in an effort to become famous like me while I'm in chains"
- "I don't care if this guy may be stealing some of my thunder"
- Because the gospel is being preached
- You need to support those preaching the gospel and rejoice in the fact that the gospel is being preached just as Paul did
- And if they're preaching for the wrong reason – as far as you're concerned, Paul says it doesn't matter. The preacher will have to answer for that if he has improper motives
- But you'll have to answer for it if out of your jealousy, you hinder the gospel in any way (just like Elymas in Acts 13:4-12)
- Or maybe you think, this preacher that's getting popular is going to cast me into the shadows
 - Here's the thing: we're already supposed to be in the shadows
 - Remember what John the Baptist said about Jesus? John 3:30 – He must increase, I must decrease
 - John the Baptist didn't say "No don't follow this guy Jesus, I'm preaching you the same thing that He's going to preach, listen to me so I can keep my popularity"
 - That would clearly have been blasphemous

- If anyone knew this, it was John the Baptist – if you put the emphasis on the speaker, you are taking away from God’s message
 - Elijah understood this in **2 Kings 2:11-14**
 - Elijah didn’t say “No Lord – you can’t take me up out of this earth, I’m popular here”
 - No, he was submissive to the Lord and passed his cloak to Elisha
 - Because he knew there was work to be done and Elisha was the one to continue that work – and God would be pleased with Elisha
 - Do not think that we cannot become jealous or selfish today – we must watch for this type of behavior
- Herod had a wife before Mariamne – Doris
 - When Herod married Mariamne, he sent Doris and her son Antipater away to make sure the royal family was with Mariamne and her sons, Alexander and Aristobulus (his sons by Mariamne were born to him during his reign as king, so he thought they should be the royal heirs)
 - Herod actually had Mariamne’s grandfather and teenage brother killed on suspicions of a conspiracy against him – whether they were true or not, nobody really knows
 - As a result, Mariamne didn’t really feel the same way about Herod that he felt about her
 - And she called him out on it – but not only Herod, she also called out his mother and sister
 - Herod didn’t do anything about it because of his love for her – he was blind to the fact that Mariamne hated him at this point
 - Herod’s wife and mother saw right through Mariamne though – so they fabricated a story about her – that she was unfaithful to Herod with Marc Antony (which was very believable – it was no secret during this time period that Antony had many women)
 - Herod just became scared for his life on account of Cleopatra – so that’s not what ended things with Mariamne
 - Herod took a trip and left Mariamne with his brother-in-law for protection – Herod told Joseph (his brother-in-law) in secret that if Antony kills him, that he should kill Mariamne to spare her from Cleopatra
 - But Joseph spilled the beans at some point
 - And when Herod found out, he lost it – he assumed that if the secret was revealed to Mariamne, there must have been other things going on between them – so he killed them both
 - This is when Herod’s madness started
- Also as evident by the fact that when he learned he shared the name “king of the Jews” with Jesus – instead of considering it a great honor, he took it the other way

- You don't want to fight against the Lord (Jesus will fight with sword of his mouth – Revelation 2:16)
 - And spoiler alert: you will lose
 - Finally, this was also evident by the way that he treated some of his children
 - We mentioned Doris and Antipater a minute ago
 - Very long story short, but Antipater fabricated a story against Herod's sons by Mariamne out of jealousy basically
 - He said that Alexander and Aristobulus had a plan to oust Herod
 - Which was a total lie – but Herod was paranoid and he knew that this kind of thing happened to people in power at this time
 - So he bought it – despite the fact that there was no evidence whatsoever
 - And he had them executed
 - Little did Herod know it was actually Antipater who had the plan to kill Herod and dethrone him
 - But the poison that Antipater intended for Herod actually was given to his last surviving brother, Pheroras by mistake – he dies of course
 - And in one of his final acts as king – he has a third son of his executed
 - After Mariamne's death, Herod constantly went back and forth “should Alexander & Aristobulus succeed me as king, or should Antipater succeed me as king” – as it turns out, none of them were able to – because in his madness, he killed all 3
 - Herod died in total madness
 - Josephus says “*Now, as for his fortune, it was prosperous in all other respects, if ever any other man could be so; since, from a private man, he obtained the kingdom, and kept it so long, and left it to his own sons; but still in his domestic affairs, he was a most unfortunate man.*” (*Wars of the Jews*, Book 1, Chapter 32)
 - He instructed that his kingdom be divided 3 ways: Philip was to become tetrarch Trachonitis and the surrounding areas, Antipas was to become the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and Archelaus was to become king
- The great thing about the Lord's kingdom is that it will endure forever (Daniel 2:44)
- If you are a member of the Lord's church, “No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck you from His hands” (*In Christ Alone*, taken from John 10:29)
- To be a part of the Lord's kingdom, you must follow His plan of salvation
 - **Step 1: Hearing the gospel** – *Romans 10:13-17*
 - Gospel = Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, arose, and appeared to many – *1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Romans 1:16*
 - **Step 2: Believing the gospel** – *Mark 16:16, John 3:16*
 - **Step 3: Confession that Jesus is Lord** – *Romans 10:8-10, 1 John 1:9*
 - **Step 4: Repentance of sins** – *Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38*
 - Repentance: a turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion and a turning back to God. Change of mind that produces a change in action.

- **Step 5: Baptism into Christ** – *Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-10, 1 Peter 3:21-22*
 - Baptism: immerse or submerge
- **Step 6: Live faithfully** – *Revelation 2:10*