

**Message #52****Matthew 14:1-13**

Now I carefully want us to observe the opening prepositional phrase of **verse 1**—“at that time.” This has some far-reaching ramifications. At the time when Jesus Christ had taught and had done so many wonderful miracles and His reputation was widely spread and He had been nationally rejected, including being rejected by those from His hometown, we then come to this part of the narrative which deals with the murder of John the Baptist. Dispensationally, Christ had just given a series of parables which demonstrated that He was going to leave and things on earth were going to become evil. Christ wants to show that God’s true servants will not be loved at this time; in fact, they will be hated, persecuted, and at times even killed. The evil will escalate.

**ONE WHO STANDS FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD AND PROCLAIMS THE TRUTH OF GOD WILL BE HATED AND THERE WILL BE THOSE WHO WANT HIM DESTROYED.**

When real righteousness is preached, it is not embraced by the majority of people. It offends most people and they want to destroy the one who is proclaiming that which is true and righteous.

**FACT #1** – Herod Antipas had heard the news about Jesus. **14:1**

The Herod being discussed here is Herod Antipas, who reigned from 4 B.C.-39 A.D. There are three main Herod’s connected to the life of Christ: 1) Herod the Great, who killed the babies of Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16); 2) Herod Antipas, who killed John the Baptist (Matt. 14:1-13), this is Herod the Great’s son; 3) Herod Agrippa, also the son of Herod the Great, who killed James (Acts 12:1). Any time you mention the name Herod, you are speaking of an evil, power-crazed, lust-crazed murderer and cold-blooded killer.

The noun “tetrarch” means that Herod was a ruler over a fourth part of the region. Josephus tells us that when Herod the Great was nearing death, he contemplated turning the entire rule over to Herod Antipas, but changed his mind and made him governor over one-fourth part of the territory. Herod Antipas was the ruler of the region Jesus was operating in and he had been ruler for over 30 years. The emphasis of the Greek words “heard the news” indicates he had been hearing about Jesus, including His teachings, for some time.

**Hearing about Jesus is not the same as believing on Jesus.**

**FACT #2** – Herod Antipas misinterpreted news about Jesus Christ. **14:2**

Herod came to the irrational assumption that Jesus was John, risen from the dead and then he invented in his mind that this was the reason why He could do miracles. **Just because someone believes something does not make it true!**

**FACT #3** – Herod Antipas arrested and executed John the Baptist. **14:3-11**

**14:3**

**Verse 3** tells us the kind of man Herod Antipas was—a hen-pecked, lust-crazed man who could be swayed to do wrong by a woman. He put John in prison because of Herodias. Now we know from Mark 6:20 that Herod enjoyed listening to the preaching of John. Herod knew that John was a righteous and holy man of God, and even though John would point out wicked things to Herod that he had specifically done (Luke 3:19), the truth is Herod still enjoyed hearing John teach.

**14:4**

**Verse 4** informs us that John had specifically been saying that it was against God’s law for Herod to have the wife of his half-brother, Philip, as his wife.

**14:5**

Now apparently from **verse 5**, we learn that Herodias (Mark 6:19) was putting pressure on Herod to kill John, but he did not want to do it because he was a politician who knew the majority of people saw John as a righteous prophet of God. In fact, he saw John as a righteous prophet of God (Mark 6:20).

**14:6-7**

Herodias and her daughter, whose name according to Josephus was Salome, came up with a plan. H. A. Ironside said this was a lascivious dance done by a young woman for an old tyrant of a king. Whatever she did in her seductive dance worked because **verse 7** says Herod said he would give her whatever she wanted.

**14:8-11**

Here is a king who is undoubtedly half drunk and just watched an immoral dance and he is concerned about his word. He would rather kill a righteous man of God than to go back on his evil, lying, adulterous word.

**FACT #4** – John’s disciples bury his body and report to Jesus. **14:12**

This is very important. Here were men with broken hearts and shattered dreams and Matthew wants us to understand who they turned to—to Jesus. You see Jesus is the healer of broken hearts and shattered dreams.

**FACT #5** – Jesus went to a secluded spot. **14:13a**

John was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. Jesus knew what John’s death meant; it meant He was next. His time was drawing near.