

Intertestamental Period & the Herods in the Bible

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- Today, we conclude our study on the Intertestamental Period and the Herods of the Bible
 - In our previous lessons, 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
 - We then took a look at Herod the Great – his life, his earthly reign, and finally that when he died, his kingdom was split 3 ways between 3 of his surviving sons
- Archelaus
 - He is mentioned in the Bible in passing in **Matthew 2:22**
 - After his father passed away, Joseph was still not willing to return to Judea due to the rule of Archelaus
 - Should tell you something about Archelaus – that he likely didn't put an end right away to his father's decree
 - God warned Joseph about Archelaus in a dream (Matthew 2:22) so at minimum, it is safe to assume that had Archelaus found out that Jesus was the true king of the Jews, he would have attempted to do the same thing his father attempted
 - He was the son of Herod by Malthace
 - He succeeded his father as king in 4BC – shortly after Jesus was born (Matthew 2)
 - His reign started off about as worse as you could imagine – there was great tumult in Jerusalem following the death of Herod
 - So Archelaus sends soldiers amongst the people with orders to kill those who would not accept his kingship – many were actually captured and crucified
 - It was one thing after another with Archelaus and he never really got settled in as king
 - He was banished in 6AD by Augustus Caesar to Gaul
 - Rome then began installing Roman procurators (governors) to oversee Judea – the same role that Pontius Pilate would eventually hold (Matthew 27:2) – the same role that Felix and Festus held later in Acts
 - The first to hold this role was a man named Coponius
 - Antipas and Philip continued their reign as tetrarchs though
- Antipas – son of Herod the Great by Malthace
 - He is one of the more well known Herod's of the Bible
 - For obvious reasons: he was the Herod who ordered John the Baptist's imprisonment and execution in **Matthew 14:1-12**
 - He wanted John dead, but he was reluctant to do so for fear of how the people would react (Matthew 14:5)

- We know the rest of the story – Herodias’ daughter performed a dance for a group on Antipas’ birthday
 - And her and Herodias wanted the head of John the Baptist on a platter
 - So Antipas granted this request
 - Interestingly, Antipas made war with Arabia over land disputes shortly after he had John the Baptist put to death
 - The army of Antipas was routed and many people thought it was because of his treatment of John the Baptist
 - Many thought God punished him in this regard (if it’s true or not, who knows)
 - But Antipas did lose in battle, and the rest of his reign as tetrarch didn’t really get any better
 - Like those before him, he was no friend of Christ’s – **Mark 8:14-15**
 - Jesus warns His disciples to stay away from this guy
 - He’s liable to kill you just like he wants to kill me (Luke 13:31), imprison you, etc. and it’s too early for that stuff to be happening to you all
 - Antipas got his chance to see Jesus when Pilate sent Him to him as a prisoner in **Luke 23:7-12**
 - Antipas just wanted to see Jesus do a miracle – he didn’t care about the message that Jesus came to bring
 - Matthew 12:39 – *“A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”*
 - And Antipas certainly allowed that to happen – he obviously had no clue what that meant nor who Jesus truly was
 - He ridiculed Jesus and mocked Him
 - Antipas was actually raised with a future member of the church (**Acts 13:1**)
 - They clearly took different roads in life – the member of the church faithfully served Jesus and Antipas played a role in His death
 - We’ll talk about this a little more shortly, but Caligula and Agrippa 1 were pretty good friends
 - Antipas married his brother Philip’s wife, Herodias, and Herodias talked him into sailing to Rome, talking to Caligula, and asking for a promotion basically – her logic was that it worked for Agrippa
 - What she failed to take into consideration is the fact that Agrippa and Caligula were friends, a relationship that Antipas didn’t really have
 - So Caligula banished him to Spain for his selfish ambition – of course, Herodias went with him and presumably, that’s where they lived the rest of their lives
- Philip
 - Son of Herod the Great by a different woman named Mariamne
 - He is mentioned in the Bible a couple times, but just in passing
 - Matthew 14 of course which we read earlier, we’re told that Herodias was his wife before she married Antipas, his brother
 - And in Luke 3:1, we’re told of the earthly authority he had

