

Matthew 14:1-13

A Haunting Retrospective

Jesus' fame ...

I. His Prophet

A. An Honest Preacher

B. Imprisoned for Truth

II. An Imposter

A. Twisted Murderer

B. Haunted Soul

III. His Heart

A. Pursues Solitude

B. Provides Retreat

... Jesus followed.

Children, Listen ...

1. Who was Herod?

2. Who was John the Baptist?

3. What did Herod do to John the Baptist?

4. Who did Herod think Jesus was?

5. What did Jesus do when He heard the news about John the Baptist?

Truth and Trouble

Charges against Herod's immorality are manifold, but his position as "king of the Jews" made him a unique target for pointed rebuke for his behavior. Many earthly kings and rulers have been and are corrupt, but Herod Antipas, even though he was illegitimately on the throne of Israel, was especially culpable for violating God's Law. Because of his position and because of John the Baptist's calling as God's prophet there was bound to be a clash. John called the pretender king out on his illicit relationship with his sister-in-law. John is arrested and matters get worse when Herod throws a perverse party and takes a wicked vow. Gruesome is too weak a word to describe what follows. Word of John's martyrdom reaches Jesus. In response the true King of the Jews withdraws to solitude and soon thereafter provides a time of respite for His disciples. The incident of John's murder was traumatic and foreboding. Jesus and His followers would need to process it all, grieve, mourn, and regroup before ministering again to the multitudes. Jesus was already anticipating the cross and this may have been a reminder that it loomed large, but in addition to dealing with their sorrow, the disciples must have begun to wonder what lay ahead for them.

In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

John 16:33