- He was obviously the first husband of Herodias (his niece)
- He was named the tetrarch of Trachonitis after his father's death
- After his death, his portion of his father's kingdom was given to Agrippa 1 by Caligula
- Herodias and Salome
 - Granddaughter and great-granddaughter of Herod the Great
 - Mentioned in the Bible in Matthew 14 at Antipas' birthday party
 - Known for their role in John the Baptist's death
 - Obviously they played a major role in the death of John the Baptist
 - To my knowledge, not much is really known about Salome outside of the Bible account of her part in John the Baptist's death
 - However, we do know that Herodias followed Antipas into his banishment in Spain and probably died there
- Agrippa 1 (grandson of Herod the Great)
 - He is mentioned in the Bible a couple times – this guy was pretty twisted, did a lot of evil
 - Acts 12 of course
 - And in Acts 23:35, Paul was held prisoner in what once was his palace
 - Historically speaking, he was the last “King of the Jews” – the same position that Herod the Great held, the same jurisdiction, authority, etc.
 - Antipas and Philip were mere tetrarchs (they had authority over a portion of the nation)
 - Agrippa 1 had the same amount of authority that Herod the Great did
 - A large part of that was due to his friendship with Caligula
 - Agrippa 1 actually said some negative things about Tiberius Caesar who succeeded Augustus as either the 2nd or 3rd emperor of Rome depending on if you count Julius or not
 - Tiberius threw him in jail as a result
 - When Caligula took over the empire, he released his buddy Agrippa and gave him the authority that his grandfather had
 - When Caligula died, Agrippa played favorites with Claudius as well
 - Agrippa wanted the favor of men in order to advance himself
 - The beautiful thing about God is that he does not play favorites (Acts 10:34)
 - He doesn't care who you are on this earth, because there's nothing of value on this earth, despite what we may think sometimes
 - And he was pretty good at that apparently – Rome rewarded him handsomely
 - And he used that money for some good things – such as building a wall
 - Remember in 70AD, there were 2 walls around Jerusalem, and there was actually the start of a 3rd before Rome invaded
 - Agrippa started building that 3rd wall, but his death prevented him from finishing (Acts 12) – this 3rd wall was finished hastily and not to the quality that Agrippa would have finished it
 - Of this wall, Josephus says “*but he began to encompass Jerusalem with such a wall, which, had it been brought to perfection, had made it impracticable for the Romans to take it by siege;*” (*Wars of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 11)

- Of course, we can read the account of him in Acts 12
 - Much like his Herodian predecessors, he was no friend of Christ's
 - He arrested Christians, and had James the brother of John killed
 - He then arrested Peter, presumably to kill him as well, but we know that he escaped (**Acts 12:1-11**)
 - Interestingly, Peter – when facing execution very soon – was sleeping
 - How could he sleep? The church is concerned about him, but he didn't seem to be too worried. How?
 - He knew good and well what Agrippa's intentions were with him – very probably the very next day, but he's sleeping
 - Because just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3, Peter knew that even if the worst happened – he had something better waiting on him
 - And the same can be said of us today, if we are faithful members of the Lord's church, there is nothing that man can do to us
 - If the worst happens to us, we know we have gained the greatest victory one can gain – an eternal home with God
 - **Acts 12:18-25**
 - Agrippa had the guards that were in charge of Peter be killed when he found out of Peter's escape
 - Agrippa was in Caesarea
 - Spoke to the people there publicly and claimed to be a god, just like Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4
 - Again, God is no respecter of persons
 - He doesn't care who you are, what you have in this world – you're going to get judged justly
 - As Christians we should not demonstrate that behavior, because God is not going to put up with it
 - Didn't put up with it when Job started questioning Him (Job 38)
 - Much like Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4, Agrippa got a little too arrogant and God put him in his place
- Agrippa 2 (great grandson of Herod the Great, son of Agrippa 1) & his sister, Bernice
 - Agrippa 2 is mentioned in the Bible in Acts 25 and 26 for his role in Paul's trial
 - You'll read that he and Bernice did a lot of things together – they were brother and sister
 - Titus, the Roman general and future emperor had a relationship with Bernice – I'm not sure if they were married or not
 - For the most part, this member of the Herodian family seemed to have his ducks in a row the most out of any of them

- Don't get me wrong – he had his flaws just like you and I do, and unfortunately he turned out to be no friend of Christ's, but of all the Herod's mentioned in the Bible, I could see why Paul would go after him in Acts 26
- Don't get me wrong there either, Paul didn't pick and choose
- Paul didn't do that – he knew that the gospel is for all (Matthew 28:18-20)
- It's not our place to be the judge of who gets it and who doesn't (Matthew 13:1-23)
 - In the parable of the sower, the seed was scattered everywhere, not just the places that contained known soil – everywhere
 - The end of Philippians suggests that Paul probably tried to get Nero, so he would have tried preaching the gospel to anyone (Philippians 4:22)
 - But just from what I know of these people, Agrippa 2 seems as if he'd have been the one most likely to accept the message
 - But nevertheless, at least to our knowledge – he did not
 - **Acts 26:25-32**
 - He's in large part the basis of our song "Almost Persuaded"
 - And if you're reading this and are not a Christian – do not make the same mistake he did by denying the gospel
 - Agrippa 2 was ready to release Paul, because he could tell that Paul had done nothing wrong
 - Compare that with Christ and Pilate – Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and the Jews were just bloodthirsty
 - But Pilate enabled that behavior and he had Christ killed
 - To his credit, Agrippa 2 appears as if he would not have done the same thing – he wouldn't have sent Paul to Nero had he not appealed to Caesar at least
 - But he still rejected the gospel – another classic example of why good, moral people if that's all they have is not enough
- He took over his father's kingdom after his death and was ultimately the last ruler of Herodian descent
- He was very good friends with the Romans as well up until the war that ultimately ended in Jerusalem's destruction – shortly before that happened, Agrippa 2 got out of Judea and wasn't really heard from much after that
- One thing I want to mention historically about Agrippa 2 is that despite the procurators (Pilate, Festus, Felix, Albinus, and especially Florus – Florus was basically the physical reason for the start of the Jewish – Roman war in the 60's) – Agrippa 2 actually tried talking sense into the Jews
 - As Christians, we need to be there for our fellow brothers and sisters as well (Romans 12:9-21)
- The state of the Jews at this time was absolutely terrible, they were truly the definition of beyond saving (**Ephesians 4:17-19**)
 - This was truly the state of the Jews in Judea at this time

- By the time the Jews decided that it would be smart to go to war with the greatest military perhaps in the history of the world, the Jews had either killed or banished anyone of their number who was not ready to fight
 - And Agrippa 2 gave them a long speech before he removed himself from the picture
 - I'm just going to paraphrase this for you, but you can read it in detail in *Wars of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 16
 - He basically told them that they were being absolutely foolish and stood no chance against Rome
 - That should have been obvious, but the Jews in Judea at this time (Josephus was one of them) were out of their minds at this time
 - And Agrippa tried talking sense into them, which they wanted no part of
 - So Agrippa got out before the war started and for the most part disappeared from the public eye
- This has been a high level overview of the intertestamental period and the Herods of the Bible
- A few things that I want to point out in conclusion of this study
- 1 – yes, the Herod's generally speaking were very wicked. But Christ died for their sins
 - Christ died for all the ungodly (**Romans 5:6-8**)
 - That includes the Herod's and you and I
- 2 – we can think that you and I are so much better. But are we?
 - When we sin once, we have no place in God's kingdom
 - Genesis 15:16
 - God tells Abram that the sin of the Amorites has not reached its full measure at this time
 - But fast forward to the book of Joshua
 - The Israelites led by Joshua cleared the land of Canaan and took it for themselves with God on their side
 - These folks now had no place in God's kingdom
 - It's the same for us today (**James 2:10**)
 - When we sin once, our sin has reached its full measure and we'd be lost in that sin if not for the blood of Christ
 - We need the blood of Christ just as much as the Herod's needed it
 - From what we know, the Herod's were not obedient
 - But you don't have to let that be your fate
- Be a friend of Christ's unlike those which we've just discussed, and don't be almost persuaded as Agrippa in Acts 26 – rather, be persuaded and accept His saving grace
- The plan of salvation is simple and it is how God has instructed us to receive His saving grace
 - **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*